

Readings in Common: Assimilation and Interpretive Authority in Early Modern Spain

By

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Abstract

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Readings in Common: Assimilation and Interpretive Authority in Early Modern Spain examines how sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Iberian scholars negotiated the meanings of shared narratives and parallel rituals across ecumenical and linguistic lines. By rendering Iberian scholastic modes of demarcating Christianity more humanistic, and by comparing these theological arguments with the reading practices of Northern European reformers, I question the conventional genealogy of modern, secular interpretive strategies. My project thus proposes a revised history of religious tolerance and textual historicism on the one hand, and of medieval and early modern Iberian *convivencia*, scholasticism, and evangelism on the other hand.

The first half of the dissertation, which examines patristic texts, scholastic commentaries, and humanist essays in Latin and Spanish, argues that sixteenth-century Iberian reformers defended a moderate politics of peaceful conversion and New Christian assimilation by reformulating established scholastic categories of difference. Emphasizing a model of religion defined by obligatory practice, scholars such as Francisco de Vitoria, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Ignacio de Las Casas, and Pedro de Valencia acknowledged the epistemological limitations of knowing and regulating the faith of indigenous Americans, Iberian Moriscos, and other potential or recent converts to Christianity. The second half of the dissertation, which investigates the Sacromonte “lead books,” a series of forged holy texts composed in Arabic, as well as several Spanish, French, and Latin philological treatises, moves from an examination of ritual to an analysis of early modern dispute over the nature of language. I demonstrate that a radically formal approach to philology, exemplified by orthodox modes of translation and an evangelical pedagogy of linguistic usage, broadly transformed understandings of cultural and religious similitude and difference. By underscoring the parallel epistemological conditions of early modern Iberian theology and philology, I both present a nuanced account of conversion and reform in the early modern

Hispanic world and show how this account can be helpful for rethinking the changing relationship among religion, scholarship, and politics in the present.

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NOTE ON SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

When citing from Spanish, Latin and French manuscripts or early printed books, I have retained original spellings and grammar as they appear in the sources, with the caveats that I have expanded abbreviated words (“que” rather than “q”) and modernized the spellings of titles (“lengua” rather than “lengva”). For transliterations from Arabic, I have followed the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)*, with a few exceptions. First, I have included full diacritical markers on the names of persons and texts, and second, when citing the transliterated texts or titles of other scholars, I leave their diacritical notation as is. For transliterations from Hebrew I have followed a simplified version of the Library of Congress system.

INTRODUCTION

Theology, Philology, and the Politics of Assimilation

In the Gospel of Luke (14:12-24), Jesus tells a story that has come to be known as the “parable of the banquet.” A rich man planned a great feast and invited many guests. At the time of the meal, he sent his servant to beckon the guests into the banquet hall, but they all made excuses about why they could not come. One claimed to have recently acquired a field that he needed to examine. Another had to test the strength of five yoke of oxen that he had just purchased. A third man, newly married, also refused the invitation. When the servant returned to report this news, his master became angry and ordered him to rush out into the streets and alleys of the town and “bring here” [introduc huc] the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. Having completed his master’s orders, empty space nevertheless remained in the banquet hall. Finally, the exasperated master ordered his servant to go once again out onto the roads and country lanes, find whomever he could, and “make them come in” [compelle intrare].

Medieval commentators interested in evangelization, conversion, and reform debated whether this Biblical parable sanctioned coercion in the formation of Christian subjects. Writing about the Donatists, a fourth and fifth century heterodox Christian sect, Saint Augustine, for instance, used this section of Luke to formulate his apology for the disciplining of Christian apostates.¹ Non-Christians, he argued, cannot be forced to convert through violence, but New Christians are subject to the formal obligations of orthodoxy once the sacrament of baptism has been performed. They, like the banquet guests, may be compelled to participate in the rituals of the Christian community. Moreover, Augustine insisted that because the efficacy of the sacraments was contingent upon God’s will rather than the intentions of the various human participants, even baptisms performed by heretical Donatist priests remained binding. Neither priestly nor New Christian insincerity could nullify a properly performed sacrament.

Although the texts of his interlocutors for the most part have been lost, we can surmise from Augustine’s later writing that his detractors invoked Saint Paul’s evangelical *accommodatio* in their criticism of coercion. In one of his replies to such criticism, Augustine framed his discussion of the parable of the banquet with a quotation in which Paul himself

¹ See “The Donatist Schism and the Problem of Coercion,” in Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 219-225; Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*; Brown, “St. Augustine’s Attitude to Religious Coercion,” 107-116. The most extensive and important text in which Augustine treats the Donatists is *De baptismo libri VII*. This and most of Augustine’s other writing on the Donatists are collected in Augustine, *Scripta contra donatistas*, in the *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*. I have consulted translations of these texts into English by J. R. King, located in Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*. For an introduction to sixteenth-century interpretations of this parable, see Mariscal, “Bartolomé de las Casas on Imperial Ethics and the Use of Force,” 259-278.

asserts that the “fulfillment of obedience”—one way of describing Christian religious experience—precedes the “readiness to avenge all disobedience” [parati ulcisci omnem inobedientiam, cum completa fuerit prior obedientia vestra] (II Corinthians 10:6). Augustine presented coercion as a class of communal correction and employed Paul’s language of obedience to distinguish between the different kinds of banquet guests: “In those, therefore, who were first brought in with gentleness, the former obedience is fulfilled; but in those who were compelled, the disobedience is avenged. For what else is the meaning of ‘compel them to come in,’ after it had previously said, ‘Bring in,’ and the answer had been made, ‘Lord, it is done as Thou commanded, and yet there is room?’” [In illis ergo qui leniter primo adducti sunt, completa est prior obedientia; in istis autem qui coguntur, inobedientia coercetur: nam quid est, ‘cogite intrare,’ cum primo dictum esset, ‘adducite,’ et responsum esset, ‘Factum est quod jussisti, et adhuc est locus?’.]² As the first Christian convert and prolific evangelizer, Paul’s texts and life have long served as both a model for Christian universalism and a trope for negotiating the inevitable limits of other universalisms. Augustine’s rhetorical and analytical gambit was to use Paul’s text to theorize a model of religious obligation that Paul himself, as his modern readers have argued, spent much of his lifetime criticizing.³

According to Augustine’s account of the parable from Luke, the violence implied by a compulsory entry into the banquet is punishment for refusing the initial invitation; suffering this coercion is the form that reconciliation with the Christian community takes. Such a synthesis of religious reconciliation and retribution evokes, at worst, an image of Inquisitorial trials and *autos de fe* and, at best, an uneasy sense of anachronism evoked by a religion rooted in public obligation rather than private piety. Augustine’s dual defense of coercion and “ritual efficacy,” provide the foundation for what seems, at least since Erasmus and Luther articulated their criticisms of irregular Christian piety and Rome’s empty ritual, a uniquely medieval model of religion. The notion that a theologian would argue that compulsory and thus potentially insincere participation in the rituals of the Christian community might nevertheless yield eschatological fruit seems radically contradictory.⁴ Privileging the role of public ritual while marginalizing or disregarding the importance of private piety and individual agency makes sense today only as superstition or strategy: either Augustine and his medieval heirs were constrained by their inability to recognize the allegorical as opposed to metonymical relationship between human ritual and cosmological order, or their supposedly religious arguments obscure a host of political, social, and economic motivations. Yet as I demonstrate in the first half of this dissertation, the theological formalism first articulated in

² This quotation is from a letter to Augustinus Bonifacio, though the text is known as *De correctione donatistarum*, which is not included in the above collection of writings on the Donatists but is accessible in the *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 33, 804. The English translation is from Augustine, *The Works*, 499. “Cogite” and “compelle” are synonyms meaning to force or drive together, like a flock.

³ There have been a number of recent works on Paul. See Badiou, *Saint Paul*; Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*; Agamben, *The Time That Remains*.

⁴ Charles Taylor has argued that the decisive shift occurred with the Protestant Reformation and that later developments, ranging from Enlightenment Deism to modern atheism, are simply points on an arc of secularization that continues to shape how we think about religion. See Taylor’s much discussed, *A Secular Age*. For arguments that Taylor’s and previous models of modern religion are too limited, see Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*; Asad, “Reading a Modern Classic,” 205-222; Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*; Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*.

the Christian context by Augustine as an apology for coercion and ritual efficacy eventually played a surprisingly central role in post-Tridentine, Catholic reform on the Iberian Peninsula; it is thus a mistake to presuppose that religion either over-determined medieval and early modern society or served merely as camouflage for other truly significant historical forces.⁵

Although most of the sources I use were written or copied on the Iberian Peninsula, the questions they raise and the problems they attempt to solve also concerned the rest of the early modern Hispanic World. Competing paradigms of evangelization in the late sixteenth century, for example, necessarily treated the conversion of *indios* and *Moriscos* as mutually defined.⁶ New World and Asian religion stretched the capacity of conventional, scholastic taxonomies of religious difference to a breaking point, necessitating a recalibration of the relationship between Christian orthodoxy and the various Thomist categories of unbelief. The debates over philology and linguistic difference that accompanied these theological discussions involved not only a consideration of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, a particularly Renaissance humanist triumvirate, but also reflection on the extraordinary linguistic diversity of the global Spanish empire.

In focusing on this period of imperial expansion after the official conclusion of the *reconquista* in 1492 but before the expulsion of the Moriscos in the early seventeenth century, a transitional moment in Iberian social, religious and political history, I align myself with those who argue that sixteenth century Iberian history should be considered in continuity with preceding centuries.⁷ Yet by examining how sixteenth-century Iberian reformers and their royal and Inquisitorial opponents alike invoked and transformed medieval theological arguments and analytical methods, I present the familiar case for medieval-early modern continuity in a different light. I contend that the arguments and analytical methods conventionally associated with religious persecution and social violence beginning with the various medieval Inquisitions in the twelfth century and continuing through the early modern Spanish Inquisition, also served more moderate, critical ends in the sixteenth century. I call this project of peaceful assimilation and willingness to endure, at least temporarily, the presence of minority communities and religious diversity a “politics of *convivencia*.” This politics of *convivencia* is more restricted than modern conceptions of tolerance and it is not conditioned by the idea, which still structures scholarship on medieval Iberia, that criticisms of religious violence and arguments for social reform necessarily privilege common aesthetic and political categories over taxonomies of ecumenical difference.⁸ Rather, an early modern

⁵ For a well-known take on the inescapability of religion in the early modern period, see Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI siècle*, and for the opposite argument that a popular celebration of religious relativity not only existed in the early modern period but represents an important chapter in the history of tolerance, see Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved*.

⁶ For two transatlantic accounts of conversion, evangelization, and representation, see Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*; García-Arenal, “Moriscos e Indios,” 153-176.

⁷ On the problem of periodization, see Grazia, “The Modern Divide: From Either Side,” 453-467, and Fuchs, “1492 and the Cleaving of Hispanism,” 493-510, both in a recent special edition of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* entitled “Medieval/Renaissance: After Periodization.”

⁸ For a variety of different accounts of *convivencia*, see Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*; Menocal, *The Ornament of the World*; Martinez, *La convivencia en la España del siglo XIII*; Nirenberg, Mann, Glick, and Dodds, eds., *Communities of Violence; Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*. Scholarship on *convivencia* overlaps with celebratory histories of

Iberian politics of *convivencia* rested upon the very scholastic categories of alterity and definitions of Christian orthodoxy associated with Inquisitorial discipline and medieval religiosity.⁹ Early modern reformers paradoxically employed these medieval models to emphasize shared narratives and common rituals across traditional ecumenical and linguistic boundaries.

Proponents of Inquisitorial discipline and scholastic pedagogy offered a surprisingly frank acknowledgement of the unstable relationship between public ritual and private faith.¹⁰ Some early modern Iberian scholars, drawing on these Inquisitorial and scholastic models, developed an Augustinian religious formalism that presented as irrelevant of the various forms of New Christian dissimulation, cultural miscommunication, and inconsistent translation that had for decades troubled evangelizers in both the New and Old Worlds. They deemphasized the importance of faith, sincerity, and resistance in their redefinitions of orthodox Christianity, in many cases openly acknowledging the impossibility, in any case, of identifying and controlling these private referents that ritual and cultural habit may just as well obscure as represent. Properly observed Christian ritual, they argued, creates an orthodox faith only over time, and so some deviation in belief is unproblematic and is, in fact, a natural part of a uniquely Christian teleology. The definition of religion as practice is one reasoned theological response to the limits of accessing another's private religious experience, and it was a response with profound intellectual weight among both Inquisitors and reformers in post-Tridentine Spain.

Language, no less than ritual, can both conceal and represent, and the epistemological limitations acknowledged during these theological discussions about reading ritual paralleled the challenges of interpretation and translation more generally.¹¹ The second half of the dissertation thus moves from an examination of debate over the effect of ritual to an analysis of dispute over the nature of language. Just as a theology based on obligatory practice and ritual efficacy was an attempt to mitigate the structural inaccessibility of another's religious experience, the focus on linguistic form, the material conditions of religious and literary texts, and the importance of usage rather than meaning in language pedagogy were all philological attempts to address the same epistemological conundrum: If the meanings of words, like the motivations for ritual, are either constitutively unstable or inaccessible, how is it possible to

tolerance. See, for example, Nederman, *Worlds of difference*; Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration*; Laursen and Nederman, Eds., *Beyond the Persecuting Society*.

⁹ Similarly critical notions of tolerance include Brown, *Regulating Aversion*; MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*.

¹⁰ I am thinking of the various fourteenth-century guides to Inquisitors, such as Nicolas Eimeric's *Directorium inquisitorum*, Bernard Gui's *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, and a fifteenth-century Inquisitorial lexicon known as the *Repertorium inquisitorum*. There are many important studies on the Spanish Inquisition. For example, see Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*; Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*. For an introduction to scholastic pedagogy, see Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au moyen âge*.

¹¹ Helpful accounts of the history of language scholarship include Lepschy and Davies, *History of Linguistics*; Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics*; Olender, *Les langues du paradis*; Droixhe, *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire (1600-1800)*; Heller-Roazen, *Echolalia*; Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*. On Golden Age Spain specifically, see Breva-Claramonte, *Sanctius's Theory of Language*; Bahner, *La lingüística española del siglo de oro*.

know that communication (or conversion) has been successful? The Protestant response to this problem of an unstable relationship between ritual and piety, which was in essence to privilege the latter, produced great theological unease in Rome.¹² Similarly, the new humanist strategies of self-fashioning and textual interpretation, important elements of the profound transformation of European religion during this period, were cause for scholastic concern. Catholic theologians emphasized the efficacy of orthodox ritual and language, while Protestant reformers and humanist innovators alike sought to explode this monopoly on form by privileging metaphorical meanings and individual motivations.

Although modern linguists have traced the origins of their field to an early modern philology increasingly independent of theology, I argue not only that the epistemological conditions of theology and philology were parallel in the sixteenth century, but also that this is no cause for secular lament. For example, an important element of the process of evangelization and conversion was language pedagogy, for which the Jesuits, who famously welcomed New Christians in the sixteenth century, became widely respected.¹³ They implemented a system of language education based upon the presumption that engagement and usage would produce language proficiency. In pursuing this “target language only” model, as second-language instructors would now say, the Jesuits conceded that the meanings of the words themselves might initially remain vague in the minds of new speakers of Spanish, students of Hebrew, or, to underscore the essential link between philology and theology, participants in mass. Echoing the stance underpinning Augustine’s apology for coercion and ritual efficacy, Jesuit techniques of evangelization and language pedagogy implied a conviction that daily practice would produce both Christian habits of thought and linguistic aptitude. Shared philological and theological presuppositions shaped competing pedagogies of language.

Translation, like language acquisition, raised similar questions that were at once philological and theological. By examining the conventions of translation from Arabic and Hebrew to Latin and Spanish in sixteenth-century Iberia, I demonstrate that papal scholars and Iberian churchmen were convinced that editorial skill coupled with philological knowledge, however over-determined by convention and institutional power, might still produce sacred text. In other words, translating some Arabic or Hebrew texts with clear Christian theological implications into an orthodox tongue was as important as the Tridentine refusal to translate the New Testament into the European vernaculars.¹⁴ The formal linguistic and material features of holy text were no less essential for being the new work of early modern interpreters as opposed to being the labor of canonical figures such as Saint Jerome, translator of the Vulgate, for instance. The question of translation from Arabic specifically and the issue of Morisco language and culture more generally were part of a debate about assimilation and expulsion, and just as the apparently medieval methods and language of theological formalism came to serve reformist ends, so too did a parallel philological formalism buttress arguments against Morisco expulsion in the Old World and conquistador

¹² Bossy, *Christianity in the West*. Ramie Targoff has recently challenged this conventional dichotomy in *Common Prayer*.

¹³ The classic study of Jesuit education remains useful: Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education*.

¹⁴ On the history Iberian scholarship on Arabic and Hebrew see, Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship*; Burman, *Reading the Qur’ān in Latin Christendom*; López Baralt and Iversen, *A zaga de tu huella*; Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500-1614*.

violence elsewhere in the Hispanic empire.¹⁵ The insistence that philological method, like religious ritual, had eschatological consequences played an important role in discussion about imperial policy. Even though the epistemological presuppositions underpinning these theological and philological practices seem, in hindsight, to be markers of the medieval, they produced a politics of *convivencia* with which we too narrowly associate an emergent secular modernity.

Audience and Agency

Hispanists have often looked beyond the Peninsula to trace the genealogy of religious reform, political criticism, and literary practices in the early modern period.¹⁶ Recent scholarship on religion has focused on the history of Iberian *erasmismo* or on the resistance of minority religious communities, such as the Moriscos or the *conversos*, to hegemonic forms of Old Christian orthodoxy. The collapse of medieval Iberian *convivencia*, so they say, led to an enduring and exceptional theological close-mindedness disrupted only by imported reformist criticisms or internal religious dissidents. For Marcel Bataillon, tracing the influence of Erasmus on what we would now call progressive trends in Iberian intellectual culture reaffirms the narrative of a still-medieval sixteenth-century Spain whose incorporation into a European early modernity only occurred through contact with humanist innovation to the north.¹⁷ Mary Elizabeth Perry and other scholars of minority crypto-religion in sixteenth-century Iberia, on the other hand, frame the gap between the public, religious practice disempowered groups were forced to perform and the syncretic or heretical beliefs to which they nonetheless remained privately dedicated as a kind of political defiance.¹⁸ Private piety becomes a form of resistance to imperial power and public religious norms. Morisco motivations are hidden yet essential. Scholarly *erasmistas* and popular heterodox groups are the Peninsular moderns who reinforce the supposed anachronism of a sixteenth-century Iberian scholasticism and an Inquisitorial law that are in different ways committed to the importance of practice in the formation of religious subjects. There was, of course, a tension between traditionalists and reformers in early modern Iberia, yet both groups employed similarly conventional juridical and theological vocabulary.

Contemporary ritually-bound religious observance, such a Judaism defined by *halacha*, the rabbinic legal code, or an Islam determined by *shar'ia*, the Islamic ritual law, are also derisively labeled anachronistic, much like scholastic Iberia in historiography on the

¹⁵ For more on the legacy of medievalism, see Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition*, as well as his "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and the Genealogies of Critique," 1195-1227.

¹⁶ The debate about Arab culture and Iberian Christian identity is well known. See Américo Castro, *España en su historia*; Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*; Sánchez Albornoz, *España: un enigma histórico*; Asensio, *La España imaginada de Américo Castro*. In the literary sphere, the importance of Italian culture on Renaissance Spain is indisputable. See, for example, Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch*.

¹⁷ Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*; Asensio, *El erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines*. More recent takes in the same vein include, Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos*; Pérez, Ed., *Epaña y América en una perspectiva humanista: homenaje a Marcel Bataillon*.

¹⁸ Perry, *The Handless Maiden*; See also Villanueva, *El problema morisco*; Galmés de Fuentes, *Los Moriscos (desde su misma orilla)*; Kamen, "Toleration and Dissent in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 3-23; Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*.

early modern period.¹⁹ Secular theories of “practice,” on the other hand, now carry analytical weight across a range of disciplines. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, has studied the relationship between class identity and aesthetic or scholarly practice, drawing the previously religious concept of self-definition through ritual into the secular sphere.²⁰ The content of aesthetic judgments and scholarly inquiry are most important, Bourdieu argues, not because they advance knowledge but rather because they mark the author as part of a particular intellectual and social community. Interpretation itself becomes a ritual that defines individual and collective identity. Michel de Certeau is also attentive to the social conditions of knowledge, but he is primarily concerned with the possibility of disrupting or opposing these conditions.²¹ He wants to salvage some essence of personal agency from the modern political and economic forces that seem to obliterate all individual subjectivity. However limited and contingent, “everyday” practices such as walking through the city or cooking a meal become forms of political resistance for de Certeau, who insists that there is room for a spontaneity that exceeds the forces of state or social coercion. Anthropologists of religion, such as Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, and Webb Keane, have suggested that the resistance de Certeau recuperates, no less than the “habitus” Bourdieu identifies and interrogates, do not tell the whole story, which entails a more historical and theological account of the relationship between agency and practice.²² As these anthropologists of religion have demonstrated, theology has long provided the vocabulary for theorizing this relationship. Participating in the practices controlled and formulated by theologians can in certain contexts be just as potent a form of agency as strategically engaging in the secular everyday. A false conflict between progressive political action or scholarship, on the one hand, and religious discipline, on the other hand, has both buttressed the familiar “meta-narrative of progress” and obscured the critical promise of theological reason.

My dissertation thus addresses two different audiences: specialists in medieval and early modern Iberian culture and history, and the anthropologists, historians, and literary critics engaged in debate about contemporary secularism. I demonstrate both that the questions and methods of scholars like Asad are useful for revising established narratives about religious reform, New Christian assimilation, and evangelization in the early modern Hispanic world, and that investigating the Iberian example can help address a significant gap in this interdisciplinary scholarship on secularism, which has tended to focus on either medieval ritual or the contemporary politics of religious practice. Because discussions about the history of Iberian religious violence have often centered on the role of theologians as both

¹⁹ In another context, Dipesh Chakrabarty has described a parallel sense of anachronism as the “waiting room of history.” See his *Provincializing Europe*, 3-23. The famous dispute between Bernard Lewis and Edward Said over Europe and the Orient is also relevant here, as is Richard Bulliet’s proposal for rethinking the history of religion and its relationship with contemporary politics. See Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*.

²⁰ Bourdieu, *La distinction*, as well as “Part I: The Field of Cultural Production,” in *The Field of Cultural Production*, 1-141.

²¹ De Certeau, *L’Invention du quotidien: Arts de faire*. I have also consulted Rendall’s English translation, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

²² Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*; Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*; Keane, *Christian Moderns*. For a review of this and related scholarship in religious studies, see Ferrer and Sherman, “The Participatory Turn” in *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies*, 1-78.

imperial apologists and political critics, the Iberian example helps historicize definitions of religion and chart the dynamic relationship between the religious and secular spheres in both the modern and early modern worlds. Moreover, Hispanists and other scholars of the medieval and early modern period have long argued that Iberia, with its medieval golden age and seemingly archaic early modernity, is different from the rest of Europe.²³ Even though I take issue with the way both apologists for and critics of imperial, Christian Spain have portrayed this difference, I agree that early modern Iberia is different. Yet it is this difference—the surprisingly progressive use of medieval theological and juridical models and the elaboration of religious reform through a debate about assimilation—that makes early modern Iberia a productive site for theoretical inquiry.

Methodology as a Problem of Similitude

By investigating how theologians challenged established meanings of the words, “Christian,” “faith,” “ritual,” and “heresy,” and by exploring how scholars of language wrestled with the unequal authority of linguistic history, theological doctrine, and first-hand experience, I historicize the interpretive strategies and political agendas that shaped and motivated the negotiation of similitude.²⁴ Contemporary scholars in many ways still live with the over-arching set of controversies highlighted by humanist and scholastic methods for negotiating similitude, and so my own methodology reflects this central tension running through my sources and this period. In each chapter I balance a New Historicist approach to reading with an inquiry into form, process, and material culture, thus echoing competing humanist and scholastic ways of arguing, standards of evidence, and views on nature and law. Like the Salamancan scholastics, I am interested in arguments about how language and ritual produce rather than presuppose individual agency, but like the Renaissance humanists, I am also concerned with unpacking shifting webs of representation.

Scholastics and humanists read differently in part because of divergent ideas about the relationship between signs and referents. They have different strategies for recuperating or producing similitude. Because words and rituals, according to the scholastics, have the power to effect change directly through repetition and habit, negotiating the boundaries between religions involved defining practices of assimilation [*assimilatio*] while at the same time marginalizing the famous early modern interpretive problem of dissimulation [Lat. *dissimulatio*; Ar. *taqiyya*].²⁵ When discrete religious traditions share a common past, practice

²³ For a review of this stance, see Walter Cohen, “The Uniqueness of Spain,” in *Echoes and Inscriptions*, 17-29.

²⁴ “Similitude,” like “resemblance” and “mimesis,” is an important concept for thinking about the early modern period in general and the colonial encounters specifically. I have found Michael Taussig’s account of how Europeans and New World indigenous peoples imitated each other during their first encounters particularly helpful. His playful criticism of contemporary critical trends in the introductory “Report to the Academy” also raises some of the issues that I pursue here. See Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*. Other classic works dealing with similitude in various contexts include, Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*; Auerbach, *Mimesis*.

²⁵ *Taqiyya*, an important theological term in early modern Iberia, referred to the notion that in certain situations where Muslims were forced to participate in non-Muslim practices, simply maintaining a private Islamic faith sufficed as a marker of orthodoxy. There was an early modern debate over whether in such instances Iberian Muslims were obligated to move to territory under Islamic political

parallel rituals, or subscribe to analogous beliefs, determining these boundaries becomes a debate over the acceptable theological limits of similitude within and across different religious communities. Renaissance humanists too, of course, recognized the power of repetition in the formation of scholarly identity and religious subjectivity. For example, Antonio de Guevara, Erasmus, and Montaigne recuperated the classical rhetorical and pedagogical traditions, which emphasized imitation and practice in writing and education.²⁶ Yet these humanists were engaged in a constant process of self-fashioning that required regulating and manipulating the gap between appearance and reality, as Stephen Greenblatt has famously argued.²⁷ The relationship between hidden referents and observable signs, whether words on the page, performance at court, or ritual in Church, was unstable. Humanists argued that a capacity for manipulating and interpreting signs, for trading in an economy of allegory [*similitudo*], made them particularly well-suited gatekeepers of hidden meanings and motivations. Modern literary strategies of interpretation, New Historicism included, have grown out of this humanist claim to a hermeneutic monopoly, while recent interdisciplinary work on material culture and disciplinary practice resonates with medieval and early modern scholasticism.

The Latin link between *assimilatio*, *dissimulatio*, and *similitudo* highlights that scholarly interpretive practices and social structures are mutually determined. In Arabic too, the root for the word “similitude” includes meanings that are particular to Qur’ānic commentary (“similar” or “ambiguous” Qur’ānic verses that demand interpretation, *mutashābihāt*), Arabic poetics (“simile” or “parable,” *tashbīh*), and social hierarchy (“to be equal to one another,” *tashābaha*). Although scholastic and humanist authors alike often highlighted the distinctions between their communities and interpretive paradigms as part of their respective claims to scholarly and political authority, the etymology of similitude suggests common conditions of religious, literary, and anthropological knowledge.²⁸ A clear vector from Renaissance humanism to the contemporary humanities privileges the literary debates about similitude at the expense of the theological and social ones. By using the tools of both scholastics and humanists to investigate how sixteenth-century authors negotiated similitude, I suggest a wider set of possible early modern models for contemporary scholarship.

control, where they could both believe and practice, or whether they could freely remain on the Iberian Peninsula, for example, and by practicing *taqiyya* still be considered orthodox Muslims even after superficially converting to Christianity. Chapter Two will treat this issue in more depth. For an introduction to *taqiyya*, see “dissimulation,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*; Monroe, “A Curious Morisco Appeal,” 281-303; Barletta, *Covert Gestures*, xxviii-xxix. For a more general take, see Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy*.

²⁶ In this regard, on the importance concepts such as “copia” and “imitatio,” see Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*.

²⁷ For a classic introduction to Renaissance pedagogy, see Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*. See also Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*.

²⁸ Many modern specialists have studied the historical overlaps between scholasticism and humanism, regardless of how the early modern scholars themselves underscored the differences. See Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue*; Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*; Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*; Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible*.

Finally, it is important not to forget that similitude is both an opportunity and a hazard. In a section on evangelization and language in *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (1575), a source text for authors ranging from Miguel de Cervantes to Noam Chomsky, the doctor and humanist Juan Huarte presents a parable about the danger of similitude in order to underscore the importance of understanding:

Los engaños, dice Platón, que nunca acontecen en las cosas disímiles y muy diferentes, sino cuando ocurren muchas que tienen gran similitud. Porque si a una vista perspicaz le pusiésemos delante un poco de sal, azúcar, harina y cal, todo molido y cernido y cada cosa por sí ¿qué haría un hombre que careciese de gusto si con los ojos hubiese de conocer cada polvo de éstos sin errar, diciendo “esto es sal,” “esto, azúcar,” “esto, harina” y “esto, cal”? Yo no dudo sino que se engañaría, por la gran similitud que entre sí tienen estas cosas. Pero si un montón fuese de trigo, otro de cebada, otro de paja, otro de tierra y otro de piedra, cierto es que no se engañaría en poner nombre a cada montón aunque tuviese poca vista, por ser cada uno de tan varia figura. Lo mismo vemos que acontece cada día en los sentidos y espíritus que dan los teólogos a la divina Escritura: que mirados dos o tres, a la primera muestra todos tienen apariencia de católicos y que consueñan bien con la letra, y realmente no lo son ni quiso el Espíritu Santo decir aquello.²⁹

[Deceptions, Plato says, never occur with things that are dissimilar and very different, but when there are many things with great similitude. Because if before a perceptive eye we put a bit of salt, sugar, flour, and lime, all ground, sifted and separated, what would a man lacking taste do if with his eyes he had to recognize each of these powders without error, saying “this is salt,” “this, sugar,” “this, flour,” and “this, lime”? I have no doubt that he would err on account of the great similarity that these things have between them. But if one of the piles were wheat, another barley, another hay, another earth, and another stone, it is certain that he would not err in naming each pile even if he were partially blind, since each is of such a different shape. We see the same thing happen each day in the meanings and spirits that the theologians give to the holy Gospels: looking at two or three, at first glance they all seem Catholic and conform well to the letter, but in fact they are not Catholic, and the Holy Spirit never wanted to say such a thing.]

For Huarte, Plato’s parable serves as a warning against deceptive interpreters whose readings of holy text confuse the boundaries of heresy and orthodoxy precisely because they approximate established doctrine. How is it possible, Huarte asks, to recognize the relative truth of different interpretations of holy text? To distinguish effective ritual from performed mockery? To identify allegory and trace citations amidst a sea of possible metaphors and references? To know that we have not misread the evidence, mistaken salt for sugar, so to speak? Though Huarte, having identified the central challenge of reading and interpreting, believes that the human faculty of understanding, *ingenio* or *entendimiento*, is what makes

²⁹ Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, vol. 2, 220. See also Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, 12; Torre, *Ideas lingüísticas y literarias del doctor Huarte*.

accurate judgment and stable knowledge possible, some of his contemporaries were not so sure. They would, undoubtedly, have found the parable itself flawed: it was possible to test whether a mystery powder was salt, sugar, flour, or lime by tasting it, but most judgments cannot be so easily vetted. In most cases, the very vocabulary of the conclusion and terms of the reasoning—the definitions of orthodoxy and heresy, the boundaries between languages and cultures, the meaning of holy or literary texts—shift over time. Would it be possible to distinguish between these ingredients if our sense of taste were variable and if the natures of the ingredients themselves were subject to negotiation?

Refusing, or at least claiming to refuse, the importance of this narrow gap marking religious, cultural, and linguistic differences made it necessary to negotiate the limits of similitude. Given the impossibility of a man without the sense of taste to distinguish among salt, sugar, flour and lime, would it not be more honest for this man to posit a common category, such as white powder, that he can recognize with certainty? It is perhaps paradoxical or polemical to suggest that by exposing or underscoring similarities across religion and language, early modern Iberian authors were acknowledging the limits of their capacity to know. This era was, after all, characterized by an obsession with discovering and eliminating heterodoxy and cultural diversity; it was an age of caste, hierarchy. Yet this is precisely why early modern Spain offers a rich, complex point of departure for formulating a less exclusionary paradigm for defining religion and a more sophisticated history of modern secularism. The skeptical sense that early modern Spain may be ill suited to this theorization of innovative models of similitude is part of the analytical and historical problem that I address.

Material Culture and Close Reading

Tracing the relationship between medieval theological and juridical models and an early modern politics of *convivencia* entails examining not only the long tradition of Iberian Thomism, for which the Universidad de Salamanca became famous in the sixteenth century, but also a host of other sources, including humanist essays, philological studies, teaching grammars, and both apocryphal and canonical holy text. These texts were written in Spanish, Latin, French, Arabic, and Hebrew, with some documents composed in a mixture of two or three of these languages, thus suggesting an early modern audience that moved, with varying degrees of fluency, among overlapping communities.³⁰ Yet there was debate even in the early modern period over the boundaries between these various forms and their relative claims to authority and authenticity. I am attentive to metaphor and language, but I also investigate these texts' complex material and manuscript histories. Paleography and codicology have shaped the theoretical and political questions that motivate my research. By following the circulating manuscript into the age of print, as Fernando Bouza Álvarez has proposed, it becomes ever more difficult to conceive of reading and interpreting in isolation from the constant, often communal processes of textual production, copying, and editing.³¹ Writing and

³⁰ The notion of “textual community” is Brian Stock’s. See his *Listening for the Text*, 23. See also Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, 43-88.

³¹ Bouza Álvarez, *Corre manuscrito*. My thinking about material culture has also been shaped by Chartier, *Inscrire et effacer*; McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*; Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*; Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology*.

reading become forms of participation not unlike a more narrowly defined conception of religious ritual.

The material history of the sources examined in Chapter One, including texts by Bartolomé de Las Casas and his interlocutor at Valladolid, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, as well as Francisco de Vitoria's commentary on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologica*, the *Scholia secunda secundae*, provides evidence for my argument that the crisis of New World authority reinvigorated various models of religious and scholarly practice that we have erroneously come to see as uniquely medieval. By opening my study of Iberian religion and culture with these debates about the New World, I invert the conventional story of evangelical and political exemplarity, which presupposes that the conquest and conversion of Granada's Muslims served as a model for expansion in the Americas. Describing the *conquista* as an extension of the *reconquista* may have been astute rhetoric for writers ranging from Columbus to contemporary critics of imperial and religious violence, but by the end of the sixteenth century it was debate about the legitimacy of the *conquista* that provided the paradigm for addressing the still unresolved question of Peninsular Islam and minority heterodoxy.

Chapter Two focuses on the debate over Morisco assimilation and expulsion, highlighting the importance not only of the Thomist vocabulary introduced in the first chapter, but also the paradoxical role that medieval juridical models, including Alfonso X *el sabio*'s *Siete partidas*, Nicola Eimeric's *Directorium inquisitorum*, and a series of other Inquisitorial guides and dictionaries served for proponents of *accommodatio* in the process of Morisco evangelization and religious reform. Late sixteenth-century reformers, such as the Morisco Jesuit Ignacio de Las Casas and humanist royal chronicler Pedro de Valencia, employed the rhetoric and arguments of this legal corpus in order to construct a criticism of Inquisitorial persecution and inept royal policy upon a foundation of obligatory Christian ritual. They cast the net of post-Tridentine obligation broadly, insisting that the coerced mass baptisms of the early sixteenth century bound not only recent converts, as the Inquisition had long maintained, but also the reformed clergy responsible for their education. By the end of the sixteenth century, Thomist debates over political and theological authority in the Americas had begun to serve as a model for integrating converted Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula, and questions about assimilation had become entangled with a wider reformist agenda.

The second half of the project shifts from theological debate over "grammars of faith," as Talal Asad has put it, to the theological stakes of reading and philology. Over the course of the 1590s, treasure hunters discovered a series of twenty-two Arabic texts falsely attributed to a first century Christian martyr in the Sacromonte hills behind the Albaicín neighborhood of Granada. Although Pope Innocent XI eventually declared these "lead books" forgeries at the end of the seventeenth century, scholars struggled for decades to translate and interpret the polysemous documents, which celebrated the Arabic language while emphasizing points of agreement between Christianity and Islam. By comparing the available early modern transcriptions of the original Arabic documents with the various Spanish or Latin translations and interpretations scattered throughout Madrid, Rome and London, I investigate in Chapter Three how linguistic knowledge and doctrinal orthodoxy shaped one another through this debate over the Sacromonte "plomos," as the lead books and Turpiana manuscript, a related discovery from the former minaret of the Granada's great mosque, became known. The

Archbishop of Granada Pedro de Castro, Granadan jurist Gregorio López de Madera, and other defenders of the texts found them useful for the consolidation and production of local power, wealth, and prestige. Like Ignacio de Las Casas, Pedro de Valencia, and famous humanists Juan Bautista Pérez and Benito Arias Montano, modern historians have concentrated on exposing the “plomos” as forgeries.⁶ This chapter focuses less on the fact of forgery than upon the interpretive processes and material history that made the unveiling of forgery necessary in the first place. Only through an audacious process of formal and philological transformation could the strangeness of the Arabic paleography and the ambiguity of the theological content disappear from the lead books.

A tension between what we would now call religious and secular authority influenced ways of reading the Sacromonte texts. Gregorio López de Madera and Bernardo de Aldrete, author of a history of the Spanish language entitled, *Del principio y origen de la lengua castellana, ò Romance, que hoy se usa en España* (1606), clashed over the conventions of philological inquiry in part because their contrasting positions on language implied opposing judgments not only about the lead books, but also the shared features of diverse tongues and the relationship between religious and linguistic history. The final chapter treats these broader issues by examining how a growing European awareness of linguistic diversity in Asia, the Americas, and the Mediterranean, forced early modern scholars to think both about the changing relationships among languages over time and the universal human capacity for language in general. To preempt the criticisms of their various co-religionists, who thought that comparative philological research would lead to heresy, medieval Arabic and Hebrew grammarians, such as Ibn Barūn and David Kimhi, as well as Jesuit philologists and other evangelizers from the early modern period, argued in different ways that language study should be radically formal rather than content-based. This pedagogical approach and theoretical stance, attacked as anti-philosophical and heretical by the Jansenists, buttressed the Jesuit accommodationist approach to evangelization in China, which emphasized participation while permitting some degree of doctrinal flexibility. I argue that this descriptive, formal philology practiced by not only by the Jesuits, but also by scholars ranging from the Nahuatl grammarian Andrés de Olmos to the humanist Juan de Valdés, paralleled the Thomists’ views on Christian ritual and community.

In his Latin grammar, *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae*, Francisco Sánchez de Las Brozas struggled with this tension between proscriptive, descriptive, and philosophical approaches to philology. By showing how Francisco Sánchez’s theorization of linguistic universalism was in fact a strategy of close reading rather than a stable and authoritative explanation of grammatical rules and semantic meaning, I conclude by returning to the series of questions that early modern theologians and philologists alike debated endlessly and that have motivated this project as a whole: How does participation in scholarly communities produce meaning, and what is the difference between this meaning that emerges from participation and a more conventional concept of meaning, which skilled readers excavate and elucidate. In theological terms, is ritual a sign of faith or is faith a product of ritual? Is it possible to distinguish between signs that produce effects and signs that represent? Differing responses to these and related questions produced opposing paradigms of assimilation and reform in sixteenth-century Iberia, and they continue to shape both how we write the history of early modern Europe and study religious experience.

CHAPTER ONE

At the Limit of Faith: Scholastic Method and Evangelization in the New World

The first section of Peter Lombard's *Sententiarum libri IV*, the scholastic text upon which theology students from the late twelfth to mid sixteenth century honed their interpretive skills, opens by establishing a distinction between things and signs. Citing the second book of *De doctrina christiana*, Saint Augustine's guide to reading, Lombard introduces this dichotomy between things and signs only then to follow his predecessor in further differentiation. Some signs, such as the sacraments, not only signify but also "hold something else" [ad significandum aliquid adhibentur]. "Therefore," writes Lombard, still quoting Augustine, "every sign is also some thing" [omne igitur signum etiam res aliqua est].³² These initial distinctions, a term that refers both to the argumentative method and the division of chapters, outline the organization of Lombard's project as a whole. They serve as a kind of prose index. But even at the conclusion of the first book, Lombard continues to raise ever more precise conditions and further distinctions. Certainly "there is some difference," Lombard frequently contends, between types of faith, pious individuals, levels of knowledge, and, indeed, aspects of the sacraments.³³ To read, Lombard demonstrates to his student audience, is to formulate distinctions.

The neophytes to whom *Sententiarum libri IV* were addressed must have wondered where these distinctions eventually lead. What conclusion or content, what *sententia*, does this dialectical method produce? But to focus only on the goal of interpretation is to miss the importance of scholastic commentary itself as a process that Lombard was instrumental in shaping. Medieval theology, Alain Boureau has argued, was a "machine for producing divisions."³⁴ Learning to participate in Lombard's reading machine defined the theologian as a scholar. The division and subdivision of the subject material was a strategy of critical engagement—the foundation of scholastic *lectio*—but it was also a form of pedagogy that marked the boundaries of the scholastic community. Unlike previous monastic reading, which was more meditation than argumentation, scholastic readers performed their acts of critical distinction in the classroom.³⁵ Students copied down dictations, converting the complex and

³² Lombard, *Sententiarum*, book 1, dist. 1, chpt. 1. The English translation is from Lombard, *Sentences*. Latin versions of Augustine's texts are all also available on the *Patrologia Latina*, as well as the www.corpusthomicum.org. For more on Lombard and this section of the *Sentences*, see Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 59-61.

³³ Lombard, *Sententiarum*, book 1, dist. 47, chpt. 5: "decimus, aliquam esse differentiam inter..."

³⁴ Boureau, *L'empire du livre*, 242.

³⁵ On this shift from monastic to scholastic *lectio*, see Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text*, 51-92. For helpful introductions to scholasticism, see Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne*; Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au*

carefully prepared glosses of their teachers into manuscripts for circulation and study. In turn, nearly every student of theology eventually submitted his own *lectio* of Lombard's *Sentences*, as the text, a compilation of patristic interpretations and Biblical citations, is known in English. This was a rite of passage, the beginning of a scholastic career.

In his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, Thomas Aquinas explains that distinctions are a tool of necessity, the result of man's imperfect ability to perceive relationships among different categories of things and fields of knowledge. While God's science "remains one, not becoming many, while it considers diverse things" [*ipsa unica manens, non multiplicata, diversarum rerum considerationem habet*], man's limited understanding is divided according to "genus and species" [*genere et specie*], and each field is studied "distinctly and in diverse books" [*distinctim et in diversis libris*].³⁶ Marking out differences, Aquinas contends, is a flawed but necessary way of approximating divine awareness of similitude and mutual contingency. The scholastic wager is that by revisiting well-trod theological texts, reassessing the analytical categories presumed by previous authors, and testing the boundaries separating theology, philosophy, rhetoric, and grammar, theologians might expand man's partial knowledge towards God's universal understanding. By integrating a test of theology's limits into scholastic method, the institution would reinvent itself at different historical moments. Critics have countered that by the late medieval and early modern period, scholastic methods and institutions had become academic in the utterly pejorative sense of the term: purposefully inaccessible, stultified, and increasingly irrelevant.³⁷

The early modern crisis of Spanish authority in the New World was, among other things, a referendum on scholastic method. To negotiate distinctions between kinds of faith, categories of non-Christians, and justifiable uses of imperial violence was also to present an argument for the power or poverty of glossing, to legitimize or undermine the authority of theologians and their distinctions. Yet the stakes were higher still. Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Bartolomé de Las Casas, and others argued that just as the pedagogical rituals of reading produce scholastics, participation in the practices of the Christian community produces Christians. Thus stated, this may seem to be a classic example of scholastic sophistry, a self-evident and redundant point. But in the centuries since the Protestant Reformation, the primacy of practice has come to be seen as anachronistic rather than obvious. Scholars unveil textual meanings; this goal motivates the practice of glossing, not *visa versa*. In a parallel way, evangelizers instill faith; this personal piety inspires participation in religious ritual. We judge an unconvinced or unmotivated participant in these respective practices to be a hypocrite, and we mistakenly presume that in the medieval and early modern periods he or she would have been, without controversy, a heretic. The Salamanca theologians unsettle the dichotomies between private faith and public ritual,

moyen âge; Rosier-Catach, *La parole efficace*. On the pedagogical and epistemological stakes of learning to "do *doctrina*" rather than to communicate its meaning, see Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things*, 9.

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri*, quaestio 1, art. 2. On division and distinction as part of scholastic method, see Charland, *Ars Praedicandi*, 150-51.

³⁷ Echoing the early modern criticisms of Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther, Le Goff calls late scholasticism "flamboyant" for its performative aspect. See Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au moyen âge*, 92.

between interpreting meanings and practicing commentary, between orthodoxy and heresy.³⁸ They question the role of individual agency and underscore the importance of communal conventions, drawing parallels between the scholarly markers of theologians and the social indicators of Christians more broadly.

Vitoria and his students defended the dialectical method defining their institutional authority and scholarly identities by proposing distinctions among different kinds of faith. The definitions of faith examined in this chapter form part of an effort to interrogate the justice of conquistador violence and affirm the humanity of New World indigenous peoples, but they also entail a criticism of a particularly *erasmista* form of epistemological hubris. Many evangelizers, from Hernando de Talavera in Granada to Juan Zumárraga in New Spain and José de Acosta in Peru, attempted to know and control that which potential or recent converts to Christianity believed. They saw themselves as shepherding souls across the line from false to true faith, as cultivating Christian piety amongst an expanding and sometimes ill-defined flock.³⁹ The authors examined here conceived of conversion and defined religion differently. Given the variable nature of faith, along with the complex challenge of accessing and documenting the faith of others, better, they argued, to focus on how perceptions of others' faiths take shape. Better to engage scholastic paradigms for interrogating Christian evangelical presuppositions. Better to focus on the conditions that shape a constantly changing faith than upon the elusive thing itself. Better, in sum, to treat evangelization as a stage of scholastic gloss. The meanings of the conversions, like the categories of Thomist inquiry, may be multiple, both contingent upon the evangelizer and changing over time. On the other hand, the forms of participation and communal conventions would, the scholastics believed, remain stable. Scholastic *lectio*, the basis of scholarly self-definition, also provides a model for defining Christians. Distinction paradoxically leads both to an approximation of universal, divine knowledge and to a universally shared Christianity.

According to the medieval theologian Peter Cantor (d. 1197), developing the skills of *lectio* was only the first step in a three-part pedagogical process for, literally, “the exercise of sacred texts” [exercitium sacrae Scripturae].⁴⁰ Cantor argued that *disputatio*, the public discussion of questions arising from difficult passages, and *praedicatio*, teaching by preaching, followed learning to read. In response to scholars and clergy outside the university, this final stage of scholastic formation and critical engagement presents reading as a universal, worldly process. Honed through debate and dispute, commentary should produce an awareness of similitude that ever more closely mirrors divine understanding, but it must also produce more Christians. Framing their own institutional methods and commitments in these cosmological terms, Vitoria and Las Casas bound up the preservation of their authority with a reconceived model of evangelization and imperial expansion. In the famous Valladolid debate (1550-51) between Las Casas and his humanist interlocutor, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Las Casas presented his argument for the relevancy of scholastic method even while insisting upon the importance of peaceful conquest. Though later generations of scholars, from José de Acosta to modern historians of international law, have agreed with many of the Salamanca

³⁸ Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht distinguishes between interpretation and commentary, between meaning and presence. See Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology*, 42-47.

³⁹ For more on this “*erasmista*” model of Catholic evangelization, see Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*; Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*.

⁴⁰ Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum*, chpt. 1. See the *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 205, chpt. 1, column 25A.

criticisms of violence, there is still debate about the relative promise and shortcomings of religious thought for generating political criticism.⁴¹ This chapter’s goal is neither to celebrate the critical agenda of Vitoria and Las Casas nor to condemn their “ecclesiastical imperialism.”⁴² Rather, I argue that the crisis of New World authority reinvigorated certain models of religious and scholarly practice that we have come incorrectly to see as uniquely medieval. By examining Iberian discussions about conquest and evangelization through the lens of Cantor’s scholastic process—*lectio, disputatio, praedicatio*—I both explore this problem of periodization and introduce the Thomist language and methods that inform early modern debate about conversion and assimilation in both the New and Old Worlds.

Lectio: Sufficient Grace and Ethical Living

In his commentary on the second section of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologica*, Francisco de Vitoria makes the bold assertion that faith in Christ is not a precondition for grace.⁴³ Despite this innovative argument about the conditional legitimacy of non-Christian faith, Vitoria’s method remains within the confines of traditional scholastic inquiry. Except for the occasional classical source for emphasis, Vitoria’s citations in the *Scholia secunda secundae*, as the commentary became known, are uniformly biblical, patristic, or scholastic. He draws distinctions between types of faith and conditions for salvation by presenting his glosses in the familiar format of a series of lectures. Vitoria dictated these lectures to University of Salamanca theology students at the Monasterio de San Esteban over three courses during the 1534-35 academic year, repeating the performance at several points during his tenure at Salamanca.⁴⁴ Though no version of the class notes was published in his lifetime, because some of his most prominent students and colleagues continued to develop and revise the central tenants of his argument, versions of Vitoria’s gloss circulated in manuscript form and were widely known in the sixteenth century. Domingo de Soto, Melchor Cano, and others all grappled with Vitoria’s view of Christian and non-Christian faith.⁴⁵

Vitoria begins carefully and locally. Taking a baptized infant as his first exemplary case, he asks whether this child, upon suffering an early death, would achieve grace despite the fact that he had not yet developed the faculty of reason. Reason, as Aristotle and then Aquinas maintained, was a precondition for exercising one’s will, which in turn was necessary for a person to be faithful. Vitoria frames his affirmative answer to this introductory question as an attack on Luther, who of course claimed that salvation resulted from “faith

⁴¹ Acosta’s criticism is contained in his treatise on evangelization, *De procuranda indorum salute*. See also James Scott Brown, *The Spanish Origins of International Law*; Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth Century Spain*.

⁴² “Ecclesiastical imperialism” is Daniel Castro’s term. See Castro, *Another Face of Empire*. Famous apologists for Las Casas include Lewis Hanke and Gustavo Gutiérrez. For example, see Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice*; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *En busca de los pobres de Jesucristo*.

⁴³ Unless directly referring to manuscript versions, citations are from Francisco de Vitoria, *Comentarios a la Secunda secundae de Santo Tomás*. This passage is from *questio 2, art. 3*. English translations of Vitoria are my own. See also Urdáñez, “La necesidad de la fe explícita para salvarse,” 60-77.

⁴⁴ See Heredia’s Introduction in Vitoria, *Comentarios*, xxiv.

⁴⁵ For more on the “school of Salamanca,” see Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*; Bataillon, *Etudes sur Bartolomé de Las Casas*.

alone” [sola fide]. Luther, Vitoria mockingly argues, denies this Christian infant salvation simply for being too young to consciously exercise his will. Yet in the next step of his argument, Vitoria begins to approach Luther’s view on faith and, more importantly, he presupposes a flexible definition of what that faith itself might be.

The child, suggests Vitoria, is analogous to those unbelievers who have never heard of the gospel. Though these various uninformed non-Christians, argues Vitoria more explicitly in the *Relectiones theologicae*, another series of theology lectures, naturally possessed reason, it is unfair to assume that they could deduce the articles of Christian faith uninstructed. Nevertheless, they may still have come to live ethically without knowing Christ, which is sufficient cause for divine grace:

Qui nihil audit de fide, potest esse in gratia Dei, et gratia sufficit ad salutem. Sed illam potest ille habere sine fide, id est sine eo quod credat. Ergo fides et credere non est necessarium ad salutem. Antecedens patet. Veniat ille ad usum rationis qui nihil novit nisi per lumen naturale; proponat bene vivere. Jam ille erit in gratia, quia facit totum quod potest ad esse bonum et ad bene vivendum; et tamen non habet fidem, id est non credit. Probo, quia nihil cognoscit de articulis fidei. Item, nec potest cognoscere. Ergo credere non est necessarium ad salutem.⁴⁶

[He who has never heard about faith can be in God’s grace, and grace is sufficient for salvation. But this man can have this (grace) without faith, which is to say without believing. Therefore faith and believing are not necessary for salvation, which has been previously demonstrated. This man may come to the use of reason, he who never had any kind of knowledge but through natural light; he resolves to live well. He would now be in grace, because he does all that he can to be good and for good living; and nevertheless he does not have faith, which is to say he does not believe. The proof: he does not know anything about the articles of the faith. Neither it is possible for him to know. Therefore believing is not necessary for salvation.]

By highlighting a common capacity to “live well,” Vitoria defends the integrity of a fraught analytical category, the innocent non-believers. Unlike Mediterranean Muslims and expelled Iberian Jews, there is another classification of people who “have never heard of faith” and yet are not excluded from salvation. By employing their natural rationality to ethical ends, these uninformed non-believers provide evidence that knowledge of the articles of Christian faith need not be a condition for salvation. This argument, as Vitoria’s readers recognized, was fundamental for establishing the ontological status of the New World indigenous peoples as full humans, not only capable of rational thought and protected by established legal conventions, but also potentially able to enjoy the eternal rewards of the Christian community. Lombard, Aquinas, Bonaventure, and others all previously had raised similar questions about the definitions of and relationship between faith and ignorance. In Book III of the *Sentences*, for example, Lombard investigates the faith of the ancients and the

⁴⁶ Vitoria, *Comentarios*, 66.

uneducated.⁴⁷ “There is some measure of faith,” Lombard concludes, “without which salvation was never possible” [est autem quaedam fidei mensura, sine qua nunquam potuit esse salus], while at the same time affirming that “faith made progress with the passage of time, just as knowledge did” [fides quippe magna dicitur, cognitione, et articularum quantitate, vel constantia, et devotione].⁴⁸ According to Lombard, a teleological progression transforms faith through time, thus shifting the conditions for salvation. Navigating contradictory source texts, Lombard attempts to address the tension between the unfolding of world history and eschatological, Christian time. There are, he argues, necessary distinctions between different kinds of faith and types of faithful individuals, and these lines change over time and through education.

In his treatment of Lombard’s taxonomy of faiths, Aquinas reaches the conclusion that while the Christian community as a whole should not strive merely for the “implicit” faith of the ancients or uneducated, neither should this community demand of all the “explicit” faith of the pious and knowledgeable.⁴⁹ After insisting on the importance of faith even for natural knowledge and maintaining that certain articles of faith must be believed explicitly, Aquinas softens the argument by asking whether “all are equally bound to have explicit faith” [videtur quod aequaliter omnes teneantur ad habendum fidem explicitam]. Like Lombard, he concludes that the relationship between different kinds of faith, similar to a varying awareness of revelation, is structured by dynamic categories that change through the pedagogical process. Aquinas responds to his own question about the obligation of explicit faith in the negative. Just as “divine revelation reaches those of lower degree through those who are over them, in a certain order,” he argues, “so too, men of higher degree, whose business it is to teach others, are under obligation to have fuller knowledge of matters of faith, and to believe them more explicitly” [Revelatio autem divina ordine quodam ad inferiores pervenit per superiores...ita etiam superiores homines, ad quos pertinet alios erudire, tenentur habere plenioram notitiam de credendis et magis explicitate credere].⁵⁰ Aquinas describes a variable faith, one that transforms itself through knowledge and experience. Even theologians, he implies, begin their formation not on the podium or pulpit but in the lecture hall, when both their knowledge and faith are less “full” or explicit. Employing personal and pedagogical language rather than Lombard’s world historical rhetoric, Aquinas links the question of explicit faith to his own privileged role as a teacher. The very distinction between implicit and explicit faith, along with the various shifting categories of faith between these two extremes, establishes a parallel between scholastic education and evangelical practice. Progressing up

⁴⁷ Much of the scholastic discussion hinges upon the example of the Roman centurion Cornelius, whom St. Peter assured salvation before having confirmed the New Christian’s faith (*Acts 10*). Lombard and others cite this example to highlight the possibility that an individual might be granted salvation without yet having faith. Lombard, *Sententiarum*, book 3, dist. 25, chpt. 4: “De fide Cornelii.”

⁴⁸ Lombard, *Sententiarum*, book 3, dist. 25, chpt. 1; See Silano’s English translation in Lombard, *Sentences*, vol. 3, 106.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of “implicit” and “explicit” faith, see Boureau, *L’empire du livre*, 89-95. The Aquinas debate is located in *Summa*, Secunda secundæ, q. 2, a. 6. English translations of the *Summa* are available online at www.newadvent.org/summa.

⁵⁰ Aquinas, *Summa*, Secunda secundæ, q. 2 a. 6.

this hierarchy of faiths metaphorically marks the eschatological progress of Christianity no less than the catechism of recent converts or the formation of theologians.

This traditional distinction between different kinds of faiths underpins Vitoria's discussion of the necessity of faith to salvation. For Vitoria, as for Lombard and Aquinas, the hierarchy of implicit and explicit faiths justifies the role of the scholastic. Yet the explicit faith of the apparently pious may be but a performance of convenience, a form of heretical hypocrisy. Actions, like words, might obscure as much as they communicate. The theological, epistemological, and, we would now say, anthropological challenge of recognizing sincere faith parallels the challenge of reading texts. Can there be a stable relationship between thing and sign such that the hierarchy of faiths corresponds to a visible nomenclature of action, such that the meanings of texts are clearly accessible from the words on the page?⁵¹ The corpus of Inquisition manuals, examined in the next chapter, offers a resoundingly affirmative though problematic answer to this question. Vitoria and his predecessors' responses are more complex. By interrogating the limits and categories of Christian faith, the scholastics acknowledge that the thing to which the sign supposedly stably refers is, as we would now say, a construction.⁵² The dynamic nature of scholastic distinctions produces different faiths. By not explicitly treating the epistemological problem of dissimulation, the scholastics suggest that form—in terms of religious practice, modes of reading, and the education of scholars—is primary. As the next chapter will demonstrate, late sixteenth-century reformers deliberating on the issue of Morisco expulsion while constrained by an increasingly influential Inquisitorial rhetoric, put this scholastic perspective to innovative, moderate use. A critical legacy emerges from the Salamanca scholastics' institutional self-preservation.

Nevertheless, theological authority is also bound up with the pedagogical process of making explicit those faiths and meanings that were once merely implicit. Performing the struggle of interpretation cements the authority of the interpreter. Struggling, indeed, to more clearly define natural, ethical living [*bene vivere*] in Christian terms, Vitoria retreats from his apparently clear endorsement of salvation even for those who have never heard of Christianity. Protecting his own role as privileged glosser, he hedges his strong argument about ethical living with a further distinction, one that affirms the importance of both explicit and implicit markers of faith and demonstrates his skill in the production of distinctions: un-evangelized non-believers who believe implicitly may achieve grace, but eternal salvation remains beyond their grasp (“*quod sine fide potest iste venire ad gratium, sed non potest salvari*”).⁵³ By distinguishing between “sufficient grace” and “salvation,” Vitoria limits precisely the horizon of possibility he had previously challenged through his discussion of faith.

Or did he? Although much of De Soto and Cano's works were published in their lifetimes, the record of Vitoria's thought is available only via his students' notes, which circulated in manuscript form during the early modern period but which were first published only centuries later. The modern version of the *Scholia secunda secundae* is based on the

⁵¹ For other takes on reading gesture, see Jousse, *L'anthropologie du geste*; Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action*.

⁵² For an excellent account of the relationship between medieval exegesis and this post-structuralist language, see Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things*, 32.

⁵³ Vitoria, *Comentarios*, 66.

lecture notes of Salamanca bachelor Francisco Trigo, one of Vitoria's students. There are, however, a total of six manuscripts in different students' hands that contain part or all of Vitoria's Aquinas lectures.⁵⁴ Unsurprisingly, these various manuscripts exhibit marked differences in the exact wording of the passage cited above. For example, in Ms. 49 of the Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca, the student note-taker records Vitoria's distinction between attaining salvation and enjoying eternal life, but there is no mention of the fact that non-believers can obtain the former merely by "living well." Instead, the student simply records Vitoria's insistence that it is an "error to say that in order to attain glory faith is not necessary" [errore dicere que ad consequendam gloriam non requiritem fides].⁵⁵ Lombard and Aquinas, along with Vitoria's more immediate scholastic predecessor, Thomas Cajetan, all insist upon this uncontroversial point, but does this student copyist miss a secondary or tertiary distinction? Have the contingencies of the classroom and manuscript history prematurely interrupted Vitoria's *lectio*?

Even bachelor Trigo's fair copy, the source text that serves as the basis for the published citation above, provides contradictory and textually unstable evidence, thus complicating any clear reading of Vitoria's definitive opinion on this issue of implicit faith. The crucial phrase suggesting that an individual is able to attain salvation despite not being a faithful Christian—"et non habet fidem"—is twice repeated in this short passage of the manuscript. Vitoria himself is thought to have read and edited his students' transcriptions, and so it is possible that he is the one who crossed out the first appearance of the phrase in the manuscript, which is, as a result, absent from the published edition.⁵⁶ Or perhaps Trigo recognized a repetition from Vitoria's dictation, editing it out as he read over his own notes. The problem in the passage itself is one of emphasis: leaving this decisive phrase at the end of the sentence describing how a good living individual can be "in gratia," highlights the key, controversial point. This individual "does all that he can to be good and for good living," and "nevertheless he does not have faith, which is to say he does not believe" [et tamen no habet fidem, id est non credit].⁵⁷

The inconclusive material record may not clarify Vitoria's precise stance, but it does provide important evidence for the power of scholastic method as a force for redefining the nature of religion in the early modern period. The consequence and meaning of Vitoria's gloss is determined not simply by a close reading of the manuscript, which modern literary scholarship nevertheless requires, but in tandem with the reactions of his colleagues, students, and readers. In their successive *lectios*, Domingo de Soto, Melchor Cano, and others respond to Vitoria's argument that explicit Christian faith is, indeed, unnecessary for salvation. De Soto, for example, attempts to ease the force of Vitoria's claim by distinguishing between categories of faith and definitions of natural knowledge, purposefully limiting the scope of the strong version of Vitoria's assertion. He agrees with his predecessor that faith is a

⁵⁴ See Heredia's Introduction in Vitoria, *Comentarios*, xxiv.

⁵⁵ The passage is located in BUS Ms. 43, f. 26v, a volume proceeding from the Salamanca Colegio de Jesuitas. Pagden argues that in the later part of the sixteenth century the Jesuits adopted and developed the previous Dominican natural law positions. This is an important point because subsequent chapters will focus on Jesuit theological and philological models. See Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 60.

⁵⁶ BUS Ms. 43, f. 16r. The text is bound and contains a title page explaining bachelor Trigo's role in the production of Vitoria's *Scholia secunda secundae*.

⁵⁷ Vitoria, *Comentarios*, 66 (emphasis mine).

precondition for salvation, but he equates such faith with that which he imagines an unbeliever might reasonably be able to deduce about the cosmos on his own: “knowing that God exists and that his is the judge” [cognoscendum de Deo quod est et quod remunerator est].⁵⁸ Having established this single condition for salvation, de Soto then paradoxically claims that it is only possible to arrive at this natural knowledge of God with supernatural help. Contradicting Vitoria, de Soto thus insists upon a more rigid notion of necessity than his predecessor while defending a similarly flexible definition of faith. Cano, on the other hand, retreats unequivocally from Vitoria’s stance, underscoring the Aristotelian position that in order to direct one’s will toward something it is first necessary to have elevated knowledge of it. He draws a further distinction, not pursued by Vitoria in this context but explicit in Aquinas’s gloss, between various different levels of knowledge.⁵⁹

In the sixteenth century, the boundaries of humanity were as contentious as the definition of faith. Indeed, the theological question of faith and the ontological debate about the New World indigenous people were in many ways one and the same issue. For an individual to exist completely outside the realm of faith, he or she had to be unresponsive to the pedagogical process, devoid of potential for spiritual self-improvement. Such individuals were, in Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda’s language, “similitudines hominis” or “homunculi” rather than full humans precisely because they lacked this potential for Christian faith and knowledge.⁶⁰ The potential for learning was, thus, intimately linked both to the theological distinction between different kinds of faith and the promise for movement up the rungs of this hierarchy. Aquinas had argued that it was possible for non-believers to be part of the Church “in potentia,” and it is this universal potential for membership in the Christian community—a universal similitude—that underwrites Vitoria’s civic protections, such as property rights, as well as the more general scholastic presumption of pedagogical or evangelical promise.⁶¹ By insisting upon this parallel among categories of faith, levels of knowledge, and boundaries of humanity, the Salamanca theologians made the Thomist tradition of canon law indispensable to debate about property, political and evangelical authority, and the ethics of violence in the New World. In so doing, however, they forced deliberation over the definition of religion out of the theology classroom. If negotiating the established categories of alterity and models of religious experience entailed assessing the boundaries of humanity, then the theologians

⁵⁸ De Soto, *Quartum Sententiarum*, 126.

⁵⁹ Cano, *Relectio de Sacramentis in genere*, 371-441.

⁶⁰ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Demócrates segundo*, 35. This text, *Democrates alter*, also known as *Democrates secundus*, was not published until Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo’s 1892 edition. I have used Losada’s more recent, improved edition. Sepúlveda presents this dialogue, which explicitly deals with just war and the New World, as the continuation of an earlier text, known as *Democrates primus* (Rome, 1535), which explores the relationship between military discipline and Christianity. A Spanish translation of this text, *Diálogo llamado Demócrates*, was published in Seville in 1541. See Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, 62-63; Prats, “Estudio histórico,” in Sepúlveda, *Obras completas III*, xv-xvii.

⁶¹ This is a line of thought that Vitoria develops in the *Relectiones theologicae* and is, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out, presupposed by Bartolomé de Las Casas as well. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 116. Vitoria’s *relectiones* about the New World are often read and translated separately. See, for example, Vitoria, *Sobre el poder civil, Sobre los indios, Sobre el derecho de la guerra*.

would need to make their scholastic method and language comprehensible to an audience much broader than theology students. Similarly, those scholars mounting counter-arguments would need to address the theologians in argumentative forms the scholastics recognized as legitimate. The scholastic *disputatio* concerning Spanish authority in the New World took place in the political capital of the Iberian empire, Valladolid, rather than the lecture halls of Salamanca or Alcalá, but the forms and rituals of scholasticism were nevertheless under examination.

Disputatio: The Scholastic Claim to Authority

The Valladolid disputation between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de Las Casas ended without a clear resolution.⁶² The “audience of fourteen” judges at this “Junta sobre conquistas y esclavitud” was supposed to present written opinions, which the Consejo de Indias for years struggled to obtain, but most of the documents have not been located.⁶³ Despite this apparent lack of consensus, in hindsight there has emerged a sense that Las Casas, along with his Salamancan allies, prevailed over Sepúlveda. This is in part a result of changing modern and early modern presuppositions about the legal and ethical framework for regulating cultural and geopolitical encounters: We no longer find the papal-granted right to evangelization or the invocation of Aristotelian social hierarchy to be sufficient or even reasonable justifications for war.⁶⁴ Although Las Casas did fundamentally agree with Sepúlveda about the right of Spanish clergy to evangelize in the New World, some scholars read Las Casas’s condemnation of political violence in the name of religion as a transformative legal, ethical, and interpretive moment in the emergence of modernity.⁶⁵ The story is more complex. If Sepúlveda is not the humanist that apologists for secularity celebrate when they trace the genealogy of modern politics, law, and religion to Renaissance humanism, Las Casas, who called for the Office of the Inquisition to come to the New World, is nevertheless not the typical late-medieval scholastic that these same apologists tend to attack as already anachronistic in the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ Competing ideologies of modernity

⁶² The bibliography on Las Casas, Sepúlveda, and their confrontation is vast, but for an introduction to the Valladolid dispute, see Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, 57-112. For an overview of scholarship on Las Casas, see Arias and Merediz’s introduction to *Approaches to Teaching the Writings of Bartolomé de Las Casas*, 9-18. Rolena Adorno offers a good recent introductory take in, “Bartolomé de Las Casas: Polemicist and Author” and “Councilors Warring at the Royal Court,” Chapters Three and Four respectively in *The Polemics of Possession*, 61-124. For an innovative account of the history of scholasticism and debate over Spanish authority in the New World, see O’Gorman, *Fundamentos de la historia de America*.

⁶³ Only Doctor Anaya’s statement exists. Gregorio López de Madera, another judge at the meeting, offered some of his opinions in defense of Las Casas’s position in his edition and commentary of Alfonso X *el sabio*’s *Siete partidas*. See Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, 114.

⁶⁴ Generations of theologians and scholars invoked Pope Alexander’s VI’s bull, *Inter Caetera* (1493), which granted the crowns of Castile and Aragon’s political and religious authority in the New World, and Pope Paul III’s bull, *Sublimis Deus* (1537), which attempted to encourage peaceful methods of evangelization.

⁶⁵ See Chapter Seven, “Equality, Civilization, and the American Indians in the Writings of Las Casas,” in Nederman, *Worlds of difference*, 99-115.

⁶⁶ Carl Schmitt writes, “In scholarly discussions of international law...medieval conditions and institutions appear today in an odd mixture: here as a specter of feudal anarchy, there as a precursor of

do not sufficiently explain the sense of progress produced by the Valladolid debate, I argue, because such generalizing meta-narratives of ethical and hermeneutic advancement ignore the local and material history of the debate itself. The notion that Las Casas prevailed over Sepúlveda, that debate about violence, religion, and war took a decisive step forward in Valladolid, is to a great extent the result of disputation itself as a scholarly and pedagogical form. *Disputatio* creates the sense of resolution and progress even when the historical record is more ambiguous.

In the medieval university, scholastic *disputatio* provided an opportunity to participate in the development of knowledge, to drive forward understanding through questions and responses, and to reaffirm the credibility of the scholastic enterprise itself. Yet the public performance of dialectical method should not be confused with a spontaneous and dynamic search for truth through dialogue. The master theologian, who both determined in advance the topic under discussion and summarized the debate after the fact, chose the student responsible for posing questions, the *respondens*. Even in the more flexible “quodlibetal disputation,” in which audience members could pose questions about any topic, the master still presented a final rebuttal and summary, his *determinatio*, the following day, as he did as well in ordinary disputations.⁶⁷ Both types of disputations provided students with a structured opportunity to hone their argumentative skills, but the process ultimately confirmed the authority of the master and displayed the advantages of dialectical method. Las Casas, I argue, casts Sepúlveda as his *respondens*, and the Valladolid debate itself resembles a scholastic *disputatio*.

Sepúlveda did not at first recognize the nature of the *disputatio* in which he participated. His presentation before the audience of scholars at the “Junta de Valladolid” suffered from a failing of form. According to Domingo de Soto’s summary of the events, while Las Casas “read” his own voluminous *Apologia* [leyó su libro], written in response to manuscript versions of Sepúlveda’s *Democrates alter sive de justis causis belli apud Indos*, Sepúlveda informally “recounted the main points of his arguments” [refirió de palabra las cabezas de sus argumentos] and “established his conclusion briefly” [fundó...su sentencia brevemente].⁶⁸ As a result, de Soto remarks, we cannot grant Sepúlveda “equal justice” [no puede guardarse tanta justicia] to Las Casas, thus linking a dismissal of Sepúlveda’s position

modern order.” For a more critical account Las Casas and the Salamancan School’s complex role in the history of political and religious thought, see Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, 56.

⁶⁷ Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au moyen âge*, 90-92.

⁶⁸ De Soto’s summary was included as a prologue to Las Casas’s printed response to several of Sepúlveda’s objections to Las Casas initial criticisms presented in the second Valladolid meeting. Las Casas’s argument is outlined in his in a manuscript, *Argumentum apologiae adversus Genesium Sepulvedam theologum cordubensem*, presented in the first meeting at Valladolid and now known as the *Apologia*. I have consulted a Spanish translation entitled, *Apología, o declaración y defensa universal de los derechos del hombre y de los pueblos*. De Soto’s prologue, Sepúlveda’s objections, and Las Casas reply were all published together in a treatise by Las Casas himself. This *tratado*, entitled, *Aquí se contiene una disputa o controversia, entre el Obispo don fray Bartholomé de las Casas o Casaus y el doctor Ginés de Sepúlveda* (1552) has been included in Las Casas, *Obras Completas*, vol. 10. For the above citation from Sepúlveda’s prologue, see Las Casas, *Aquí se contiene una disputa*, 106.

to his ill-chosen style of presentation.⁶⁹ Las Casas the theologian treats his Valladolid presentation as he would a lecture before future scholastics, as an inquiry into the authority of the Spanish monarchy to wage war on the indigenous peoples of the New World. Sepúlveda, on the other hand, wields his *sprezzatura*, as Baldassare Castiglione called the feigned nonchalance of the humanist courtier, for an audience of primarily religious scholars. De Soto, a fellow Dominican of Las Casas and Vitoria, confessor to Charles V, and one of the judges who heard the arguments at Valladolid in August 1550, was a biased observer. Yet his account reveals the extent to which judgments of the Valladolid disputation were shaped by scholastic conditions of knowledge and forms of legitimacy.

In the *Apologia pro libro de iustis belli causis* (Rome, 1550), a short defense of *Democrates secundus* written in response to the refusal by committees of theologians from the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá to recommend its publication, Sepúlveda begins to display an awareness of the importance of arguing as a theologian. While *Democrates secundus* is a conventional humanist dialogue in which the range of his rhetorical skill and literary Latin is, as de Soto and Cano condescendingly note, on full display, Sepúlveda claims that the *Apologia* will conform to the “scholastic method” [more scholastico].⁷⁰ The text is, indeed, organized in dialectical fashion, with responses to the objections raised by previous critics presented in clearly delineated order and buttressed with citations from Biblical, patristic, and scholastic sources. Although the *Apologia* has often been catalogued as a juridical document, a formal “resumen” or “refundición” of *Democrates secundus*, there is material evidence that Sepúlveda thought of the work as a “summa” on the question of just war, a theological inquiry based on the model of the medieval scholastic *summae*. For example, one version of the *Apologia*, contained in a manuscript that was edited by Sepúlveda himself, carries the title, “Summa quaestionis ad bellum barbaricum...in qua omnes obiectiones Salmanticae et Compluti factae proponuntur et solvuntur.”⁷¹ This is a short version of the *Apologia*, and it does not include either the usual introductory address to Antonio Ramírez, the Bishop of Segovia and friend and critic of Sepúlveda, or the text’s concluding section. Both absent sections were written in an informal prose unlike the scholastic register of the text’s body, which would explain why they are missing from this particular manuscript. The theologians, Sepúlveda suggests both argumentatively and formally, misunderstood his claims in *Democrates secundus* because they brought the practice of scholastic *lectio* to bear upon a humanist text designed to persuade rather than perform. The *Apologia* was Sepúlveda’s attempt to engage his scholastic critics in their own forms and language.⁷²

⁶⁹ Sepúlveda’s prologue in Las Casas, *Aquí se contiene una disputa*, 106.

⁷⁰ Sepúlveda, *Apologia pro libro de iustis belli causis*, 194. Other than the summary of Sepúlveda’s objections contained in Las Casas’s 1552 *Tratado*, this is the only printed text that approximates Sepúlveda’s Valladolid argument. His views, however, were familiar because *Democrates secundus* circulated in manuscript form in the early modern period. Even Sepúlveda’s *Apologia* was difficult to acquire, as Las Casas himself noted, because Charles V ordered all copies that reached Spain confiscated. See Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, 63.

⁷¹ Hernández discusses this text in his introduction to Sepúlveda, *Apologia*, xlvii-viii. The published edition of this text is based on BNE Ms. 5785.

⁷² Sepúlveda, *Apologia pro libro de iustis belli causis*, 194: “meum librum vel non legerunt, vel lectum propter characteris paulo cultionris insolentiam non intellexerunt” [they have not read my book, or, if

While de Soto, along with modern scholars such as Anthony Pagden and Antonio Moreno Hernández, have underscored Sepúlveda's formal miscalculations in his writing and Valladolid presentation, for Las Casas, Sepúlveda's primary interlocutor, the crucial problem was not structural or stylistic but argumentative. Sepúlveda selectively cites Biblical *exempla* without taking into account scholastic glosses on these episodes. His solutions to juridical and evangelical conundrums seem to generate rather than prevent violence. And most importantly, he misconstrues the categories of religious difference structuring Christian thought from Augustine to the early modern Thomists. Sepúlveda, Las Casas argues, is imprecise with his scholastic distinctions, and the faults in his argument emerge from this sloppy scholasticism. For example, Sepúlveda insists that Augustine himself condones coercion and punishment for "hereses" and various other non-believers, including "paganos."⁷³ In writing about the Donatist heretics, Augustine does mount a defense of coercion as a way of obligating certain Christian behaviors. Yet, as Las Casas points out both here and in his longer *Apologia*, Augustine limits such coercion to apostates like the Donatists, who were baptized Christians and thus, according to Augustine, subject to Church authority.⁷⁴ When Augustine does mention a more general class of non-believers, Las Casas claims that he does so only to mount the limited argument that it is licit for a Christian sovereign to prohibit idolatry among his own subjects, not, as Sepúlveda suggests, to wage war on foreign idolaters. Prohibiting idolatry at home is not the same as pursuing war abroad, all non-believers are not parallel, and political authority has clearly circumscribed limits. These distinctions are both fundamental and, to the properly trained scholar, utterly conventional. In his attempt to produce a recognizably scholastic argument, Sepúlveda is, according to Las Casas, at best intellectual negligent—"frívolo y falso," are his words—and at worst purposefully mendacious.

As de Soto has already warned his readers at the beginning of his summary of the Valladolid debate, Las Casas's perspective is more fully articulated and formally presented than Sepúlveda's, so it is unsurprising that de Soto spends a large section of his prologue

they have read it, have not understood it because they are unaccustomed to reading books even a bit cultured].

⁷³ Las Casas, *Aquí se contiene una disputa*, 133. The reference is from Sepúlveda's second objection, in which he cites various letters of Augustin, including *ad Vincent, ad Bonifacium donatistam*, and *ad Donatum*. At stake is not just the Donatist question, however, but the stability of the taxonomy of non-believers in general. In his commentary on Aquinas, (*Secunda secundae*, q. 6, a. 8.) Thomas Cajetan, an important influence on the Salamanca school, outlines three types of infidelity: 1) Christians, Jews, and Moors in Christian territories; 2) individuals that are subject to Christian authority by law but not in fact, like Turks occupying Christian territories; 3) individuals who are neither by law nor fact subject to Christian princes, like the pagans in distant places. Las Casas and others sometimes divide up the first group into two, separating Christian apostates and heretics from Jews and Muslims. The point is that the hierarchy was well established by scholastic precedent. See Barreda, "La Apología en su contexto teológico," in Las Casas, *Apología*, lxvi.

⁷⁴ Las Casas, *Aquí se contiene una disputa*, 156. This argument begs the question: What if the baptism, already celebrated, was itself coerced? Is it still valid? I will treat this question in more detail in the next chapter, but in the Valladolid debate the issue was discussed using two examples, the Donatists and the "parable of the banquet" (Luke 14; Mathew 22). Sepúlveda enlists these texts as a doctrinal defense of coercion, while Las Casas, following Augustine, argues that the individuals were compelled only through their use of reason. See Mariscal, "Bartolomé de Las Casas on Imperial Ethics and the Use of Force," 271-72.

outlining Las Casas's specific counter-arguments to Sepúlveda's use of Augustine. As de Soto relates it, the issue is not just Sepúlveda's mistaken interpretation of Augustine, but also a lack of familiarity with the conventionality of the distinctions between types of coercion, obliged subjects, and epochs of Church history. Such distinctions are clear in Augustine's corpus and the trained reader would know how to find and cite them.⁷⁵ The sheer volume of evidence offered by de Soto in his summary and Las Casas in his full *Apologia* underscores the extent to which Sepúlveda's reading was overly selective. He failed to display the sort of comprehensive competency that would have produced a legible scholastic argument. By harping upon this fault, de Soto and Las Casas mount a defense of scholastic method's fundamental importance to these questions of law and politics.

Sepúlveda may have failed to employ and transform conventional scholastic distinctions, but such distinctions are by no means static. Directly rejecting or blurring them is simply an unrecognizable form of scholastic argumentation. These distinctions are logic itself, the very scholastic claim to intellectual authority, and rejecting them is to upend the very rules of thought rather than to engage in honest debate. As Vitoria's interrogation of different kinds of faith and grace demonstrates, it is possible to challenge and transform the meanings of conventional distinctions only by introducing ever more precise distinctions. Sepúlveda was argumentatively and formally too cavalier even if his conclusion about the justice of imperial war in the Americas was well within the early modern bounds of reason. Esteemed jurists and theologians, including the president of the Council of the Indies, Cardinal Loaysa, friar Domingo Betanzos, and others, agreed with him.⁷⁶ The Pope himself had asked Sepúlveda, as a *visitador general*, to write a rebuttal to a group of Iberian scholars at San Clemente de los Españoles in Bologna, who were increasingly critical even of defensive wars despite the fact that the medieval tradition of just war theory had always deemed them legitimate.⁷⁷ The consequence of Sepúlveda's strategic miscalculation was that he lost control of the material history of his own texts and arguments. Soon after the conclusion of the *disputatio*, Las Casas published de Soto's summary of the Valladolid debate along with his own short reply to Sepúlveda's arguments. In practice, de Soto's summary came to function as part of Las Casas's critical apparatus.

As Anthony Pagden has argued, an impulse of institutional and professional self-preservation drove the Salamanca debate over New World authority as much as the theological, legal, and political questions concerning conversion and empire. When Cano, along with Bartolomé de Carranza and Diego de Covarrubias, two of Vitoria's students, first condemned *Democrates secundus*, Sepúlveda's text proposing the inferiority of the American Indians, they were attacking the legitimacy of a humanist speaking to what they considered theological questions.⁷⁸ The Salamanca theologians presented the question of political authority and violence in theological terms, examining the issues using a scholastic method to which Sepúlveda's texts and formation did not conform. While these criticisms of Sepúlveda had as much to do with form and method as with argument, the same can be said of modern

⁷⁵ See De Soto's summary in Las Casas, *Aquí se contiene una disputa*, 110-11.

⁷⁶ Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, 18, 22-34, 67-69.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

⁷⁸ See Chapter Five, "The Rhetorician and the Rheologists: Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and his Dialogue, *Democrates secundus*," in Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 109-118. For more on this background, see Mariscal, "Bartolomé de las Casas on Imperial Ethics and the Use of Force," 261.

perspectives on Vitoria, Las Casas, and the scholastic tradition of which they are part. The perception that Spain was historically marginal to the progressive currents of early modern European thought has resulted, paradoxically, in the need to reclaim certain arguments or works from the Iberian scholastic milieu while rejecting the apparently medieval forms of expression that Sepúlveda so struggled to master. For example, while Vitoria's commentary on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* has remained largely unstudied, a few of his *Relectiones theologicae*, those specifically dealing with political authority and the New World indigenous peoples, are widely read, translated, and celebrated.⁷⁹ As the title of the lectures highlights, these "re-readings" were theological in nature, but by focusing only on a few of them in isolation from his other writing, the body of Vitoria's work appears markedly less scholastic. With the theological conditions for thought quarantined and the scholastic method de-emphasized, this is the Vitoria who becomes the father of international law.⁸⁰ A similar division exists in the work of Las Casas, whose *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* is much more commonly studied than his Latin treatise on evangelization, *De unico vocationis modo omnium gentium ad veram religionem* or his full response to Sepúlveda, the *Apologia*.⁸¹ The heuristic dichotomy between certain kinds of religious texts or modes of argument on the one hand, and juridical and political texts on the other hand, confuses more than it explains.⁸² Why is it that applying Thomist categories to the realm of politics and empire as a form of criticism was an innovative, even modern, epistemological move, while the parallel reformulations of faith, salvation, and evangelization contained in scholastic glosses serve as markers of the medieval?

Praedicatio: Evangelization and Epistemology

In *De unico vocationis modo omnium infidelium ad veram religionem* (c. 1537), a treatise on evangelization composed in response to Spanish violence in the New World, Bartolomé de Las Casas argues that until the invention of Islam, all religions universally recognized that potential converts must freely enter into the process of conversion.⁸³

⁷⁹ The complete Latin text has been edited by Teófilo Urdáñez, *Obras de Vitoria: Relectiones teológicas*. Again, sections relating to the New World have been published as part of the CSIC's *Corpus Hispanorum de Pace* series.

⁸⁰ At least this is the modern, secular approach. Christian scholars do the exact opposite. See Urdáñez, "Las Casas y Francisco de Vitoria," 235-304.

⁸¹ For helpful ways of addressing this problem in the classroom, see Jáuregui and Restrepo, "Imperial Reason, War Theory, and Human Rights," 106-116. On Las Casas, Vitoria, and a whiggish history of human rights, see Beuchot, *Los fundamentos de los derechos humanos*. For a more recent and critical take on human rights and international law, see Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.*

⁸² Mariscal, "Bartolomé de las Casas on Imperial Ethics and the Use of Force," 273. Despite the parenthetical aside, Mariscal's formulation highlights the double standard concerning the relationship between religion and modernity: "Contemporary commentators have called Las Casas 'modern' for a variety of reasons ranging from his recognition of 'the Other' to his pivotal role as a founding voice of human rights discourse. But insofar as 'modernity' (in itself an empty abstraction susceptible to multiple constructed meanings) traditionally has signified a high degree of secularism we cannot enlist Las Casas in its ranks." Edmundo O'Gorman presents a similarly problematic, though more nuanced periodization in, "La idea antropológica del padre Las Casas: Edad media y modernidad," 309-319.

⁸³ Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Del único modo de atraer a todos los pueblos a la verdadera religión*. For a good introduction to the text, see "El único modo," Chapter Five in Gustavo Gutiérrez, *En busca de*

Conversion by the sword, Las Casas maintains, both fails to produce true converts and condemns the violent evangelizers themselves. Paul provides Las Casas's evangelical ideal and Muhammad, an equally famous and successful proselytizer, serves as the counter-example.⁸⁴ Violent Christians in the New World, Las Casas suggests in no uncertain terms, are failing to emulate Paul and instead acting like Muhammad and his followers, who conquered much of the Mediterranean and Near East during the eighth and ninth centuries. Citing a dialogue from the *Speculum historiale*, a short text associated with the thirteenth century translation workshop funded by Peter the Venerable, Las Casas accuses Muhammad of violent conversion methods, but he then paradoxically acknowledges the potentially problematic features even of peaceful methods.⁸⁵ Violent Christian conquistadores mimic the fierce Muslims who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century, but "all who have wanted to induce others to truth or falsehood," Las Casas writes, "could not accomplish this but by, at the very least, a verisimilar predication. And we know that, with the exception of your violent companion," continues Las Casas in the voice of a Christian addressing his Muslim interlocutor, "everyone in reality has proceeded in this manner" [Quicumque enim voluit inducere homines ad veritatem sive ad mendacium, non potuit hoc facere sine aliqua vel saltem verisimili praedicatione et omnes quidem, praeter socium tuum, ita fecisse noscuntur].⁸⁶ Conversion by the sword is self-defeating, but all evangelization begins with "verisimilar" performance.

Like advocates of all religions until the invention of Islam, Christians should use the persuasive tools of representation to influence non-believers to enter freely the process of becoming Christian. Evangelizers should rely neither upon violence nor miraculous revelation. Although Christianity may be *the* truth for Las Casas, correct evangelical technique hinges on an awareness and manipulation of similitude, of the gap between true and "true-like." Unlike Christian proselytizers, Muslim and Jewish preachers suffer the handicap of needing to persuade their audiences of an erroneous faith. Yet Christian preachers too, Las Casas argues, must diligently employ the same rhetorical tools as their opponents if they are to attract the attention of a fickle and uneducated audience.⁸⁷ In atypically candid fashion for a theologian, Las Casas concedes the parallel between the performances of artists and

los pobres de Jesucristo, 219-74. *De unico modo*, as Las Casas text is known, was composed before the Valladolid debate in the 1530's and circulated in manuscript form throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century, but was not published in Las Casas's era. Because *De unico modo* criticizes violent evangelization, the text is often framed as an early pacifist treatise, thus de-emphasizing the disciplinary element that interests me. See, for example, Song No, "Teaching *De unico vocationis modo*: The Maternal Discourse of Bartolomé de Las Casas," 124-131.

⁸⁴ Las Casas elsewhere invokes Islam and its founder as an example of violent conquest, which Christian conquistadors perhaps unwittingly mimic. See Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (book 3, chpt. 115), and Las Casas, "Memorial de los remedios," 121. Anthony Pagden mentions this issue in Pagden, "Ius et Factum," 94.

⁸⁵ In his editor's notes, Millares argues that Las Casas's source text for this dialogue is Alfonso de Spina's *Fortalitium fidei*, which in turn employs Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*. For more on this dialogue and Peter the Venerable, see Américo Castro, "Disputa entre un cristiano y un judío," 173-180.

⁸⁶ Las Casas, *Del único modo*, 460.

⁸⁷ For more on rhetoric and Las Casas's model of evangelization, see Rosales, "Del único modo de enseñar en Bartolomé de Las Casas," 131-40.

preachers. Yet the conditions of this initial decision to pursue a pious path are not the focus of *De unico modo*. Las Casas acknowledges this moment of individual freedom, influenced though it may be by evangelical representation, merely as the quickly forgotten origin of a communal, disciplinary process. He hopes that participation in the shared customs that follow this first decision to become Christian will obscure the initial agency itself.

Being Christian, Las Casas argues, is to continue to participate in these customs such that the participation itself ceases to seem like a series of daily decisions at all. Discipline replaces decision-making; participation supplants metaphorical meanings and private faith.⁸⁸ Framing faith itself in terms of ritual and action, Las Casas recognizes that successful evangelization helps neophytes develop the habits that mark a Christian identity. The goal, as Las Casas describes it, is to make Christianity seem natural through repetition: “custom is a habit, or with the repetition of acquired acts it engenders a habit, which, if it is not nature of itself, it undoubtedly a form of nature, since custom makes habitual acts easy, quick, and unencumbered, as if driven by nature itself” [consuetudo est habitus ex ipsa generatur habitus ex frequentatis actibus acquisitis, qui non est natura, sed est quasi natura, quia quasi ita faciles, promptas et expeditas facit consuetudo operationes consuetas, ac si essent illae operationes a natura principiatae].⁸⁹ Manipulation of the slippage between “natura” and “quasi natura,” like the overlap between real and verisimilar, is practically useful from the evangelical point of view but problematic from the scholastic perspective. Las Casas recognizes the power of *consensus gentium*, local custom, in shaping the very idea of the natural. The “quasi” implies that even the supposedly stable and universal *jus naturae* of the Salamancan theologians is culturally contingent, subject to change over time, not unlike the scholastic depiction of faith or understanding. Las Casas’s meta-commentary on natural law nevertheless unfolds according to scholastic method: he distinguishes between that which is natural at one time and place compared to another time and place. He shows how the development unfolds through education and acculturation. Yet by describing the process by which Christian practice might begin to seem ordinary and a-historical even amongst distant non-believers, the essential distinction between Christianity and other religions begins to break down. All religions are habits with histories.

In her reading of Las Casas’s *Apologética historia*, which presents a parallel argument about the importance of custom, Deborah Shuger concludes that Las Casas was both a “structural anthropologist” and critic of “Eurocentrism” *avant la lettre*.⁹⁰ It is clear that the New World encounter was a pivotal moment for the history of the human sciences, an

⁸⁸ For an excellent discussion of how this model of evangelization actually worked in New Spain, including shifts in strategies of Inquisitorial control and punishment, see Klor de Alva, “Colonizing Souls: The Failure of the Indian Inquisition and the Rise of Penitential Discipline,” 3-23.

⁸⁹ Las Casas, *Del único modo*, 94-95.

⁹⁰ Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible*, 81-82. There is a long tradition of highlighting the anthropological element in Las Casas’s work. See, for example, Chapter Seven, “Historien et anthropologue,” in Mahn-Lot, *Bartolomé de Las Casas et le droit des Indiens*, 180-192. José Rabasa criticizes Pagden’s view of Las Casas’s anthropological approach in “Utopian Ethnology in Las Casas’s *Apologética*,” 263-290. For a prominent example of the argument that Las Casas prefigured contemporary critiques of Eurocentricism and imperialism, see Wallerstein, *European Universalism*. Wallerstein’s basic argument is familiar. See, for example, Dussel, “Núcleo simbólico lascasiano como profética crítica al imperialismo europeo,” 11-17.

opportunity to reassess the relationship between Latin Christendom and the changing known world, but Las Casas's argument was, we must not forget, a means to evangelical ends. The allure of Las Casas the proto-ethnographer or critical historian, an intermediary figure between natural law theorists like Vitoria and, according to Shuger, even more innovative and self-critical thinkers such as Hugo Grotius, buttresses the continual re-reading of Las Casas's historical and polemical texts and the concomitant marginalization of the evangelical and theological agenda presented in *De unico modo*.⁹¹ My point is that the political criticism is inseparable from the theological argument and scholastic method. Just as it makes little sense to celebrate Vitoria as a patriarch of modern international law while at the same time attacking him for his Euro and Christian-centric theology or self-interested scholastic method, drawing a similar analytical dichotomy between the supposedly modern anthropological or historical insights of Las Casas and his theological methods and goals is equally problematic. Las Casas's sophisticated argument that "praxis, rather than values or beliefs," point toward the "fundamental structures of religion," to quote Shuger's accurate formulation, is an early modern insight that does, indeed, help to historicize recent anthropological interrogations of religion and culture as categories of analysis.⁹² But the argument is as much theological as ethnographic or historical. Las Casas is less concerned with the structural meanings represented by the rituals of the people he converts than he is aware of the role such rituals play in disciplining them as Christian subjects. The practices of *lectio*, *disputatio*, and *praedicatio* defined the scholastic; customs, Las Casas argues, make the Christian.

Some famous Catholic evangelizers, such as José de Acosta, disagreed with Las Casas's definition of religion, insisting upon the importance of personal faith and individual agency in addition to communal ritual and social discipline. The Indians, Acosta writes in *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588), his own influential treatise on evangelization, "pretend to be Christians only in view of the priest, and whenever they have the opportunity, they secretly return to their old superstitions" [præsentent tantum sacerdote christianos se simulent, clanculum ubi datur facultas, avitas superstitiones studiosissime obeant].⁹³ While Las Casas celebrates participation in Christian ritual and contact with the Christian community, however temporarily duplicitous it may be, Acosta demands that the private mental lives of converts match the public ceremony. In Acosta's text there is a tension, as Ivonne del Valle has noted, between "being and doing."⁹⁴ He argues neither that the material efficacy of the sacraments—

⁹¹ Shuger, 82. For more on Grotius and the language of similitude, see Newman, "Selden, Grotius, and the Seventeenth-Century Intellectual Revolution in Moral and Political Theory," 285-317. Walter Mignolo, who takes a negative view of Vitoria and Las Casas's project, points out the importance of Grotius as a "common beginning for scholars of International Law in the English and French speaking worlds." See Mignolo, "Who Speaks for the 'Human' in Human Rights?" 7-24.

⁹² I have in mind here debates about the role of ritual and practice in the constitution of religious identity. See, for example, Chapter Two, "Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual," in Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 55-79; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*.

⁹³ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum*, vol. 2, 26; Pagden, 149. As Walter Mignolo explains in his introduction to Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, Acosta saw *De procuranda indorum* as his most important text; the *Historia* began as a brief introduction to his evangelical treatise and only then developed it into a complete work. See Mignolo's introduction in Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, xxi.

⁹⁴ Valle, "Jesuit Baroque," 151.

the “something else,” as Lombard would say, contained in these performed signs—is contingent upon the intention or faith of the participants nor that Christian customs and social habits themselves will produce this private, Christian, mental life. Although ritual is, for Acosta, fundamental to Christian identity and experience, unlike Las Casas and Vitoria, he constantly worries that it may always only be a form of imitation. Alluding to an unnamed fellow Jesuit who doubted those who claim, for example, to have “set the Gospel in the these Indians’ souls,” Acosta too suspects that the conversions merely served appearances [Prudenter et vere quidam nostrum scripsit pater non videri sibi ad indorum horum animos penetrasse evangelium, sed ad speciem tantum receptum].⁹⁵

The point here is not that Acosta is uninterested in the formal, ritualistic aspect of Christian experience. Acosta defends the importance of indigenous neophytes taking communion and, if they were so inclined, even eventually joining the priesthood, a subject of heated debate amongst theologians in the New World. He argues that the sacraments produce one set of Christians, not a hierarchy of old and new. But Acosta also thinks that developing Christian habits would open a space for the indigenous people of Peru then to assign Christian meanings to the performances in which they participate. Wary both of the potential superficiality of ritual performance and a Thomist hierarchy of increasingly inclusive faith, Acosta privileges an unseen yet clearly defined Christian piety, a set of meanings that would fill the “emptiness,” as Del Valle puts it, created by the new forms of bodily discipline and ritual performance.⁹⁶ The disciplines and ritual themselves do not, for Acosta, create the mental experience of piety, as they do for Las Casas. Ritual might produce Christians, but ritual alone, Acosta insists, effectively encourages systematic and permanent forms of heresy.⁹⁷

Acosta argues that any sort of flexibility in regard to faith should be a temporary and passing step on the path toward an even more explicit and dogmatic Christian universalism. He agrees with Aquinas and Vitoria’s emphasis on the role of teaching in the transformation

⁹⁵ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum*, vol. 2, 24-25. Luis Pereña, the modern editor of *De procuranda indorum*, suggests that Acosta is here referring to a letter that Bartolomé Hernández, the rector of the Colegio de Lima, wrote to Juan de Ovando, the president of the Consejo de Indias, in which he remarks that the New World Indians, like the “Moors of Granada,” are only “Christian in name and exterior ceremony, while on the interior they have no concept of the things of our faith” [como los moros de Granada...tel nombre de christiano y las cerimonias exteriors, y interiormente no tiene concepto de las cosas de nuestra fe]. Between 1588 and 1590, just after the publication of *De procuranda indorum*, Acosta accepted the position of Jesuit “visitador” to the provinces of Andalusia and Aragón, where he would have had the opportunity to see some of these Old World problems of assimilation first hand. See the introduction by Francisco Mateos entitled, “Personalidad y escritos del P. José de Acosta,” in Acosta, *Obras*, xxiii-xxiv.

⁹⁶ Del Valle, 152-53.

⁹⁷ Pierre Duviols underscores the difference between Las Casas and Acosta’s views of ritual by describing their divergent conceptions of indigenous idolatry. While Las Casas famously argued that New World idolatry and other ritual practices were simply the result of the varied customs that emerge from geographic diversity, Acosta thought that they were the work of the Devil. The argument hinged upon whether the goal of stopping human sacrifice in the New World was a sufficient cause for just war. Las Casas, unlike many of his contemporaries, argued that it was not. See Duviols, *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial*, 22-23. See also Mills, “The Limits of Religious Coercion in Mid-Colonial Peru,” 84-121.

and development of individuals' faith, and with Lombard on the teleological arch of faith through religious history, but differs with them in regard to questions of evangelical implementation. Even the temporary strategic or theoretical recognition of the legitimacy of non-believers' implicit faith would, according to Acosta, become an excuse for lax catechism and unmotivated proselytizing. The eschatological potential of "good living" innocents would rapidly turn into the intransigency of the Jews or Muslims. But the disagreement between Acosta and his scholastic predecessors is also in part a question of the limits of scholastic distinction as a critical method. Distinguishing between categories of faith is useful up to a point, Acosta admits, but Vitoria and his students have gone too far. Faith without knowledge of Christ is, Acosta claims, "nothing but knowingly expressing craziness" [nihil aliud est quam cum ratione insanire], whatever conclusions might emerge from the theology lecture hall.⁹⁸ He is particularly upset about the ways in which the Salamanca theologians employ Aquinas in defense of a definition of faith that Aquinas himself, so Acosta maintains, would have rejected.⁹⁹ For Acosta, salvation through Christ is part of an eschatological story beginning with creation and ending with final judgment; claiming to intuitively know the story is no different than "claiming to know the Aeneid or the Odyssey without ever having heard the names of Aeneas or Odysseus. Who could resist laughing?" [Nam si quis Aeneida aut Odisseam tenere ses diceret, neque tamen Aeneum aut Odisseam unquam audisset, quis obsecro risum tenere posset?].¹⁰⁰

Acosta, in sum, reads Lombard, Aquinas, and Vitoria's sources differently. Like his scholastic predecessors, he acknowledges the various categories of implicit and explicit faith, but he historicizes the categories themselves. Focusing on the famous example of Cornelius, Acosta maintains that although Saint Peter informed Cornelius of his salvation even though at the time he lacked explicit faith, the Roman centurion did have some level of Christian knowledge sufficient to his time. Cornelius had "studied with the Jews" during an age when the Gospel was not "sufficiently promulgated" [Cornelio iudæorum et libris et consuetudine instructo sufficere potuit...Cornelii certe tempore nondum plene pro palatum fuisse Evangelium gentibus] and so the standards of necessary knowledge for salvation were different.¹⁰¹ "After having amply predicated the faith," Acosta insists, "we consider that to believe, and to believe in Christ is of the same necessity" [Modo vero post late prædicatum Evangelium, eiusdem necessitatis putamus credere et in Christum credere]. Continuing his direct criticism of the Salamanca theologians, whom, as we have already seen, the famous evangelizer of Peru thinks have misinterpreted Aquinas himself, Acosta succinctly concludes his case: "Without faith in the mystery of Christ, no one can be saved. So taught Saint Thomas a long time ago, and so decreed the Council of Trent" [sine cuius misterii fide

⁹⁸ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum*, vol. 2, 216. In his biography of Acosta, Claudio Burgaleta points out that Acosta shunned the scholastic forms like the *questio* and commentary, preferring a more eclectic, humanist method, which Burgaleta calls "Jesuit theological humanism." See Burgaleta *José de Acosta, S.J. (1540-1600): His Life and Thought*, 73-116.

⁹⁹ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum*, Vol. II, 206: "A quo cum obiectionem suam dilui videant, nescio quomodo in eam sententiam vocare possint quam refellit."

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 216. For more on Acosta's relationship with Salamanca scholasticism, see Lopetegu, "Notas sobre la actividad teológica del P. Jose de Acosta," 527-63; Coelle de la Rosa, "Más allá del Incario," 55-81.

¹⁰¹ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum*, vol. 2, 200-202.

iustificari neminem et olim Beatus Thomas et nuper sancta sinodus Tridentina decrevit].¹⁰² The claim is clear, yet the epistemological problem remains unresolved. What should be done about the dissimulation or imitation that in both the New and Old Worlds troubles assimilation?

Answering this question would seem to involve a discussion about the relationship between the signs of Christianity and the authenticity of personal piety. But, as Augustine and Lombard demonstrate, it is possible to argue on theological grounds that any simple and stable correspondence between sign and referent is impossible. The relationship between the two, the scholastics recognize, emerges through the process of glossing. Yet Acosta's dual criticism of scholastic *lectio* and Las Casas's evangelical strategy highlights precisely the parallel he was attempting to refute: reading scholastic texts and transforming the religious lives of New Christians presented parallel disciplinary challenges. In both cases, Acosta insists upon the importance of meanings and interpretations and dismisses the potential primacy of the pedagogical and ritualistic practices that condition such meanings and interpretations. He does not acknowledge the limits of the evangelizer's ability to convey culturally specific meanings or access the private faiths of potential or recent converts. Rather, he presumes the importance of the mental registers of religious life, painting any epistemological limitation on accessing such registers as a tactical, evangelical dilemma to be overcome.

As I have been arguing over the course of this chapter, Vitoria and Las Casas assess these epistemological challenges, sometimes only implicitly by doggedly pursuing alternate lines of inquiry, and other times more directly by displaying their own tactical and institutional agendas. Together they argue that scholastic definitions of faith and grace can and should shape Iberian evangelizers' interactions with non-believers, even if these non-believer's mental lives remain partially obscured. Acosta responds that this approach cedes too much ground to the impossibility of knowing. He not only rejects the idea of salvation by implicit faith, central both to Vitoria's political critique and Las Casas's conception of ritual, but also worries that even explicit faith might obscure a heretical truth. As an evangelizer, Acosta desires confirmation of his successful work in the form of religious sincerity. Yet some of Acosta's late-sixteenth century contemporaries, reformers who develop the presuppositions of the Salamanca Thomists in new and radical ways, argue that sincerity is impossible to access and, as such, irrelevant. The essence of Christianity, these reformers argue, should not be contingent upon the sincere faith of the pious any more than the boundaries of heresy should be defined by the insincerity of dissimulation. Their arguments, as the next chapter will demonstrate, revolved around the questions of Morisco assimilation and expulsion rather than New World evangelization, but the vocabulary and modes of argument are closely tied to the texts and debates examined in this chapter. Negotiating the distinctions between different categories of faith and populations of Christians, it became clear over the latter half of the sixteenth century, entailed revisiting the old question of heresy.

¹⁰² Ibid., 204.

CHAPTER TWO

Assimilation as Reform: The Trans-Atlantic Politics of Ritual

Heresy, according to Alfonso X *El Sabio*'s thirteenth century legal code, the *Siete partidas*, is a type of "insanity" identifiable both by an effort to undermine the word of God and by the desire to remain purposefully detached from Christianity. "*Haeresis*," the text reads, "in Latin, as in Romance, means separation, and I take from here this name, 'heretic,' because the heretic is separated from the catholic faith of Christians" [en latín: tanto quiere decir en romance como departimiento, e tomo de aqui este nome herege, por que el hereje [sic] es departido de la fe catholica de los christianos] (7.26.1).¹⁰³ This imprecise etymology – the Latin word "haeresis" originally meant simply a "school of thought," and the Greek equivalent, which appears several times in the New Testament, refers neutrally to religious groups or sects of various sorts—nevertheless underscores the religious stakes of similarity and separation. While the Salamancan theologians had argued for a dynamic faith that might tentatively include even those separated from Christianity by geography, history, belief, and practice, at the limit of this broad taxonomy of Christian faith was, inevitably, heresy. To define the realm of "departidos," aloof and resistant if not also physically isolated, was to circumscribe the Christian community, identified both by its common doctrines and shared social space. The separation of the heretic and the kinship of the orthodox were mutually defining categories. While the previous chapter examined the mid-sixteenth century attempt to expand the definition of orthodox Christian faith, this chapter traces the related late-sixteenth century argument over how to narrow the definition of heresy.

The pithy etymology of "haeresis" presented in the *partidas* obscures a more complex story about the history of heresy as both a word and crime in the medieval period. The term "herege" entered the Castilian lexicon via eleventh and twelfth century Provençal, and as scholars of medieval minority communities and social violence have pointed out, heresy as Alfonso X defined it was arguably a product of that earlier time. Rome had become increasingly uneasy about Latin Christendom's diversity of local religion, which included not only distinct minority groups such as Jews and Cathars, but also itinerant preachers who were increasingly vocal critics of Church corruption. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which took place just before the founding of the papal Inquisition by Pope Gregory IX in the 1230s, attempted to control these various minority and heterodox traditions, which previous, more informal Episcopal inquisitions had been unable to suppress. But the language originally formulated by Rome to control the multiplicity of local religions across Latin Christendom quickly made such disparate voices seem much more cohesive and thus menacing to both the Church hierarchy and political authority than they otherwise may have been. Rome, in a

¹⁰³ Alfonso X, *Las siete partidas del sabio rey Don Alonso el nono, glosadas por el licenciado Gregorio López*. Citations are parenthetical by *partido*, *título*, and *ley*.

sense, formally created heresy and apostasy in the process of trying to eliminate them.¹⁰⁴ By the time the Alfonsine workshop began to compose the *Siete partidas* in the mid 1250s, several decades after the conclusion of the medieval Inquisition, heresy had come to exist not only as a challenge to Church authority, but also as a perceived danger to social and political order. The title “De los hereges,” falls, for example, in the seventh *partida*, which outlines the laws for trials and punishments related to prosaic illicit activity ranging from stealing in the marketplace to adultery in addition to treating issues related to Jews and Muslims under Christian political authority. Heresy was undoubtedly a liability for the soul, but the organization of the *partidas* suggests that this state of spiritual separation was of primary royal concern because of the threat it posed to the *res publica*.

Yet in his authoritative edition and gloss of the *Siete partidas* (Salamanca, 1555), Gregorio López underscored that ecclesiastical rather than civic authorities had jurisdiction over questions of heresy.¹⁰⁵ Although there may have been social and political consequences to defining heresy, and although the “juezes seglares” performed the punishments and *autos de fe* stipulated by their Inquisitorial counterparts, in his commentary Gregorio López insisted that the Office of the Inquisition had jurisdiction over all questions heretical. The Alfonsine text itself acknowledged that heretics should be accused “before the bishops or the vicars that they have in their places” [delante de los obispos, o delos vicarios, que tienen sus logares] (7.26.2), but Gregorio López underscored the point in his notes, highlighting the chain of Inquisitorial authority from the Holy See to local Inquisitors.¹⁰⁶ Gregorio López’s gloss re-affirmed the crucial point that civic law must provide a clearly demarcated public space for religious authority to function.

Since the founding of the Spanish Inquisition by papal decree in 1478, a host of *instrucciones* had circulated in manuscript form on the Iberian Peninsula, outlining and codifying the various traditions in canon and medieval Inquisitorial law regarding the execution and jurisdiction of the Holy Office.¹⁰⁷ The publication of Fernando de Valdés’s synthesis (1571) of these various Spanish Inquisitorial manuals, the appearance of several versions of the *Repertorium inquisitorium*, a lexicon for Inquisitors, and Francisco Peña’s edition of Nicola Eimeric’s late fourteenth century *Directorium inquisitorium*, published five times in the final decades of the sixteenth century, underscores the extent to which medieval legal strategies for dealing with ecumenical difference and Christian heterodoxy were central to early modern Iberian debates over conversion, assimilation, and, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, expulsion.¹⁰⁸ Gregorio López’s willingness to highlight the limits of

¹⁰⁴ For a classic take on this history, see Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*.

¹⁰⁵ On the manuscript and early print history of the *Siete partidas*, see Scott and Burn’s Introduction to Alfonso X, *Las siete partidas*, xxiv-v.

¹⁰⁶ The relevant part of Gregorio López’s note reads, “Crimen haeresis est mere’ ecclesiasticum...et Inquisitores per sedem Apostolicam deputati” [The crime of heresy is ecclesiastical in nature...and Inquisitors are granted their authority by the Holy See].

¹⁰⁷ For a collection of excerpts from this body of texts, see Monteserín, *Introducción a la inquisición española*.

¹⁰⁸ Mandosio and Petrus, *Repertorium inquisitorum pravitatis haereticae*; Eimeric, *Directorium inquisitorium*, ed. Francisco Peña; future citations from Eimeric will include page numbers both from a late sixteenth century Latin edition and Francisco Martín’s modern Spanish translation, *El manual de los inquisidores*.

civic authority, the power of a once again active Spanish Inquisition, and the relevance of the influential Iberian scholastic tradition—all emblematic markers of an early modern Iberia supposedly mired in a backward and intolerant Middle Ages—underscores the complex relationship between progressive legal and political traditions and the continued role of older theological models.

As this chapter demonstrates, in early modern Iberia the obligatory, public religion defined by Inquisitorial rhetoric and canon law came to serve reformist and critical ends. Reformers like the Morisco Jesuit Ignacio de Las Casas and humanist Pedro de Valencia employed the categories and language defined by the medieval scholastics and jurists to challenge accepted definitions of heresy, question the importance of faith and ritual in the process of defining orthodoxy, and reformulate the conventional distinctions between ecclesiastical and civic authority. In the process, an innovative and paradoxical definition of religion emerged. This model of religion, which does not respect any clear differentiation between the spiritual and civic arenas and which privileges formal practice rather than private faith, is decidedly unpalatable in the modern West. This tension between what we might call a medieval model of religiosity and secular modernity has motivated a desire to unveil “modern” religiosity and minority political agency—dual forces that modern scholars celebrate as loci of resistance to Inquisitorial intolerance—in late medieval and early modern Iberia. This desire is one of the unspoken impulses behind Marcel Bataillon’s masterpiece on *erasmismo* in sixteenth-century Spanish religious life, or Eugenio Asensio’s examination of medieval mysticism’s importance to post-Tridentine piety, or even my own interest in Morisco popular belief’s co-option by Old Christians in Granada. As a result, it has been difficult to see how Ignacio de Las Casas and Pedro de Valencia’s at once critical and conventional language functioned. The search for *erasmismo* forms part of a project to recuperate post-Tridentine Spanish orthodoxy for modern religiosity, but it obscures the progressive and critical potential of orthodoxy itself. It was possible, in other words, to challenge the definition of heresy in early modern Iberia by employing the tools traditionally used to prosecute heretics. This alternative, fraught, and hitherto unexamined politics of *convivencia*, this paradigm for peaceful assimilation, is the subject of this chapter.

Obligation and Baptism

Depending upon the frame, Ignacio de Las Casas was either one of the last Iberian Arabists with direct links to Muslim life on the Peninsula or one of the first members of the burgeoning field of scholarly Arabic and oriental studies in seventeenth-century Europe. He grew up speaking colloquial Arabic and was educated with other Morisco boys in the Casa de la Doctrina, a short-lived Jesuit school for the New Christians of Granada. But in order to learn *fusha* [formal Arabic], Las Casas traveled to Rome, where oriental studies had begun to

take shape around the Medici Arabic press, the first of its kind anywhere in the world.¹¹⁰ In a series of memorials written to, among others, Pope Clement VIII (d. 1605) and King Phillip III, Las Casas presented himself as an expert on the intricacies of Morisco conversion, assimilation, education, and language. He defended the effort to peacefully integrate the Morisco community and, as we might expect, emphasized the importance of preaching in the Arabic understood by his audience. But unlike earlier sixteenth-century advocates of *accommodatio* such as Hernando de Talavera, Pedro de Alcalá, and others in the New World, the Jesuit Las Casas did not simply cite a pithy Pauline aphorism and then push on to the linguistic business itself. He spilled a great deal of ink justifying his educational project, an increasingly unlikely and unpopular one in early seventeenth-century Spain. Echoing the contention of Nuñez Muley, who famously argued in defense of the Moriscos before the Granadan Royal Audiencia of 1567, Las Casas's claim might be summed up quite simply: the Moriscos were, like all members of the Church, imperfect Christians in need of reform.¹¹¹

Las Casas insisted that the sacrament of baptism fundamentally defined both Old and New Christian identity. The fact that the baptisms of the Iberian Muslims did not occur after extensive preaching and education, as they should have, made the sacrament itself no less binding. Years later, a Morisco might overtly lie, falsely claiming that he was not baptized, but for Las Casas, such dishonesty would neither eliminate him from the ranks of protected Christians nor would it absolve preachers of their responsibility to educate him. The binding nature of baptism, rather than the sincerity of the convert's faith, defined Christian identity for Las Casas. Because the personal faith and doctrinal knowledge of Christians everywhere are universally imperfect, highlighting the religious sincerity or insincerity of particular groups obscured this broader problem. The Moriscos too, according to Las Casas, seemed to recognize the binding nature of ritual, even when the ritual in question was Christian baptism itself:

Baptizáronlos a manadas en las iglesias echándoles agua con hisopos y entendían tan bien lo que recibían que muchos dellos se metían debaxo de los bancos o se cubrían en otras suertes porque no les tocasse el agua del sancto bautismo; y no lo encareço yo porque assí me an certificado muchos testigos de vista que pasó y los mesmos baptizados me an dicho aver sido assí verdad. (9-10)

[They baptized them by the herd in churches, throwing water on them with the baptismal cup. And they so well understood what they received that many hid under the benches or covered themselves however they could, so that the water of holy baptism

¹¹⁰ El Alaoui, *Jésuites, morisques et indiens: Etude comparative des méthodes d'évangélisation de la Compagnie de Jésus d'après les traités de José de Acosta, 1588 et d'Ignacio de las Casas, 1605-1607*, 2 vols. The first volume is Alaoui's study and the second volume is an edition of Las Casas's *memoriales*, which are found in the BL Ms. Add 10.238. All quotations are from El Alaoui's edition of the *memorial* to Pope Clement VIII (hereafter cited parenthetically). See also, El Alaoui's article, "Ignacio de Las Casas, jesuita y morisco," 317-339; Griffin, "'Un muro invisible': Moriscos and Cristianos Viejos in Granada," 133-54.

¹¹¹ Garrad, "The Original Memorial of Don Francisco Nuñez Muley." The text has recently been translated by Vincent Barletta in Muley, *Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audiencia and Chancery Court*.

would not touch them. And I am not exaggerating, since many first-hand witnesses, people who experienced the baptisms themselves, have confirmed this account, saying it to have been true.]

Avoid the holy water, and avert conversion. What sort of heretical crypto-Muslim hides from the Christian drizzle under the nearest church pew? This reaction of the baptized Moriscos points less to their confidence that a pure, private *niyya*, or pious intention, sufficiently guaranteed religious identity than it does to an acknowledgment of the “material efficacy” of ritual, even *Christian* ritual.¹¹² If the clergy in charge had managed to chase down those hidden stalwarts with the last remaining drops of the *hisopo*, then everyone would have emerged Christian. Las Casas emphasized that this manner of baptism was not ideal, for the neophytes never even understood the “falsity of their sect and the necessity of the evangelical law to be saved” [la falsedad de su secta y la necesidad de la ley evangélica para salvarse] (9). But hiding did not qualify as resistance according to Las Casas, and so for those touched with the holy water, the baptisms were binding. Even those “*mesmos bautizados*,” telling their story decades later, seemed to have agreed. They hid from the holy water because they recognized its power. Baptizers and baptized alike take the doctrine of “*ex opere operato*” for granted, acting as if contact with the baptismal water essentially defined Christian identity regardless of the various participants’ contradictory or heretical intentions.¹¹³

Las Casas’s Thomist argument here is that although it was not permissible to force conversion upon a gentile, those that have already been baptized should nevertheless be considered Christians.¹¹⁴ Decades earlier, the participants of a 1525 assembly of theologians in Madrid, which was convened to discuss the *mudéjar* conversions, paradoxically presented a

¹¹² This private intention or sincerity, *niyya*, is what made *taqiyya*, introduced above, thinkable. Without this notion of individual agency, the theological logic of this particular kind of dissimulation would make no sense.

¹¹³ From the scenes described by Las Casas, it seems that the notion of *taqiyya* was not operative for Moriscos during the mass conversions of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Their reactions to the holy water suggest that the famous *fatwa* affirming the permissibility of *taqiyya*, which was sent to the Iberian Moriscos by the Mufti of Oran, does not date to early in the sixteenth century, as the French scholar J. Cantineau argued, but rather to the 1560s, as Mercedes García-Arenal and Mary Elizabeth Perry have maintained. See Cantineau, “Lettre du moufti d’Oran aux musulmans d’andalousie,” 1-17; García-Arenal, *Los Moriscos*, 44-45.

¹¹⁴ Carro, *Teología y los teólogos juristas españoles*, 154. See also Aquinas, *Summa*, *Secunda secundæ*, q. 10, art. 8: “Respondeo dicendum quod infideles sunt qui nunquam susceperunt fidem, sicut gentiles et iudaei; et tales nullo modo sunt ad fidem compellendi ut ipsi credant, quia credere voluntatis est...Alii vero sunt infideles qui quandoque fidem susceperunt, et iam profitentur, sicut haeretici, et quicumque apostatae et tales sunt etiam corporaliter compellendi, ut impleant quod promiserunt, et teneant quod semel susceperunt” [I answer that, among unbelievers there are some who have never received the faith, such as the heathens and the Jews; and these are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will...On the other hand, there are unbelievers who at some time have accepted the faith, and professed it, such as heretics and all apostates: such should be submitted even to bodily compulsion, that they may fulfill what they have promised, and hold what they, at one time, received]. The English translation is slightly altered from <http://newadvent.org/>. Anthony Pagden sharply criticizes Carro’s over-all apologist project in Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 7-8.

similarly Thomist logic, maintaining that baptized Iberian Muslims were Christians and should thus be subject to Inquisition discipline. Las Casas and his predecessors cited as precedent both the Council IV of Toledo—also frequently cited in the debates about the New World—which prohibited forcing Jews to accept baptism, as well as interpretations that left ambiguous the definitions of both coercion and resistance.¹¹⁵ Unlike previous theologians, however, Las Casas used the Council IV of Toledo and this line of Thomist argumentation to highlight the baptismal obligations not only of the Moriscos, but also of the Christian clergy. Las Casas insisted that Christian preachers and friars had a responsibility to educate the Moriscos by preaching to them in their language, opening *colegios* for their children, and addressing their doctrinal questions. Failure of either the Moriscos or the clergy to fulfill these duties required the discipline and reform of both groups, which is what Las Casas sought. The construction of a Christian community was contingent upon this mutually reinforcing obligation, initiated with the holy water of baptism. The flaunting of these obligations for nearly a century did not for Las Casas render the baptisms invalid or unsuccessful. Quite the contrary, the passing of these decades, during which there were several Morisco revolts and also the Council of Trent, allowed Las Casas to link the language of Morisco assimilation to Catholic reform. The Council of Trent’s declarations on baptism, moreover, reaffirmed “ex opere operato,” further buttressing the authority of Catholic practice to create Christian identity, regardless of the beliefs of the participants.¹¹⁶

The affirmation of the material efficacy of ritual and the defense of an inclusive definition of faith, examined in the previous chapter, were part of the process of circumscribing both the valid forms of Christianity and the authority of the legitimizers themselves. The two were, in fact, one and the same. Vitoria and his colleagues defined New World faith such that their scholastic authority would remain intact, and the representatives at Trent defined the legitimate forms of sacraments like baptism such that the Church’s monopoly on the forms and meanings of religious experience might withstand the critical and democratizing arguments of the reformers. They re-affirmed the primacy of public ritual because such ritual was more easily monitored and monopolized than private belief. There existed a centuries old corpus of Inquisitorial law and guides for Inquisitors designed to help the custodians of orthodoxy read this ritual. Yet as Deborah Root has demonstrated, the

¹¹⁵ Redondo, *Antonio de Guevara et l’Espagne de son temps*, 230-31. Redondo cites Alonso de Santa Cruz’s account from the *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V*: “...pues los moros de aquel Reino no hicieron ninguna resistencia cuando los bautizaban por fuerza, que la fe que por fuerza les hicieron tomar, que quisiessen o no, le habían de guardar” [since the moors of that Kingdom mounted no resistance when they baptized them by force, for the faith that by force they made them take, whether they wanted to or not, they must keep].

¹¹⁶ See the Council of Trent decree, “De Baptismo,” which explicitly anathematized the following doctrines: “Those who are baptized are obliged only to have faith but not to observe the whole law of Christ...Baptism given by heretics in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost with the intention of performing what the Church performs, is not true baptism...True and natural water is not necessary for baptism, and therefore the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost.” See, “Baptism,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913), www.newadvent.org/cathen. Also, Aquinas gives this definition of baptism in the *Summa*, Tertia pars, q. 66, a.1: “Baptism is the external ablution of the body, performed with the prescribed form of words.”

Inquisition did not aim to directly control the beliefs of the Catholic flock, the referents represented by the symbolic acts. Rather, the Inquisition extend its authority over the wide range of social practices not previously considered religious but which nonetheless create the conditions for belief.¹¹⁷ An expanded conception of ritual, which came to include cultural markers such as dress, food, and language, for example, broadened Inquisitorial authority to regulate and punish. Daily trivialities, such as modes of washing, work schedules, and social bodily gestures all became regulated as forms of holy practice. “It is of interest to Inquisitors,” Nicola Eimeric wrote at the end of the fourteenth century, to be able to “recognize the particular rituals, clothing, etc. of the distinct groups of heretics.”¹¹⁸ In his commentary on and edition of Eimeric’s text, Francisco Peña conceded that certain forms of heresy do not neatly correspond to such “external signs,” [signa exteriora] but he nevertheless remained confident that “words and deeds” [verbis aut factis] were in most cases sufficient markers of heresy. “Heresy that is hidden,” not obeying this rule of correspondence, Peña acknowledged, “would by definition escape the Inquisitor’s control and be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the divine tribunal” [Initio hoc statuamus velut certissimum et exploratissimum, omnem haeresim per aliqua signa exteriora esse à iudicibus fidei deprehendendam: quia ea quae omnino occulta est, nec ullis prodita indiciis, diuino iudicio relinquatur vindicanda].¹¹⁹ Cataloguing the many practices that do reveal heresy, Peña presented an apology for the Inquisitor’s authority and attempted to dismiss the epistemological difficulty of an unstable relationship between external signs and internal realities.

But even Inquisitors must historicize. In response to those who suggested that it is possible to identify Jews solely by their eating practices, Peña warned against oversimplification. Not all stomachs bear any food or drink, and so these indicators “cannot of themselves be conclusive evidence of heresy or apostasy” [quare ex hoc solo non videtur omnino praesumendum de haeresi vel apostasia]. Peña conceded, on the contrary, that it would be “implausible” [non videtur verisimile] if the sons or descendants of a converted Jew continued abstaining from certain foods for these aforementioned reasons. Why would they abstain if not out of “respect and reverence toward this satanic sect” [nisi ex damnatae sectae reuerentia et approbatione]?¹²⁰ Similar considerations, Peña argued, are applicable to Christians that proceed from other religious sects apart from Judaism. Variation in taste is universal, Peña posited, and therefore a lack of variation across several generations of converts provides evidence of heresy. Although the first generation of *conversos*, after a life of abstaining from pork products, for example, may not have been able to grow physically accustomed to them, their children and children’s children, the *conversos* of Peña’s day rather than Talavera’s, could not legitimately invoke such an excuse. Properly reading the signs required some amount of historical knowledge and contextualized analysis. The *Directorium inquisitorum* and other *instrucciones* for Inquisitors were supposed to provide these additional tools.

¹¹⁷ Root, “Speaking Christian,” 118-34.

¹¹⁸ Eimeric, *Directorium*, 438: “Sane quia multum interest...cognoscere cuius sunt sequaces haeresis, siue sectae, quad ed eorum uita, seu moribus, et ritibus ac signis exterioribus patet clarè...” See also a modern Spanish translation, *El manual*, 157.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 439; *El manual*, 157-8.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 443; *El manual*, 161.

It is true, of course, that the Inquisition attempted to control all aspects of social and religious life, but my point is that such will to regulate is more complicated than it might at first seem. Though many Protestant detractors broadly attacked the theological position that Las Casas and Peña, with opposite agendas in mind, took for granted, perhaps the most famous and influential early modern criticism was Erasmus's. Refusing the idea that the baptism ceremony alone produced Christians, Erasmus argued that the individual first needed to cleanse himself spiritually by expressing contrition for his vices and striving for reform.¹²¹ Though Erasmus's condemnation of the belief in the necessity and efficacy of "ceremony" seems to have put him at odds with more conservative strains in the Catholic Church, his vocabulary in fact echoed distinctions carefully drawn by theoreticians of the Inquisition itself. The *Repertorium Inquisitorum*, first circulated in 1494 and published in several late sixteenth-century editions, differentiated between "caeremonia," fundamentally linked to Jewish and Muslim religious practices designed for display, and "ritus," which in its ideal form was both universally consistent and indistinguishable from Catholic custom and observance.¹²² Before ritual became a "bad word signifying empty conformity" to borrow Mary Douglass's phrase, the "ceremony" of the "judaizante" carried this negative connotation. Even anthropologists formerly invested in the analytical usefulness of the scholarly, as opposed to strictly theological, distinction between "ritual" and "ceremony," have recently become less sure that the dichotomy itself signifies anything but Eurocentrism.¹²³ What is "ritual," after all, if not the outdated robe we claim to shed at Western modernity's door? "Ceremony" was the "ritual" of early modern reformers.

Erasmus's criticism of the potentially empty theatricality of baptism resonates closely with contemporary scholarly assumptions about the tenuous relationship between modernity and religion. A modern, secular reader would likely view the obligation born of baptism, Las Casas's very definition of Christian identity, with a healthy dose of Erasmian skepticism. Is this invocation of religious duty nothing but a juridical sleight of hand? Does not creating the "conditions for experiencing" Christian truth depend upon a cynical manipulation of religious discourse? And does not the fact that a receptive audience accepted the theological defense of holy water's material efficacy reflect the backwardness of both scholastic religiosity and popular piety? At stake here are competing conceptions of ritual. Though Erasmus himself defended the complex and occasionally contradictory middle ground, the more strongly maintained Lutheran view was that the true value of rituals such as baptism is wholly dependent upon the participants' beliefs. Baptism, like all ritual, was essentially an allegorical expression of some deeply held faith. For Protestant reformers, "suscipere fidem," Aquinas's wording for baptism, quite literally meant, "to acknowledge or receive the faith." Without faith there was no sincere conversion.¹²⁴ The *Repertorium Inquisitorum*, on the other hand,

¹²¹ On Erasmus's view of baptism, see Chapter 9, "Baptism and Confirmation," in Payne, *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments*, 155-180.

¹²² See the *Repertorium inquisitorum*, organized alphabetically, as well as the translation by Sala-Moulins, 155. "Judaizing" is the crime of celebrating for the purpose of display.

¹²³ See the whole final chapter, "The Repudiation of Ritual in Early Modern Europe," in Peter Burke's, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, 223-238. Burke quotes a slightly different Douglass phrase from a different source, but the above citation is from Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, 40.

¹²⁴ Ramie Targoff complicates this assumption. See Targoff, 6.

warned that the faith of the participants, which was not a precondition for felicitous conversion, was “sometimes confused with the sacrament of baptism.”¹²⁵ Precise completion of ritual actions, repeated expression of authorized prayer, and disciplined employment of theologically sanctioned argument will *produce* religious identity over time. It is a common mistake, in our age of the humanist subject, to dismiss as obsolete or attack as reactionary this Aristotelian moral behaviorism.

Inquisition historians and Morisco specialists generally frame Peña’s model of interpretation and accompanying will to control in one of two ways: either as a cynical, ultimately politically driven attempt to forcibly assimilate a culturally dissimilar group, or as religiously motivated intolerance, an example of theology at its most backward. The first paradigm marginalizes religion as a historical force, and the latter mistakes a specific instance of religion’s role in violent control for a general rule about any religious observance predicated upon the rigorous regulation of daily life. Management of the mundane cannot itself be the sign that makes intolerance visible, for such highly disciplined existence characterizes the orthodoxy of many sacred systems, not just famously violent and repressive ones. To find examples of such systems, moreover, we need not look all the way back to the monastic rules, as Talal Asad does. Scholars of early modern Spain need only think of Ignatius de Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* to recognize the importance of controlled daily practice for the production of religious belief, piety, and virtue.

To draw this parallel is neither to discredit Loyola nor celebrate Inquisitorial discipline. Staking a juridical, theological, or political claim on the fundamentally binding nature of a broadly defined ritual is not, of itself, a cynical or intolerant move. Loyola’s own Jesuit order famously welcomed New Christians of various stripes throughout the early modern period, providing an assimilatory path despite the fact that its institutional conception of religion very much paralleled the Inquisitorial model. And, as we have already seen, the Inquisition’s arguments about obligation underpinned Ignacio de Las Casas’s reformist positions. In sum, Las Casas’s insistence throughout his various *memoriales* that to be a good Christian was to act like one rather than to believe like one would have been rather unremarkable in his time, however peculiar it might seem to us.

When Las Casas did finally address the Morisco’s Islamic beliefs, the object of polemical derision by European Christian writers from Robert of Ketton to Bernardo de Chinchón, he was profoundly, even provocatively, blasé:

Llámolas dudas y no errores ciertos y asentados en ellos porque ay entre éstos muchos que con la frecuente conversación con los christianos y con oyr, o voluntaria o forçadamente, cosas contra Mahoma y su secta están de suerte que ni son absolutamente moros ni christianos sino como atheos, confiando salvarse con sola la ley natural sin creer a nada de la ley escrita ni de gracia, o por dezillo como es a la letra, diziendo en sus coraçones sólo Dios sabe quién sigue la verdad y se salva... (40)

[I’]ll call them doubts rather than certifiable, adjudicated errors among them because many of these, who because of frequent conversation with Christians or because of hearing, either voluntarily or under duress, things against Muhammad and his sect, are

¹²⁵ “Baptism,” in the *Repertorium inquisitorium*.

of a type neither absolutely Moor nor Christian, but rather like atheists, trusting in salvation only through natural law without believing anything of written law or grace, as the letter says, saying instead in their hearts that only God knows who follows the truth and will be saved...]

Las Casas was quick to point out that these “como atheos” had it wrong. They will not be saved. But having just outlined the heretical “dudas” in question – Jesus is not the son of God, the teachings of the Church are corrupted versions of Jesus’s evangelical doctrine, and the Qur’ān contains the final, sealed truth of all earlier scriptures – his forbearance, to say nothing of his attentiveness to Islamic creed, is striking. The Moriscos are of a type (“están de suerte”) neither absolutely Moor nor Christian, subscribing only to the natural law regulating all rational beings. Although their doubts concerning Christian dogma are the conventional polemical points of contention, the Moriscos do not speak for Islam.¹²⁶ Las Casas insisted that the tricky textuality of revealed Islamic law was not germane to the Morisco problem and, furthermore, not even understood by Christian commentators, who mistook the metaphorical for the literal.¹²⁷ Frequent contact with Christians, both voluntary and compulsory, has emptied out these Morisco hearts of everything but a fatalistic agnosticism. Unable to definitively decide upon a particular creed or institution, Las Casas argued that the Moriscos preferred a shared religious terrain determined only by the affirmation of God’s omnipotence and omniscience.

Iberian reformers such as Las Casas and Pedro de Valencia promoted this image of non-denominational Moriscos because it served their agenda of peaceful assimilation and education. By admitting the Islamic doctrinal points raised by the Moriscos only as innocuous doubts rather than polemical attacks on the doctrinal core of Christian faith, Las Casas effectively redefined both belief and its role in religious identity. Islamic beliefs held by baptized Christians were not properly religious beliefs at all. Like the private doubts of Old Christians, they neither contradicted nor undermined Christian identity. Heretical beliefs had to be irrelevant so that the true essence of religion, which transcends the boundaries of any particular creed, could take center stage. And this notion of religion was, in Las Casas’s view, universal. All people, no matter which written law they professed to follow, participated in this shared “natural law” by commonly assenting to God’s omniscience. Like English and

¹²⁶ On Robert of Ketton and other medieval Christian scholars of Islam, see Chapter One, “Translation, Philology, and Latin Style,” and Chapter Two, “Latin-Christian Qur’ān Translators, Muslim Qur’ān Exegesis, in Burman’s recent book, *Reading the Qur’ān in Latin Christendom*, 12-59. For a later Iberian evangelizer, see Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón, *Antialcorano: Diálogos christianos: conversión y evangelización de moriscos*.

¹²⁷ Correcting the Christian commentators, who focus on the material delights of the Islamic hereafter, Las Casas writes, “sus expositores [los moros] dicen que son metáforas y las entienden y explican metafóricamente pues, quando los que dellos leen sus libros y exposiciones ven que los nuestros les niegan esto tan mordazmente y otras infinitas cosas, y leen las confutaciones que andan en romance, en las quales topan tantas cosas que ni tienen ni dicen los moros ni sus libros” [their commentators say that they are metaphors and they thus extend and explain them metaphorically. When those among them read their books and glosses they see that our commentators deny them this so bitterly, as well as other infinite things, and they read the confutations that circulate in Spanish, in which they find so many things that they neither the Moors nor the books maintain or say] (58).

French Deism, or the “natural religion” that emerged in the middle decades of the seventeenth century and remained popular during the Enlightenment, Las Casas’s “ley natural” established a suitably shared terrain of religious experience.¹²⁸

Although we tend to see this shared terrain of universal religiosity as a product of Protestant reform and, in later periods, progressive trends in seventeenth-century humanism, I maintain that there is an Iberian genealogy of this argument for commonality. Ignacio de Las Casas’s rhetoric of natural law echoes, for example, de Soto’s pared down conditions for Christian faith amongst un-baptized New World indigenous people: Like de Soto, Las Casas argued that individuals must simply acknowledge the omnipotence of a judging God to be counted amongst the Christian flock. Although Anthony Pagden has suggested that members of the Jesuit order, such as José de Acosta and Francisco Suárez, carried on the critical project of their Dominican predecessors, no scholar has thoroughly traced the relationship between this scholastic line of inquiry focused on the New World and similar modes of criticism engaged with the question of the Moriscos. The post-Tridentine reform pursued by Las Casas, himself a Jesuit who, for reasons that remain unclear, ended up sharing a surname with one of his potential models, Bartolomé de Las Casas, owes more to the Peninsular tradition of New World criticism than Northern European *erasmismo*.

In his *Tratado acerca de los Moriscos de España* (1606), Pedro de Valencia, like Las Casas, recognized the importance of re-defining Muslim infidelity in terms of Christian doubt.¹²⁹ But unlike Las Casas, who marshaled contemporary accounts of Morisco belief to defend his forgiving portrayal of the recent converts, Valencia candidly acknowledged that describing the Moriscos as “doubtful and frail” [dudodos y flacos] (100) members of the Church was a useful fiction for social reformers and evangelizers alike. Why, he asked, should the Church punish and coerce whole populations of tentative converts for clinging to their old beliefs and customs when it was possible to represent these people not as dangerous heretics, but rather as “indifferent individuals, without bringing to bear evidence of infidelity” [indiferentes sin que induzcan evidencia de infidelidad] (99)? In the same passage, Valencia invoked early Church history and cited a theological defense for this fiction of indifference, this “disimulación o dispensación.” He claimed that even the “Holy Apostles, by divine dispensation and economy of the Holy Spirit, dissimulated for a long time in the Church with the frail converts from Judaism, who along with the light wanted to engage and conserve the shadows of the law, and still kept its ceremonies after baptism” [Santos Apóstoles, por divina dispensación y economía de Espíritu Santo, disimuló mucho tiempo en la Iglesia con los flacos convertidos del judaísmo, que juntamente con la luz querían entretener y conservar las sombras de la ley y guardaban todavía las ceremonias de ella después del bautismo] (99). Just as the Church fathers pretended to ignore Jewish heterodoxy so that the new converts would not too quickly suffer punishment and reject Christ out of resentment, Valencia argued that Iberian theologians should similarly greet Morisco *taqiyya* with a sanctioned form of Christian theological dissimulation (80). The fiction of not discerning heterodoxy would avert the Inquisitorial penalties that along with differences in

¹²⁸ Keane, *Christian Moderns*, 87; Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 40.

¹²⁹ Valencia, *Tratado acerca de los moriscos de España*. There are three different manuscript versions, BNE Mss 7845 (ff. 2-42v), 7845 (ff 45-102), and 8888, which I have also consulted, though subsequent parenthetical references are to Cañal’s printed edition.

manners, speech, and dress re-enforced the “distinción,” as Valencia called it, between Moriscos and Old Christians. According to Valencia, eliminating these marks of distinction through a host of measures, including resettlement [disperción] and officially encouraged inter-marriage [permisión], would eventually produce an integrated and faithful population of Christians rather than a hierarchy of Old and New Christians.

Valencia’s argument about the different goals and uses of mendacity echoes not only the church fathers but also, again, the instructions to Inquisitors, which argue that dishonesty is one of many tools for interviewing the accused. It is necessary to distinguish, Peña contended in the section of his commentary on Eimeric that treated strategies for eliciting confessions from the accused, between different kinds of prohibited mendacity and deceit as a tool for arriving at the truth.¹³⁰ While Valencia was primarily concerned with theological and juridical strategies for concealing the crimes of heretics, for redefining the crimes themselves, Peña articulated a method for uncovering them. But both defended the untruthfulness of those in positions of power as a tool of the common good, and both believed that such mendacity would result in the reincorporation of sinners into the Christian community.

Valencia insisted that constantly singling out recent converts for punishment, even when their heresy warranted such punishment, was not a tool of assimilation but an obstacle to it. If it became absolutely necessary to reprimand certain Moriscos for the flagrant flouting of orthodox norms, then Valencia proposed a “tribunal seglar” (118) rather than an Inquisitorial trial. Although Valencia and the Office of the Inquisition shared the goals of transforming and regulating Morisco religious life, by proposing an alternate, explicitly non-religious institution of enforcement Valencia tried to buttress his fiction of indifference against the prevailing worry of a ubiquitous, defiant, and veiled heterodoxy among recent converts. While the Inquisition tried to transform daily life into a form of religious ritual in order to extend its own authority over such heterodoxy, Valencia attempted to treat irregular religious beliefs and practices as a civic matter punishable by “fines or ordinary penalties” [penas pecunarias y molestias ordinarias] (118). Las Casas argued that forms of practice rather than matters of belief should define religion, but Valencia took a different approach, maintaining that even some of these ritual practices, particularly those that marked heterodoxy, should not be punished as religious. Citing Plato’s advice for fashioning republican unity, Valencia implied that resolving the Morisco problem would require persuading Old Christians, “even through deception” [aunque sea con mentira], that Old and New Christians were all “citizens of a single republic, brothers of one blood and lineage, and native to that same land” [ciudadanos de una república que todos son hermanos de una sangre y linaje, y naturales de aquella misma tierra] (126). It was clear that establishing this shared civic sentiment among Moriscos and Old Christians demanded a redefinition of religion, one that would transform how ecumenical boundaries were plotted, perceived, and experienced.

Valencia acknowledged that this transformation would take time. He called for another delay in the strict regulation of Morisco religious and social life similar to the several dispensations granted by the Spanish crown over the course of the sixteenth century. Yet unlike the previous allowances, which were designed to provide evangelizers and educators the chance to work, Valencia framed his plea for patience as but one feature of a broader plan for social re-organization. As his focus on a shared “sangre y linaje” demonstrates, he

¹³⁰ Eimeric, *Directorium*, 435; *El manual*, 155-56.

imagined transforming Iberian society by directly challenging the entrenched *limpieza de sangre* statutes, which excluded converts from precisely the institutions, networks, and families that would have most effectively stimulated these New Christians' integration. By assimilating Moriscos into these various communities, thus providing them with the opportunity for economic improvement and social acceptance, their religious dissimulation would become an unnecessary defense mechanism, an atrophying remnant of a disappearing social reality. While the Jesuit Las Casas focused, somewhat traditionally, on the role of newly qualified Christian preachers in educating both Moriscos and Old Christians, the humanist Valencia pursued a similar reformist agenda by addressing more broadly the lived conditions of the populations involved.

Despite their differing attempts to reshape the debate over the Moriscos, Valencia and Las Casas argued, along with their more conservative opponents, that previous coerced baptisms remained binding. Yet at the same time, they both pointed out that recent converts did on the whole profess Christianity and confess their sins. As proponents of expulsion saw it, the problem was not lack of Morisco participation in Catholic religious life, but rather the new converts' unwillingness to cease supplementing such orthodox practice with elements from their previous religion. Las Casas argued that this purposeful confusion of religious traditions paralleled the many other kinds of folk syncretism common in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Moriscos simply represented one instance of a more general challenge facing religious reformers in post-Tridentine Spain. Valencia too was provocatively casual in the face of such heterodoxy, but his solution focused on the social and political rather than the religious. *Taqiyya* might, according to Valencia, be a "diabólica traza" [diabolic plan] (80), but because he saw such duplicity as the result of faulty royal policy rather than the cause of assimilation's failure, it was not particularly threatening. And regardless of the causes behind Morisco dissimulation, Valencia recognized, much like insightful modern historians of the Hispanic world, the impossibility of verifying an individual's private beliefs: "Whatever they may declare and deny," Valencia wrote matter-of-factly of the Moriscos, "we shall never be able to be assured of their faith" [nunca nos habemos de poder asegurar de su fe, por más que digan y desdigan] (80).¹³¹ This apparently intractable problem of Morisco dissimulation did not for Valencia provide a clear motive for expulsion, as it did for the conservative Catholic scholars Jaime Bleda or Damián Fonesca. Instead, the reality of such dissimulation underscored the need to transform the social and political conditions that made heterodox behavior and belief possible. Valencia wagered that if Moriscos were permitted or even encouraged to truly and completely pass as Old Christians, enjoying all the appropriate respect and opportunities of that status, then over time the gap between imitation and identity would disappear.

My principal point here is that simply tracing the legacy of *erasmismo* in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Iberian reform movements reveals an incomplete genealogy of political criticism and religious renewal.¹³² Although the Erasmus-influenced scholarly tradition of Biblical humanism remained strong in Salamanca and elsewhere well into the

¹³¹ See also Kamen, "Strategies of survival: minority cultures in the western Mediterranean," 207: "It is, in short, difficult to find out what Spaniards believed, and more convincing to see how they behaved."

¹³² This is one of the problems with Canseco, *El humanismo después de 1600: Pedro de Valencia*.

seventeenth century—Pedro de Valencia, for example, studied with the Hebraist Arias Montano and Las Casas’ Jesuits were famously adept students and teachers of Hebrew language—Erasmus’s rhetoric of Christian piety and personal sincerity was markedly absent from Valencia and Las Casas’s program for Morisco assimilation and post-Tridentine reform. Personal piety, they implied in different ways, was a result rather than a prerequisite or method of reform. The conditions of communal life, obligations of ritual practice, and reality of miscegenation would produce Christian piety rather than reflect it.

New World and Medieval Mediterranean Exemplarity

As the previous chapter argued, the crisis of Spanish political and religious authority in the New World stimulated a reformulation of the traditional Thomist categories of ecumenical difference. Theologians and evangelizers alike realized that it was at times both ethically and evangelically practical to emphasize the commonalities amongst American indigenous peoples, Mediterranean Muslims, and Iberian Old Christians. Ignacio de Las Casas and Pedro de Valencia were clearly indebted to scholars like Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, and Bartolomé de Las Casas, whose various theories of natural commonality underpinned the suggestion that social mixing would succeed in producing a singular population of Christians. In this section, I examine the way that Las Casas and Valencia employed debates about and histories of evangelization abroad in their arguments for reform and assimilation. Las Casas often invoked the commitment to education and language learning that he thought characterized itinerant preachers in the New World, and he presented these preachers as examples for Morisco evangelizers to follow. Valencia, on the other hand, employed stories of miraculous mass conversions in Asia in a more skeptical and sophisticated manner; he at once doubted their veracity and marshaled them to his ends. Las Casas and Valencia’s interest in the global history of peaceful conversion and the local history of social reform does not fit neatly into narratives of modern tolerance or pluralism. To the contrary, their approaches highlight the instability of the line between the religious and secular spheres, the founding dichotomy upon which such narratives have been constructed.

When Spanish and French missionaries in the New World and China encountered the radical difference of American and Asian religious and civic life, they at first struggled to incorporate such alterity into Old World religious systems. Yet some evangelizers soon realized that emphasizing the resemblances between Christianity and its various others, rather than harping on the differences, was at times an expedient evangelical tactic.¹³³ Protestant detractors were, of course, also quick to pounce on certain parallels, gleefully highlighting the similarities between Catholic mass and American cannibalism. But Catholic critics too, such as the Jansenist Blaise Pascal, ruthlessly mocked Jesuit *accommodatio*.¹³⁴ Dissimulating similitude, to use Pedro de Valencia’s vocabulary, was a fraught theological strategy. Yet as Alain Badiou has recently demonstrated, formulating a compelling theory of similitude and its

¹³³ BUS Mss. 169 and 170, examined in detail in Chapter Four, contain collections debating Jesuit missionary practice in China. Franciscan and Dominican missionaries took issue with the Jesuit insistence that certain Chinese worship practices and vocabulary were social, rather than religious in nature. Only those practices, vocabulary, or beliefs with sufficient parallels in Catholicism could be considered properly religious in this universal sense. Certifying the universality of natural religion thus becomes a search for Christianity among the Aztecs, Muslims, or Chinese.

¹³⁴ See in particular the fifth letter in Pascal, *Les lettres provinciales*, 42-54.

limits—negotiating a definition of universalism—is a project that has captured scholarly imaginations from Saint Paul to the present.¹³⁵ Shaping the rhetoric of universalism was to wield interpretation in the form of ethical authority.

In the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century Hispanic world, addressing the question of Christianity’s capacity for inclusiveness necessarily entailed treating the recent history of New World evangelization. Even so, the extent to which Las Casas grounded his arguments concerning Morisco assimilation specifically in New World history is striking. To make the Morisco communities a “better Indies” [mejores Indias] (50), Las Casas suggested that Iberian clergy needed to import the techniques of assimilation and conventions of conversion from the Americas.¹³⁶ Because certifying the universality of natural religion became, in practice, a search for Christianity among the Aztecs, Muslims, or Chinese, there was a need for extensive knowledge of foreign languages and familiarity with different cultures. Las Casas told his readers that New World preachers spent the better part of their lives learning Nahuatl, Quechua, and Yucatec, patiently educating and baptizing oftentimes defiant indigenous people: “they consider well-employed the years they spend righteously learning new and varied barbarous languages in order to convert one soul, and this is very great charity and zeal” [dan por bien empleados los años que gastan sanctamente en depender nuevas y varias lenguas bárbaras por convertir un alma y es muy gran charidad y zelo] (39). The Franciscans, Dominicans, and Benedictines of the New World did not grow disappointed or fatalistic at the scope of their work in the Americas, but this enthusiasm abroad left the Moriscos “abandoned” [desamparados] back home. Reiterating the importance of baptism for consolidating the obligation, both of the Christian clergy and the new converts, Las Casas pointed to the “the Indies, where so many are baptized...See the histories” [Indias donde baptizan tantos...Véanse las historias] (34). Recent scholarship on precisely these histories has demonstrated that the form of this conversion project, including the very nature of the Christianity to which indigenous Americans began to subscribe, was shaped by the practices and beliefs of the evangelized as much as the evangelizers. The precise cross-linguistic definitions of the supposedly shared vocabulary were hotly negotiated and often ambiguous.¹³⁷ Las Casas seemed not only comfortable with such *accommodatio* in the New World, but proposed a parallel model of flexible assimilation on the Iberian Peninsula.

The “abandonment” of Old World responsibility regarding the Moriscos was a common trope by the end of the sixteenth century. After so much scholarly effort had been expended debating imperial authority in the Americas, and so much evangelical energy spent converting the indigenous people there or elsewhere abroad, lamenting the feeble state Iberian of political and religious unity was not uncommon. Valencia, joining Las Casas in bemoaning the lack of attention to Morisco catechism, saw arrogance as the motivating force. Quoting a refrain from one of Aesop’s fables, Valencia challenged evangelizers to repeat their feats at home:

¹³⁵ See Chapter One, “Paul: Our Contemporary,” in Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 4-15.

¹³⁶ On “les Indes de l’intérieur,” see Vincent, “Les Jésuites et ‘les Indes,’” 275. On transatlantic research more generally, see García-Arenal, “Moriscos e Indios,” 153-75, and note 142 below.

¹³⁷ Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 184. For an older account, see Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*.

Dícese un refrán antiguo: *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus*. Por este cuento jactábase uno de ligereza excesiva en saltar y en esta razón decía que había hecho en Rodas un salto de muchos pasos, mucho mayor de lo que era creíble. Contradecían los presentes y él porfiaba afirmándose en su cuento. Salió un hombre avisado y díjole las palabras del refrán: "No hay para qué porfiar; haced cuenta que estáis en Rodas y dad aquí otro salto y creeros hemos." Esto se nos puede decir a los españoles: Que demos aquí el salto que en la China y en el Japón y que hagamos las maravillas en nuestra patria que se cuentan que hacemos en provincias tan extrañas y lejanas. (115)

[An old refrain says: "Here is Rhodes, jump here." The story goes that someone was boasting with excessive flippancy about his jumping ability, and he said that he had achieved a jump of many lengths in Rhodes, a distance far greater than what was believable. Those present disputed, and he insisted on his story. An astute man got up and told him the words of the refrain: "There is no need to insist; pretend you're in Rhodes and complete another jump, and we will have to believe you." This can be said to us Spaniards: Let us complete the jump here that we achieve in China and Japan, and let us realize the miracles in our fatherland that we are said to realize in such strange and distance provinces."]

Valencia, like the "hombre avisado" in his anecdote, challenged the Spanish people, who have reached "to the ends of the orient and the occident, to Chile, China, and Japan," [hasta los fines del oriente y del occidente, a Chile, a la China y al Japón] (115), to prove that the self-congratulatory story of successful Christianization abroad was more than the tall tale of a boastful people. If it was so easy to convert people in Asia and the New World, then why not simply repeat the process on the Iberian Peninsula? Valencia at once suggested that the reports of mass conversions abroad were inventions and used the power of such stories to motivate actual reform at home. He did not, like Las Casas, uncritically invoke the "miracles" performed by itinerant preachers, but rather acknowledged the web of invention and fantasy surrounding all information about distant events and peoples: Let us repeat those miracles, Valencia skeptically wrote, that "we are said to realize" [que se cuentan que hacemos]. And let us address ourselves as we address the arrogant athlete, "pretending" [hacer cuenta] that the Iberian Peninsula is Rhodes. Valencia's two uses of the verb *contar*, "to tell," highlight the power and danger of fiction according to early modern literary convention. Authors, like the long jumper or Spanish evangelizers, can represent idealized or distorted worlds, and these representations can stimulate an audience to different kinds of imitation. The story of mass conversions abroad may be no more credible than the proud jumper's account of his leap at Rhodes, but the importance of the former as a foundation of Spanish political and military intervention allowed Valencia to hold his countrymen to their own standard of miraculous success.

Las Casas and Valencia's comparisons between the struggle to educate and integrate Moriscos on the one hand, and the conversions of Asia and the New World on the other hand, are remarkable not only because they invert the traditional use of Old World exemplarity for making sense of an increasingly global reality. Their arguments were also tactful reformulations of the much more hard-line approach of proponents of Morisco expulsion and conservative post-Tridentine theologians. Drawing a parallel between evangelization abroad

and the “otras Indias” of the Old World was a compelling tactic for several different ideological camps.¹³⁸ Echoing the sentiment of famous advocates for expulsion, such as the conservative catholic scholars Juan de Ribera, Aznar Cardona, Jaime Bleda, and Damián Fonesca, the anonymous author of the *Discurso antiguo en materia de moriscos*, wrote:

Andamos a convertir los infieles del Japón, de la China y de otras partes y provincias remotísimas que aunque es obra muy buena y muy santa parece que es como si uno que tiene la casa llena de víboras y escorpiones no pusiera cuidado en limpiarla dellos, y dejando en tan evidente peligro a su mujer e hijos se fuere a cazar leones o avestruces a Africa por tenerlo por caza mayor, más real o más cierta.¹³⁹

[We go to convert the unbelievers of Japan, China, and other places and far-flung provinces, which although a very good and holy undertaking, seems like someone who has his house full of vipers and scorpions takes no care to rid it of them, and leaving such an obvious danger to his wife and children, goes to hunt lions or ostriches in Africa, taking it to be a greater pursuit, more real and more certain.]

For Las Casas, the central challenge was to emulate at home the sense of Christian charity and obligation characterizing the evangelical project abroad, and for Valencia the ultimate goal was social reform. But for expulsion apologists, the hubris of going off to Japan, China, or some other remote place in search of a greater political and evangelical test had left the familial hearth threatened, as it were, by an infestation of “vipers and scorpions.” Quotations of this sort have sometimes been enlisted as evidence of an increasingly virulent and uncompromising early modern Spanish intolerance, one whose harvest is finally reaped with the early seventeenth-century Morisco expulsions. I will have more to say about tolerance and intolerance immediately below, but in order to understand the ways in which Las Casas and Valencia inhabited and reformulated the apologist argument, it is first necessary to focus on some of their shared assumptions.

First, Las Casas, Valencia, and this passage’s reactionary author presume that their respective audiences found the link between Iberian and imperial authority persuasive. Many scholars, most prominently Anthony Grafton in *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*, have written about the extent to which classical geographies, Biblical stories, or even medieval travel literature shaped perceptions of American alterity. And others have focused on the ways in which early modern European religious and political conflict over-determined representation of the New World and Far East.¹⁴⁰ But very little has been written about the possibility that the debates and experiences defining the first hundred years of Spanish and French expansion might have actually shaped early modern discussions of Old World issues, such as the Morisco question.¹⁴¹ Those historians who do explore the relationship between the evangelization of Granada and Mexico, for example, tend to presume that the former provides a model for the latter, when in fact the opposite may also be true, especially in the late

¹³⁸ Adriano Prospero, “Otras indias,” 205-234.

¹³⁹ Reproduced in Janer, *Condición social de los moriscos de España*, 266-68.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, the extensive bibliography on Montaigne’s essay, “Des cannibales.”

¹⁴¹ Barbara Fuchs hints at some of these issues in her book, *Mimesis and Empire*.

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁴² This was certainly the case for Las Casas and Valencia.¹⁴³ Second, Las Casas and the author of the *Discurso antiguo en materia de moriscos* agreed that the situation of the Moriscos, even after forced resettlements of the final quarter of the sixteenth century, was terribly problematic and ultimately unsustainable. Perhaps most strikingly, both cast a large share of the blame on the actions and attitudes of the Christian clergy. Thus, reformers like Las Casas and Valencia reformulated rather than directly challenging some of the most important presuppositions buttressing the argument for Morisco expulsion. They acknowledged the problem in terms largely fixed by the apologists for expulsion. Like such apologists, they highlighted the persuasiveness of employing Spain's extra-European, imperial history as a model for thinking through the Morisco situation. The question of responsibility was fundamental for all sides, and two of the exemplary loci for determining the nature and limits of this responsibility were, for Las Casas and Valencia, the New World and Asia.

Throughout his *memoriales*, Las Casas also often cited a number of authoritative Old World, sources, which included, unsurprisingly, the Councils of Vienne (1311-1312) and Basel (1431-1449). The decrees approved in these gatherings were precedent for the kind of Arabic study Las Casas thought vital for preaching to the Moriscos and peacefully assimilating them into Catholic Iberia. The delegates at the Council of Vienne, under pressure from Ramón Llull and Raymundo de Peñafort, whom Las Casas cited, mandated the creation of scholarly chairs for Arabic study in European universities such as Salamanca, Paris, and Rome.¹⁴⁴ Arabic study in Latin Christendom had never before taken any kind of institutionalized or systematized form outside of Toledo, and although the directive was only partially followed, the Council of Vienne was an important moment in the history of Arabic study in the Latin West. Las Casas thought that it also served as a fundamental precedent for the peaceful assimilation he was defending nearly four centuries later. The Council of Basel, as Las Casas pointed out, also unambiguously called for the education of preachers competent in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Chaldean. The goal of the council was to re-establish Catholic unity after years of jockeying for authority between the Pope and different factions of powerful bishops. For Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia, two participants in and later historians of the gathering, the theme of Christian harmony was intimately connected to religious harmony more generally, for the threat of Turkish Islam was, by the mid-fifteenth century, looming menacingly large.¹⁴⁵ Cusa's response, in the tradition of Peter Abelard's dialogue and Llull's *Libre del gentil e los tres savis*, was the *Pax fidei*. Segovia, for his part, imagined a "contraferentia," or conference of the faiths, where religious representatives of

¹⁴² Aranda, *Moriscos e indios*; Aranda, *Organización de la iglesia en el reino de Granada y su proyección en Indias, siglo XVI*; Vincent, *Minorías y marginados en la España del siglo XVI*.

¹⁴³ Villanueva, *El Problema Morisco*, 121. Villanueva also mentions Juan Palafox and Antonio Sobrino in this context.

¹⁴⁴ Raymundo de Peñafort, the important late thirteenth-century Dominican friar, helped organize the evangelical effort in Aragon and North Africa. In the biographical account of his conversion and education, Llull mentions Peñafort as the one who encouraged him to study Arabic in Aragon rather than head to Paris or Rome for scholastic education.

¹⁴⁵ See Badia and Bonner, *Ramón Llull: vida, pensamiento y obra literaria*; Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islamico*; Nederman, *Worlds of difference*.

opposing religions would meet and reach an accord in a kind of fifteenth-century interfaith dialogue.¹⁴⁶

It is no coincidence that Ramón Llull, Raymundo de Peñafort, Nicholas of Cusa, and Juan de Segovia are precisely the names often mentioned during contemporary scholarly discussions of “toleration” in medieval and early modern Christendom.¹⁴⁷ Although some specialists have pointed out that Llull and Cusa, for example, at various points in their public lives justified violent confrontation in clearly religious terms, some of their texts display a willingness to entertain or employ the suggestion of religious parity. Las Casas seems to have been surveying the very terrain upon which Cary Nederman and others would eventually construct this genealogy of modern tolerant attitudes, which passes not only through Llull and Cusa, but also Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de Las Casas. But unlike Nederman, who is interested in tracing the medieval pre-history of a supposedly tolerant pluralism, Ignacio de Las Casas synthesized examples both from the late Middle Ages and the New World to justify his agenda of assimilation. Yet if a precondition for this Western model of tolerance is the recognition of that which is shared across cultural or ecumenical lines, then Las Casas has more in common with scholars like Nederman than it would first appear. Like Enlightenment deists, early scholars of Comparative Religion, and even secular proponents of American multiculturalism, Las Casas carefully de-emphasized the importance of particularly divisive religious beliefs. But unlike these other writers, he argued that the particularities of private belief were irrelevant precisely because the public ritual was obligatory. His was an evangelical agenda, rather than a secular one, even though both hinge upon parallel notions of commonality. Iberian debates over Spanish authority and violence in the New World are often celebrated as the link between these two agendas, as the moment of transition from medieval scholasticism to the secular law of nations. But this meta-narrative of tolerance obscures the ways in which communally observed ritual code and religious law might serve critical ends after the Middle Ages.

Unlike the Jesuit theologian Las Casas, who promoted assimilation as an issue of primarily religious concern, the humanist Pedro de Valencia participated in debates over Morisco conversion, ritual, and belief in order to create and defend a sense of civic unity. Although he championed peaceful assimilation against proponents of expulsion, Valencia’s defense hinged upon making religious coercion appear as civic brotherhood. As a general rule, wrote Valencia, religious diversity was “desconveniente” [inconvenient] to such brotherhood, commerce and peace, yet he acknowledged that if the Greeks and Romans, because of their vast and diverse empires “tolerated many [false faiths] as long as they did not impede public peace” [todas las toleraron como no siguiesen opiniones que impidiesen la paz pública] (78), then perhaps Spain could abide a bit of heresy too. He did not argue that tolerance was the foundation of public peace, as a modern scholar like Nederman might, but rather suggested that a clearly circumscribed forbearance was at times a necessary evil, a way of temporarily tolerating—in the sense of bearing an unfortunate burden—the reality of ecumenical difference.¹⁴⁸ This stance of course begs the question of what Valencia meant by

¹⁴⁶ Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 145.

¹⁴⁷ Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*; Creppell, *Toleration and Identity*; Laursen and Nederman, eds., *Beyond the Persecuting Society*.

¹⁴⁸ Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion*.

the “public peace” he was so dedicated to maintaining. For while he clearly envisioned his “tribunal seglar,” for example, as a tool for establishing and preserving this peaceful public sphere, such a tribunal was also a way of redefining and regulating religious practice and belief. The state, Valencia argued, should assume some of the coercive power previously monopolized by the Office of the Inquisition, not to separate church and state but rather to present the impression of such a separation. As modern scholars, such as Winnifred Fallers Sullivan have demonstrated, allowing the state to determine the boundaries of religious orthodoxy continues to present a complicated set of problems that apologists for both secularization and the separation between church and state are loath to address.¹⁴⁹ Valencia, however, was strikingly candid with his learned and royal audiences regarding the centrality of his various enabling fictions—that the Moriscos were indifferent rather than defiant, that evangelization was both successful abroad and reproducible at home, and that secular courts treated only non-religious infractions—to his vision for reform.

At first retrospective glance, Las Casas and Valencia’s goals of peaceful assimilation and social and political reform seem to be precisely the sort of agenda Nederman and others might celebrate as part of an early modern pre-history of contemporary tolerance, secular democracy, and religious freedom. I argue instead that Las Casas and Valencia provide two different but related models for making visible the exclusionary nature of such apparently desirable modern ideals as tolerance and freedom. Las Casas’s insistence upon the ethical potential of religious obligation, the practical promise of ritual efficacy, and possibility that daily practice might shape the beliefs and commitments of a pious populous highlight the poverty of our current presuppositions concerning the relationship among religion, modernity, and interpretive authority. Valencia’s candid portrayal of the fictions buttressing secularization, a process that humanist scholars have only recently begun to question, underscores the extent to which such fictions have become almost totally obscured from view in the present. Las Casas’s redefinition of religion and Valencia’s enabling fictions can help us see the range of interpretive possibilities that the combined force of a reactionary, hierarchical Spain and an emergent European modernity have systematically precluded.

The Convert, the Author, and the Improvisation of Power

The vehemence with which some Iberian scholars maligned the Moriscos and lobbied for their expulsion at the beginning of the seventeenth century reflected an increasingly widespread conviction that this minority of several hundred thousand people was still actively contemptuous of Christianity. Where Las Casas and Valencia saw doubts and weakness, Jaime Bleda and other recognized only haughty disdain. Unlike Bleda’s inflexible position, the arguments of one famous proponent of expulsion, the longtime Bishop of Valencia Juan de Ribera, provide a more sophisticated counterpoint to Las Casas and Valencia’s accommodationist stances. Ribera, who studied canon law and Thomist theology under disciples of Francisco de Vitoria in Salamanca, began his career in the Church hierarchy as the Bishop of Badajoz in 1562. Establishing himself there as a committed reformer, Ribera instituted regular visits to his diocese, strictly oversaw expenses and donations, and attempted to confront and reform the diverse forms of popular religiosity that characterized not only his own diocese but Spain as a whole. Yet even while diligently implementing this Tridentine

¹⁴⁹ Fallers Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*.

program, Ribera often delivered sermons emphasizing the importance of silent prayer and internal piety, two potentially controversial forms of devotion in mid and late sixteenth-century Spain. Silent and solitary connections with God were considered suspect because of their similarities with Protestant priorities and religious practice. According to Benjamin Ehlers's account of Ribera's education and early professional experience, he avoided identification with Protestant heretics in Spain only because of auspicious coincidences of formation and association, for his methods and concerns, coupled with dubious colleagues, would have surely attracted greater suspicion.¹⁵⁰

When Ribera began his forty-two year tenure as the Bishop of Valencia in 1569, he faced the dual challenge of winning favor with the local Valencian elite, comprised of cathedral and university officials and powerful city leaders, and working to integrate a sizeable and still isolated Valencian Morisco population. He expanded the Church's presence in Morisco rural areas by establishing new parishes and financing sermons and visitations by a host of different religious orders, especially the Jesuits. After several decades of only limited success, Ribera wrote his own teaching text, the *Catechismo para instruccion de los nuevamente convertidos de moros* (1599), which reflected some of his growing cynicism about the prospects of Morisco assimilation.¹⁵¹ Ehlers argues that by the end of the century, Ribera was dutifully going through the motions of attempting to integrate and educate the Moriscos primarily in order to demonstrate to the heir to the crown, the future Philip III, the futility of assimilation and the inevitability of expulsion.

While Las Casas proposed Morisco and clerical obligation as the path toward religious unity and Valencia framed the challenge in social and political terms, Ribera pursued solutions aimed at transforming individual Moriscos' relationships with God. Sermons championed the importance of personal reflection upon the meaning of the Eucharist, for example, and the presence of parish priests was supposed to encourage regular confession. Ribera increasingly saw his evangelization project as a failure in large part because he was unable to stimulate a sense of Christian piety in his Morisco parishioners, unable to frame their personal connections to the divine in Christian spiritual terms. This emphasis on the personal and private may have prematurely doomed Ribera's project. Ehlers observes that Moriscos under Ribera's jurisdiction routinely "described their religious life in terms of actions rather than unchanging, essential beliefs" and, as I have been arguing over the course of this chapter, presuming that this ritual-based model of religious life is *merely* strategic implies the existence of a more profound religious sincerity, one that Ribera was decidedly unable to foment amongst his Morisco flock. Ehlers suggests that Moriscos may have emphasized their actions rather than their beliefs in order to minimize their crimes before Inquisitorial courts, and he provides the example of Pedro Barcaco, a fifty-year old Valencian who in 1579 confessed to fasting during Ramadan but insisted that such rituals were not religious. According to Barcaco, they were merely "what moriscos do." Ribera, Ehlers, and the Office of the Inquisition presume that fasting during Ramadan must be pregnant with

¹⁵⁰ On Ribera's early career, see the Prologue, "The Formation of a Tridentine Bishop," in Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos*, 1-8.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

spiritual meaning and motivated by religious feeling, that is cannot be simply what Muslims do. They all insist that Barcaco lied.¹⁵²

Las Casas would perhaps have more credulously read Barcaco's comment as evidence of indifference rather than duplicity, an invitation to obligate Christian rather than Muslim fasts. And Valencia would likely have argued that Barcaco indeed fasted during Ramadan because that is what Moriscos did, but only because they lived isolated and scorned. If Moriscos were better integrated into Old Christian life, they would no longer identify as a separate community defined by participation in such communal rituals. The different possible conclusions drawn from Barcaco's comment highlight some of the broader questions examined in this chapter: How did early modern theologians distinguish between the religious and civic spheres? What was the relationship between the Catholic reformation and Morisco assimilation? Is it possible to know what another believes and, if so, does it matter? This final question draws early modern Iberian debates about Morisco assimilation into a broader discussion about the religious stakes of reading and interpretation.

Although in this chapter, like Chapter One, focused on theological arguments concerning the relative importance of religious sincerity and obligatory ritual, my understanding of this issue has been shaped by literary scholarship on the accessibility of authorial intention and the importance of form to the construction of meaning. Debates about whether the author is dead have informed my thinking about converts and conversion, and the theological arguments examined over these first two chapters will shape my investigation of reading and philology in the coming two chapters. The general problem of how to understand the relationship between signs and referents, and how to historicize the scholarly authority to parse this relationship, is reflected in the disciplinary histories of both literary and religious studies. As literary scholars have moved ever further away from privileging the canonical text and its genius author, anthropologists of religion have also begun to question the relationship between religious ritual and the believing subject.¹⁵³ Because sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts themselves tend to resist easy generic and linguistic categories, the Renaissance has been a fruitful place of inquiry for the New Historicist critics who have driven this re-orientation. Stephen Greenblatt, for example, has famously argued that Renaissance authors maintained the complex illusion of a stable and integral self, one fashioned through layers of representation and reference, while in fact authorship and identity remained in constant and unsettling flux. Scholars of early modern imperialism have drawn on Greenblatt's language of "self-fashioning" to argue that the English, French, and Spanish held a monopoly on this capacity for improvisation. Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, has suggested that Spanish conquistadors and preachers were able to integrate themselves into Aztec religious and historical worldviews, manipulating indigenous expectations and vocabulary to imperial or evangelical advantage.¹⁵⁴ Todorov argues that they presented themselves as ambassadors, conquerors, messengers, and Gods as the situation demanded.

Yet over the last several decades, the geographic and temporal specificity of this improvisational faculty has grown somewhat suspect. Scholars of Colonial America, such as

¹⁵² Ibid., 95.

¹⁵³ In addition to Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, see Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*.

¹⁵⁴ See Part Two, "Conquest," in Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, 51-123; See also Chapter Six on Shakespeare and the New World, entitled "The Improvisation of Power," which I have borrowed as a heading to this section, in Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 222-57.

Inga Clendinnen and Louise Burkhart, have convincingly demonstrated that indigenous Americans themselves improvised, disrupting the stability of religious vocabulary and maneuvering the representations of power to their advantage.¹⁵⁵ The corpus of research on the Moriscos and early modern Spanish piety has been moving in a parallel direction recently, as Vincent Barletta, Mary Elizabeth Perry, and others have attempted to reconstruct the spiritual lives of minorities, examine their strategies of self-preservation and representation, and analyze the relationship between political resistance and religious duplicity. Rather than working to unveil Morisco spirituality and practice, I have shown in this chapter how late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century reformers attempted to transform the meaning of Christianity in order to address the Morisco problem. Examining the dissimulation of Catholic reformers rather than the *taqiyya* of the Moriscos themselves underscores how the dichotomy between religious sincerity and insincerity can be a limiting rather than instructive analytical principle.

Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, and Webb Keane, have rethought the relationship between individual religious agency and the power of institutional norms or social patterns. While literary scholars have historicized texts and concepts of authorship, these anthropologists have historicized disciplinary techniques, ways of acting in the world, and ritual practice. Why, they have asked, insist upon an agency that the actors, for a host of epistemological, social, and strategic reasons, might deem unimportant? This kind of research works against the intellectual currents that have defined secular scholarship and shaped forms of religious engagement in Europe and America since the time of Erasmus and Luther. We recognize sincere religious experience only when it is possible to uncover evidence of personal belief, and we acknowledge comprehension or expertise in literary studies and the social sciences only after parsing complex layers of representation and reference. The ability to access or reconstruct unseen organizing principles is the standard by which we judge interpretive success. Although I do not think that, like Juan de Ribera, we are bound to fail in this process of interpretation, I have argued in this chapter that this kind of hermeneutic project has obscured an important part of the Iberian politics of *convivencia*. By now turning to debates about the relationship between signs and referents as a set of philological rather than solely theological questions, I pose a series of questions designed to underscore the parallel epistemological limitations of accessing another's faith by reading ritual, on the one hand, and parsing meaning by reading texts on the other hand. For example, how do authoritative readers distinguish truly holy language from the false prophecies—the textual dissimulation, so to speak—of heretics and charlatans? Is there a relationship between these competing strategies of reading and competing stances on evangelization? To what extent were theological doctrine and philological knowledge mutually determined? As the next chapter demonstrates, opposing answers to these questions were shaped not only by patristic precedents and humanist methodology, but also by a set of seemingly miraculous, perhaps fraudulent archeological discoveries in the hills outside of Granada.

¹⁵⁵ See works cited above, as well as Clendinnen, ““Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty,”” 60-100.

CHAPTER THREE

Reading Similarity: Sacromonte and the Use of Philology

In his *Tratado de la verdadera y falsa profecía* (1588), Juan de Horozco y Covarrubias, eventual Bishop of Guadix, proposed a series of rules for distinguishing between true and false prophecy. Echoing a verse from Paul's Corinthians, Covarrubias argued that one marker of divine truth was familiar language.¹⁵⁶ Paul had suggested that theological reliability and familiar language were intimately connected; this is why he encouraged Christian evangelizers to preach in the language of their audience. Foreign "tongues" might seduce pious listeners, but linguistic strangeness was nonetheless for Paul a "sign, not for believers but for unbelievers" [linguae in signum sunt non fidelibus sed infidelibus].¹⁵⁷ According to Covarrubias too, linguistic unfamiliarity may have made false prophecy seem old and venerable, but it was one of many possible "invenciones," "ilusiones," and "artificios" (33) employed by heretics and imposters. True prophecy, on the other hand, would have been glossed, edited, copied, and studied by generations of esteemed scholars. Its language would be familiar and its truth, consequently, would grow ever more indisputable as sacred text.¹⁵⁸

Critics of Covarrubias's argument, such as the Granadan jurist Gregorio López de Madera, did not point toward popular piety or institutional struggle as driving forces in the human process of producing sacred text and establishing its meaning, as a modern scholar might.¹⁵⁹ Instead, they invoked a belief in the divine power to undermine the apparently secure philological and material principles enlisted to preserve the dichotomy itself between revelation and heresy, between truth and fiction. God could change the rules, López de Madera insisted, simply by revealing a new text. Suggesting that this new revelation must conform to the material and formal conventions of previous holy texts from the Judeo-Christian tradition was to limit the power of God to subvert those conventions. Refusal to acknowledge this divine power of exception, López de Madera suggested, was a particularly humanist form of heretical hubris. Nevertheless, those charged with interpreting any kind of

¹⁵⁶ Citations from the *Tratado de la verdadera y falsa profecía* will be parenthetical.

¹⁵⁷ The full verse from Paul reads, "Itaque linguae in signum sunt non fidelibus sed infidelibus; prophetia autem non infidelibus sed fidelibus" [And so tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; and prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers] (I Corinthians 14: 22).

¹⁵⁸ On prophecy in late sixteenth century Iberia, see Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams*, 86-113.

¹⁵⁹ This Gregorio López is not the same person as his more famous contemporary by the same name, the Gregorio López who edited and glossed Alfonso X el sabio's *Siete partidas*. The complete title of the former's text on Sacromonte is *Historia y discvrsos dela certidvmbre de las reliquias, laminas, y prophecias descubiertas el MonteSanto y Yglesia de Granada, desde el año mil y quinientos y ochenta y ocho, hasta el de mil y quinientos y nouenta y ocho* (Granada, 1601). For his skepticism, see ff. 10v-13v. Future citations will be parenthetical.

new text, especially those whose authorship and material history were dubious, faced the complicated challenge of a perceptibly positivist interpretive process. A text's newness itself was, Covarrubias argued, associated with deception. Despite the presumption that scripture was different in kind from other potentially dangerous narratives, including, for some readers, *libros de caballería* such as the *Amadís de Gaula*, theological concern about forged or apocryphal religious texts paralleled an anxiety over fiction's socially disruptive mimetic power.¹⁶⁰ Writers of various stripes, including Juan Luis Vives, the Jesuit Gaspar de Astete, and Antonio de Guevara, who himself is famous for forged citations and inventive historicity, disparaged romances and other literary genres over concerns about readers' spiritual health.¹⁶¹ False prophecy, like fiction, might mislead a pious but naive populace.

When Pope Innocent XI declared the illegitimacy of the Sacromonte lead tablets on September 28, 1682, unequivocally calling them "pure human fictions, fabricated for the ruin of the Catholic faith," he rejected López de Madera's criticism of the conventional modes for distinguishing between true and false prophecy.¹⁶² These texts were twenty-two thin, palm-sized lead sheets covered with writing in "Solomonic" Arabic, an angular script with separated letters conducive to etching quickly on metals. Like the writing surface and script, which was striking different from the cursive scripts for which Arabic calligraphy was and remains known, the circumstances of the texts' discovery were unusual. Laborers, children, and treasure hunters had unearthed the etchings in the hills behind the Albaicín neighborhood of Granada over the course of the 1590s. In the decades following the discoveries, theologians and philologists struggled to claim authority over translating and interpreting the polysemous documents, which celebrated the Arabic language while emphasizing points of agreement between Christianity and Islam. Should the texts be read as the lost, true prophecy of an early Christian saint, which as the renowned humanists Pedro de Valencia, Juan Bautista Pérez, and Benito Arias Montano pointed out, required overlooking what they recognized as an anachronistic Arabic lexicon and jumbled account of early Islam? Or, as Archbishop of Granada Pedro de Castro, Marqués de Estepa Adán Centurión, and Gregorio López de

¹⁶⁰ Ife, *Reading and Fiction*, 24-48. See also Nelson, *Fact or Fiction*; Ferguson, *Trials of Desire*; and Bernard Weinberg's classic study of the Italian Renaissance, *History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. On scripture and fiction see, Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction*, 119-21. Eden outlines Augustine's taxonomy of narrative trickery in his *Soliloquies*, which distinguished between "fallacious" [fallax] texts whose end was deception itself and "fabulous" [mendax] narrative whose deception was intended by authors as entertainment. Scripture was the stable counterweight to these kinds of worrisome writing. Simply categorizing a text as fiction did not quarantine its potential danger, for many learned readers considered fictions, particularly contemporary fictions, to be at best a frivolous waste of time and at worst a disruption of social and religious order

¹⁶¹ Because of their alleged common capacity to corrupt through example and imitation, it is no coincidence that *libros de caballería*, like *conversos* and *Moriscos*, were prohibited from the New World. See Ife, *Reading and Fiction*, 33-36.

¹⁶² For an extended citation of the papal rejection, see Godoy Alcántara, *Historia crítica*, 126-27. The Sacromonte bibliography is vast, but essential studies include Alonso, *Los apócrifos del Sacromonte*; Hagerty, *Los libros plúmbeos*; Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada*. See also recent research collected in two volumes edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Manuel Barrios Aguilera: *Los plomos de Sacromonte* and *¿La historia inventada?*

Madera suggested, could there be a divine explanation, a miracle that would confound such philological and historical objections?¹⁶³

As Katie Harris has demonstrated, the Sacromonte lead books, along with the Turpiana manuscript—a multilingual document found with various relics in the former minaret of the Nasrid great mosque—provided an appealing Christian history to a medieval Muslim city.¹⁶⁴ Defenders of the texts found them useful for the consolidation and production of local power, wealth, and prestige. They recognized, as I will demonstrate below, that the texts could serve as a useful fundraising tool in Rome and Madrid, where papal and monarchic officials might decide to support ecclesiastical infrastructure to house and celebrate the findings. Inscribing Granada into early church history would not only give the Christian population of the city a sense of local pride, but it could potentially turn the city into a pilgrimage sight, thus giving local officials some leverage in larger theological and imperial debates. Moreover, because the lead books advocated the principle of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, a subject of intense argument among Franciscans and Dominicans in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Andalusia, the documents quickly filtered into mainstream theological discourse as proponents of this doctrine cited the discoveries to support their position.¹⁶⁵ At the same time, educated Moriscos such as Miguel de Luna and Alonso de Castillo, some of the few people on the Peninsula capable of reading (and, as several scholars have argued, *writing*) the books, would have appreciated not only the prestige associated with translating and glossing the texts but also the flexible Christianity articulated within them. In sum, these forgeries provided a sense of local, Christian identity, played an influential role in theological debate, and transformed Arabic and oriental studies on the Iberian Peninsula.

How did the diverse glosses, transcriptions, and translations of early modern scholars produce the authoritative texts out of the Arabic etchings? By what formal qualities was it possible to recognize Christian orthodoxy? In fact, two different versions of the lead books emerged from this material history. The documents' detractors, foreshadowing the language of the papal rejection, attacked the texts as dangerous and heretical fictions. Their commentaries circulated across the Iberian Peninsula with copied or translated sections of the original documents. Because Archbishop Pedro de Castro jealously guarded the lead tablets themselves in Granada until the middle of the seventeenth century, when he reluctantly sent them first to Madrid in 1631 and then on to Rome in 1642, critics of the tablets saw themselves as condemning an archeological curiosity rather than a proper text.¹⁶⁶ The dubious material history of the tablets proved the skeptics' critical point: a truly authentic religious text would have been cited in other ancient sources; it would have been copied and codified

¹⁶³ There are many collections of these scholarly opinions, one of which is BNE Ms. 7187 (hereafter cited parenthetically by folio). See also López de Madera, *Historia y discursos*; Centurión, *Informacion*.

¹⁶⁴ Harris and others have suggested that this Turpiana manuscript, found in 1588, was an experiment by the Sacromonte forgers to gauge possible reactions to the much larger project of the lead books themselves. See Harris, "Forging History," 947; Koningsveld and Wieggers, "The Parchment," 327-58; Cabanelas Rodríguez, *El morisco granadino*, 244-48.

¹⁶⁵ For an introduction to this debate, see Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception*.

¹⁶⁶ BNE Ms. 6437 contains miscellaneous arguments that the lead books should remain in Granada. For dates of the books' transfer to Rome, see Hagerty, *Los libros plúmbeos*, 46.

by some studious early saint; it surely would have become, over the course of fifteen centuries, a sacred *book*.

Defenders of the discoveries acknowledged this problem, and they set about producing such a recognizable and aesthetically beautiful holy text. They circulated both manuscripts and printed secondary sources, replacing the suspicious lead etchings with paper and ink. By making the lead books formally recognizable as holy text, the texts' defenders hoped that the discoveries would be accepted as true prophecy. While the last two chapters examined apologies for the importance of formal, ritual action in the construction of orthodox Christian identity and the elaboration of a politics of *convivencia*, this chapter examines parallel positions regarding the formal philological and material qualities of text. If Moriscos could become orthodox Christians by complying with their ritual obligations, regardless of their heterodox beliefs, then could an Arabic etching become Gospel, regardless of its suspicious history and ambiguous content, by displaying the conventional linguistic and manuscript qualities of holy text? Defenders of the lead books fervently thought so, and thus they pursued a philological and material re-packaging of the discoveries. They formulated an entire scholarly apparatus of commentary affirming the Arabic etchings' Christian orthodoxy. They either purged the Islamic elements from the Castilian and Latin translations or circumscribed them by a web of footnotes and explanation. Once translated into Castilian and Latin, contested Arabic theological terminology fit seamlessly into authoritative, now Christian manuscripts. Defenders of the texts recognized the importance of both insisting upon the potential for a miraculous exception to established historical knowledge and theological doctrine on the one hand, and tirelessly working to transform the lead books so that they complied with Covarrubias's basic rules for identifying true prophecy on the other hand. Indeed, by the time Pope Innocent XI declared that the lead tablets were early modern forgeries, there existed a decades old textual history attesting to their early Christian orthodoxy.

According to Pedro de Valencia and other erudite readers, however, the Sacromonte documents were suspicious not only because of the strange mixture of various languages, but also because they incorporated diverse and overlapping imagery from the histories of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The theological excess paralleled the conspicuous philological foreignness of the lead books, which were written primarily in Arabic but which also contained passages in difficult, sometimes nonsensical Spanish and Latin. In Valencia's 1607 letter about the lead books to the Inquisitor General D. Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, he moved seamlessly between the theological anxiety produced by the amalgamation of imagery and language from discrete religious traditions and the philological evidence of the lead books' illegitimacy, citing the same passage from Corinthians on the relationship between foreign tongues and false prophecy that Covarrubias had invoked. Valencia argued that while atheism was the mistake of too active "aversion to everything supernatural and spiritual, and when hearing about miracles, prophecy, sainthood, and revelation, judging it all as comedy and pretense, superstition was the opposite error" of too willing acceptance of diverse forms of worship and belief [ay homres tan aversos a todo lo sobrenatural espiritual y divino que en oyendo nombrar milagros, profecia, santidad, revelacion lo juzgan todo por burla y impostura y se le oponen de gana y con ira esto tira a Atheismo; como es otra

blandura indiscreta a supersticion].¹⁶⁷ It was necessary, Valencia continued, to “prudently stay the middle course between these two extremes,” [seguir prudentemente al medio], avoiding the traps of both too much skepticism and too much belief. A willingness to accept the authority of too many diverse religious experiences was, like the sense of philological strangeness produced by an amalgamation of different languages in one text, a sign of false prophecy.

Scholars have often called such theological excess and philological ambiguity “syncretism” rather than “superstition.”¹⁶⁸ Syncretism is an analytical and explanatory category with secular purchase and a modern history; it gives meaning to representations that seem to straddle or challenge traditional ecumenical boundaries, thus gesturing away from the mutually exclusive, universal claims different religious traditions make on particular iconography or language. A desire to unveil and celebrate the motives behind such challenges to traditional ecumenical and linguistic boundaries underpins the logic of syncretism. Syncretism as a conceptual framework suggests a series of questions that I find somewhat limiting: Which minority groups stood to benefit from doctrinal flexibility? Why would particular authors or historical actors have staked out a religious middle ground? Did certain literary genres or historical circumstances lend themselves to syncretic narratives? Behind these questions is the unspoken implication that medieval or early modern syncretism might stand in as a kind of pre-modern pluralism or resistance *avant la lettre*. Syncretism, according to this conventional though inadequate narrative, was a necessary accommodation to local circumstances by evangelizers and evangelized alike.

Though modern historians, like early modern detractors, have concentrated on exposing the “plomos,” as the lead books and Turpiana manuscript collectively became known, as forgeries, I am less interested in the fact of forgery than upon the philological transformation and material history that first made the unveiling of forgery necessary.¹⁶⁹ I study the audacious processes that eliminated from the lead books the strangeness of the Arabic paleography and the ambiguity of the theological content, rather than the evidence of syncretism and the heretical authorial intentions that such syncretism implies.¹⁷⁰ Just as the last chapter studied theological strategies of dissimulation rather than Morisco *taqiyya*, this chapter examines how pious readers of the lead books based their argument for the texts’ authority upon precisely the contingent formal and philological factors that the discoveries

¹⁶⁷ BNE, Ms, 7187, f. 122r. Valencia’s text has recently been edited by Grace Magnier as Pedro de Valencia, *Sobre el pergamino y láminas de Granada*, but my references (hereafter cited parenthetically) are to the folio numbers for this manuscript source of Magnier’s edition.

¹⁶⁸ On Sacromonte “syncretism,” see Hagerty, “Los apócrifos granadinos,” 45-66; Bernabé Pons, “Los libros,” 57-81; Bernabé Pons, “Los mecanismos,” 385-402; Philippe Roisse, “La Historia del Sello” 141-71; Cabanelas Rodríguez, “Intento de supervivencia,” 334-58. On trying to get past the logic of syncretism, see Louise M. Burckhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 7. In much of this scholarship, linguistic concepts of creolization and language mixing have served as models for thinking about religious syncretism.

¹⁶⁹ Godoy Alcántara established this paradigm for research in his *Historia crítica*. See also Kendrick, *St. James in Spain*; Cabanelas Rodríguez, *El morisco granadino*.

¹⁷⁰ On syncretism and authorship, see García-Arenal, “El entorno,” 51-78; Cabanelas Rodríguez, *El morisco granadino*, 251-53. On scholarship and forgery, see Grafton, *Forgers*; Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self*.

seemed to disrupt, not the literary and theological strategies of disruption themselves. I study the defenders' attempt to appropriate the power to canonize, for this is what controlling the definition of authenticity and the boundary between true and false prophecy meant. Although they failed to render the lead books canonical, I argue that the contested nature of their failure demonstrates an early modern conviction that philological and theological formality, although over-determined by convention and institutional authority, might still produce sanctity.

Raising the Arabic Curtains

By comparing Miguel de Luna's 1595 translation of the two most famous and theologically important lead books, *Kitāb qawā'id al-dīn* [Book of the Foundations of Religion] and *Kitāb fī-l-dāt al-karma* [Book of the Essence of God], with Bartolomé Pectorano's interlineal Latin and Arabic version, *Sol veritatis*, finished around the time of the Pope's 1682 judgment, it is possible to trace significant philological and theological transformations over nearly a century of manuscript history.¹⁷¹ Miguel de Luna, whose translation was commissioned by the Archbishop Pedro de Castro and supported by King Philip II, succeeded his colleague, Alonso de Castillo, as Arabic interpreter to the crown. He also authored *La historia verdadera del Rey Don Rodrigo* (part 1, 1592; part 2, 1600), which re-imagined the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in terms sympathetic to the conquerors. Importantly for the theme of this essay, Luna claimed to have merely translated his *Historia verdadera*, attributing it to (who else?) an "historiador árabe" in order to lend the text authority and deflect criticism.¹⁷² Pectorano, on the other hand, was one of the Arabic interpreters charged by the Pope with translating the lead books. Professor of Arabic at the University of Naples, he was famous for supposedly having converted the son of the emperor of Ethiopia to Christianity during his travels through the Middle East and Africa. In 1658 Pectorano came to Spain, and Philip IV wanted to make him archbishop of the Italian city of Reggio, then under Spanish authority. Determined to mount a defense of the lead books, Pectorano refused the offer and instead took a position as the first canon of the Abbey of Sacromonte, where he set to work on his transcriptions and translations.¹⁷³

Because codicological conventions, such as binding, decoration, and layout nudged readers toward particular interpretive assumptions, to produce an elegant manuscript was, in a

¹⁷¹ I have followed Hagerty's transliteration of the lead books' Arabic titles. Luna's Latin and Spanish translations are at the AASG, the BNE, and the Archivo y Biblioteca de la Fundación Zabaláburu. BFZ Altamira 161, GD.5, D.117 (hereafter cited parenthetically by folio) is unique for its early date and royal audience. Copies or summaries of Pectorano's interlineal translation are at the British Library, the Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca, and the Real Academia de la Historia. *Sol veritatis* is RAH Ms. 9/7088 (hereafter cited parenthetically by page number). I have consulted other Arabic transcriptions of the corpus as points of reference: RAH Mss. 11/9009 and 11/9010 (Luna and Castillo), and Archivo de la Fundación Galdiano Ms. 149 (Luna and Diego de Urrea), but when transliterating here I follow Pectorano's text. Arabists may note slight differences in spelling from modern, standard Arabic, is the result of early modern variation or error on the part of the forgers and copyists. The section title is a metaphor about translating the lead books taken from the dedication to Archbishop Pedro de Castro in Bernardo de Aldrete, *Varias antigüedades*, 2v. The original Spanish refers to a time when scholars will remove the "cortinas del lenguaje árabe."

¹⁷² Villanueva, *El problema morisco*, 45-98; Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*, 111-13.

¹⁷³ Caro Baroja, *Las falsificaciones*, 140.

sense, to engage in theological dispute. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Pectorano composed a series of works transcribing, translating, summarizing, and glossing the lead books, even as the papal rejection of their authenticity was imminent. In his *Sol veritatis*, an interlineal Arabic transcription and Latin translation of the entire lead book corpus, for example, Pectorano often copied both the Arabic and the Latin texts of theologically fundamental passages in red ink in order to draw attention to them. While Luna's text remained an unbound draft meant to spur initial interest in and satisfy preliminary doubts about the lead books, the material and formal details of Pectorano's interlineal translation made his loftier goals self-evident. The final folios, for instance, provide an index of names (amazingly, in transliterated Solomonic Arabic, transliterated classical Arabic, conventional Arabic script, and Latin) and a chart comparing specific passages in the laminates to both orthodox sources and heretical confutations. Although Pectorano himself figures prominently in his text's introductory story of the Sacromonte lead books' discovery and translation, he lets the conventions of theological commentary and the materiality of early modern manuscripts authorize the rest of the text.¹⁷⁵

The manuscript's formal elegance leaves the impression that an orthodox consensus on the status of the lead books has already formed and that Pectorano was simply piously making it available to readers. As a papal scholar, a member of the clergy, and a celebrated guest in Spain, Pectorano wrote from a position of professional security, and so unlike Luna or Castillo, for example, he could afford to be definitive in his translation. Luna, writing earlier than Pectorano and from the complicated position of a Morisco Arabist funded by Philip II, had to tread more carefully. His wariness is evident in the top and bottom margins of every page, which are filled with signatures and cross-hatching, a notarial convention designed to protect the integrity of the text and, in turn, the trustworthiness of the author. Waiting both for consensus and a lead book manuscript tradition to coalesce rather than offering a definitive fair copy, Luna tried to guard his reputation as an expert Arabist and avoid Inquisitorial suspicion.¹⁷⁶

Kitāb qawā'id al-dīn the first text discovered in the caves of Sacromonte, relates in paratactic prose the history of Adam and Eve, as well as Jesus's life and death. A colophon on the final laminate reveals the author to be Thesiphon Aben Athar Arabi, whom later lead books divulge was a brother of Saint Cecilius, the founder and first bishop of Granada. Luna's Spanish version of the *Kitāb qawā'id al-dīn*, which he calls *Libro de los fundamentos de la ley* served the dual function of solidifying the lead books' theological meaning for a broader audience and enticing the king, to whom the manuscript was sent in 1595, to further support translation of the remaining discoveries.¹⁷⁷ Although at first glance the text seems to be a reasonably orthodox account of early Christianity, Luna nevertheless proceeded carefully in his translation. He hedged the body of his text with hundreds of footnotes, transliterated

¹⁷⁵ The continuing importance of manuscript culture in the print age has been a topic of fruitful inquiry for Fernando Bouza Álvarez, Roger Chartier, and D. F. McKenzie, but the Sacromonte episode highlights the possibility that other writing surfaces might still have a place and a power.

¹⁷⁶ Luna did not totally avoid suspicion. On his Inquisition case, see Godoy Alcántara, 104-115.

¹⁷⁷ FZ Altamira, 161, GD.5, D. 133, letter from Miguel de Luna to Philip II, 14 March 1595.

specific Arabic words that might raise suspicion, and referred to the opinions of Alonso de Castillo, who was at the same time working on his own, separate translation. Over the course of more than a year, closely regulated by Archbishop Pedro de Castro, Luna, Castillo, and others translated much of the corpus.¹⁷⁸

Even as these translators worked, communicating in Arabic or possessing Arabic books had become signs of heterodoxy. The Inquisition had progressively extended its definition of religion to include a host of cultural and daily practices associated with Muslims but not necessarily hitherto considered religious, and use of Arabic grew increasingly suspect. Archbishop Pedro de Castro and the notary officials who validated the Sacromonte translations attempted to mitigate this danger of Inquisitorial suspicion by making sure Arabic translators signed formal “juramentos” before beginning their work. Luna specifically agreed not only to translate accurately, but to do so “palabra por palabra, uerbum ex uerbo fielmente, de manera que las palabras castellanas de la traduçion uayan correspondiendo al original palabra por palabra, por la orden que en el original arabigo estan escritas” [word for word, *verbum ex uerbo* loyally, in such a way that the Castilian words of the translation correspond to the original word for word, in the order which the original Arabic is written] (1). Charged with producing what amounts to a lexicon in prose, it is no wonder that Luna and others constantly defended and explained his word-choice by referencing the range of possible meanings in the Arabic original.¹⁷⁹

When translating, for example, the phrase preceding the passage that introduces Jesus to the story – clearly an important narrative moment – Luna rendered the sentence, “fa-inā amthala laki al-towhid al-muthalātha” [Verily I exemplify to you the three-part unity] into Spanish as “y assi exemplificar os quiero la unidad trina” (5).¹⁸⁰ Letting such a theologically crucial moment go unaccounted for would have begged questions about the original Arabic, so Luna offered a note explaining the translation to his readers.¹⁸¹ But the language he used to reiterate his certainty regarding this translation effectively revealed an insecurity that the note was meant to obviate. The citation, composed in a mixture of Spanish, Latin, and Luna’s own transliterated Solomonic Arabic, is short but authoritative: “15. la diction arabiga [mutalata]

¹⁷⁸ On Archbishop Pedro de Castro’s role in regulating the translations, see Harvey and Wieggers, “The Translation from Arabic of the Sacromonte Tablets and the Archbishop of Granada,” 59-78; Rodríguez Mediano and García-Arenal, “De Diego de Urrea a Marcos Dobelio,” 297-333.

¹⁷⁹ FG Ms. 149. Although this is simply a series of transcriptions, rather than translations, Luna and Urrea formally swear to have “sacado e traslavado bien e fielmente” (f. 4v) the Solomonic script into the cursive Arabic of the period.

¹⁸⁰ Subtly emphasizing the first-person narrative voice, Luna added the word “quiero,” although the Arabic equivalent is absent at least from Pectorano’s Arabic edition of the text. Also, Pectorano writes in Arabic “muthalātha” rather than “muthālatha,” and “towhid” rather than “towhīd,” two examples either of divergent early modern spellings or copyist error.

¹⁸¹ This topic had, unsurprisingly, often been contentious: While examining earlier translations of the Turpiana manuscript along with the Arabic original, al-Ḥajarī noticed that previous readers had seen a “venerable threefold essence” [al-dhāt al-karīma al-muthallatha] where in fact the word “threefold” was absent. The translation and Arabic text (with another transliteration variant) are Kroningsveld, Al-Samarrai, and Wieggers’s. See al-Ḥajarī, 77 (English), 21 (Arabic); Bernabé Pons, “Los mecanismos,” 392. Also, yet another take on the m-th-l root was included in Urrea’s lexicon of lead book terms, which Luna, Castillo, Archbishop Castro, and others likely used as an aid in translating the lead books. For Urrea’s text, see AAS C.46 J.

id est trina y esta adiectiva da como en el arabe” [15. the arabic word, ‘mutalata’ *id est* three-part, and this adjective is given just as in the Arabic] (5). Assuring his readers, whom he knew would have included King Philip II, Luna showed the evidence for his faithful translation directly from the Arabic. For good measure, Luna highlighted the theological trustworthiness of the Arabic “muthalātha” by linking it to his Spanish translation with the reliable and authoritative Latin connector, “id est.” In most instances Luna remained quite satisfied with the less commanding vernacular, “quiere decir,” but when specifically defending Spanish translations of potentially tricky Arabic words, he preferred a more formal Latin terminology that carried both the force of classical grammar and the prestige of the Church’s language.

As detractors would later note, this short phrase that apparently introduced the tripartite nature of the Christian God appeared right in the middle of a passage mimicking the Islamic declaration of faith, the *shahāda*. Luna’s full translation reads:

Nadie entiende a Dios sino Dios: y si entendieramos a Dios: no seria Dios: por que el hombre su entendimiento es flaco: y assi exemplificar os quiero la unidad trina con este mi exemplo. El padre se miro como en el espejo: el padre primera persona: el hijo la persona segunda: y el spiritu sancto terçera persona: tres personas: en essencia una y assi Maria fue el espejo. (5-6)

[No one understands God but God; and if we were to understand God, it would not be God, for man’s understanding is weak. And thus I want to exemplify to you the three-part unity with this, my example. The father looks at himself, as in a mirror. The father is the first person. The son is the second person. And the Holy Spirit is the third person. Three people in one essence, and thus Mary was the mirror.]

Variations on “there is no God but God” [lā ilaha illa Allāh], a fundamental Islamic statement of belief and a ritually obligatory phrase pronounced during the process of conversion (from the Prophet Muhammad through the present day) are scattered throughout the lead books. Defenders of the texts attempted to dismiss the Islamic referent by cataloguing parallel Hebrew and Latin formulations of God’s singularity, insisting upon the Judeo-Christian context in which the Arabic Sacromonte texts should be read.¹⁸² But it was difficult to avoid the reality that the texts were written in Arabic, and so comparing this repeated reformulation of the *shahāda* with linguistic or theological parallels in other monotheistic traditions did little but provide evidence for a common grammar of monotheism.

The only way to limit the context of this shared theological syntax was to quickly and definitively translate the lead books out of Arabic and into Spanish or Latin. But this emphasis on translation belied the theological insistence that these texts were, in fact, new revelations, thus contradicting the notion that scripture was untranslatable. The paradoxical nature of this argument, which resonates with the similarly paradoxical refusal to admit the translatability even of Saint Jerome’s Vulgate, itself a revision of earlier translations, reveals the institutional and formal conditions of possibility for producing orthodoxy. It was critical

¹⁸² BNE Ms. 6637, ff. 169-211, an anonymous, printed defense of the lead books from the early seventeenth century. A short section of this fascinating manuscript, which includes Spanish, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic, has been reprinted as a citation in Bernabé Pons, “Los mecanismos,” 390.

to translate the Sacromonte texts into Spanish or Latin expediently, thereby obscuring the suspect Arabic original and making it at least possible to conceive of these findings as Christian. But the Arabists responsible for the translations were themselves suspicious simply for their capacity to read Arabic, and so even as their work erased the philological evidence of an Islamic lexicon, these scholars had to protect their integrity as experts by recording the transliterated traces of the lead books' heresy in margin notes.

In later versions of the lead books the hermeneutic hedging and theological uncertainty marking Luna's translation largely disappear. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Bartolomé Pectorano produced a series of works transcribing, translating, summarizing, and glossing the lead books, even as the forceful papal rejection of their authenticity was imminent¹⁸³ In his *Sol veritatis*, an interlineal Arabic transcription and Latin translation of the entire lead book corpus, Pectorano rendered the above cited, potentially problematic Arabic phrase, "Verily I exemplify to you the three-part unity," into Latin as "narrabo tibi unitatem Trinitatis" [I narrate to you the unity of the Trinity]. The Arabic term for the Christian trinity, *thālūth* comes, unsurprisingly, from the same root as the word for "three-part," but this was not a mere confusion of vocalization on Pectorano's behalf: The words for "trinity" and "three-part" do not resemble each other in Arabic. Rather, his translation was itself a gloss on both the mirror metaphor and the more flexible Arabic vocabulary, from which the actual word "trinity" was noticeably absent. Pectorano did provide a margin note at this line in his text, not in order to explain his translation of "muthalātha," but rather to revise his choice of "narrabo." With this word, "I narrate," the text shifts from a third person, omniscient narrative account to the first-person voice of Saint Cecilius, supposedly martyred in the very Granadan hills where the lead tablets were discovered. Pectorano, perhaps dissatisfied with this literary language of narration, replaced "narrabo" with "exemplificabo" (6) in the recopied sentence of a margin note.¹⁸⁴ While the Latin language of exemplification forcefully implied the truth of the mirror metaphor – the father reflects himself through the light of the Holy Spirit [rūhānī al-muqaddas] upon a mirror, Mary, to make the Son visible – the Arabic root [m-th-l] carries the more explicit literary connotations (as in "narrabo") of representation, metaphor, and resemblance.

Pectorano interpreted this metaphor as confirmation of theological doctrine, and he read the *Kitāb qawā'id al-dīn* as a textual proof of both the trinity and Mary's fundamental role in its revelation. What was here a marginal gloss meant to erase the literary language of narration by the end of the volume became a scholarly marker of the lead books' orthodoxy. The very first reference on the comparative doctrinal chart found in the final folios of *Sol veritatis* was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the trinity. While a host of traditional sources support the doctrine of the trinity, Pectorano makes clear that Muslims, Gnostics, and "all the other ignorant people" of the world deny it (880). Readers were supposed to recognize that the text of the lead books should no longer exist in this middle ground of theological debate, but pass

¹⁸³ In addition to Pectorano's *Sol veritatis*, housed in the RAH, there is another manuscript, of similar size, color, and binding, also entitled *Sol veritatis* in the AAS. The content, however, is different. The AAS text is only a commentary and defense of the lead books without the interlineal transcription and translation of the RAH version. It appears, though, that they were meant to be used together, the former as source text and the latter as gloss.

¹⁸⁴ AASG C46. J, f. 341r. Urrea similarly highlights concern over this root in his manuscript lexicon: He translates the passive participle, "mamthilin," as "exemplificado, o figurado."

instead, according to the chart's spatial logic, to the left-hand column of established and authoritative sources. The table recording the lead books' alleged mention of the trinity refers, of course, to precisely the page examined above, doubly obscuring Pectorano's sleight of hand, for it was there that he had inserted the word, "Trinitatis," in the first place.

Pectorano's scholastic method partially concealed the metaphorical nature of Jesus's introduction into the lead books. By reproducing God's representation as Jesus, Mary is the mirror, the reflecting surface that makes the three parts of the trinity visible. This is not a radically new conception of the trinity, but rather an emphasis on Mary's role in helping ordinary Christians access a tripartite God. For many Old Christians, Mary was an intercessor, a nurturing figure capable of mitigating the harsh judgments of a retributive God. Stories about Mary provided a proximate and familiar point of entry into the confusing theology of the trinity, a way for worshippers across the Hispanic world, especially recent converts, to participate in local Christian practice.¹⁸⁵ On the one hand, since Plato's worries about poetry and drama in *The Republic*, literature was seen as potentially dangerous for its disruptive mimetic potential. On the other hand, theologians employed narratives such as those about Mary's life to help produce pious action. These are two opposing aspects and uses of imitation. Felipe Pereda takes the argument about the relationship between Marian devotion and conversion a step further, arguing that evangelizers themselves recognized the usefulness of Mary iconography for the Christianization project. Christian preachers and theologians emphasized Mary before a Morisco flock because they knew of Mary's acceptability within Islam.¹⁸⁶ Devotion to the Virgin Mary and the *plomos* were mutually re-enforcing modes of popular piety and local adoration over the course of the seventeenth century.¹⁸⁷ This connection emerged because one of the relics found in the same lead box as the Turpiana manuscript was half of the handkerchief Mary supposedly used to wipe her tears at the crucifixion of Jesus, and several important passages in the lead books themselves feature Mary as a main character. Not only does Mary take a *mi'rāj*-like night journey paralleling Muhammad's, but in one of the found tablets, which became known in Spanish as *Libro de la historia de la verdad del evangelio*, she describes her dictation of the so-called *Libro mudo*, another set of etchings that no translator has been able to decipher but whose eventual decoding, Mary predicts, will occur at a final-judgment assembly on the Island of Cyprus.

In this end-of-days scenario, the processes of translating, editing, and glossing the *libros plúmbeos* would transform the Christian scriptural canon as a whole. Sacromonte philology would reveal a universal theological truth. In the *Libro de la historia de la verdad del evangelio*, Mary posed a series of meta-textual questions to Saint Peter about the future discovery and interpretation of the lead tablets. In response, Saint Peter outlined the future decipherment of the *Libro mudo*, praised the Arabist interpreters that would translate the texts, and predicted that a definitive reading of the lead book corpus, to emerge from a "concilio" on the island of Cyprus, would occasion Mediterranean religious harmony. This assembly, which echoes both the Council of Trent and the many councils convened by Iberian

¹⁸⁵ Stevens-Arroyo, "The Evolution," 50-73; Taylor, "The Virgin," 11.

¹⁸⁶ See "La industria de las imágenes," in Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia*, 249-373.

¹⁸⁷ Cervantes Augustiniano's *Parecer de S. Augustin*, a defense of the Immaculate Conception and celebration of both Saint Cecilius and the Mary of the lead books, is dedicated to Pedro de Castro. See also Christodouleas and Matar, "The Mary of Sacromonte," 199-215.

Bishops over the course of the sixteenth century to discuss religious affairs, features several characters with striking early modern Iberian and Mediterranean parallels. A “holy priest” [santo sacerdote], supported by the “King of the Arabs who will not be Arab” [rey de los arabes y no será árabe], will motivate various privileged interpreters, led by a “most humble creature” [humildísima criatura] to the Cyprus assembly.¹⁸⁸ As detractors of the lead books pointed out, these characters suspiciously resembled the Archbishop Pedro de Castro (the holy priest), the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent or one of his heirs (non-Arab King of the Arabs), the bilingual Morisco readers and learned Arabists (the interpreters), and the Virgin Mary herself (the most humble creature).

The stakes of Sacromonte philology were particularly high, the lead book authors seemed to recognize, because unlike other prophecy in the Christian tradition, compromise characterized the denouement. Religious discord and violence would end not when the truth of one religious tradition had dominated all the others, but rather when religion itself came to be defined by shared iconographies, histories, and practices across traditional ecumenical lines. Defining religious similitude would both enable Morisco assimilation and put an end to dissimulation. The emergence of this final harmony, Saint Peter predicted, would be preceded by an intensely contradictory, polemical, and violent debate over interpretation. Along with fornication and pride, Saint Peter tells the Virgin Mary that the “multiplication of ways of speaking with metaphors as well as dissimulated ridicule” [se multiplicare el modo de hablar con metáforas y el fisgar] was evidence that God’s blessing had vanished from the world. The various kinds of dissimulation examined the last chapter might have been tools employed for contradictory political and religious ends, but whatever their uses, their prevalence suggested religious crisis.

The linguistic ambiguity and unstable narrative context of the *libros plúmbeos* was itself part of this crisis, which the “concilio” on Cyprus would resolve. The future theological agreement that the discovery of the lead books would produce was to mark an end to the metaphorical mode of reading that both detractors and defenders of the texts necessarily exercised. By celebrating the role that readers played in establishing the definitive meaning of the lead books, the forgers both carved out a privileged social and religious place for the future interpreters (whom they might have guessed would be themselves) and framed the formal and material transformation of the texts themselves as part of a universal religious cosmology and Mediterranean political geography. Cyprus was, after all, a middle ground, an island floating between the Christian and Muslim worlds. The lead books foretold the story of interpretation’s end, thereby predicting a moment when the religious differences between Muslims, Moriscos, and Christians would cease to exist as differences. The common features of their diverse religious lives would become unproblematic aspects of a universal religion rather than the “syncretic” terrain for negotiating political and social dispute or pursuing an evangelical agenda.

Mary’s depiction as a “mirror” for seeing one’s religious self is a clear implementation of literary tropes linking art, reflection, and self-knowledge. But insistence upon Mary’s sinless birth, evident in both learned opinions on the lead books and the popular devotion the texts helped generate, transformed Mary from a narrative to a doctrinal tool. Franciscans and others employed the Mary of Sacromonte in order to pressure the Vatican to decide upon the

¹⁸⁸ Hagerty, *Los libros*, 119-30.

doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, only declared dogma by the Pope in the mid-nineteenth century. Proving Pereda's insights, though Mary had attracted a broad audience and provided an opportunity for varied interpretation, her presence in the lead books had a profound theological and social impact. In other words, regardless of the allegedly heretical intentions of the lead books' authors, by gradually making certain popular forms of ritual and belief orthodoxy, the Vatican eventually co-opted the Mary worship that the forgeries themselves had helped produce. A local Granadan junta had declared the relics authentic in 1600, and as Adán Centurión happily reminded his readers, the Tridentine rules for authentication and canonization left the Pope with no other option. Rome could police the philological and theological boundaries of the Sacromonte texts themselves, but the Granadan judgment on the relics had to stand. As a result, devotion to Saint Cecilius's remains and Mary's handkerchief continue to this day.¹⁸⁹

Monopolizing the power to define the Sacromonte texts as either fiction or scripture entailed judging not only certain theologically contentious phrases or regulating narrative conventions, but also deciding how to parse individual characters themselves. Just before the conclusion of *Kitāb fī-l-dāt al-karma*, which in most manuscript collections of the corpus follows *Kitāb qawā'id al-dīn*, there are two individual Arabic letters, a "mīm" and then a "rā'." Preceding the two characters is another invocation of the *shahāda* and following them is the word "Allāh," which ends the chapter. In both the lead laminates and the manuscript versions, "seals of Solomon" (i.e. "star of David" diagrams) and an affirmation of God's oneness decorate the space below the end of the main text. As many modern readers have pointed out, thus repeating early modern scholarly insights, the second part in the traditional Islamic declaration of faith is "Muḥammad rasūl Allāh," [Muhammad is the messenger/prophet of God]" (emphasis mine).¹⁹⁰ It seemed reasonable, as Pedro de Valencia argued, to read the "mīm, rā', Allāh" as an abbreviation of this phrase, especially since it followed the first part of the *shahāda*, translated by Luna as "no ay otro Dios sino Dios" [there is no other God but God] (13). Notwithstanding the obviousness of this reading, which served as evidence of the documents' heretical character, transcribers and translators of the texts immediately began transforming the abbreviation.

Luna followed his accurate translation of the first part of the *shahāda* with long dashes in the main text where the second phrase of the translation should be. He thus concluded the chapter with an erasure, explaining that after the final lines "se siguen quatro letras singulares littera proparte que por agora no se entienden" [four singular letters *littera proparte* follow, which for now are not understood] (13). This placeholder, "por agora no se entienden," occurs in the margin notes of many folios of this early translation, and much like the "id est" mentioned above, it signals a particularly problematic passage or Arabic term. In a margin note specifically about these thorny "letras singulares," Luna paraphrased the work of his

¹⁸⁹ BNE Ms 10503, f. 9v. On 8 December, the annual feast of the Immaculate Conception, hundreds of worshippers participate in a holy parade, visit the Sacromonte caves, and gather in the abbey for mass. According to the abbey's official tour, the institution's *raison d'être* is tied to the relics, not the lead books, which the Vatican held inaccessible from the middle of the seventeenth century until 2000, when Pope John Paul II returned them to the Granada. For more on the abbey and the lead books' return, see Abbot Sánchez Ocaña, *El Sacro Monte*.

¹⁹⁰ Bernabé Pons, "Los mecanismos," 393. On a parallel set of abbreviations see Sánchez-Blanco, "De Pablo a Saulo," 237-38; Roisse, "La Historia del Sello," 142-48.

fellow translator, Alonso de Castillo, who claims, “el arabe dice ‘gua rabune alah,’ que quiere decir y nuestro criador dios i ‘gue’ es copulativa y ‘rabune’ es nombre quiere decir criador compuesto con pronombre plural ‘ne’ criador nuestro ‘alah’ dios que quiere decir y criador nuestro dios” [the Arabic says ‘gua rabune alah’, which means and our creator God. The ‘and’ is copulative and the ‘rabune’ is a noun meaning creator, combined with the plural pronoun, ‘ne,’ or our creator God, ‘alah,’ which means and our creator God] (13). It is possible that Castillo innocently confused the “mīm” for a “wāw,” which means “and” in Arabic, for though the Solomonic ductus of the former was slightly more angled than the latter, clear descenders identified both Arabic letters. But the explanation of the first-person possessive ending is at best irrelevant and at worst spurious, for the individual letters from which he extrapolated the meaning do not admit prefixes or suffixes. This overly wrought and ultimately faulty grammatical argument, apparently meant to buttress the paleographic claim, casts doubt on Castillo’s gloss as a whole. Interpreting the letters as “and our creator God,” is certainly more flexible than the clearly Islamic implications of “messenger of God,” the most theologically weighty *idāfa*, or genitive construction, in the Arabic language. Moreover, Castillo’s translation is four words, which would explain the discrepancy between the *two* hotly contested letters present in the Arabic manuscripts and the *four* letters Luna mentions. Was the concluding observation of four, mysterious letters an erasure of the two-letter Arabic evidence and a lie buttressing a translated acronym?

Invoking a paleographic defense for what he portrays as innocent uncertainty rather than outright deception, Luna explained that the letters on the original, round lead tablet were elongated in order to keep the lines flush, making them difficult to decipher. Filling the textual gap with Castillo’s tentative reading, Luna insisted on delaying a final decision about the characters’ meaning with the evasive though strategically hopeful “por agora” of critical ignorance. Later translators were less timid. If the goal of the abbreviation in the first place was to encourage creative and multiple readings while at the same time subtly invoking a widely recognizable Islamic turn of phrase, then this “mīm” and “rā” played their roles splendidly. Adán Centurión translated the final line as “No hay Dios sino Dios, Jesús, Espíritu de Dios” [There is no God but God, Jesus, the Spirit of God], adding Jesus and the Holy Spirit and for good measure. Centurión tried to defend this translation by reading the “rā” as “rūḥ” [spirit], but he admitted that in other sections of the text he translated “rūḥ” differently, and he conveniently avoided mentioning the abbreviations at all.¹⁹¹ Pectorano, for his part, translated the phrase as “Non Deus nisi Deus Messias Spiritus Dei” [There is no God but God; The Messiah is the Spirit of God] (24), changing the Arabic text to fit his Latin translation by adding in the words “mesiha,” [Messiah] and “rūḥ” where, as he mentions in a margin note, only the “duas l’tras solitarias” [two solitary letters] once stood. Though Pectorano, unlike Luna, at least managed to see the correct number of letters, he imagined an orthodox Latin translation, invented an Arabic phrase as the original, and relegated the troublesome remnants of ambiguity to the margins.

Had the forgeries bred yet more forgery? The apparently trivial “mīm” and “rā”, which serve as a test case for the hermeneutic problems posed by language as a whole, were theologically fundamental. Yet at the same time, these letters were perceived to be inherently

¹⁹¹ Hagerty, *Los libros plúmbeos*, 77. Hagerty bases his edition of Centurión’s text on various AASG manuscripts and BNE Mss. 205 and 10503, probably produced in the 1620s.

unreliable, even heretical, as Valencia had implied by citing the above Corinthians passage in his letter on the lead books. Like Paul, Valencia was skeptical of any text that emphasized its status as a system of signs, even though his own scholarly authority rested upon the ability to parse language and to recognize generic convention. Attempting to give the impression of antiquity, the paleographic and philological features of the lead books did foreground their linguistic peculiarity, and Valencia was incredulous, carefully distinguishing mysterious though unreliable language from the prophecy, as Paul put it, of the faithful. For Valencia and others, the mixture of languages and the strange diagrams confirmed the suspicion that the texts were inventions.

Yet portraying Pectorano's textual decisions as deliberate scholastic censorship does not tell the whole story. The process of transcription and translation is, of course, editorial in nature, which is not to absolve Pectorano of his responsibility as an interpreter, but simply to recognize that editors must make choices. Rarely is scholarly consensus so firm that such decisions seem commonsensical or objective, and so the editorial process, as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has argued, entails both imaginative and scientific work.¹⁹² Though Pectorano's choice to parse the Arabic acronym by writing the words he thought they represented in the main text itself might seem misleading in retrospect, these decisions provide insight into how the process of "canonization through commentary" functioned.¹⁹³ Faced with the impossibility of translating an Arabic acronym "verbum ex verbo," Pectorano made explicit an implied meaning whose divine apostrophe he understood to be directed at a universal audience. He claimed an authority we now associate either with editors of literary texts, who routinely fill in missing words and "correct" copyist errors, or with critics more generally, whose analyses produce sacred objects of a different order.¹⁹⁴

Acronyms and abbreviations, which characterized medieval and early modern manuscript culture, are only one subset of the many possible textual gaps. Signs signaling truncation, contraction or various types of citation were collectively meant either to save space and time or, simply, to communicate in more conventional ways. Early modern copyists, like modern editors, had to parse and elucidate these abbreviations when producing more elegant and detailed manuscripts to make comprehensible what perhaps remains for many of us *litterae unintelligibis*. Moreover, in both the Christian and Islamic traditions there was a custom of abbreviating oft-repeated monikers or blessings such as, "Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Ivdæorvm" [Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews] or "Şallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam" [May Allah bless him and grant him peace]. Conventionality underpinned these abbreviations, and when the linguistic, cultural, and religious clues for producing meaning were in doubt, abbreviation only served, as Valencia worried, to foreground the volatility of our systems of communicating more generally. But there was also a mysterious quality to this volatility, a special power possessed by certain abbreviations such as INRI, which hovered uncannily over medieval and Renaissance paintings of the crucifixion. Filling in syllabic gaps and making absent words visible, the interpreter's authority rested upon the formal, ritualistic effect of

¹⁹² Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology*, 29.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 47; Nichols, "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture," 1-10.

¹⁹⁴ Although Pectorano's goals were quite different from some of his contemporaries, like Benedictus Spinoza and Richard Simon, who hauled the Bible out of the sacred realm and into the literary sphere in order to subject it to close reading and analysis without *a priori* theological limits on their conclusions and judgments, they shared many common interpretive and editorial methods.

language, even though the interpreter's work of commentary and translation often obscured that essential philological power.

The process of parsing abbreviations, like reading itself, has always been fraught. And despite Pectorano's attempt to gloss the "mīm" and "rā" by insisting on the obviousness of his orthodox interpretation, this insistence ultimately provided evidence for Valencia's criticism. The Sacromonte books as a whole, like the "mīm" and "rā" specifically, generated such a contentious debate not only because they seemed to emerge from a Morisco milieu linked to heterodox ideas and suspicious Arabic, but because they forced an awareness of language's inherent conventionality, even in Latin or Spanish. In the end, defenders of the lead books might not have been able to prove the texts' authenticity or orthodoxy, but the terms of the detractors' attacks exposed the unreliability not only of the Sacromonte discoveries, but of all text, even scripture. Pectorano's editorial practice highlights the difficulty with using formal differences in hermeneutic strategy to track the boundary between the literary and religious spheres; his insistence that an uncorrupted divine word might be contained in a corrupted text reveals a keenly modern awareness of scripture's literary quality and material historicity. Defenders of the lead books were not able to prove the texts' orthodoxy, but the terms of the detractors' attacks exposed a relationship between the heretical unreliability of fiction and the trustworthiness of scripture. Linguistic conventionality, after all, underpinned them both.

Theological Skepticism and the History of Language

Like Pedro de Valencia and Juan Bautista Pérez, Ignacio de Las Casas, Luis del Mármol, and others came to the conclusion that the lead books were forgeries long before the Pope. In the years following the discoveries, these scholars pointed out the impossibility of an Arabic-speaking population on the Iberian Peninsula in the first century, catalogued mistaken references to Roman antiquity, and attempted to examine the way in which translation concealed a set of Islamic theological meanings. Unconvinced by the formal transformation undertaken by the lead books' defenders, the language of Pedro de Valencia's attack foreshadowed the Pope's final declaration more than half a century later. In his letter on the lead books, which circulated widely in manuscript form, Valencia claimed that the texts reminded him of the many "ficciones de libros hechos por erejes y de otros engaños con que se fingen y venden" [fictions from books made by heretics, as well as other deceits with which they are forged and sold] (f. 119v). He was concerned with both the problem of blurred narrative categories and a purposefully heretical intent to pass off an invented text as an integral part of religious history, even if only for entertainment or profit. Despite Valencia's protests, by the first decade of the seventeenth century, thousands of pilgrims from varying classes and backgrounds had begun to venerate the Sacromonte martyrs. However dubious the textual source, this pious devotion was real, and Valencia's learned opposition to such powerful forms of religious experience did little to stop them.

The mere fact that a diverse audience saw these discoveries as a miracle whose reward was a hitherto unknown canonical story obliged the Church to reach a judgment. The pilgrims' wonder was produced through a mimetic process, but determining whether this was a scripturally or fictionally driven economy of imitation would only be decided after a century of exasperatingly, perhaps purposely slow institutional decision-making. And even then, the simple papal dismissal of the lead books as "human fictions" belied the complicated history of

co-option and canonization traced in this chapter. The papal formulation itself underscores the broader hermeneutic and formal problems concerning the relationship among fiction, scripture, and heresy, for the modifier “human” remained tellingly present in the rejection, suspended between a theological contradiction in terms (a divine fiction) and a tautology (all fictions are human). This anxiety over how to portray the distinction between holy and heretical narrative, palpable throughout the Sacromonte debate, drew attention both to the instability of meaning and the complex balance of philological power to determine and sanction that meaning. While epistemological doubt about legal and literary documents was a pressing political affair, challenging the boundaries of scriptural canonicity and questioning the very historicity of holy language, many theologians vociferously argued, an eschatological matter.

Yet some defenders of the lead books responded to their critics using precisely the interpretive tools that had come to characterize the humanist authority they opposed. I have already demonstrated that an insistence upon the omniscience of God and the reality of the miraculous underwrote a reading practice even more radical than the humanists’ scholarly doubt. However, miracles demanded a revision of historical and philological knowledge. Citing *Ecclesiastes* (8:7) on man’s constitutive ignorance, but shifting the terms for debate from divine omniscience to limitations on historical and philological certainty, Gregorio López de Madera argued that the lead books’ detractors held too secure a view of ancient times and inflexible model of linguistic history. In a brilliant inversion, Madera cited the Donation of Constantine, the exemplary early modern instance of forgery’s enduring power to affect social, political, and even religious history, not as a warning about the danger of forgery, as his readers would have expected, but as evidence for the need to occasionally revise and correct centuries of accumulated scholarly error.¹⁹⁵

But Madera did not simply invoke the miraculous exception and then conclude his argument. Perhaps more strikingly, he wielded conventional humanist conceptions of literature and language to his Pyrrhonic skeptical ends. First, Madera responded to the attack upon the lead books as mere fiction in explicitly literary terms while nevertheless implying that the stakes of the representation were religious. Invoking classical literary theory, Madera argued that the lead books were not fictitious “porque quieren en ellos lo fingiera, buscara lo mas verosimil” [because if they had wanted to invent, they would have sought the verisimilar] (f. 23r), even though everyone seemed to agree that both the content of the texts and the circumstances of their discovery were, precisely, *inverisimilar*. Madera read this historical and philological implausibility as both a sign of divine exception and proof of fiction’s absence; a plausible representation would have more effectively stimulated the audience’s mimetic faculty [mas facilmente persuadirlo a imitacion] (f. 23r). In other words, if the authors of the Sacromonte texts were in fact dangerous heretics intent on spreading their mistaken beliefs and practices, then surely they would have marshaled the power of fiction-making by following its rules, rather than offering such a strange mixture of languages and religious traditions that, in Madera’s theatrical and religious vocabulary, the “testigos” [witnesses] would have viewed with skepticism. The audience of learned skeptics, rendered narrow-minded by the burden of its Aristotelian vocabulary, failed to perceive the Sacromonte truth that the pious pilgrims proved.

¹⁹⁵ On scholarship and forgery, see Grafton, *Forgers*; Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self*.

Second, faced with the lead books' mixture of sixteenth-century Spanish, classical Latin, and post-classical Arabic, a linguistic paradox that humanist detractors often invoked as evidence that the texts were sixteenth-century forgeries, Madera proposed a genealogy of linguistic complexity. Attempting to demonstrate that late sixteenth-century Spanish and classical Latin could have been simultaneously in use in first-century Iberia, he argued that the Sacromonte discoveries provided evidence for a long history of Iberian multilingualism. Early modern speakers, López de Madera noted, employed different languages depending upon the community, context, and register, so why couldn't the ancient inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula have done the same (ff. 32v-33v)? Moreover, López de Madera argued that the specific languages by which it is possible to identify nations over time are themselves mixtures, including borrowed words and phrases from an array of neighboring communities and warring empires, so why do critics find the Turpiana manuscript's mixture of Spanish, Latin, and Arabic so problematic? Individuals speaking different languages with shared imperial or Biblical histories, such as Spanish and Portuguese, or Hebrew and Arabic, can sometimes understand each other perfectly well, so why do humanist detractors of the *libros plúmbeos*, such as Pedro de Valencia and Juan Bautista Pérez, sanctimoniously point out that the texts were written primarily in Arabic even though the first-century Granadan addressees were not native Arabic speakers?

As precedent for his argument that Spanish, Latin, and Arabic could have existed simultaneously in ancient times, López de Madera highlighted the shared features of various Near Eastern languages. Crediting Saints Paul and Jerome with first recognizing the "propogacion misma" [common genealogy] of Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, and Arabic, López de Madera suggested that the "similitude" (f. 117r) and great closeness [much cercania] (f. 116r) among these languages was not only pregnant with theological meaning but also paradigmatic of the similarities and differences among other groups of languages, such as the Romance vernaculars. Although he mistakenly concluded from this evidence of Semitic similitude that Spanish and Latin could have "since their beginning intermingled" [puderion desde su principio mezclar], López de Madera's insistence on language families reflected an emerging late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century scholarly interest in the shared formal features of all language, an issue examined in more detail in the next chapter. Moreover, this debate about the overlapping histories of language paralleled the lead books' prophecy about religious harmony. Philological and theological similitude were mutually determined. Even López de Madera's primary opponent in the debate over the history of Spanish, Bernardo de Aldrete, would have agreed that languages and religions were genealogically related and that it was possible to trace the history of these relationships. It was clear that a revised history of Christianity such as that proposed by the lead books also demanded a revised history of language.

Nevertheless, while López de Madera argued that these linguistic familial relationships were somewhat stable, Aldrete emphasized the transformations that languages necessarily undergo over time. In his first book, *Del principio y origen de la lengua castellana, ò Romance, que hoy se usa en España* (1606), which was later published as the first part of Sebastian de Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (1611), Aldrete

forcefully argued that the Spanish language emerged from corrupted, vernacular Latin.¹⁹⁶ The humanist Antonio de Nebrija had proposed a similar relationship between Latin and Spanish over a century earlier, but Aldrete was the first to systematically document the morphological and lexical transition. Though he never mentioned López de Madera by name, Aldrete's text was in part an attack on López de Madera's defense of Spanish's ancient lineage, a position for which the lead books, if authentic, provided clear evidence. *Del principio y origen* triggered animated counter-attacks by scholars such as Bartolomé Ximénez Patón, who found López de Madera's position convincing, and in his second book, *Varias antigüedades de España, Africa, y otras provincias* (1614), Aldrete took a conciliatory tone.¹⁹⁷ In the prologue, dedicated to none other than Archbishop Pedro de Castro, Aldrete professed belief in the authenticity of the lead books, and later in the text he acknowledged that ancient saints might have communicated in Renaissance Spanish with the appropriate divine assistance. Still paradoxically maintaining that Spanish had descended from and post-dated Latin, Aldrete nonetheless admitted the possibility of miraculous exceptions, implying that the discovery of the *plomos* may be one such example.

Despite this concession, some have hailed Aldrete as the father of Romance philology.¹⁹⁸ Compared to López de Madera, the anti-humanist foil, Aldrete is by far more widely known not only because his linguistic conclusions turned out to be more accurate, but also because his argument about the relationship between diachronic changes in language and the expansion of political power now strikes some scholars—most famously Walter Mignolo—as excessively celebratory.¹⁹⁹ Both admirers and critics of Aldrete agree that his work represents an important shift toward a recognizably modern methodology for studying the history of language, even if they disagree over the imperial agenda that accompanied this methodology. Although there has been a tendency to isolate Aldrete's research from the Sacromonte religious polemic out of which it emerged, the slippage between his strong argument in *Del origen y principio* and his conciliatory claims in *Varias antigüedades* suggests that Aldrete's conclusions were, indeed, intimately shaped by theological concerns, by his argument with López de Madera, and by the complex debates over history and language occasioned by the Sacromonte discoveries. In the case of the *plomos*, the basic epistemological question was clear: Should scholarly consensus on the history of language function as the stable standard of evidence by which the authenticity of the lead books is determined, or rather do the lead books themselves provide evidence of the need to revise scholarly consensus? The disagreement between Aldrete and López de Madera over the development of the Spanish language, like the debates between Bartolomé Pectorano, Arias Montano, Pedro de Valencia, and others over how to translate and interpret the lead books, demonstrates the extent to which theological judgment and philological knowledge were mutually determined.

¹⁹⁶ Bernardo de Aldrete, *Del origen, y principio de la lengua castellana ò Romanca que hoy se usa en España*. For an introduction to philology in the Spanish Golden Age, see Bahner, *La lingüística española del siglo de oro*. On Adrete and the Sacromonte episode, see Woolard, "Bernardo de Aldrete, Humanist and Laminario," 449-76.

¹⁹⁷ Aldrete, *Varias antigüedades*, 269-71.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel Droixhe, *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire*, 100.

¹⁹⁹ See especially Chapter One, "Nebrija in the New World: Renaissance Philosophy of Language and the Spread of Western Literacy," in Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*.

Part of my goal in this chapter has been to demonstrate that defenders and detractors of the lead books wielded both humanist and scholastic scholarly practices and conventional arguments about linguistic form in surprising ways. Aristotelian literary theory served as a defense for the possibility of the miraculous, and humanist tools of textual criticism and philological analysis served to create and authorize scripture, rather than simply criticize or undermine it. This overlap between humanist and scholastic methods and positions parallels a similar confusion between scholarly approaches and political debate over Morisco expulsion. The lead books' critics' unveiling of Islam does not, for example, parallel Américo Castro's contentious twentieth-century search for elements of Islamic culture and Arabic literature in Golden Age Spain. Castro was challenging a normative vision of Latin Iberia, while scholars like Pedro de Valencia and Ignacio de Las Casas were protecting and reformulating this vision. Moreover, Valencia and Las Casas saw no contradiction between working against Morisco expulsion and criticizing the lead books, whose theological vision in many ways parallels their reformist vision of Morisco and Old Christian mixing. Indeed, Las Casas and Valencia's political authority to pursue the latter project rested upon their scholarly integrity in regards to the former. On the other hand, Granadan Archbishop Pedro de Castro's team of scholars and translators, the men who defended the Sacromonte texts' authenticity, attempted to erase the Islamic features from the lead books to reveal, in their view, a definitively Christian meaning even while forcefully arguing against Morisco expulsion. In a letter dated March 9, 1610, as the Morisco expulsions were about to begin, Archbishop Pedro de Castro asked King Philip III that the number of people expelled be as low as possible.²⁰⁰ The discovery of the lead books had persuaded Pedro de Castro to begin studying Arabic, to work closely with erudite Moriscos such as Alonso de Castillo and Miguel de Luna, and, it seems, to champion an optimistic view of the Morisco community's prospect for assimilation in post-Tridentine Spain. Even if only for strategic or institutional reasons – Pedro de Castro, after all, desperately needed qualified Arabists to read the lead books – when it came to royal policy regarding the beleaguered and marginalized Morisco community, the Archbishop found himself in political agreement with Pedro de Valencia and Ignacio de Las Casas, two of his most committed opponents during the Sacromonte debates.

Though the political dispute about Morisco expulsions was settled several decades after the discovery of the lead books, the philological debate about the history of the Spanish language and theological disagreement about the Christian orthodoxy of the lead books were not resolved until the late seventeenth-century papal rejection of the texts. In the end, institutional modes for demarcating the blurry lines between different types of narrative and spheres of knowledge remained authoritative. The Pope himself found the skeptical invocation of the miraculous unconvincing, paradoxically reaffirming both the conventional boundaries of the Christian canon and established humanist philological knowledge. For all their material, formal, and philological arguments, defenders of the lead books could not convince the Vatican of their position. But the way in which the theological and philological debate unfolded demonstrates an early modern conviction, in an Iberian milieu where we have least come to expect it, that textual authenticity and religious orthodoxy were the creation of readers.

²⁰⁰ AAS, legajo 4, no. 31, letter from Archbishop Pedro de Castro to Philip III; Ortiz and Vincent, *Historia de los Moriscos*, 281; Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, 128.

The arguments of these various readers underscores that the boundaries of Christianity were shaped by formal considerations. I have argued that negotiating these forms of ritual, scholarly debate, and holy textuality was both a scholastic and humanist enterprise, one that confuses some of our basic presuppositions about the development of the historical criticism of scripture and the place of skepticism on the Iberian Peninsula. The boundary between what we would now call religious and secular authority was perhaps too blurry in early modern Iberia to be a helpful analytical paradigm for thinking about the Sacromonte debates. As the next chapter demonstrates, however, even in the wider field of early modern philological inquiry, language education, and debates about assimilation and conversion throughout the Hispanic world, theology and philology were constantly reshaping each other. For if some scholars thought it was possible to become Christian by fulfilling ritual obligations, regardless of faith, and to produce Gospel by displaying the conventions of Holy Scripture, regardless of dubious textual origin, then what were the broader philological implications of this pedagogy of participation? Were there limits to the power of religious and linguistic form to shape orthodoxy and subjectivity?

CHAPTER FOUR

Converting Speakers: Comparative Philology and the Limits of Meaning

In the late tenth century, the renowned Andalusian Jewish scholar Moshe ibn Ezra asked his friend and contemporary, the Zaragossan author Abū Ibrāhīm Iṣḥāq ibn Barūn, to send him a copy of the latter's comparative grammar and lexicon, *Kitāb al-muwāzana bayn al-luḡha al-'ibrāniyya wal-'arabiyya* [The Book of Comparison between the Hebrew and Arabic Language].²⁰¹ After reading the text, Ibn Ezra's response was ambivalent. In some poems, he lavished praise on his friend's work, but Ibn Ezra also thought that comparative research on Hebrew and Arabic could be profoundly dangerous theologically, writing at one point that the *Kitāb al-muwāzana* was "as honey-comb to the pure of heart, but as poison to the hypocrites" [Hebrew: l'barīm ketzofīm v'rosh l'chanefīm].²⁰² Throughout the text, Ibn Barūn cited not only the authoritative Jewish grammarians, such as Sa'adiah Gaon (b. 882) and Ibn Janāḥ (b. late tenth century), and traditional Jewish religious texts such as the *Mishnah* and the Masoretic texts, but also Arabic sources, including a translation of the Pentateuch, passages from the Qur'ān, examples from *ḥadīth*, and pre-Islamic verse from the *Mu'allaqāt* of Imru'al-Qays.²⁰³ Systematic comparative research of the kind pursued by Ibn Barūn demanded this co-mingling of sources across ecumenical lines. Despite powerful traditions of secular prose and poetry in both Hebrew and Arabic, the exemplary language that Ibn Barūn set out to study was also located in holy text and its glosses. To ignore these texts would have been disingenuous, but, as Ibn Ezra acknowledged, to study them in this comparative context was to risk heresy. Some readers would have insisted that the very act of employing non-canonical texts and another tradition's holy language to parse sacred Hebrew text was heretical regardless of the interpretive result. On the other hand, because similarities between Hebrew and Arabic might help elucidate ambiguous passages or vocabulary in the Hebrew scripture, knowledge of Arabic language and familiarity with Islamic sources were, at least in theory, potentially useful tools to Jewish commentators.

The theological unease presented by comparative Semitic philology did not emerge solely in response to Ibn Barūn's work.²⁰⁴ His predecessor, the Cordoban scholar Ibn Janāḥ,

²⁰¹ Pinchas Wechter, *Ibn Barūn's Arabic Works on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography*, 5; Ibn Ezra, *Maḥberet mi-shire*, 17.

²⁰² Maman, *Comparative Semitic Philology in the Middle Ages*, 13.

²⁰³ Wechter, 15.

²⁰⁴ "Comparative Semitic philology" was the name retrospectively given to medieval grammatical and lexical research on Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic by nineteenth-century scholars interested in similar

applied Arabic methods of grammatical inquiry to the Hebrew language long before Ibn Barūn compiled his list of similar Hebrew and Arabic words in the *Kitāb al-muwāzana*. Anticipating Antonio de Nebrija's justification for applying the methods of Latin study to the Romance vernaculars in the early modern period, Ibn Janāḥ insisted in his *Kitāb al-luma'* [Book of the Many-Colored Flower Beds], a Hebrew grammar originally written in Judeo-Arabic, that he was trying to elevate Hebrew to its rightful place alongside Arabic, the authoritative scholarly and imperial language of tenth-century Iberia.²⁰⁵ Ibn Janāḥ addressed the theological anxiety over comparison by presenting his research in political and social rather than religious terms. Ibn Quraysh (b. late eighth century), another Hebrew grammarian whose comparative work was roundly criticized by his Jewish co-religionists, took a different approach from both Ibn Barūn and Ibn Janāḥ. He formulated his apology for comparative philology in the religious language of his critics. In his *Risāla*, or letter, to the Jewish community of Fez, Ibn Quraysh argued that it was vital for Jews to read not only the Hebrew *Tanach*, or written Torah, during their synagogue rituals, but also to recite sections of the Aramaic *Targūm*, a translation and commentary of the Hebrew text.²⁰⁶ Although he thereby articulated and defended a uniquely Jewish justification for comparative philological knowledge, his audience recognized that it was only a short analytical and linguistic leap from a limited comparison between Hebrew and Aramaic to a more inclusive and thus theologically troublesome comparative model that would include Arabic as well.

This history of comparative scholarship on Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic, accessible in the sixteenth century through the writings of David Kimhi, Elias Levita, Pedro de Palencia, and others, offers a helpful model for rethinking the terms of comparative philological research in the Iberian Renaissance.²⁰⁷ During Ibn Barūn's day, social pressure and theological anxiety may have motivated the scholarly emphasis on linguistic form to the exclusion of the fraught question of holy text's meaning, but by the time the Jesuit grammarian Emmanuel Álvarez composed his Latin grammar in the late sixteenth century, maintaining this clear distinction between linguistic signs and theological referents had itself become recognizable as a theological position. After the Protestant Reformation, which focused attention upon the gap between observable signs or rituals, on the one hand, and metaphorical meanings or private faiths, on the other hand, this formal approach to philology among Christian scholars was part of a more general Catholic insistence on the sacramental efficacy of language. Paradoxically, the medieval Jewish grammarians, who in different ways distinguished between formal philological inquiry and the more complicated matter of theological meaning, prefigured the approach that Iberian scholars and Inquisitors alike would eventually take. Although all the Rabbinic commentaries and Jewish holy texts, along with much of the hermetic philosophy that stimulated an interest in comparative philology during the Renaissance, were officially outlawed in sixteenth-century Iberia, some strictly

comparative analysis. See Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, 16-17; Dubois, *Mythe et langage au seizième siècle*, 27-51.

²⁰⁵ Coffin, "Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-luma'*: An Integration of Medieval Grammatical Approaches," 65-79. See also Ibn Janāḥ, *Le Livre des parterres fleuris*; Ibn Janāḥ, *Opuscules et traités*.

²⁰⁶ Van Bekkum, "The 'Risāla' of Yehuda Ibn Quraysh and its Place in Hebrew Linguistics," 307-327.

²⁰⁷ On David Kimhi, see Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor*; Talmage, *David Kimhi*; Pedro de Palencia's 1611 treatise in defense of rabbinic commentary has recently been edited as Palencia, *Glosas rabínicas y sagrada escritura: Tratado de Pedro de Palencia*.

grammatical texts were permitted. David Kimhi's *Shorashim* [Roots], for example, along with works by Sebastian Munster and other philologists in northern Europe, were excluded from the *Index*'s prohibitions, suggesting an institutional effort to distinguish between permissible formal analysis and suspicious engagement with heretical content.²⁰⁸ In other words, to refuse, or at least claim to refuse, the importance of semantics in philological research echoed Augustine, Vitoria, and Bartolomé de Las Casas's marginalization of individual faith in the formation of Christian subjects. If accessing meaning, like confirming faith, highlighted the epistemological limits of reading and knowing, focusing on linguistic and ritualistic form was to acknowledge these limits.

Although in the medieval Jewish context comparative philologists often found it necessary to obscure even the Jewish theological uses of their research, in the early modern, evangelical context, Christian theology over-determined comparative lexicons and grammars. The colonial history of the association between proselytizing and philology drove comparative philological research by Christian scholars in the Renaissance. The claim to an evangelical agenda was often justification for Christian scholars interested not only in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but also an increasingly long list of New World and Asian languages. Because evangelism has historically played a much more marginal role in Jewish scholarship and self-definition, medieval grammarians like Ibn Barūn did not have the luxury of such a clearly recognizable, orthodox motivation for comparative research. In the age of exploration, the great diversity of peoples encountered by Europeans made knowledge of new languages and experimentation with innovative philological methods not only of scholarly interest, but also a theological necessity.

Christian polymaths of the period moved seamlessly among medieval comparative work on Hebrew and Arabic, a comparative philology born of colonial and evangelical expansion, and inquiry into the nature of language more generally. Munster, for example, composed the extremely popular *Cosmographia* (1544), a collection of woodcuts and maps with images of the distant peoples and places visited by Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch explorers, and translated medieval Hebrew grammatical research that became widely known throughout Europe. Later scholars, such as the papal official and Jesuit linguist Anastasius Kircher, one of the Roman translators of the Sacromonte lead books, were fascinated by strikingly different languages ranging from Egyptian hieroglyphics to Arabic and Chinese. Kircher, like many of his contemporaries, was drawn to the search for an original, divine, or universal language by the newly discovered diversity of known tongues. Just as the array of religious diversity encountered by European explorers occasioned a re-examination of religious history and a search for common theological threads, the awareness of astounding linguistic difference stimulated a parallel search for linguistic commonality.

This chapter examines the theological conditions of an early modern philology that focused on common lexical and grammatical forms in a comparative linguistic and religious context. I begin by examining Jesuit approaches to Hebrew language education, showing that the Jesuit disinterest in holy semantics characterized the study of language not only in

²⁰⁸ The *Index* specifically allowed the Hebrew grammatical works such as the *Massorettes*, as well as texts and translations published by early modern Hebraists Juan Buxtorsio, Mordecai Nathan, Sebastian Munster, Elias Levita, and David Kimhi. See Jiménez Monteserín, *Introducción a la inquisición española*, 594-95.

conventional pedagogical situations in the Old World, but also in various evangelical encounters around the globe. By examining the debates between the Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jansenists about language and evangelization in China, I show that the attempt to separate the formal from the semantic also structured the Jesuit approach to conversion of New Christians. Because comparative philological research and the Jesuit practices of *accommodatio* were mutually determined, a politics of peaceful evangelization was intimately tied to thinking about language. I then shift back to the more familiar tradition of Golden Age scholarship on language, examining the disagreement between Antonio de Nebrija and Juan de Valdés over whether it was best to investigate language as a proscriptive or descriptive enterprise. The terms of this humanist debate, which pitted Nebrija's erudite Latinizing tendency against Valdés's emphasis on popular usage, parallel some of the tensions raised during the disagreements among the religious orders over language and evangelization. I conclude the chapter by showing how Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas's approach to language in his Latin grammar, *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae* (1587), underscores how the unstable relationship between signs and referents challenged both philologists and theologians.

Powerful or Pregnant Words

Initially known primarily for their strict and extensive Latin study, which integrated classical poetic and historical texts into religious education, Jesuit colleges began to apply their pedagogical skill to teaching other languages over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁰⁹ Their method for teaching Hebrew grammar provides a particularly revealing entry point both to their methodology of language education and to the ways in which linguistic and theological concerns intersected in the Jesuit classroom. The section of the Jesuit educational program that outlines a curriculum of Hebrew study makes especially clear a division between formal knowledge of Hebrew language and the potentially heretical content of unfamiliar Hebrew texts. This treatise, the *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu* (1599), a much debated and revised document that systematized Jesuit pedagogy, instructed *professori linguae hebraeae* thus: "When he is interpreting the sacred books, he should not spend as much effort on pondering the content and ideas as on taking note of the power of the words, and the special idioms distinctive of the language, and the grammatical rules according to the actual usage of the authors" [Dum sacros libros interpretatur, non tam in rebus ac sententiis expendendis laboret, quam in vi ac potestate verborum, ac propriis eius linguae idiotismis, et in grammaticae praeceptis iuxta germanum auctorum usum observandis].²¹⁰ The Hebrew text was to be understood as collection of grammatical rules and idioms in need of parsing, rather than a potentially rich and contentious reservoir of meaning.

The reasons for this approach in the context of Hebrew education in Inquisitorial Spain were clear. Despite the allowances of the *Index*, the very presence of Hebrew or Arabic script raised suspicion, as the previous chapter on the Sacromonte episode demonstrated. By

²⁰⁹ For a well-known, somewhat critical history of the Jesuits, see Aveling, *The Jesuits*.

²¹⁰ *Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education (Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Iesu)*, 61. Several editions of the *Ratio* were published at the end of the sixteenth century (1586, 1591, 1599). The Latin text is from Ladislaus Lukács's critical edition.

publicizing their lack of interest in semantic questions, the successive teams of Jesuit pedagogues who composed and revised the *Ratio* under the nominal direction of Claudio Aquaviva tried to insulate their teachers and students both from the accusation and allure of the heresy of “judaizing.”²¹¹ While it was possible to study Christian Latin and Greek texts in classes on theology and employ profane, ancient literature to master classical grammar, the history of Hebrew offered no such clear dichotomy in terms of register and usage. Even the bawdy medieval Hebrew odes to wine and women, from King David’s *Psalms* to the poems of medieval al-Andalus, displayed a striking Biblical inter-textuality. As a result, the authors of the *Ratio* determined that there was no choice but for students to direct their attention toward the Hebrew Bible, which, despite its sacredness as a Jewish text, held a fundamental place in the Christian canon. Neophytes would limit their analysis to the observable aspects of the language while ignoring the problematic “potestate verborum,” which more highly trained theologians would gloss in other contexts.²¹² While the reality of Hebrew education was in practice less tidy than the *Ratio* mandated—the Jesuit order was, after all, popular among *Conversos* because its classrooms afforded some degree of freedom to maintain a connection to their Jewish heritage, if not actually use their specialized knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish ritual to their professional advantage—the insistence upon a clear distinction between form and content in language study came to characterize the Jesuit approach in broader evangelical contexts as well.

For the Jesuits, as for the Salamanca Thomists, one became Christian by repeatedly performing ritual acts that over time shaped ethical behavior and religious belief.²¹³ Their philosophy of language learning, as the *Ratio* and Emmanuel Álvarez’s Latin teaching grammar *De institutione grammatica* (1572) both demonstrate, privileged a pedagogy of usage rather than a philosophy of meaning. The *De institutione grammatica* was composed completely in Latin, and critics of the Jesuits asked how students were supposed to learn a language when their textbook presupposed the knowledge it was supposed to help develop. The *Ratio*, produced after Álvarez’s text, outlined a similarly rigid Latin-only instruction for communication among students and teachers in Jesuit colleges. Students were supposed to learn a language by using it.²¹⁴ Students willing to engage in the game of imitation and experimentation, the theory went, would progress toward fluency most quickly. Even if students did not completely understand the grammar they were partially and oftentimes incorrectly employing, and even if the teacher initially let misunderstandings and miscommunications pass without comment, developing the habit of communication would speed acquisition.

²¹¹ On the series of editions and revisions, see Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education*, 219-401.

²¹² See Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education*.

²¹³ The old Salamanca *Colegio de Jesuitas* was originally right across the street from the Universidad de Salamanca. Anthony Pagden discusses the relationship between the ideas of the Dominican Thomists such as Vitoria and de Soto, and Jesuits like Acosta, in *The Fall of Natural Man*, 147.

²¹⁴ Contemporary trends in the pedagogy of language acquisition have begun to look increasingly like the early modern Jesuit model, which was at once critical of content and insistent upon usage. Indeed, the most successful contemporary second-language programs routinely tout complete immersion and firm target language pledges. Middlebury College’s Summer Language Program is perhaps the most extreme example of this model. Students must sign a “language pledge” at the beginning of the summer. All academic and extra-curricular activities take place in the target language.

Be it second language acquisition in the modern classroom or grammar study for preparing future evangelizers in early modern Jesuit colleges, developing the habit of communication is fundamental for achieving the practical goal of language acquisition. This focus on form and usage over meaning has, in particular after the “Chomskian Revolution” in linguistics, come to be seen as *merely* a pedagogical strategy or descriptive impulse rather than a deeper philosophical, philological, or, as I have been arguing, theological position on the nature of human agency and identity. Chomsky attacked his predecessors and teachers, the Bloomfieldian linguists, a group of scholars primarily invested in cataloguing the variety of world tongues, for not investigating universal grammatical qualities, the “deep structure” common to all language.²¹⁵ Yet the vast majority of sixteenth-century comparative philological research was, like the later work of the Bloomfieldians, essentially descriptive, particularly in evangelical contexts; New World, Asian, and Mediterranean dictionaries and grammars were focused on lexical equivalencies rather than philosophical meditation. The Franciscans Andrés de Olmos, whose *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (1547) was the first Nahuatl grammar, and Pedro de Molina, whose *Vocabulario en la lengua castellana y mexicana* (1555) was the first printed Nahuatl lexicon, exemplify this formal philological approach that I have been tracing through the Jesuit approach to education. Both Olmos and Molina’s works were written in the mid-sixteenth century as part of the evangelical effort in New Spain, and because they served as practical preaching aids, there was little place for philosophical reflection on the shared features of all languages or the relationship between indigenous tongues and an original, universal language. Olmos and Molina’s dictionaries and grammars were based on important earlier models, including Pedro de Alcalá’s *Arte para ligemente saber la lengua arabiga* (1505), produced to aid Hernando de Talavera’s evangelization of the Granadan Muslims, and Nebrija’s own Latin grammar, the *Introductiones latinae* (1481), which was the standard Iberian paradigm for vernacular grammars through the first half of the sixteenth century. These various grammars and dictionaries marked Iberia’s imperial power, exemplified by the political and religious need for communication with an increasingly diverse set of subjects, and, as anyone who has examined these texts can attest, exemplified an apparent lack of interest in philosophical or theoretical reflection on language itself.

Like Alcalá’s Arabic lexicon and Olmos and Molina’s Nahuatl texts, the first Jesuit studies of languages spoken by potential New Christians around the world focused on the small subset of theological vocabulary that would make it possible for an evangelizer to perform a reasonably accurate rendition of the *Pater nostra* or *Ave Maria*.²¹⁶ Just as Jesuit

²¹⁵ The so-called Bloomfieldian linguists (named for Leonard Bloomfield, d. 1949) were primarily concerned with unraveling the grammars of the vernaculars spoken by distant and oftentimes isolated communities, and they studiously avoided the field of semantics. Framing the human capacity to learn and use language as a kind of Pavlovian, conditioned response seemed insufficient to Chomsky. The fact that such a conception of language, which failed to account for the creative aspect of communication, continues to be perceived as inadequate speaks to Chomsky’s profound effect on linguistics and philosophy of mind. See Harris, *Linguistics Wars*; Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*; Chomsky, *Language and Mind*; Cook, *Chomsky’s Universal Grammar*.

²¹⁶ There are many accounts of Jesuits preaching in Asia and the New World, including the early history, Luis de Guzmán, *Historia de las misiones que han hecho los religiosos de la Compañía para predicar el Santo Evangelio en los reynos del Japón* (1601). For an excellent discussion of the debates about the Jesuits in China, see Part II of Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*. For early modern takes on the

students of Hebrew limited their readings of holy text to grammatical rules specifically in order to circumvent the weighty and potentially heretical implications of the Hebrew Bible's content, Jesuit missionaries were not particularly concerned with the range of meanings and complex religious connotations of the local languages they encountered. Chinese, Visayan, or Aymara words, no less than Hebrew ones, might retain their heretical meanings despite being transposed into the realm of Christian cosmology and ritual performance. There was great potential for theological confusion in this process of translating sacramental language into the local idiom, and old meanings in New Christians' native tongues might very well corrupt meanings in Latin or Spanish. Dominican, Franciscan and, later, Jansenist critics all argued that Jesuit missionaries, by insisting upon the importance of formal, though arbitrary, lexical equivalencies, were willfully blind to doctrinal misunderstanding.

Detractors most famously attacked the Jesuits for their approach in China, spawning an array of texts and arguments that have, since the seventeenth century, become known as the "Chinese Rites Controversy."²¹⁷ It is clear from the manuscript history of these discussions that debates over China and Chinese language also concerned evangelizers elsewhere, particularly in New Spain, France, and on the Iberian Peninsula. At the beginning of a two-volume manuscript collection of various late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century treatises regarding these "controversias ecclesiasticas en la China," an anonymous author from Acapulco, Mexico tells how a Dominican by the name of Fray Sebastian came to visit him from the Philippines, bringing news of the Jesuits' controversial conversion strategies in Asia.²¹⁸ Within these texts, the Jesuit position is most clearly articulated by two Jesuit missionaries in Asia, Fray Bartolomé de Roboredo and Fray Baptista Morales. Internal remarks by the various authors in these manuscripts, now housed in the Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca, make it clear that copies of these treatises and responses circulated ("corrio") widely in the Hispanic world.²¹⁹ From later Jansenist criticisms of the Jesuit approach in China, it is evident that the outlines of the controversy were widely debated in France and elsewhere. Jesuit evangelization in China became a pedagogical and doctrinal test case for the limits of philological formalism and theological *accommodatio* in an early modern imperial age.

The controversy revolved around whether Chinese terms and Confucian ritual practices were religious or civic in nature. Following the leads of Francisco Xavier and Matteo Ricci, the first Jesuit missionaries in China, later evangelizers such as Roboredo argued that it was necessary to "accommodate to the affects, ceremonies, and political

Chinese language, see Fr. Joan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China* (Antwerp, 1596), as well as Matteo Ricci's famous diaries, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas*, edited and translated by his contemporary, Nicolas Tribault.

²¹⁷ For an introduction to this episode, see Standert, "Jesuits in China," 169-185; Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*.

²¹⁸ BUS Mss. 169 & 170, two sizable (over 200 folios each) Castilian and Latin manuscripts collections from the seventeenth century, written in various hands.

²¹⁹ BUS Ms. 169, ff. 10v-11r "...esta Apologia corrio tambien en las Islas y yo tengo copia della en los demas papeles."

manners” [acomodarse a las cortesias, ceremonias, y modo politico] of Chinese scholars.²²⁰ Xavier, Ricci, Roboredo, and others, insisted that such accommodation was simply a way to engage the local people, who respected their Confucian “letrados,” in a familiar political and social hierarchy. By repeatedly arguing that controversial gestures, practices, and, indeed, turns of phrase, were not religious in nature, Jesuit proponents of *accommodatio* asserted that such engagement did not entail a legitimization of heretical Chinese beliefs and practices. This desire to separate actions and words from their local religious contexts, to read and reproduce these visible and audible signs as part of a civic life whose potential religious referents might just as well be Christian as Confucian, paralleled the Jesuits’ desire, systematized in the *Ratio*, to study the formal aspects of language in isolation from potentially heretical content.²²¹ To pick one notorious example, Jesuit and Franciscan interlocutors disagreed over the meaning and implication of the Chinese term, “ching boang” or “chim huam,” which referred to the guardianship of a city or holy place and which early modern Jesuits and Franciscans agreed to literally translate as “muro” [Eng. wall; Ch. ching] and “fosso” [Eng. moat; Ch. huam] respectively.²²² Used together the phrase implied some kind of higher civic or divine protective power. An anonymous critic pointed out that Father Morales, in explaining the meaning of these terms, had emphasized the architectural lexicon in order to present the Chinese phrase as part of a civic logic of urban defense. Nevertheless, Morales, the critic continued, needed to add the word “xím,” or “spirit” to place the meaning of “ching boang” in a more clear cultural and linguistic context, suggesting that the “actual meaning” [el propio significado] of the phrase included precisely the theological element that Morales was attempting to elide.²²³ Was Morales’s literal, architectural reading of the terms an attempt to obscure its metaphorical, theological meaning?

This formal philological strategy is reminiscent of the dissimulation of the Church fathers evoked by Pedro de Valencia in his apology for the peaceful assimilation of Moriscos into Old Christian society on the Iberian Peninsula in Chapter Two. Roboredo justifies this sort of philological and theological sleight of hand in precisely the language that Valencia

²²⁰ BUS Ms. 170, f. 182r. See also Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, 13-73; Liu, “The Intricacies of Accommodation: The Proselytizing Strategy of Matteo Ricci,” 465-87; O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 342.

²²¹ BUS Ms. 169, f. 62v. Roboredo’s argument in response to Franciscan criticisms is emblematic: “Pero no son idolatrias las honrras que en los tempos, sepulcros, y en sus casas hazen los nuevos Christianos a los dichos difuntos...por que los Chinos en las onrras que hazen a sus progenitores muertos usan dos suertes de Ceremonias, las unas proprias de sectra de los letrados y estas son puramente politicas, dirigidas solamente a veneracion, respecto, y estima Civil de sus abuelos difuntos, y las otras son proprias de la secta de los idolos y estas son supersticiones” [But the honors that the New Christians offer to their aforementioned dead in the temples, sepulchers and houses are not idolatrous...because in offering these honors to their dead forefathers, the Chinese use two types of ceremonies, the first specific to scholars, and these are purely political, directed solely toward Civil veneration, respect and esteem of their dead grandparents, while the others are specific to the sect of the idols, and these are superstitions].

²²² See “chim-hoam,” in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 929. Debate over the meaning of these terms is in BUS Ms. 170, f. 385r and f. 661r. For an account of a similarly contested term, “qi,” see Zhang, “Demystifying Qi: The Politics of Cultural Translation and Interpretation in the Early Jesuit Mission to China,” 74-106.

²²³ BUS Ms. 169, f. 385r.

used in his *Tratado de los Moriscos de España*. “In the Early Church,” Roboredo argues, “the Holy Apostles dissimulated and permitted many Jewish and Gentile ceremonies in order not to distance Gentiles and Pagans from the law of Christ” [en la primitiva iglesia disimulaban y permitian los sagrados Apostoles muchas ceremonias Judaicas y gentlicas por no apartar de la ley de Christo a los Gentiles y Paganos].²²⁴ Some degree of flexibility and permissiveness during the first stage of evangelization was necessary. Diving quickly into difficult issues of theological doctrine would, in Roboredo’s idiom, be “too hard for New Christians to swallow” [bocado duro para principiantes en la fe].²²⁵ A formal approach to both philology and theology was thus part of a practice of dissimulation with recognizably orthodox precedents. The Jesuits’ *modus operandi* of a peaceful and successful evangelization and a patient pedagogy of participation relied upon this fiction of a formal distinction between linguistic signs and theological meanings in both philological and theological contexts. For Jesuit pedagogues, as for medieval Jewish grammarians, this duality made comparative philology, which entailed crossing both ecumenical and linguistic boundaries, defensible.

Like the anonymous Franciscan and Dominican critics from the Salamanca manuscript collection, Blaise Pascal and his Jansenist colleagues of Port Royal argued that the Jesuit emphasis on form in language and ritual at best demanded too great a doctrinal and philological sacrifice, and at worst was an example of doctrinal and institutional duplicity.²²⁶ Taking confession as a paradigmatic example in his *Lettres provinciales*, Pascal asked how Jesuit theologians like Antonio Escobar y Mendoza could possibly argue that confession would retain its sacramental character if the personal sense of contrition were absent. “Des artifices de devotion” [the artifices of devotion], Pascal insisted, were not the same thing as devotion itself.²²⁷ Indeed, throughout the *Lettres*, Pascal argued that the Jesuits were using language with conventional theological meanings, such as penance, devotion, and grace, in new and often contradictory ways. The important point here is that Pascal’s disagreement with the Jesuits over the efficacy of ritual form and importance of individual agency in evangelical contexts like China or the New World paralleled a broader divergence between the Jansenists and Jesuits over the relationship between language and mind. As Maria Tsiapera and Garon Wheeler have argued, given this famous theological discord between the two groups of scholars, the interest of Pascal’s colleagues, Claude Lancelot and Antoine Arnaud, in the universal reason structuring all language was a transparent jab at the Jesuit

²²⁴ BUS Ms. 169, f. 107v.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 57r. Roboredo is specifically referring to the Jesuits’ decision to emphasize a vision of “Christ in Glory” rather than “Christ in agony,” hoping not to alarm potential or new converts. In the fifth letter of his *Lettres provinciales*, Blaise Pascal attacks this strategy, which he specifically associates with the Jesuit missions in India and China: “quand ils se trouvent en des païs où un Dieu crucifié passe pour folie, ils suppriment le scandale de la Croix, et ne preschent que Jesus-Christ glorieux, et non pas Jesus-Christ souffrant: comme ils ont fait dans les Indes et dans la Chine, où ils ont permis aux Chrestiens l’idolâtrie...” [when they find themselves in countries where the notion of a crucified God passes as craziness, they suppress the scandal of the cross and only preach about Jesus Christ in his glory, rather than about Jesus Christ suffering, as they have done in the Indies and in China, where they have permitted idolatry among Christians]. See Pascal, *Les lettres provinciales*, 44.

²²⁶ Maire, “Port-Royal: The Jansenist Schism,” 301-51.

²²⁷ Pascal, *Les lettres provinciales*, 109.

methodology and principles visible in the Chinese Rites Controversy.²²⁸ Lancelot and Arnaud conclude the preface to the 1656 edition of the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée de Port Royal* by emphasizing the importance of reason over custom: “puis que si la parole est un des plus grands avantages de l’homme, ce ne doit pas estre une chose méprisable de posséder cet avantage avec toute la perfection qui convient à l’homme; qui est de n’en avoir pas seulement l’usage, mais d’en pénétrer aussi les raisons, et de faire par science, ce que les autres font seulement par coutume” [therefore if language is one of the great advantages of man, it ought not be a despicable thing to possess this advantage with all the perfection due to man, which is not to have only the use of language, but to penetrate its reasons, and to do through science that which others do only by custom].²²⁹ By penetrating the layers of usage and custom to access the constitutive rationality of language, the Port Royal linguists saw themselves as scientists in addition to teachers and readers. Lancelot and Arnaud sought the rational laws of language. Unlike the Jesuits, who marshaled the pedagogical and social power of convention, both ritualistic and linguistic, to accomplish their evangelical goals, the Jansenists of Port Royal pursued deeper knowledge of language’s causes in order to possess and employ it more perfectly.

Despite the argument of Tsiapera and Wheeler that the scholars of Port Royal demonstrated the ways allegedly universal features of language were related to modes of thought, Lancelot and Arnaud were more circumspect than they have sometimes been portrayed. At the beginning of the *Grammaire*, Lancelot and Arnaud formulate their linguistic project thus: “L’engagement où je me suis trouvé, plustost par rencontre que par mon choix, de travailler aux Grammaires de diverses Langues, m’a souvent porté à rechercher les raisons de plusieurs choses qui sont, ou communes à toutes les langues, ou particulières à quelques-unes” [The project in which I find myself engaged is more by hazard than by my choice, for working on the grammars of diverse languages, has often led me to investigate the reasons behind many things which are either common to all languages or particular to some.]²³⁰ For the authors, there was a tension between the diversity of actual languages and the recognition of commonality between the linguistic features that are “particular” and those that are “common.” As I have argued above, it became possible to imagine vernacular grammars and comparative morphological analysis of “diverse languages” only in the mid-sixteenth century, when Christian scholars began to broaden their linguistic interests beyond Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to include the Romance vernaculars, German, English, Nahuatl, Yucatec, Quechua, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Syriac, and Aramaic. A burgeoning scholarly interest in the languages of the New World and Far East, in addition to a new kind of philological, as opposed to merely polemical, attention to the languages of the Near East and Mediterranean began to take shape. The multiplication of known languages made investigating universal linguistic features a compelling and politically pressing line of inquiry. Just as the diverse and unfamiliar religious practices in the New World stimulated great debate over the theological and cosmological limits of the Christian subject, radically different languages generated scholarly inquiry into the relationship between these strange tongues and the more familiar

²²⁸ Tsiapera and Wheeler, *The Port-Royal Grammar: Sources and Influence*, 60-63.

²²⁹ Lancelot and Arnaud, *Grammaire générale et raisonnée*, 4. I have used a facsimile of the 1676 edition.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

and proximate classical languages or European vernaculars. By overemphasizing Lancelot and Arnaud's interest in features common to all languages and dismissing their concern with the particularities of French, Tsiapsera, along with Chomsky, has not only obscured the linguistic complexities that the Port Royal scholars set out to explore, but also disregarded a scholarly approach to language that emphasizes description, usage, and form.

In Chomsky's case, his immediate critical targets were the early twentieth-century Bloomfieldian linguists, but by celebrating the seventeenth-century Jansenist approach to language as part of a modern linguistics polemic, some parallels between these Bloomfieldians and the early modern Jesuits become visible. For example, the Bloomfieldian linguists argued that there was little reason to believe that research on universal grammar and logic was even possible. Universal claims about language demanded extensive comparative philological knowledge, which they set about trying to develop. Yet even after the process of extensively documenting diverse languages, they argued that it remained unclear whether researchers can truly comprehend the African clicking languages or obscure indigenous tongues they document. Recognizing this limitation on comprehension, which continues to present a challenge not only to descriptive philologists but to scholars in other fields as well, the Bloomfieldians chose to simply ignore the question of semantics.

In their evangelical and philological approach, early modern Jesuits pursued a similar model. They recognized that it would be more efficient to control the social effects of language and ritual by focusing on usage rather than debating meaning. This is why they encouraged potential converts to use certain words in specific ritual contexts, to say the correct prayers at mass, for example, regardless of what such a speech act might have meant to the community of speakers. Miscommunication and misunderstanding was the price Jesuit evangelizers were willing to pay for participation. Yet in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, new epistemologies of language entailed considering the universal quality of all language, along with the metaphorical meanings produced in particular religious contexts, rather than the specific turns of phrase that might ring true to the laborers in Castilian, Andalusian, or Mexican church pews. Twentieth-century linguists re-enforce traditional presuppositions about what "modern" linguistic study means, as well as the trope of Iberian anachronism, when they disregard the scholarly interest in formal philology. Yet for early modern Iberian scholars of language, ranging from Antonio Nebrija to Bernardo de Aldrete, and from Juan de Valdés to Francisco Sánchez de la Brozas, the tension between form and content, and the balance between a study of local usage and a proscriptive, oftentimes Latinizing tendency were topics of heated debate.²³¹ As the next section will demonstrate, the epistemological and philological questions that I have been examining above in a theological context also played out among a more diverse group of Iberian humanists whose primary concerns were aesthetic and political rather than religious.

Reforming Grammar: The Aesthetic Question of Usage

Over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the use and scope of research on grammar in Spain and elsewhere drastically changed. Antonio de Nebrija may have been the first Iberian scholar to extend the legitimacy of Latin study to the Romance vernaculars, but one goal of his *Grammatica de la lengua castellana* (1492) was to provide an

²³¹ Brevia-Claramonte, *Sanctius' Theory of Language*.

accessible entry point for students to eventually continue with advanced study in Latin.²³² He thought that systematic language study in the vernacular would help students to make the jump to subjects that presupposed reading knowledge of Latin and familiarity with Latin grammar. Moreover, Nebrija understood the work of grammarians as proscriptive, as part of a process of improving and correcting unregulated and misused language in order to produce a vernacular worthy of a global empire. Spanish, in other words, needed to become more standardized and stable, like Latin. But he seemed not to draw a distinction between modern tongues and dead, classical languages. Although some humanists—Michel de Montaigne is the most famous example—occasionally claimed that their *first* language was Latin, for the vast majority of students in early modern Europe there was a clear distinction between the vernacular they spoke at home and the Latin they learned in school. Because Nebrija was primarily interested in Latin for the access it provided to classical culture, he de-emphasized the whole question of usage, which necessarily entailed formulating some sort of specialized and innovative paradigm for studying the vernacular rather than simply exporting existing grammatical models from Latin to Spanish. By the middle of the sixteenth century, with Spain's New World empire expanding, there emerged a more pressing need for linguistic inquiry focused on practical, daily communication.

Even among Peninsular humanists, though, there was debate about whether Nebrija's Latin-focused approach to vernacular language made sense. Nebrija's most famous critic, Juan de Valdés, repeatedly attacked his study of Spanish as a grammatical "arte" taught in books rather than as a lived form of communication. Valdés playfully ridiculed Nebrija's approach as a set of "gramatiquerías" that missed the truly dynamic aspect of spoken Spanish.²³³ This is why the *Diálogo de la lengua* (1535), a conversation between a group of curious Italians and their Iberian interlocutor, is so full of popular refrains. Valdés purposely emphasized the lived language that he thought Nebrija had mistakenly ignored.²³⁴ For example, in response to the Italians' request that the Iberian informant explain and justify his own linguistic choices in Castilian using Latin grammatical terms, the eponymous Valdés curtly countered with one of many digs at Nebrija's bookish approach: He could not respond to this question, Valdés the character contended, "porque he aprendido la lengua latina por arte y libros, y la castellana por uso, de manera que de la latina podría dar cuenta por el arte y por los libros en que la aprendí, y de la castellana no, sino por el uso común de hablar" [Because I have learned the Latin language by art and book, and the Castilian language by use, consequently I could account for Latin through the art and books in which I learned it, but not Castilian, which I can but account for through the common use of speaking].²³⁵ Although Valdés sometimes expressed his orthographic or lexical preferences, most often he did so while simultaneously highlighting and explaining the extant variety of expression. He offered examples of the ways that native speakers employed ambiguous phrases, chose among

²³² For two classic accounts of these pedagogical and philological transformations, see Rabil, *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*; Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain*. See also Droixhe, *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire (1600-1800)*, 100.

²³³ Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de la lengua*, 66; For more on Valdés and Nebrija, see Guitarte, "Alcance y sentido de las opiniones de Valdes sobre Nebrija," 247-88.

²³⁴ Bahner, *La lingüística española del siglo de oro*, 69.

²³⁵ Valdés, *Diálogo de la lengua*, 43.

synonyms, and distinguished between geographic and class-specific registers. Valdés's interest in usage provided a descriptive counter-balance to Nebrija's proscriptive strategy.

By the dawn of the seventeenth century, Nebrija was so closely associated with a negative, "gramatiquería" model of language knowledge on the one hand, and a defense of Latinizing Spanish on the other hand, that his name had become shorthand for critics of such a project. Francisco de Quevedo, for example, ruthlessly ridiculed "cultista" poets such as Luis de Góngora, who subscribed to this Latinizing tendency. In his short satire, "La culta latiniparla," [the Latin-speaking sect] which playfully advised "mujeres cultas y hembra latinas" [sophisticated and Latin-obsessed women] on Castilian expression, Quevedo mocked his female addressee, whom he described with false admiration as "tan airosa de hipérboles y tan nebrijense de palabras, que tiene más nominativos que galanes, y siendo la dama de más arte (de Antonio) que se ha visto" [so airy with hyperboles and so Nebrija-like in words, who has more nominatives than suitors, a lady of more art (Antonio's) than has ever been seen].²³⁶ According to Quevedo, the "cultista" poets, in their effort to seem erudite and literary, missed the true beauty and gravity of popular expression, just as Nebrija had. Quevedo presented the literary apology for a dynamic and rich language as it was actually employed in writing and speech, demonstrating his point with scores of vernacular neologisms and sardonic importations from Latin. As I have argued above, there was a parallel theological case for an emphasis on the dynamic, communicative aspects of language over a set of stable grammatical rules and lexical equivalencies. The scholarly tensions structuring the politics of philology on the Peninsula paralleled the theological debates about language in China, the New World, and elsewhere.

However, even in the most erudite philological studies, such as Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas's *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae* (1587), which was famous for its goal of grammatical abstraction from the particulars of Latin itself to the functioning of language in general, it was impossible to completely avoid the specificity of Latin expression.²³⁷ Unlike Valdés, who repeatedly invoked spoken language, Francisco Sánchez returned again and again to particular turns of phrase in classical texts. This is unsurprising; Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas is perhaps most familiar to Hispanists as editor, translator, and commentator of a host of classical Latin texts and Renaissance lyric, not as a grammarian. Yet because Francisco Sánchez posited a universal and rational grammatical logic that structured all communication, the *Minerva* has recently attracted attention from modern linguists and historians of philology. Francisco Sánchez called this logic the "ratio grammatica." The range of meanings of the word "ratio" include both the mathematical sense of proportionality and the mental process by which such proportionality is calculated, a faculty that we now call "reason" or "judgment." Unlike the Jesuit authors described above, who used "ratio" to more specifically describe a pedagogical method, Francisco Sánchez, also known as Sanctius and El Brocense by his modern and early modern readers, employed the term in the traditional,

²³⁶ See Quevedo, *Sátiras lingüísticas y literarias*; Quevedo, *Obras completas en prosa*, vol. 1, no. 1, 97.

²³⁷ I have consulted both a Latin original and a modern Spanish translation of the text. See Sánchez de las Brozas, *Minerva, seu de causis linguae latinae*; Sánchez de las Brozas, *Minerva: o, de la propiedad de la lengua latina*. For a helpful biography of Francisco Sánchez, see Bell, *Francisco Sánchez, el Brocense*.

scholastic sense. Possessing such a *ratio*, or capacity for reason, was both a precondition for exercising one's will toward Christian faith and a marker of humanity.

In the fourth chapter of the *Minerva*, Francisco Sánchez outlined a definition and taxonomy of the grammatical term, "ellipsis," which is fundamental for understanding what El Brocense meant by the phrase, "ratio grammatica." At the beginning of this chapter, Francisco Sánchez defined ellipsis as "the absence of one or more words in a correct construction, such as 'I want a few [words] with you'" [Ellipsis est defectus dictionis vel dictionum ad legitimam constructionem; ut, *Paucis te volo*].²³⁸ Although the word, "words," is absent from the example, readers and listeners would have understood the implied meaning because of the grammatical structure of the phrase. Previous writers, ranging from the Roman grammarian Quintilian (b. 35) to the English Renaissance humanist Thomas Linacre (b. circa 1540) had treated the problem of omission under various different names, but Francisco Sánchez accentuated the importance of this idea by devoting an entire section of his grammar to cataloguing examples. Moreover, unlike Linacre, who argued that it was possible to deduce the omitted word or phrase either from comparable phrases by the same author or from the remaining words in the particular sentence—either by historicizing or close reading, we would now say—Francisco Sánchez claimed that it was the *ratio grammatica* itself that provided a third, definitive tool for parsing the omission.²³⁹

Noam Chomsky in particular has criticized Francisco Sánchez for insufficiently isolating the syntactical aspect of the ellipsis problem from other modes of unveiling or recovering absent allegorical, linguistic, or even eschatological meaning. Despite Francisco Sánchez's stated intentions, Chomsky thinks Francisco Sánchez is too much of a close reader of literary language.²⁴⁰ Even though Francisco Sánchez himself saw no analytical problem with mining historical and poetic texts for evidence of a universal "ratio grammatica," such intimate engagement with particular texts precluded universal conclusions. Strictly speaking, Chomsky is right. It is, indeed, possible to invert the relationship between the Francisco Sánchez's textual evidence and his grammatical conclusions, to understand the *Minerva*'s various examples of ellipsis as justification for his interpretations rather than a theory of syntax. Yet as Chomsky's many critics have contended, the very assertion of absolute abstraction, an assertion that buttresses the notion of universal or deep grammar, is a dubious one.²⁴¹

Francisco Sánchez and Noam Chomsky, both claiming to investigate the rules of language and logic themselves rather than the particularities of Latin or English at specific times and in local contexts, fall short. They both place too much faith in the possibility of unveiling the hidden logical mechanisms and semantic referents obscured by linguistic form. I have investigated a formal philological approach that, unlike Francisco Sánchez's in the early

²³⁸ Francisco Sánchez, *Minerva: o, de la propiedad de la lengua latina*, 671.

²³⁹ For an excellent introduction to the history of language study as it is relevant to Francisco Sánchez's innovations, see Breva-Claramonte, *Sanctius's Theory of Language* 7-81. A now classic take on philology in the Renaissance is Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols.

²⁴⁰ Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, 139. Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind*, 16

²⁴¹ See Chapter Five, "Generative Semantics I: The Model" for Robin and George Lakoff's early criticisms, and Chapter Seven, "The Vicissitudes of War," for later arguments, in Harris, *Linguistics Wars*, 100-134, 160-97.

modern period or Chomsky's in our day, acknowledges this epistemological difficulty. I have shown how the documentation of linguistic form and the pedagogy of usage, rather than an attempt to formulate universal grammatical principles or the relationship between thought and language, was a carefully articulated analytical position aligned with some of the surprisingly progressive political and social effects examined in previous chapters. Moreover, the philological formalism of the Jesuits Emmanuel Álvarez or Father Roboredo, along with the popular philology of Juan de Valdés, parallel the theological formalism articulated in different ways by Francisco de Vitoria, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Ignacio de Las Casas, and Bartolomé Pectorano.

Francisco Sánchez's method of parsing the problem of ellipsis in the *Minerva* underscores, first, how uncovering the faith of New Christians and the hidden or allegorical meanings of written texts were parallel processes circumscribed by shared limits. And second, the refusal to engage in this process, either by focusing only on linguistic form or by insisting upon a pedagogy of linguistic usage, must be considered within the theological context outlined in the first half of this dissertation. By showing that Francisco Sánchez's treatment of ellipsis can serve as test case both for his definition of "ratio grammatica" and for techniques of literary close reading, I conclude this chapter by highlighting the parallel epistemological challenges facing early modern and contemporary scholars. Moreover, Francisco Sánchez's approach to ellipsis, which requires positing an absent word and mining the formal rules of grammar for hidden semantic meanings, parallels the work of some theologians, such as José de Acosta from the second chapter, who insist upon establishing a clear relationship between the signs of New Christian ritual and reality of their faith. Here, for example, is Francisco Sánchez's entry for the elided word, "fidem," from the *Minerva* chapter on ellipsis:

Fidem. Ter. Phorm. *Prô Deûm immortalium*. Ubi Donatus ellipsis esse, et *fidem*, vel simile aliquid, desiderari ait. Cicero in *Æconomico*, *Quid igitur, Prô Deûm immortalium, primum eam ducebas quæso?* Terent. *Prô Deûm immortalium, hominum fidem.*²⁴²

[Faith. Terence, *Phormio*: "By the immortal Gods," in which Donatus says there is, and "faith" or something similar is necessary. Cicero, *Æconomico*: "And so, by the immortal Gods, what did you first teach to this one?" Terence: By the Gods and the faith of men.]

The exclamation, "pro Deum inmortalium," taken from Terence's second-century b.c. play, *Phormio*, is missing a word or phrase, which the fourth-century commentator, Aelius Donatus suggested could be "fidem." According to the logic of Donatus and Francisco Sánchez alike, the genitive plural construction, "of the immortal Gods," produces an ellipsis, which thus succinctly explains how the grammatically incorrect or incomplete phrase might be, in fact, correct and whole. The missing accusative might be visibly absent, but its implicit presence is a condition of both grammatical correctness and determining the precise meaning of the phrase. Francisco Sánchez is sure of this reading, for he structures the entire chapter on ellipsis alphabetically, organizing his examples according to the first letter of the various

²⁴² Francisco Sánchez, *Minerva: o, de la propiedad de la lengua latina*, 727.

absent words. The absence is evidence of ellipsis, and the re-presentation of the missing words offers a definitive close reading of ambiguous Latin passages.

Recognizing this Terence citation as an example of ellipsis hinges upon several important interpretative presumptions at a number of different textual levels. Most obviously, Francisco Sánchez, following Donatus's lead, presumes that the omission is not simply an error either on the part of the author or the scribes through which the tradition of second century b.c. comedy and its glosses arrived in sixteenth-century Salamanca. Francisco Sánchez argues that the rules of grammar make this omission visible as a meaningful rather than accidental absence. Though it is easy to imagine a host of paleographic and codicological explanations for such a minor and fleeting omission, by presuming the transparency of the material history of both *Phormio* and its glosses, the grammarians carve out a space for interpretation under the guise of a grammatical logic: the missing word is "'faith,' or something similar," and it is the job of close readers to further specify and gloss the meaning of the whole phrase.

While Francisco Sánchez presumes that the omission was not accidental, he also argues that it was not intentional. In order to draw general conclusions about the workings of Latin grammar, this elliptical moment must have been utterly conventional, readily recognized by a community of speakers. Though it is tempting to read Terence, who was a poet after all, as trying to *disrupt* rather than unthinkingly abide by such linguistic conventions, perhaps this post-Romantic conception of the author and the literary text is simply too anachronistic to have crossed Francisco Sánchez's mind. Francisco Sánchez himself seems not to entertain the possibility that such a disruption of conventions might be part of the representation, which would make the whole scientific logic of ellipsis a carefully wrought defense for a particular literary reading of Terence. Were the Salamancan scholar's examples were too literary? Did his illustration of the "ratio grammatica" tend toward the interpretation of particular linguistic usages rather than the scientific examination of deep linguistic principles?

For Francisco Sánchez, the word "fidem" was supposed to function as evidence for the existence of a set of universal grammatical rules, but such linguistic evidence, we now recognize, is always inscribed within a geographically and historically specific linguistic system. There is an ineluctable tension between this observable phonetic or orthographic evidence and the intuition that there must be some unseen condition of possibility that makes this evidence communicable in the first place. When Chomsky and others criticize Francisco Sanchez for not sufficiently separating the specific analysis of literary language from a universal and abstract grammar they are attacking him for his methodology, but they agree with the hermeneutic impulse of deducing the formal rules for accessing absent or veiled meaning. Chomsky criticizes the interpretative aspects of Francisco Sánchez's approach, but he becomes profoundly defensive when humanist critics argue that the notion of deep grammar relies upon similar presuppositions while defining the object of study differently.²⁴³ If one accepts this criticism, then there are two possible reactions to the resulting double bind:

²⁴³ For more on Francisco Sánchez's modes of literary interpretation, see Jiménez, *Retórica y literatura en el siglo XVI: El Brocense*, 107-117. Just as the rules of rhetoric structured Francisco Sánchez's reading of literary themes, plots, and images (see his *De arte dicendi*, 1558, and *De auctoribus interpretandis*, 1558), the rules of grammar shaped his reading of literary language.

One can simply embrace close reading's possibilities and limitations by delving ever deeper through the layers of possible meaning, conflicting interpretation, and material history (i.e. literary study and humanistic practice as we have come to recognize it in the twentieth century) and sacrifice the claim to scientific method; alternatively, one can accept certain epistemological limitations on accessing meanings, motivations, or mental processes and instead focus on form.

My larger and final point is that philological debate over how to best reclaim the word "fidem" from its elliptical absence parallels theological argument over how to best recognize the thing itself—religious faith—among members of a religious community. Just as there was disagreement about whether the formal rules of Latin grammar would really allow the word "fidem" to function as a bridge of access to the "ratio grammatica," there was similar disagreement over whether public, religious ritual provided an observable code for recognizing the private and, as Enlightenment Deists would eventually argue, universal essence of religious experience. Experts from a variety of institutional contexts, religious or otherwise, may have tried to systematize and regulate the meaning conveyed through both ritual and language by employing hermeneutic or scientific method. Yet over time the practices in which such ritual and language are embedded transform not only the metaphorical meanings, but also the very rules for arriving at such meanings. Just as some early modern scholars argued that it was only possible to posit unseen linguistic meanings by closely examining the way in which a particular language was used, so too did some of the same scholars think that only by reading and reshaping ritual was it possible to access private religious experience.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of this dissertation, I have investigated a series of theological and philological responses to the parallel epistemological challenges of accessing religious faith and linguistic meaning. I have shown that some Iberian theologians chose to define orthodoxy primarily as obligatory participation precisely because of the elusive nature of a stable correspondence between the visible signs of religious ritual and the hidden realities of private beliefs. Practice, these moderate reformers insisted, would produce belief. They articulated their agenda of peaceful assimilation using scholastic forms of argumentation and Inquisitorial rhetoric. This politics of *convivencia* rested on a renegotiation of conventional categories of difference and a reformulation of various models for defining and mapping religion. Similarly, I have examined the works of philologists who argued that because linguistic meaning is subjective and unstable, it is often expedient to focus philological inquiry on the formal aspects of language rather than on questions of semantics. Philology reimagined as an investigation of usage became a pedagogy of participation, a notion that informed Iberian humanist conceptions of language and strategies of evangelization across the Hispanic world. This radically formal approach to theology and philology, far from forming part of a rear-guard doctrinal and political conservatism, produced what we would now recognize as surprisingly progressive social, religious, and political reform.

By demonstrating that proponents of Inquisitorial discipline and scholastic pedagogy acknowledged the unstable relationship between sign and referent in both the theological and philological spheres, I have presented an early modern Iberia that is at once more medieval and more humanistic. In the theological sphere, deemphasizing the importance of faith, sincerity, and resistance, along with an open acknowledgement of the impossibility of identifying these hidden referents in the first place, was a more theologically moderate and politically complex position than most modern scholars, in the process of identifying Iberian anachronism, have acknowledged. In the philological sphere, linguistic formalism played a fundamental role in the development of peaceful methods of evangelization. This early modern approach to language and scholarship more generally provides a model for rethinking the terms of contemporary scholarly authority. I have shown that an important link between these two overlapping spheres of knowledge and action—theology and philology—is a shared discussion about the limits, dangers, and potential of similitude.

Examining the relationship between theological debates over assimilation and humanist interpretive practices in early modern Spain, I have asked what early modern Europe has and should connote. This question is fundamental to the current effort to reconsider the importance of religion in the academy. While interdisciplinary research and theoretical reflection on this issue has tended to focus either on medieval religiosity or Enlightenment reason, I have examined how religious and secular categories defined one another during the shift between these two periods. My research thus inaugurates a dialogue between scholarship on the early modern Hispanic world and investigation of the changing relationship between religion and secularism over time.

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AFG	Archivo de la Fundación Galdiano (Madrid)
APR	Archivo del Palacio Real (Madrid)
BFZ	Biblioteca de la Fundación Zabaláburu (Madrid)
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid)
BUS	Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca (Salamanca)
BL	British Library (London)
RAH	Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid)

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