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**A Jewish Solution to the Problem of Excessive Christian Virility
in the War against Spanish Islam**

by Erika Tritle

Abstract

In the decades before Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon marched their Christian forces against the last remaining Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula, the Castilian bishop Alonso de Cartagena was reviving and revising a historiography that linked the contemporary Castilian monarchy genealogically to the Visigoths. This genealogical continuity supported the argument that Castile should complete its unfinished but divinely-ordained mission to conquer the Moors of Granada and unite the lands of Spain under Christian rule. As Cartagena's intellectual successors took up this cause, they employed discourses of masculinity and virility to uphold a vigorous Castilian Christianity against the perceived effeminacy of its depraved infidel enemies. However, while Cartagena praised acts of bravery and urged Christian knights to fight with manful courage and boldness against the peninsular forces of Islam, the bishop also warned that the nobility tended to pursue these manly qualities to ruinous excess. By contrast, he argued that Jewish nobility, when washed of the stains of faithlessness through baptism, possessed the mildness of King David preferred by God. Contesting the notions of virility and manliness that had come to characterize Castilian knighthood as well as so-called Old Christian identity, Cartagena argued that the only way for the Castilian nobility successfully to pursue its God-given mission to expand and defend the holy Catholic faith was for the masculine gentile flesh of Old Christian nobility to join with the baptized, Jewish, feminine flesh of the *conversos*.

This essay explores the way Cartagena used notions of Judaism, femininity, and theology to critique contemporary alignments of Spanishness and Christianity with an excessively warlike conception of masculinity. Engaging modern scholarly conversations about universalism and particularism, the essay argues that this cluster of texts by Cartagena provides a fruitful point of entry into current conversations about the intersection of conceptions of gender with those of race and class and their relationship in turn to questions of faith and the construction of religious and national identities.

While Pope Urban II's 1095 call to the First Crusade exhorted Christians of Europe toward the east, he also urged Iberian Christians to devote their crusading energy to protecting

Christians “from the tyranny and oppression of the Saracens” closer to their own home.¹ Historians of Spain have argued that a full understanding of crusading necessarily includes consideration of military campaigns and their papal endorsements in Spain as well as in the Middle East. While efforts to “reconquer” the lands of Iberia held by Muslim kingdoms predated the idea of crusading, Joseph O’Callaghan demonstrates that Christian efforts at *reconquista* were taken up into the crusading movement and could entail the same spiritual rewards as campaigning in the Holy Land.²

Claims of lineage bolstered the concept of entitlement that informed the so-called *Reconquista*. In the decades before Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon made their triumphant entry into the city of Granada in January 1492 as conquerors of the last remaining Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula, the Castilian bishop Alonso de Cartagena was reviving and revising a historiography that linked contemporary Castilian monarchs genealogically to the Visigoths.³ Gothic rule had replaced that of the Romans in the late fifth and early sixth centuries and had continued until 711 with the invasion of Muslim forces coming from North Africa. Claiming continuity with the Visigoths, who had converted from Arian Christianity to Roman Catholicism by 589, supported the argument that Castile should complete its unfinished but divinely-ordained mission to conquer the Moors of Granada and unite the lands

¹ *Papsturkunden in Spanien: I. Katalonien*, ed P. Kehr (Berlin, 1926), no. 23, p. 288.

² Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). See also *inter alia* Ane Bysted, *The Crusade Indulgence: Spiritual Rewards and the Theology of the Crusades, c. 1095-1216* (BRILL, 2014), 70–73, and William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, C.1095-c.1187* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014), 120–78.

³ Already at the height of eleventh-century efforts at *Reconquista* historians had argued for continuity between the Visigoths and Castilians; the idea received extended treatment from thirteenth-century historians such as Jiménez de Rada and Lucas of Túy but then had receded into the background. See Thomas Devaney, “Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile,” *Speculum* 88, no. 3 (2013): 732–33.

of Spain under Christian rule. Younger contemporaries followed Cartagena's lead, and that of his father, Pablo de Santa María (also known as Paul of Burgos), in stressing their kings' Visigothic lineage.

Natasha Hodgson has recently explored how ideas about certain *gentes* could contribute to constructions of masculinities within crusading narratives of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She shows how the Norman *gens*, building on the *fama* of the Normans for warlike ferocity and generosity as well as for "greed, cunning, and in-fighting," provided authors with a useful tool for expressing "gendered praise and criticism" regardless of the historical weight of Norman contributions to crusading activities.⁴ Cartagena similarly draws on a largely mythical construction of the *gens Gothorum* for his own rhetorical purposes. As part of the narrative that linked the Visigothic kings to the Castilian monarchs, Cartagena emphasizes the Visigoths' virtuous masculinity, contrasting noble Christian, masculine virtue with the effeminate depravity of their Muslim enemies and with that of their own rulers when those rulers seemed to betray their virile Christian ancestry.⁵ Like the Normans of the crusade narratives, though, Cartagena's Visigoths garnered both praise and criticism. Ultimately, the bishop's explorations of nobility and masculinity served a greater purpose; he wanted to promote a new *gens*, and he thought that his own Castile was just the place.

In the terms of current theoretical and political considerations, this description of the fifteenth-century context highlights the construction and negotiation of a universal identity that united the Christian and the masculine against their opposites. Lisa Lampert has argued that

⁴ Natasha Hodgson, "Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade," in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2015), 201.

⁵ See Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile."

careful analysis of medieval and early modern texts, as well as investigation into the Christian paradigms of universalism that they present, can complicate and enrich contemporary debates about particularism and universalism. In turn, she argues, contemporary theoretical approaches such as those of Ernesto Laclau and Linda Zerilli provide useful tools for examining pre-modern texts.⁶ Following the incarnational logic identified by Laclau as the historical Christian paradigm of the relationship of the universal to the particular, one could argue that Cartagena's successors posited noble, masculine, Castilian Christianity as "the privileged agent of history...whose particular body was the expression of a universality transcending it."⁷ However, this quick assessment would ignore the processes by which contemporaries contested the meaning of each of the four terms comprising this notion of the universal: noble, masculine, Castilian and Christian. Accordingly, I argue that the cluster of texts by Cartagena discussed here provides a fruitful point of entry into current conversations about the intersection of conceptions of gender with those of race and class and their relationship, in turn, to questions of faith and the construction of religious and national identities. The conclusions I draw about such broad questions within this brief essay will be more suggestive than definitive; I hope to show that the points of intersection identified by scholars in recent decades cast illuminating perspective on pre-modern texts and contexts. I will also argue that those texts and contexts informed the very intellectual developments that have led to the identification of those intersections.

The Moors were not the only significant non-Christian presence in Spain. Jewish people had long before settled on the Iberian Peninsula as part of their ancient dispersion throughout the Roman Empire, and the Sephardim had made noteworthy contributions to the intellectual,

⁶ Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 7.

⁷ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(S)* (London: Verso, 1996), 23.

cultural, and political development of Spain under both Muslim and Christian rule.⁸ While conversions among the three religions had occurred over the centuries, the religious landscape changed dramatically after 1391, when waves of anti-Jewish violence spread throughout the peninsula. By 1416 a substantial number of Iberian Jews had been baptized.⁹ They and their descendants, known as *conversos*, thus entered the gates of the holy Catholic Church and assumed the rights and privileges granted to Christians. By the 1430s, however, many “Old Christians” in Castile had become convinced that the wide-spread conversions had served only to allow the so-called Jewish enemy to stir up trouble from within. In 1449 such anti-*converso* sentiment produced a violent attack on the *conversos* of the city of Toledo and the a prototype for policies of *limpieza de sangre*, or discrimination based on bloodline.¹⁰ Such was the background against which Alonso de Cartagena was writing his genealogy of the kings of Spain, also known as the *Anacephaleosis* (1454-1456).¹¹

⁸ Classic general studies of these communities include L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1990) and Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vols. 1 and 2/3* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993) (originally published 1973-1984). Brian Catlos offers a succinct and nuanced introduction to “Islam and Latin Christendom to 1050” in *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c.1050–1614* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–12. See also *inter alia* Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English, *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

⁹ Emilio Mitre Fernández, *Los judíos de Castilla en tiempo de Enrique III: el pogrom de 1391* (Valladolid: Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1994), 50–54.; B. Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1995), 1095–1102. For 1391 and its immediate aftermath see also Mark D. Meyerson, *A Jewish Renaissance in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 22–42.

¹⁰ See Tomás González Rolán and Pilar Suárez-Somonte, eds., “Sentencia-Estatuto de Pedro Sarmiento,” in *De la Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento a la Instrucción del Relator* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2012), 13–31. For a discussion of anti-*converso* sentiment from the 1430s, see Erika Tritle, “Anti-Judaism and a Hermeneutic of the Flesh,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 95, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2015): 183–84.

¹¹ For the Latin and Spanish texts of this document, see Yolanda Espinosa Fernández, *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena: edición, traducción, estudio*, 3 vols., Colección Tesis

As a churchman, diplomat, royal adviser, and scholar, Cartagena conversed with knights, kings, and even an elected Holy Roman Emperor. His writings reached the highest strata of religious and secular authority, and he regularly corresponded with nobles and other church officials within Castile as well as with humanist scholars from Italy and elsewhere in Europe.¹² Queen Isabella possessed a copy of his treatise on knighthood which she inherited from her father, King Juan II, and the growing class of lay noble readers in fifteenth-century Castile looked to Cartagena for advice on what to read and how to stock their libraries.¹³ Although his other writings do not specifically take up the *converso* cause, Cartagena's *Defensorium unitatis christianae* of 1450 chastises the rebels in Toledo and offers an eloquent defense of Jewish lineage and its place, after baptism, within Spanish Christian society.¹⁴ This treatise, written in Latin and addressed to King Juan II, survives in two manuscript copies. It was clearly intended for the eyes of church officials and intellectuals outside of Spain as well, and its arguments reached the eyes of close papal advisers such as fellow Castilian Juan de Torquemada, a cardinal

doctorales (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filología, Departamento de Filología Clásica, 1989).

¹² The classic studies of Cartagena's family are Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos, d. Pablo de Santa María y d. Alfonso de Cartagena, obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores*, Escuela de estudios hebraicos, B (Madrid: C. Bermejo, 1942) and 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). For a more recent biography, see Luis Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena, 1385-1456: Una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2002).

¹³ For this as well as a list of other influential noble families that owned a copy of Cartagena's *Doctrinal de caballeros* see Noel Fallows, "Just Say No? Alfonso de Cartagena, the *Doctrinal de Los Caballeros*, and Spain's Most Noble Pastime," in *Studies on Medieval Spanish Literature in Honor of Charles F. Fraker*, ed. Mercedes Vaquero and Alan Deyermond (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1995), 129–30. On lay literacy in late medieval Spain and Cartagena's role as literary adviser in the court of Juan II see J. N. H. Lawrance, "The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62, no. 1 (January 1, 1985): 79–94.

¹⁴ Alonso de Cartagena, *Defensorium unitatis christianae. Tratado en favor de los judíos conversos*, ed. P. Manuel Alonso (Madrid, 1943).

serving in the Roman curia. Cartagena presents his “defense of Christian unity” as a defense of a notion of universal humanity that embraces and unites the particular identities of Jews and gentiles according to lineage when “[being] reborn, through the unity of universal baptism they are made one people in the holy bath, and that ancient difference is completely removed when, putting on the new human being, they cast off the old.”¹⁵

Twenty-first-century observers will note that this notion of “Christian unity” posits Christianity as the hegemonic universal into which other, particular, identities are subsumed or, in the face of resistance, eliminated.¹⁶ But Cartagena’s work reveals a more complicated contest over the content of that identity and the nature of that unity in fifteenth-century Spain than such an easy assessment allows. Using the *Defensorium* as a lens through which to examine the bishop’s other works on nobility, knighthood, and kingship, this essay will show how Cartagena used notions of Judaism, femininity, and theology to critique contemporary alignments of Spanishness and Christianity with an excessively warlike conception of masculinity. The stakes were high. The Hebrew scriptures abounded with cautionary tales about how God’s chosen people suffered from divine wrath when they disregarded the responsibilities that came with divine chosenness. We need look no further than the fate of the northern kingdom of Israel, whose members the book of 2 Kings tells us were carried away by the Assyrians, cast off and afflicted by the Lord, as punishment for their sin and disobedience (ch.17). If, as Cartagena and others believed, God had endowed Castile with a special mission to lead Spain and head the

¹⁵ “Cum per baptismatis unitatem universi sacro lavacro renascentes unicus populous sint effecti et illa antiua differentia funditus sublata novum hominem induentes veterem exuerunt.” Ibid., 63. All translations of primary texts are my own.

¹⁶ Guillermo Verdín-Díaz observes this universalizing goal of Cartagena’s *Defensorium* along with his ultimate failure to achieve his goal in Alonso de Cartagena, *Alonso de Cartagena y el Defensorium unitatis christianae.*, trans. Guillermo Verdín-Díaz (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1992), 19, 79.

Church Militant's efforts to defend and expand the holy Catholic faith, then Castile and its nobles had better remember that mission and conduct it in a manner that pleased God.

The baptism of so many Jews in the Spanish kingdoms seemed to Cartagena and others to make considerable, even providential, progress toward the goal of expansion through conversion.¹⁷ However, the mission to expand and defend the faith also required conquering the Muslims of Granada and thus bringing the centuries of *Reconquista* to a final close.¹⁸ Within Cartagena's writings, this sense of Castile's divine mission appears in his *Discurso* regarding the preeminence of the king of Castile over the king of England, given at the Council of Basel in 1434.¹⁹ There the Castilian churchman claims that among kings reckoned as equals in other respects, that king should be favored who is currently at war for God, for God is the ultimate sovereign and "emperor over all the kings." A worthy king actively served God his sovereign by protecting and expanding the sovereign's realm. War for God, Cartagena explains, is war waged against infidels.²⁰ In these terms Juan II of Castile deserved more honor than Henry VI of England, for the English king's warfare against French forces did not target infidels, neither did

¹⁷ 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* 16 (January 2010): 130.

¹⁸ By contrast, Cartagena's contemporary, Juan de Segovia, also a representative at the Council of Basel, advocated the peaceful conversion of Muslims. For a recent edition and study of Juan de Segovia's work on Islam see Juan de Segovia, *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Sarracenorum: Edition und deutsche Übersetzung*, ed. Ulli Roth (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012).; see also Anne Marie Wolf, *Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace: Christians and Muslims in the Fifteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014).

¹⁹ Alonso de Cartagena, "Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea," in *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*, ed. Mario Penna, vol. I (Madrid: Atlas, 1959), 205–33. See Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Guerra justa y guerra santa en la obra de Alonso de Cartagena", *EHumanista*, n. 24, 2013, pp. 341-354.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

it bring praise to the Catholic faith, nor did it extend the boundaries of Christendom.²¹ The Castilian king, by contrast, fought a divinely ordained war against “pagans and infidels” in his engagements with the Moors of Granada.²²

In his efforts to promote Spain’s holy war, Cartagena ties masculinity to virtue and military valor, supporting his notion of a militant Christianity whose knights devote themselves to expanding and protecting the Church Militant and its earthly rulers. He praises the conquering Visigoths as warlike and valorous, so much so that even the women “inherited the bellicose nature and soldierly spirit of the men.”²³ With open admiration the man of letters argues that the activity most closely associated with nobility is military exercise: “the equestrian charge, and doing battle to trumpet sounds under the banners of princes, with head and breast armed and shins covered with finely-tempered iron, certainly is an act of nobles.”²⁴ Military exercise especially pertains to nobility “because it is nearest to virtue and full of beauty, splendor, and boldness.”²⁵ The bishop praises the knight Diego Gómez de Sandoval, who commissioned Cartagena’s *Doctrinal de caballeros*, or manual of knighthood, for the boldness of his heart and

²¹ In making their case for the superiority of their king over the English king, the Castilians surely also had in mind Henry VI’s minority and what his own subjects regarded as his disappointing lack of military ability or other manly tendencies. See Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013).

²² Cartagena, “Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea,” 221.

²³ “Tantaque in illis animositas bellandique desiderium erat, quod etiam fortitudinem et militare exercitum ex eorum origine ad feminas dicitur pertransisse.” Espinosa Fernández, *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena*, 243; cf. p. 1120.

²⁴ “Militaris tamen cultus et cursus equestris ac sub vexillis principum armatis capite et pectore tibiisque ferro calibe temperato coopertis ac tubis sonantibus preliari, Actus utique nobilium est.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 214–15.

²⁵ “Hinc est quod militare exercitum quod omnia alia labore et periculo superat, tamen quia virtute proximum est et formositate.” *Ibid.*, 214.

his “upright, virile intention to practice the acts pertaining to [his] profession” as a “military man.”²⁶ Castile needed a vigorous Christian knighthood in order to pursue its holy war.

Unfortunately, this kind of masculinity tended toward excess. One contemporary observer, himself an accomplished knight of the high nobility, complained of the unrest and violence caused by undisciplined nobles in a letter from January 1444. In the letter, the future Marqués de Santillana asks Cartagena to illuminate the history and nature of knighthood, particularly the oath given to the Roman *milites* of antiquity.²⁷ As if in apology, Santillana explains why he needs the bishop’s help: “How can my will move itself to think about, much less be involved in such things, [as investigating the origins of knighthood], given these tiresome times, where such scandals, debates, and tumults are stirred up and every day grow and increase because of our sins, so much so that now the arrogant flames of rage seem to reach the sky?”²⁸ Indeed, the *Crónica de Juan II de Castilla* reveals a Castile fractured by shifting allegiances and bitter rivalries within the ruling class that occasionally erupted into acts of violence.²⁹

²⁶ “Lo qual demuestra bien la animosidad de vuestro corazón, y la recta, viril intención que tenéis de ejercer los actos a vuestra profesión pertencientes.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 214–215, also quoted above, and Alonso de Cartagena, *Tratados Militares*, ed. Noel Fallows, Colección Clásicos (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2006), 65.

²⁷ Although he would not receive the title of Marquis until 1445, I will refer to Íñigo López de Mendoza as Santillana, the title by which he is most commonly known.

²⁸ “¿Cómomo la voluntat mía se puede mouer a pensar nin a entender en tales cosas, esguardado e visto este tienpo así trabajoso, donde tantos escándalos, debates e bolliçios son mouidos, e todos días por pecados nuestros cresçen e se aumentan tanto que ya las soberuiosas flamas de la yra paresçe que llegan al çielo?” Angel Gómez Moreno, “La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena,” *El Crotalón* 2 (1985): 348. The *Questión* and *Respuesta* are also published in D. Mario Penna, *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*, vol. I (Madrid, Ediciones Atlas, 1959), 235–45.

²⁹ Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, “Crónica del serenísimo príncipe Don Juan, segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla y en León,” in *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, ed. Cayetano Rossell, vol. II, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Rivadeneira, 1953), 273–695.

Cartagena agreed that Castilian knights had lost their way. In his reply he complains of the damage done to the entire kingdom because of their “courtly wars”:

Such is the spirit and boldness of the nobility of Spain, that if it does not exercise its energies in just war, then it turns to exerting them in those conflicts...that we properly speaking can call courtly, because they are waged over the court’s power, although later they extend through the majority of the provinces of the kingdom.³⁰

The bishop makes a similar point in his *Doctrinal* when he bemoans the fact that

the splendid trade of arms is exercised in amassing hosts against kin and against those who ought to be friends, or in jousts or in tournaments, of which, the one is loathsome and abominable, and activity that brings dishonor and destruction, the other a game or test, but not a principal act of knighthood

and all the while “those of Granada are in peace.”³¹

Instead of wasting their energies in play-fighting and pursuing destructive courtly rivalries, Cartagena urges knights to devote their time when not at war to the pursuit of wisdom and virtue through study.³² Returning to Santillana’s query, Cartagena divides the oaths given to ancient Roman knights into two categories, both aimed at keeping knights to their task of defending the republic. The first kind of oath bound knights “not to refuse death for the public good,” while the

³⁰ “Tanta es la animosidad e brío de la nobleza d’España que si en guerra justa non exercita sus fuerças, luego se convierte a las mouer en aquellas contiendas que los romanos çibdadanas llamauan, porque sobre el estado del regimiento de su çibdat se mouían, avunque después se estendían por diuersas partes del mundo; e nos propiamente fablando podemos llamar cortesanas, pues sobre el valer de la corte se mueuen, avnque después se estienden por las más prouinçias del regno.” Gómez Moreno, “La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena,” 351.

³¹ “Mas, ¿qué diremos nosotros, que vemos el reino lleno de platas y de guardabrazos, y estar en paz los de Granada, y el hermoso meneo de las armas ejercitarse en ayuntar huestes contra los parientes y contra los que debían ser amigos, o en justas o en torneos, de lo cual, lo uno es aborrecible y abominable, y cosa que trae dishonra y destrucción, lo otro un juego o ensaye, mas no principal acto de la caballería?” Cartagena, *Tratados Militares*, 265–66.

³² Thus Cartagena also encourages the reformation of Castilian noble masculinity by promoting elements traditionally associated with the masculinity of university men. On divergent models of medieval masculinity see Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 2–3.

second commanded them not to set out to fight “without reason” through “spirited pride.”³³ In good Aristotelian fashion, Cartagena explains that only with the guidance of reason can one cultivate the virtues, understood as the mean between two extremes. Through this analysis of the ancient Roman oaths Cartagena counsels contemporary Castilian knights to cultivate reason to achieve the virtue of courage.³⁴ Just as cowardice, the deficit of courage, loses battles, so does boldness, or courage taken to excess. Thus true masculinity entailed finding the balance between the two.³⁵ Cartagena reminds Santillana of that knight’s own grandfather who, along with other *grandees*, died in battle not because of fear, but because of “excessive valor.”³⁶ It seems that, though tired after a long, hot march, without waiting for the rest of their company to arrive or for orders from their captain, the spirited knights set out to wound the enemy forces that were resting in an advantageous location near an artificial stockade deep within their own realm. Cartagena moralizes, “Let fear not hold one back nor spirit impel one forward, beyond what reason seems to demand.”³⁷ Only through the cultivation of this key masculine property of *prudencia*, or

³³ “E por lo vno e por lo otro mejor se guardar se fallaron los juramentos que escripto auemos; ca porque el temor de la muerte o amor de la vida non retraya al cauallero ante de tiempo, jura de no refusar la muerte por el bien público, e porque con orgullo brioso saliendo adelante non dé cabsa a pelear syn razón.” Gómez Moreno, “La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena,” 359.

³⁴ This is the *prudencia caballeril* discussed at length by Jesús Rodríguez Velasco in Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*, Estudios de Historia (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 1996).

³⁵ As Katherine Lewis shows, Cartagena’s contemporary moralists in England were making a similar point in their mirrors for princes, . *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, 22–25. See also Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 40–41.

³⁶ “Ansí la que oystes infortunada pelea, en que vuestro abuelo e otros grandes con esforçado coraçón fenescieron sus días, non por temor mas por exçesivo denuedo fue por çierto rompida.” Gómez Moreno, “La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena,” 358.

³⁷ “E mucho es syn dubda esto de acatar que el temor non retraya nin abalånçe el esfuërço allende de lo que paresçe pedir la razón.” *Ibid.*

rational courage, could knights such as Santillana successfully fulfill their role as preservers of the faith and protectors of the king and his people.³⁸

According to Cartagena, the Visigoths too, whom he praises for their warlike spirit, succumbed to the invading Moors when they failed to cultivate those virile qualities under the direction of reason and in the service of faith. Cartagena's story of the last Visigothic kings tells of sexual and spiritual adultery, rape and betrayal, and even to the extent of divesting rivals of their eyes. In accordance with divine providence, the excesses of the last kings and their departure from the true faith led directly to the Moorish invasion of Spain, as punishment, Cartagena writes elsewhere, "for our sins."³⁹ He describes how King Rodrigo, dressed in magnificent finery and riding in an ivory carriage according to custom, boldly rode out to meet the North African army. Ultimately, however, the Christian forces, "with the idleness of arms born of a long peace and a superficial abundance," lacked courage and fled.⁴⁰ In his description of the way Rodrigo should be portrayed in the illustrations for the *Anacephaleosis*, Cartagena highlights the same kind of excessive boldness that led Santillana's grandfather to his death. This foolhardiness, coupled with a preoccupation with finery, suggested a softening of the Visigoths' ancestral martial vigor, which surely led to the flagging courage of the Christian soldiers at the

³⁸ See *ibid.*, 359. Cartagena writes, "no consiste el loor de los caballeros en tener muchas armas ni en mudar el tajo de ellas y poner su trabajo en hallar nueva forma de armaduras y poner nombres nuevos...mas en exaltar con ellas la santa fe y ensanchar los términos del reino. Cartagena, *Tratados Militares*, 266. On prudence as a key masculine quality, see Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, 17. See also Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 41, for a discussion of the tension between the prudence praised by prescriptive literature and the prowess that comprised knights' ideals of masculinity.

³⁹ Cartagena, *Tratados Militares*, 64 and Gómez Moreno, "La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena," 351. The *Quëstión* and *Respuesta* are also published in Penna, *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*, I:235–45.

⁴⁰ Espinosa Fernández, *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena*, 1183.

advance of the Moorish army.⁴¹ Cartagena writes, “he who set off to battle boastfully proud, making a display of pompous banners and arrogant robes, is shown covered in mourning and weeping, for in his time the Monarchy of Spain fell from such a high state into such a lamentable abyss, and the name of the Goths disappeared from it.”⁴²

If gentile Christians, such as the Visigoths and the “Old Christian” knights of the fifteenth century, too easily tended toward rash boldness, on the other side of courage Jews were notorious for cowardice. Cartagena affirms that they were deservedly so, noting that “so great and so notorious is the timidity of the faithless Israelites, that when we want to express excessive timidity we call it Jewishness, and we are accustomed to call an excessively timid person a Jew.”⁴³ Readers will likely not be surprised to see that Jews, so often accused of cunning duplicity, preoccupation with material wealth and power, and cowardice on the battlefield, could be feared as corrupting and effeminizing forces. Once baptized, they could, so the Toledan insurgents and others, argued, degrade virile Old Christian Spanish society from within. The anonymous author of the *Alborayque* (1456), who named his work after the winged steed *al-Buraq* which Islamic tradition says transported the prophet Muhammed on his night journey, describes *conversos* (or “*alboraycos*”) as fearful and cowardly Jews, proudly strutting because of

⁴¹ Similarly Lewis shows how the English king Henry V and his supporters attributed his victory and that of his army over the French at Agincourt in 1415 to their superior masculinity which both garnered and revealed divine approbation, . Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, 103–18.

⁴² “Quien salio a la batalla jactanciosamente sobervio, hacienda alarde de insignias pomposas y ropajes arrogantes, se muestre cubierto de luto y llanto, pues en su tiempo cayo de tan alto estado en tan lamentable abismo de lagrimas la Monarquia de España y se borro el nombre de Godos en ella.” Espinosa Fernández, *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena*, 1184.

⁴³ “Tanta namque et nam notoria infidelium israelitarum timiditas est, ut cum excessivam timiditatem exprimere volumus, iudeitatem vocemus et excessive timentem iudeum solemus vocare.” Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 215.

their riches and honors although despised by God, Christians, and Moors.⁴⁴ Furthermore, like the author's version of the hybrid beast in question, they are neither male nor female but possess the nature of both. As descendants of Jews they are the source of sodomy, from whence that depravity also came to the Moors and from them to evil Christians.⁴⁵ Marcos García de Mora, one of the leaders of the Toledo rebellion and author of an apology for the rebel regime, claimed that the *conversos* fled in cowardly fear of armed fighting, "since they were and are of base lineage and were accustomed to conquer more through usuries and deceptions than through arms."⁴⁶

These and other arguments by opponents of the *conversos* connect Jewishness and all the problems of unbelief, hermeneutical error, moral corruption, and animosity to Christians that they associated with Jewishness, to lineage. Not even baptism, which was supposed to wash away all trace of sin, could wash away the Jewishness of one's body, let alone one's spirit.⁴⁷ Such arguments have led many scholars to argue that we need to consider the concept of race in this pre-modern Spanish context.⁴⁸ While fifteenth-century anti-*converso* arguments do not draw

⁴⁴ Dwayne E. Carpenter, ed., *Alborayque: estudio preliminar, edición y notas*, vol. 1, Biblioteca de Barcarrota 6 (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2005), 71-87.

⁴⁵ Carpenter, *Alborayque: estudio preliminar, edición y notas*, 1:84, 94-95.

⁴⁶ "Aquellos que eran e son de ruin linaje y acostumbraron más vencer por logros y engaños que no por armas." 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," in *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), 213.

⁴⁷ Robert C. Stacey, makes a similar point about thirteenth century England, "The Conversion of Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth-Century England," *Speculum* 67, no. 2 (April 1992): 278.

⁴⁸ E.g. David Nirenberg, "Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of 'Jewish' Blood in Late Medieval Spain," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Ben Isaac, Yossi Ziegler, and Miriam Eliav-Feldon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 232-64; Max S. Hering Torres, Maria Elena Martinez, and David Nirenberg, eds., *Race and Blood in the Iberian World* (Zürich; Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012).

on the language of skin color or the medical terminology of nineteenth-century race theory, they do employ a kind of reproductive logic that posits the heritability of spiritual, cultural, and moral traits in the reproduction of the flesh. Language from the Toledan insurgents' manifesto, the *Sentencia-Estatuto*, that links *conversos* irrevocably to Jews because of their common breed or stock (*ralea*), suggests that we ought to consider the relevance of notions of race to these debates over the nature of both Jewish and Christian identities.⁴⁹ Further, such terminology indicates a point of intersection between notions of race and ideas about religious and gender identity.⁵⁰

While Cartagena agrees with the contemporary view of Jews as a cowardly people, he challenges García de Mora and his sympathizers on their conflation of *conversos* with Jews. Once a Jew has received baptism, Cartagena argues, his theological slavery, a result of assenting to the ancestral sin of killing Christ, is completely washed away. Thus cleansed, converted Jews and their descendants achieve a degree of military prowess disproportionate to their comparatively small numbers, proving that "some live coal of nobility . . . 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."⁵¹ Thus Cartagena rejects the content of his opponents' understanding of Jewish lineage, but he does not reject their racial logic per se. Rather, he tries to

⁴⁹ For '*ralea*' see Joan Corominas and José Antonio Pascual, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, Biblioteca románica hispánica (Madrid, 1980).

⁵⁰ Thus whereas the *gens* as described by Natasha Hodgson "added yet another layer of expectations and stereotypes on groups of men" in earlier crusade narratives, Jewish lineage as posited by the insurgents at Toledo determined all other cultural and spiritual traits. See Hodgson, "Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade," 213.

⁵¹ "Neque aliter secundum communem cursum nature tam repente excessum timoris dimittere et audaciam bellandi artemque militarem assumere sub tam brevi temporis spatio verisimiliter potuissent, nisi aliquis nobilitatis carbunculus licet non plene lucens non tamen prorsus extinctus in stomachis aliquorum ex eis qui ex vetustissima nobilitate eorum de seculo in seculum descendens aliquantulum fumigasset." Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 217. The passage preceding the one cited refers to the renowned timidity of the Jews, making the post-baptismal behavior and abilities of many *conversos* all the more impressive.

revise his contemporaries' interpretation of the content of Jewish flesh. We have seen that Cartagena urged knights to pursue reason and cultivate wisdom and virtue through study. Within the pages of the *Defensorium unitatis christianae*, however, Cartagena draws us deeper into his thinking regarding the solution to the problem of Castile's wayward nobility. There he presents a new kind of virility, one consonant with reason and calculated to address the violent anti-*converso* sentiment that Cartagena deemed a threat not only to Castile's pursuit of its divine mission to expand and defend the faith but also to the unity of the Christian Church.

In the *Defensorium* Cartagena describes how God first described Job as a simple and upright person [*homo simplex et rectus*] but, following Job's manfully [*viriliter*] enduring the temptations that Satan beset on him, God then praised Job as a simple and upright man [*vir simplex et rectus*]. Cartagena explains that while the word *homo* refers to any weakling or child, the word *vir* describes "the rational male of courage."⁵² As we have seen, while Cartagena praises acts of bravery and insists on the military role of knights, urging them to fight with manful courage and boldness against the peninsular forces of Islam, nevertheless he also warns the Christian nobility of their ruinous tendency to pursue these manly qualities to excess. Subverting the rhetoric of virility and manliness that had come to characterize Castilian knighthood as well as Old Christian identity, Cartagena argues that the only way for Castilian nobility to pursue the God-given mission to expand and defend the faith successfully is for the

⁵² "ab hominis verbo quod cuicumque etiam puero vel debili congruit, ad viri verbum procedens quod non cuicumque sed perfecte et integre fortitudinis rationali mari congruens est." Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 253. Cf. Job 1:8 and 2:3. Christopher Fletcher has drawn attention to the use of *viriliter* elsewhere in the Vulgate Bible and the implications of this term for medieval understandings of ideal manly conduct: *Richard II: Manhood, Youth, and Politics 1377-99*, (Oxford, 2010), 31–32.

gentile flesh of Old Christian nobility to join with the baptized, Jewish, feminine flesh of the *conversos*.

In an exposition of 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,” Cartagena employs gendered language to describe Jews and gentiles:

[The prophet] proclaims sons who would come from far away and daughters who would arise from the flanks. The appellation of sons is not inconsistent with the gentiles who were far from the law, indicating those who, excessively extolled as powerful from an abundance of arms and lands, not without merit deserve to be designated under the masculine sex, for sons usually wander beyond the houses of their parents and even the regions of their own native land. But daughters designated the Jewish people, because just as daughters do they usually remain at home, and thus they stayed behind within the fixed boundaries of the promised land.⁵³

To defend attacks on the newness of the *conversos*' Christian faith, the bishop uses this gendered language to undermine Old Christian claims to superiority; gentiles (here, non-*converso* Castilian Christians) arrive at the Christian faith as to a completely new law, while Jews (parallel to *converso* Christians) have known and remained with the law from infancy.⁵⁴ This gendered discourse further characterizes gentiles as masculine for their emphasis on acquiring arms and land, a quality that is “excessively” extolled, whereas the Jewish daughters are content to remain peacefully at home. Later in the treatise, Cartagena expounds on Isaiah 11:6-9 to present his notion of the ideal knight and his solution to the problem of excessive

⁵³ “Sed ad hunc solem eternum, qui extensione et intensione omnia superat, filios de longe venturos et filias de latere surrecturas pronunciat, filiorum appellatione non incongrue gentiles qui longe a lege erant, significans, qui potentia armorum ac terrarum diffusionem nimium preextollentes, sub masculino sexu non inmerito designari merebantur. Solent enim filii extra domos parentum et etiam provincias patrie proprie vagari. Filie vero iudaicum populum designabant, quia sicut filie domi consistere solent, sic et illi intra certos fines promissae terre morabantur.” Ibid., 87–88.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 78.

boldness among the Old Christian nobility: they must allow Christians of Jewish lineage into their ranks and join their flesh with that of the Jews:

What else, then, is the image that the wolf dwells with the lamb, or that the leopard lies down with the kid, if not that the unbridled bellicosity of the gentiles and the activity of arms are joined together with the mildness of the people of the law within one church? ... It is not that the lamb shall dwell with the wolf or the kid shall lie down with the leopard, but on the contrary, the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid... Because within the unity of the church, the ferocity that is indicated in these animals must be renounced and the mildness of the other animals must be imitated, so that Davidic mildness be not exchanged for the fierceness of the activity of Alexander, Hannibal, or Caesar, or of other princes of gentility, but that Davidic mildness might govern the fierceness of arrogant Caesar under the moderation of reason. For it is this mildness that renders kings acceptable to God, according to the prophet, "O Lord, remember David, and all of his mildness."⁵⁵ He did not, then, say "courage," although David was very courageous... For indeed under faith the wolf dwells with the lamb and the leopard lies down with the kid, because the activity of armed gentility is bound to the courtesy of Israelite mildness.⁵⁶

With this passage Cartagena challenges contemporary notions of Christian masculinity to argue for the superiority of the ways of (baptized) Jews over those of (baptized) gentiles in the eyes of God, even while asserting the unity of the two within the Christian Church. Marcos García de

⁵⁵ Cartagena's text has *mansuetudinis* here where the Douay-Rheims Vulgate has *afflictionis*; *mansuetudinis* parallels his use of that word in the preceding passage. The King James Version translates *afflictionis* here as "meekness" and not as "afflictions" or similar. Cartagena cites Ps. 131:1.

⁵⁶ "Quid ergo aliud est lupum cum agno simul habitare aut pardum cum edo accubare nisi effrenatam bellicositatem gentilium et strenuitatem armorum mansuetudini populi legalis intra unam ecclesiam coniungi. In qua coniunctione illud attendendum sancti doctores dixerunt quod non agnus cum luppo aut edus cum pardo, sed contra luppus cum agno et pardus cum edo habitaturus et accubaturus erat, quod non ab re sit scriptum existimare debemus. Qui intra ecclesie unitatem ferocitas que in his animalibus designatur, dimittenda et mansuetudo aliorum animalium immittenda est, ut non alexandri, hanibalis, aut cesaris aliorumve gentilitatis strenuorum principum ferocitas mansuetudinem daviticam mutet, sed davitica mansuetudo ferocitatem cesaree superbie sub temperamento rationis gubernet. Hec est enim que reges deo redit acceptos, dicente propheta, 'Memento domine david et omnis mansuetudinis eius.' Non enim dixit fortitudinis, licet david fortissimus fuit; et alio in loco ait: 'non salvabitur rex per multam virtutem neque gigas salvabitur in multitudine virtutis sue,' virtutem pro robore corporis seu excessu potentie intelligens, sub fide namque lupus cum agno habitat et pardus cum edo accubat, quia strenuitas armate gentilitatis benignitati israelitice mansuetudinis copulatur." Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 141.

Mora and the Sarmiento regime in Toledo envisioned a universal that excised everyone of Jewish descent, regardless of religious status (e.g. whether baptized according to Catholic rites, never baptized, or disavowing one's baptism and openly practicing Jewish rites and customs) or theological status (e.g. whether believing in the Christian gospel and thus accepted by God, ignorant of the gospel, or knowingly rejecting it). More precisely and in anachronistic but useful terminology, for García de Mora one's race could limit the possibilities for one's religious and theological status. In terms of the Pauline binaries spirit/letter and spirit/flesh, this logic tied the so-called hermeneutical Jew that represented the errant interpretation and spiritual disability of the letter, along with the moral depravity and material preoccupation of the flesh, to real Jews according to the literal flesh, or Jews by race.⁵⁷

While Cartagena agreed that the universal was Christian as well as noble and masculine, he challenged García de Mora's notion of the content of the universal, or the meaning of the terms "Christian," "noble," and "masculine."⁵⁸ He argued that while the human community should be divided per religious and theological status, i.e. Christian and non-Christian, it should embrace, and not erase, racial difference. He wanted to see such conjoining in the social and political bodies of Castile and in the behavior and composition of its knights, in addition to the makeup of the holy Catholic Church. Quarreling with the association of timidity and cowardice

⁵⁷ I discuss this logic further and its use of the Pauline binaries in Tritle, "Anti-Judaism and a Hermeneutic of the Flesh."

⁵⁸ While García de Mora states that civil nobility counts for nothing before God, nevertheless he extols his own nobility as the son of a citizen *hidalgo* and natural citizen of the particular city of Toledo, versus his *converso* interlocutor who descends from "the most vile and filthy Jews of Alcalá de Henares." Furthermore, he insists that nobility cannot derive from one's land of origin. Otherwise, since woman was formed in Paradise and man was formed outside of Paradise, woman would be considered more noble than man, "which would be absurd." García de Mora, "Apelacçión e suplicaçión," 235. These debates related, further, to synchronous negotiations of Spanish identity and nationhood.

with Jewishness by race, Cartagena points to the courage and martial valor of King David along with that of contemporary *converso* knights. David's "mildness" derives from the moderating influence of reason on his courage, in contrast to the boldness of Old Christian knights and of David's gentile opponents and their descendants. Significantly, whereas Cartagena's predecessors and contemporaries tended to link both Judaism and femininity to irrationality, Cartagena ties them both to true rationality. This mildness is a theological quality that denotes one's relation to and acceptability by God. David, for Cartagena, is the psalmist who humbled himself before God, the king who kept his people faithful to God. He is also the earthly ancestor of Jesus' human, fleshly lineage.⁵⁹ For Cartagena the infamous cowardice of the Jews resulted from the theological slavery that clouded their noble traits after the crucifixion of Christ; once baptized, however, that ancient Israelite nobility that both derived from and occasioned divine favor shone with rekindled brilliance.

We can speculate about Cartagena's silence on the *converso* question in his other works. Perhaps the uprising at Toledo awakened him to the severity of the threat that anti-*converso* sentiment posed not only to individual descendants of Jews but more importantly to the church as a whole. Perhaps, again, Pope Nicholas V's disappointing suspension in October 1450 of his earlier bull that defended the *conversos*, coupled with King Juan II's ultimate decision in March 1451 to pardon the city of Toledo, guarantee its citizens impunity for all crimes committed during the rebellion, and ratify the rebel government's incapacitation of *conversos* for all offices in the city suggested the wisdom of a return to silence in Cartagena's later works.⁶⁰ Toward the

⁵⁹ For examples of Cartagena's use of David see Cartagena, *Defensorium*, 102, 123, 132, 282.

⁶⁰ See Juan II's letter dated March 21, 1451, in Eloy Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV: vida política*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1961), doc. 23, 216. See also pp. 75-76.

end of the fifteenth century the notion of a unified, homogenous Christian Spain began to seem a reality, as Isabella and Ferdinand joined the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, established the Inquisition to root out heresy and heterodoxy, and renewed the war with Muslim Granada. Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo urged Castilian nobles to bring this vision of a unified Christian Spain to fruition by casting aside effeminate foreign influences and proving their native virility and military boldness.⁶¹ This vision derives in part from the work of Alonso de Cartagena that posited masculine, noble, Christianity as the universal that would encompass all particularity. But Cartagena based his vision for Castile's Christian mission not only on notions of civil nobility and a virile Gothic heritage but also on his theology of baptism and the nature of the church, through which he tried to make room for descendants of Jews. In their praise of Christian virility, Cartagena's successors omit his warning that the bellicosity of the Castilian nobility, unbridled by the rational, feminizing, influence of the Jewish lineage of the *conversos*, risked bringing about its own downfall through a prideful excess of courage. They also ignored Cartagena's warning that it was not Alexander, not Hannibal and not Caesar who was acceptable to God, but David.

In the letter previously cited, the Marqués de Santillana expressed the fear that his brother knights had forgotten the declaration of their "Master and Redeemer" that "Every kingdom divided in itself will be laid waste and lost."⁶² While Santillana's fear stemmed from the

⁶¹ Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, "Compendiosa historia hispánica," in *Hispaniae illustratae . . . scriptores varii*, ed. Andreas Schottus, vol. 1, 4 vols. (Frankfurt: Marnius, 1603). See Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile," 735–36.

⁶² "Por cierto non otra cosa sinon que los tales viçios e pecados ayan en este infortunado emisperio, así commo la tronpa de Misçeno, exçitado, amonestado e prouocado a los onbres, e todos días los llaman e conbidan a las marçiales armas. E ya no avemos memoria nin los recuerda aquel dicho de nuestro Maestro e Redemptor: 'Todo reyno en sí mesmo diuiso será desolado e perdido.'" Gómez Moreno, "La Quëstión del Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena," 348–49. Cf. Mk 3:24, Mt 12:25, Lk 11:17.

nobility's preoccupation with internecine quarrels and martial excesses, his worry also seems prophetic regarding the way in which the march toward uniformity came to obscure Cartagena's vision of unity, in which Jew and gentile would merge in the body of the church and in Spanish civil society. Still, while Cartagena tried to redefine the universal as exemplified in his exegesis of the wolf lying down with the lamb, perhaps his vision of unity did not shift the paradigm of universalism enough to take root. He wanted to establish a place for descendants of Jews and their femininity and rationality within the universal, but the Jew had to become Christian and the feminine only served to make the masculine better, more properly masculine. And what of the religious and perhaps racial otherness of adherents to Islam? They are not part of Cartagena's explicit universal, but the Moors are present along with the Turks in their challenge to the unity and hegemony of Christian Spain. In Toni Morrison's image of the fishbowl, they provide a structure that defines the empty space in which the universal may be contested.⁶³ As with the Jews and their baptized descendants, in late-medieval Spain the Muslim presence was real and not only figurative. Likewise, the violence that Cartagena urged Spanish Christian knights to wage against the Muslim other in order to eliminate or at least to conquer that other was actual and not only metaphorical.

If Western intellectual tradition has posited an "absolute human type' that is Christian and masculine," Cartagena's work is surely part of that tradition.⁶⁴ However, while Cartagena's approach to the universal and the particular does aim for synthesis, he does not entirely obliterate difference. His debate with contemporaries over the place of *converso* Christians and their

⁶³ Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Reprint edition (New York: Vintage, 1993), 17. Lampert discusses this image in *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, 168–69.

⁶⁴ See Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, 8.

Jewish flesh within Spanish Christian society reveals an intense process of negotiation regarding the meaning of the universal that encompassed all of humanity. Further investigation into the intersections of gender, race, class, and religious identities in the late-medieval period will yield greater insights into the processes of negotiation in the development of hegemonic universals, and the reasons why they often accompanied calls for actual and metaphorical violence.