Chivalry and Crisis at the Court of Juan II of Castile: The Chivalric Writing of Alonso de Cartagena and his Contemporaries.

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 2016

James Michael Ellis

Trinity Hall
Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution, except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.
This study addresses chivalric writing and court culture during the reign of Juan II of Castile and aims to examine the changing chivalric ideal in Castile during this turbulent period of Castilian history. My thesis argues that political crisis in Castile led to a corresponding crisis in Castilian chivalry as commentators at the royal court tried to correct the failings of the Castilian nobility. The study is based around the work of Alonso de Cartagena, an esteemed diplomat, translator and the Bishop of Burgos in the latter years of Juan II’s reign. Like many of his contemporaries, Cartagena lamented Castile’s descent into civil war and felt compelled to take up his pen in response to the drawn swords of the Castilian nobility. His Doctrinal de los caballeros, produced in 1444 at the height of the civil war, was a highly critical look at chivalry and nobility in the Kingdom of Castile. Cartagena’s view of the chivalric ideal was one which was fundamentally shaped by the civil war. This study seeks to set his ideas in their broader context and argues that they should be seen as part of a wider Castilian debate on chivalry and nobility. This debate involved a number of Cartagena’s contemporaries including, Diego de Valera, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo and the Marquis of Santillana Íñigo López de Mendoza. Cartagena, along with a number of these authors, challenged traditional views on chivalry and nobility and instead argued for a view of knighthood grounded in individual good conduct and personal worth, in place of lineage and inherited status. This study argues that the civil war in Castile paved the way for the development of a rich literature of chivalric reform and facilitated the development of the sort of knightly criticism seen elsewhere in Europe in the later Middle Ages. However, rather than simply being a theoretical discussion, the civil war and unique social pressures on the Iberian Peninsula made the debate highly relevant. Chivalry became a vehicle for political criticism and reform. For Cartagena and his contemporaries, chivalric writing offered a means of ending the civil war by addressing what they saw as endemic issues with the rebellious Castilian nobility. My work has thus argued for a view of chivalry as a changing and developing body of thought shaped by the intellectual and political context in which it developed. Chivalry was, in essence, a code of military ethics governing conduct on and off the battlefield. However, whilst its basic tenants of virtue, honour, prowess at arms and piety were broadly similar across Europe, how they were understood differed greatly. Rather than seeking an all-encompassing definition, I have argued that the focus should fall on the differences and complexities within chivalric thought.
Acknowledgements

I am, first of all, deeply indebted to my supervisor Professor David Abulafia whose careful guidance has shaped this project from start to finish and without whose support it would not have been possible. I am similarly extremely grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Royal Masonic Trust whose generous support allowed this project to happen. I would also like to thank Trinity Hall for their generous contributions to research expenses. I must also extend my thanks to Dr Rosemary Horrox for her invaluable advice and guidance. I am similarly very grateful to Dr Nigel Chancellor whose unwavering faith in me and constant support got me through the long process of research and writing. I must also extend my thanks to the staff at the many research libraries that I have visited, but special mention must be given to the staff of Cambridge University Library and the Biblioteca Nacional de España. I would also like to thank my partner Laura, my parents and my friends and colleagues who endured proof reading and numerous lengthy talks on chivalry without complaint. Finally, I would like to thank the men and women of Trinity Hall Boat Club who kept me sane over the last four years.
# Contents

Introduction. 11

1  The Reign of Juan II of Castile and the Life of Alonso de Cartagena. 39

2  Chivalry and Crisis: The Literary Response to Civil War. 61

3  Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera and the Civil War. 81

4  Chivalry and Nobility. 107

5  Chivalry and Humanism. 153

6  Epilogue: In Search of Triumph. 183

Conclusion: Knights, Nobles and Courtiers at the Close of the Middle Ages. 193

Appendix: Study of Cambridge University Library MS. Add. 8586. 197

Bibliography. 211
Introduction

Alonso de Cartagena was one of fifteenth-century Castile’s more unlikely chivalric commentators. His illustrious career as a churchman and diplomat spanned the turbulent reign of King Juan II and the early years of Enrique IV’s. Alonso, best known as the Bishop of Burgos, a post he effectively inherited from his father in 1439, left a large and complex literary legacy comprising, religious, chivalric and political works and several celebrated translations of classical sources. Amongst this extensive and varied corpus of work is the Doctrinal de los cavalleros, a vast legal treatise on knighthood. The Doctrinal was a development of ideas which Alonso had first given voice to in his correspondence with the Marquis of Santillana and the Count of Haro. Alonso believed that many of his fellow courtiers harboured profoundly misguided views on chivalry, nobility and the office of knighthood and, through the laws of the Siete Partidas, he harked back to an imagined thirteenth-century chivalric golden age. However, Alonso’s ideas were not just nostalgic dreaming of a bygone age, but rather an attempt to propose a new, learned knighthood and his deliberately archaic view masked a scholarly redefinition of what it meant to be a nobleman at court.

Whilst Alonso’s views on knighthood have received some scholarly attention, there has been little attempt to understand how his intriguing views on chivalry and nobility fit into the wider context of chivalric culture and writing during the reign of Juan II. Moreover, Alonso’s views on knighthood should be considered in light of his other scholarly writing. The first half of the fifteenth-century in Castile saw the production of a rich corpus of texts which tackled many of the same issues that Alonso so eloquently raised in the Doctrinal. His contemporaries, men like Diego de Valera, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, Íñigo López de Mendoza, Juan Alfonso de Baena and the poet Juan de Mena in conjunction with the sadly unknown authors of the Aviación de la dignidad real, the Quistoión entre dos cavalleros, the Libro de la consolación de España and the Regimiento de vida para un caballero, all sought to grasp the same complex issues which Alonso had discussed. It is against this rich literary context that the Doctrinal must be considered and Alonso’s

3 All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own. Spanish will used in the text and an English translation given in full in the footnotes. No attempt has been made to modernise the language, spelling or grammar of the source texts. Accentuation and spelling therefore are not standardised and differ between sources used. The translations given tend to be literal and reflect the syntax of the original Spanish source texts. Any errors in translation, or transcription, are mine alone.
work was part of a much more extensive chivalric debate. Whilst historians have sought to set Alonso’s work within a wider context of chivalric writing spanning the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, there has been no attempt to place his pertinent criticisms of knightly culture within their immediate literary context. Far from an age of romance, the literary outpouring on chivalry and nobility during Juan’s reign took the form of serious critiques in verse and prose, spurred by the manifold issues which decades of civil strife and weak kingship had raised. The ideas which Alonso and his contemporaries expressed were inseparably tied to the cultural and political context of Juan II’s reign. Indeed, the two things cannot be understood without one another. The civil war during Juan’s reign had a formative impact on Alonso’s ideas and those of his contemporaries. In turn, their writing provides a greatly neglected means of shedding fresh light on the complex political crises of the first half of the fifteenth century.

This study will primarily focus on Alonso de Cartagena’s chivalric writing, but will also draw heavily on a body of sources produced during and immediately following Juan’s reign. This turbulent half-century of Castilian history is often overlooked in favour of the more dramatic reign of his son King Enrique IV, the glorious Mediterranean conquests of his cousin Alfonso the Magnanimous, or the reign of his daughter Isabel. To a modern historian, gifted with hindsight, Juan’s reign seems clouded by complex politics and dominated by a civil crisis which was neither particularly bloody nor sustained. However, it is worth remembering that this was not how it appeared to contemporaries. The carefully constructed balance of power left by Enrique III and his brother Ferdinand of Antequera crumbled as bitter familial squabbles tore apart the court and kingdom. This was a crisis which played out in the intimate confines of the court through the honour bound relationships which tied together family, friends and courtiers. To those who lived through the turbulent years of Juan’s reign it must have appeared as one of the most serious threats to the stability of the kingdom in living memory. Trastamara hegemony over the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon and Navarre threatened to turn a civil crisis into a war between the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula on several occasions. Juan’s own inept kingship stood in sharp contrast to the capable leadership his father and uncle had offered and he seemed incapable of dealing with the divisions between his own family and subjects. However, Juan was not the only one who fell short of the mark. To Alonso de Cartagena and several of his contemporaries, the nobles of Juan’s court hardly appeared to be paragons of chivalric virtue. Whilst modern historians have looked to the political, economic and social climate of Juan’s kingdom to explain the civil unrest, Alonso and his contemporaries took issue with the knightly ethos which pervaded at court. The civil war saw a number of the kingdom’s most prominent noblemen turn openly against Juan and the divisive figure of his favourite, Álvaro de Luna. These cases of open rebellion and the prolonged unrest at court raised uncomfortable questions about the nature of nobility and the role of the office of knighthood at court.
Chivalry has proven a popular topic amongst historians working on the high to late Middle Ages. As Maurice Keen suggested, it is an evocative term and one which considerably outlived medieval knighthood.\(^4\) However, despite this popularity, chivalry, and the associated terms linked with knighthood, are challenging to define and discuss. Decades of scholarship has done little to add clarity to this discussion and, put simply, chivalry has proven as elusive to modern historians as it did to medieval commentators. This issue of definition is one which has been widely acknowledged by historians. Keen described chivalry as, ‘a word elusive of definition, tonal rather than precise in its implications.’\(^5\) This problem has been admirably addressed by Jonathan D’Arey Dacre Boulton, who even went as far as to question the usefulness of the term ‘chivalry’ for historians.\(^6\) In his study Boulton attacked the general tendency amongst historians on the topic to view chivalry as a singular idea. Rather, using linguistic analysis, he asserted that the term ‘chivalry’, and much of the associated language of knighthood, had little grounding in historical reality. He rightfully pointed out that medieval authors writing in French and English seldom employed these terms, and he cast the idea of a ‘chivalric code’ as largely a historical fallacy created by historians writing from the late eighteenth century onwards. This approach, however, does little to help historians seeking to examine and understand the complexities of knighthood, nobility and chivalry.

The idea of a chivalric code and the view of chivalry as a static and harmonious body of thought has been particularly prevalent amongst historians. Both Keen and Richard Kaeuper readily referred to chivalry as a code.\(^7\) Other historians, such as John Gillingham and David Crouch, have argued for the existence of a code and have applied the label to chivalric writing from the mid thirteenth century onwards.\(^8\) The term code, and the historical search for coherence which has accompanied its use by historians, has proven deeply problematic. Chivalry was a complex and often contradictory body of thought, with different approaches taken by different authors. However, as this study argues, we cannot assume uniformity in how knights or commentators understood the concepts which make up chivalry. Each author addressed in this study, from Alonso de Cartagena to Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, put forward differing versions of what we might term the chivalric ideal, which often covered different aspects of knightly and noble society. To attempt to limit chivalry strictly to a singular definition would lend little to the debate and would be both counterproductive and disingenuous to the source material on which this study rests. As Craig Taylor has

\(\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\) Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London, 1984), 1.
\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) Ibid., 2.
stated, ‘it is essential to resist the modern temptation to simplify the chivalric ethos into a simple, coherent code and brush over the complexity and even contradictions’. Rather, this study aims to embrace the breadth of views and approaches which the chivalric commentators of late medieval Castile took. The study is an attempt to examine how several commentators addressed common questions arising from the conduct of Castile’s knights. Their responses addressed noble conduct and the role of the knight in society and, in doing so, fall under what can be termed ‘chivalry’.

Chivalry is, in reality, a convenient term for discussing the ideas surrounding knighthood and nobility. Despite its issues, the term is unavoidable for any historian writing on knighthood. Unlike Boulton, I believe that chivalry is a term which can be employed by historians. Employing other terms such as ‘knighthage’ as he did, does little to avoid the issues associated with the term. Whilst issues remain with its use, chivalry is a means of facilitating discussion of the ideas and practice of knighthood during the Middle Ages. Indeed, such a discussion would prove challenging without use of the term. However, as this study will seek to show, the focus should fall on the differences between views on knighthood and chivalry, rather than attempting to restrict it to a singular definition. Rather than presenting a common understanding of chivalry, knighthood and nobility in the kingdom of Castile during the first half of the fifteenth century, this study will seek to unpick how authors writing on these topics responded to the challenges and questions raised by decades of political instability and the threat of civil war.

Despite these issues of definition, chivalry has been widely studied and employed by medieval historians. The study of chivalry and knighthood has been dominated by the work of Johan Huizinga. Huizinga’s *Waning of the Middle Ages* has exerted a powerful influence on the study of the subject and his depiction of chivalry as an ethical and aesthetic ideal in glorious decline by the end of the Middle Ages, has proven hard to escape. His views have since been robustly challenged by a large number of scholars working on chivalry and aristocratic culture across Europe. Other historians, such as Malcolm Vale, have similarly explored chivalry and sought to challenge Huizinga’s view of chivalry as a dying ideal. Keen’s landmark study, *Chivalry*, and his writing on the subject has similarly exerted a powerful influence. Historians such as Crouch, Kaeuper and Keen have tended to approach chivalry in a broad fashion and have produced studies exploring the idea throughout large swathes of Europe and over long periods of time. Their studies have

---

9 Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge, 2013), 6–7.
12 Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*. 
shed light on the common ground between aristocratic culture across Europe. However, such an approach, as will be discussed later, is not without issue. Historians have frequently approached chivalry thematically and have subdivided it into its constituent parts, such as honour and shame, piety and faith, violence and prowess or courtly love. This thematic division, although not always grounded in contemporary sources, is nonetheless a helpful means of subdividing chivalry as a body of thought. Studies taking this approach have often dealt with the development of one, or several of these ideas, across a period of time. This approach has been championed by Richard Kaeuper, whose *Chivalry and Violence* and more recent *Holy Warriors*, have examined the place of violence and faith in chivalry. Kaeuper’s work argued for the centrality of, ‘the demigod prowess’, in the chivalric ideal throughout the Middle Ages. Violence, and its link to honour in the chivalric ideal, has similarly been explored by Matthew Strickland in his study, *War and Chivalry*. Other historians, such as Christopher Allmand, have similarly unpicked the impact of violence and the role chivalry played in either limiting or exacerbating violence. Derek Brewer took a similar thematic approach and explored the role of honour and shame in the knightly ideal. More recently, Craig Taylor opted for such an approach in his study of French chivalric thought during the Hundred Years War.

In contrast, this study will not take a thematic approach to chivalry. Rather, the first part of this study will explore how chivalry and nobility were discussed in relation to the civil unrest during Juan’s reign. The second part will explore the relationship between this body of chivalric writing and wider discussions of nobility, and tentatively address the impact of humanist thought on the discussion at court. A thematic approach, whilst an excellent means of unpicking the links between authors and texts, risks removing the texts being examined from the social, political and literary context in which they were produced. This has been the case with many studies on chivalry, including those of Keen and Kaeuper, as their broader approach has separated the ideas being discussed from the context which gave rise to them. As much of this study aims to address the links between the development of Castilian chivalric thought and the political context of the kingdom, I have instead opted for a structure which seeks to preserve the chronological progress of Castilian thought during the worst period of political instability.

The study of chivalry has been greatly influenced by the ideas of Norbert Elias in his *Civilising Process*. Elias’ work examined the role of courts as mechanisms of social change and suggested that they had a great impact on aristocratic behavior. The influence of his ideas is seen in the work of historians such as Kaeuper and Strickland, who view chivalry as a civilising force restraining the violent conduct of knights. Stephen Jaeger’s

---

15 Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, 47.
18 Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, 2013.
The Origin of Courtliness, which built on Elias’ ideas, has been similarly influential.19 Elias’ and Jaeger’s ideas have had a wider impact on the study of chivalry through works exploring the courtly society which defined noble life. This link has been explored by Aldo Scaglione, whose Knights at Court was, in part, a response to the work of Elias and Jaeger.20 As Crouch has argued, the link between chivalry and ideas of courtliness has caused issues in the study of chivalry. These studies also hint at the influence of anthropology and sociology on the study of chivalry. Honour has long been seen as one of the primary mechanisms in chivalry and it is a concept which will be discussed at length in this study. It is through these thematic strands of chivalry that the influence of anthropology has been felt, especially in regards to honour and shame. John Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers’ studies of honour and shame in the Mediterranean have proven influential in the study of chivalry.21 Many of these studies point to the importance of image in chivalry. For the knights of Juan’s court, their fama or reputation was of the utmost importance.22 Chivalry, and arguably much of chivalric court culture, was about appearance. Honour and shame were so important because they worked on a social level. Chivalric display has been widely studied by historians, especially jousting and the pageantry of court life. Teofilo Ruiz’ wide ranging study has unpicked the festive life of the court in late medieval Castile and others, including Fallows, have focused on the knightly obsession with jousting.23

There has been a tendency amongst historians working on chivalry to view it as a monolithic and unchanging set of values, with examples drawn from literary and historical figures across hundreds of years and spanning the breadth of Europe.24 However, such an approach risks divorcing individual sources from their contexts. Each text, whether it be a chronicle, romance or book of chivalry, put forward a differing view of what it meant to be a knight, and these views were often heavily influenced by the context within which they were produced. What was lauded as the chivalric ideal was inherently subjective and differed from author to author. Moreover, the body of thought which constituted chivalry changed and evolved depending on the circumstances. Ideas of honour and virtue rarely stayed constant and were very much personal.

24 Maurice Keen, Chivalry; Maurice Keen, Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages; Richard Barber, The Knight and Chivalry (Woodbridge, 1995); Richard Barber, The Reign of Chivalry (Newton Abbot, 1980); Richard W. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe; Richard W. Kaeuper, Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry.
Craig Taylor, in his recent work on chivalry during the Hundred Years War, argued for a move away from this broad view of chivalry and knighthood.\textsuperscript{25} Taylor warned against viewing chivalry as a coherent set of ideals but rather, stressed that historians should look at the complexities and differences between views, in order to understand the intellectual and cultural impact of chivalric thought.\textsuperscript{26} The rich corpus of chivalric thought produced in Castile in the first half of the fifteenth century could benefit well from such an approach. Both Keen and Kaeuper have sizeable and illuminating studies unpicking the ideological footing of knighthood. However, within the broad approach which they, and other historians of chivalry, adopted not only has the Iberian Peninsula been neglected, but also the important links between the social and political context and chivalric thought have been lost. Keen argued that we should not accept fifteenth-century authors views of chivalric decline. Rather, in a critique of Huizinga and Kilgour, he argued that chivalry was continually being reformed and could not be divided between periods of success and of decline.\textsuperscript{27} For Huizinga, chivalry in the fifteenth century was a spectacular attempt to enact a dying dream with reality moving further and further from the knightly ideal.\textsuperscript{28} For the commentators of Juan’s reign, the early fifteenth century was just such a period of chivalric decline. Chivalric criticism and reform had been a common feature of chivalric writing throughout the Middle Ages and Castile was no different. However, we cannot simply ignore the criticism voiced during Juan II’s reign on these grounds, a more nuanced view is needed.

There has been some attempt to unpick developments in Castilian chivalric thought. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, in his \textit{Debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV}, sought to examine the underlying chivalric principles in fifteenth-century Castile. His study, focused on Diego de Valera, divided chivalric thought in Castile into roughly three periods, one of development from 1250 to 1350, one of restriction between 1330 and 1407 and a final period of expansion from 1390 to 1492.\textsuperscript{29} Rodríguez-Velasco’s extensive study of Castilian chivalric thought tracks its development from Alfonso X to the end of the \textit{Reconquista}. This present study fits into what he argued were years of expansion, one of new ideas, new authors and new approaches. However, Rodríguez-Velasco largely overlooks the debate at the end of Juan’s reign in favour of a broader view focused on Valera’s later writing during the reign of Juan’s son, Enrique IV. The period was, in some ways, one of expansion, at least of intellectual expansion, and one which saw an outpouring of chivalric writing. However, it was also one of intense criticism and attempted reform. As Julian Weiss argued in his study of the \textit{Quiestión entre dos caballeros}, a study of the development of chivalric thought in fifteenth-century

\textsuperscript{25} Craig Taylor, \textit{Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War}, 2013, 2.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 4–6.
\textsuperscript{28} Johan Huizinga, \textit{The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries}, 39, 125.
\textsuperscript{29} Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, \textit{El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo} (Valladolid, 1996), 18.
Castile is sorely needed. This study will remain tightly focused on the latter decades of Juan’s reign and the early years of Enrique IV’s. A thorough assessment of chivalric thought in fifteenth-century Castile is neither intended, nor possible, within the confines of this thesis. Rather, the scope will be limited; almost all of the works considered in this study were produced during Alonso de Cartagena’s lifetime, and most during the latter years of Juan II’s reign.

Aspects of chivalric court culture during Juan II’s reign, notably jousting, have received a great deal of attention from historians. Martín de Riquer famously studied the fifteenth-century tradition of knight errantry around the Castilian court through both the appearance of Castilian knights in European courts and the arrival of foreign knights on the Iberian Peninsula. However, there has been no attempt to unpick the development of chivalric thought during Juan II’s reign. The development of a rich discourse on chivalry and nobility ran parallel to King Juan’s own attempts to foster an active knightly ideal at court.

I have used ‘chivalry’ as a term to describe the ethos, ideology and theoretical underpinning of knighthood. Whilst this usage is undoubtedly problematic, it provides a means of discussing broader ideas of knighthood and nobility. ‘Chivalry’ itself is best equated with the Castilian term, caballería. This link is not, however, without issue. Whilst modern historians have eagerly used the term, as I do, to describe the theoretical and ethical structure behind knighthood, contemporaries often employed the term in a more varied manner. Diego de Valera in the Espejo, commented that, ‘como la cavallería agora sea la dignidad más común en el mundo, no sin razón algo della devemos tractar’. For Valera, caballería meant a dignidad or office, an understanding best equated with the English term knighthood. However, what Valera goes on to discuss, including the, ‘regla de cavallería’, undoubtedly falls under what we would consider ‘chivalry’.

For Valera and his contemporaries, the idea of the social position of a knight was inseparable from the ethos and complex body of thought which came with it. Valera presented this link as the, ‘orden de cavallería’, or the ‘order of chivalry or knighthood’. Knightly status brought with it membership of the ‘order’ and thus inclusion in the ethical framework surrounding a knight’s social standing. Alfonso X, in the Segunda Partida, ascribed a similar meaning to caballería. Law xiii of título XXI discussed, ‘quales cosas deuen fazer los

---

31 Noel Fallows, ‘Just Say No? Alfonso de Cartagena, the Doctrinal de los caballeros, and Spain’s Most Noble Pastime’; Noel Fallows, Jousting in Medieval and Renaissance Iberia; Teofilo F. Ruiz, A King Travels.
33 Ibid., 105. ‘As knighthood is now the most common office in the world, it is not without some reason that we should discuss it’.
34 Ibid., 107. ‘rule of knighthood’.
35 Ibid.
This use of the term clearly identifies it as the office of knighthood. Whereas, in the introduction to the *Doctrinal*, Alonso de Cartagena referenced the potential for writing to, ‘despertar los corazones en los fechos de la cauallería’. Within the context of Cartagena’s discussion of the potential for texts to inspire virtue, *caballería* here seems much closer to our modern understanding of ‘chivalry’ as the ethical framework around knighthood. Part of this variance in meaning may, of course, be that contemporary understanding of the term *caballería* had changed between the writing of the *Siete Partidas* and the mid-fifteenth century. However, it also suggests that the differing meanings of the word were closely intertwined. The practice of knighthood was inseparably linked to the theory which had grown and developed alongside it. Separating these aspects was simply not possible. Translation has, of course, muddied the waters further, as the Castilian term *caballería* encompasses both of the English words ‘chivalry’ and ‘knighthood’. This issue is compounded further by a general neglect by historians of Iberian chivalric sources. Many historians, including Boulton, who have written on the subject were more concerned with the French term *chevalerie*. Their references to *caballería* are often as an afterthought, with little consideration of the term’s meaning, beyond a general assumption that it corresponds directly to the English and French terms. This issue is largely the unfortunate byproduct of the dominance of studies on France and England in Anglophone historical writing on chivalry.

Chivalry, or *caballería*, was thus closely linked to the idea of nobility and it is impossible to address the term without also considering the associated terminology of nobility. Fifteenth-century commentators were well aware of the importance of this link and, as Chapter IV will explore, the issue of whether knighthood conferred nobility was at the forefront of the Castilian debate during Juan’s reign. When discussing nobility, commentators used a number of closely connected terms; *nobleza*, *hidalguía*, and occasionally *claridad*. These ideas, and the complex structure of Castilian noble society, will be briefly addressed here before being discussed further in Chapter IV.

The terminology surrounding knighthood is fraught with difficulties. It is possible to define a knight based on a knight’s military role. From the early eleventh century onwards, commentators equated the Latin term *miles* with a mounted warrior. The term *miles* was originally used to describe any soldier but, by the thirteenth century, it was almost exclusively used to mean ‘knight’. Knighthood undoubtedly originated with this military usage. However, whilst all knights were, in theory, mounted warriors not all mounted warriors were knights. Moreover, whilst knighthood was typically seen as conferring nobility, not all knights were noblemen. Nowhere else in Europe were these distinctions so clearly seen as in Castile, and they raise issues as to the relationship between knighthood and nobility. To noblemen, and medieval society in general, nobility would have been obvious. As Valera remarked, it was an innate quality which separated

---

36 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 97. ‘which things should squires do before receiving chivalry’.
37 Ibid., 81. ‘awaken in hearts deeds of chivalry’.
some members of society from others.\textsuperscript{39} The \textit{Segunda Partida} affirmed this and said, ‘los gentiles fueron omnes nobles e buenos e biyieron mas onrradamente que las otras gentes.’\textsuperscript{40} Phillipe Contamine aptly described the nobility as, ‘a class which perceived itself and was perceived by others as occupying the apex of the social pyramid.’\textsuperscript{41} This ‘quality’ was made manifest through elaborate courtly ritual and conspicuous displays of wealth and power. However, it was a quality distinct from wealth and power, as they were merely signs of social status, and what it entailed was central to the debate over how noblemen should act. As has been seen, Valera adopted Bartolus’ view of nobility and saw society as mirroring the divine order. This idea was, of course, nothing new. The \textit{Segunda Partida}, reproduced by Cartagena in the \textit{Doctrinal}, stated that, ‘defensores es vno de los tres estados por que Dios quiso que se mantouiese todo el mundo. Ca bien asi como los que rruegan a Dios por el pueblo son llamados oradores, e otrosi los que labran la tierra e fazen en ella aquellas cosas por que los omnes han de beuir e mantenerse son dichos labradores, otrosi, los que han a defender a todos son llamados defensores.’\textsuperscript{42} In this division of society, the nobility formed the last of these categories, bound as knights to defend the people, church and kingdom. However, the division of Castilian society was more complex than this simple three way split suggested. The sheer number of people which fell under this category was vast. Contamine has suggested that there were around a hundred thousand \textit{hidalgo} families, comprising roughly ten percent of the five million strong Castilian population in 1500.\textsuperscript{43} Of this vast number, only a tiny amount, around thirteen families, were truly influential in the complex court politics of Juan’s reign. Knighthood was a unifying factor amongst the Castilian nobility, from the greatest lords to local gentry. Boulton has suggested that commentators, throughout the Middle Ages, frequently discussed knighthood rather than nobility because it perfectly encapsulated the nobility’s place in the idealised division of society into those who fought, those who prayed and those who laboured.\textsuperscript{44} However, whilst most noblemen were knights, not all knights were noblemen and many noblemen were much more than just knights.

The \textit{caballeros} described in the \textit{Siete Partidas} were men whose social status was grounded in lineage, wealth, military responsibility and good customs. Of these characteristics, lineage was considered vital for a knight. The \textit{Segunda Partida} laid down a requirement of at least four generations of nobility in order for someone to qualify for knighthood and, despite his earlier reservations, Cartagena faithfully reproduced this section.

\textsuperscript{39} Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 92.

\textsuperscript{40} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 90. ‘the courteous were good and noble men and they lived more honourably than other people.’


\textsuperscript{42} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 88–89. ‘defenders were one of the three estates that God made to maintain the world. Since those that pray to God for the people are called orators, and those that work the land and make from it those things that men eat and drink are called labourers and those that defend all are called defenders.’

\textsuperscript{43} Phillipe Contamine, ‘The European Nobility’, 96.

in the Doctrinal. Alfonso X saw lineage as integral to knighthood. Citing Vegetius, Alfonso argued that lineage ensured that knights would not flee battle, as the shame of doing so would destroy their family name. Lineage was even part of the name fijosdalgo and, as Alfonso explained, it literally meant, ‘fijos de bien’, or ‘sons of quality’. According to the Segunda Partida, ‘esta gentileza auia en tres maneras: la primera por linaje; la segunda por saber; la terçera por bondad de costumbres e de maneras.’ The section laid the foundation for what would become two competing paths to knighthood, one through birth and the other through virtue. The Segunda Partida established lineage as the most important of these and stated, ‘fidalguia, segund diximos en la ley ante desta, es nobleza que viene a los omnes por linaje.’ This was, the law explained, because for, ‘la mayor parte de la fidalguia ganan los omnes por la onra de los padres’. Alfonso saw honour as inherited and that nobility passed from father to son. Whilst a marriage between a nobleman and a non-noble woman did not jeopardise this, the sons and daughters of a marriage between a noblewoman and a non-noble man did not inherit their mother’s nobility. There were many examples of this happening during Juan II’s reign, as conversos, like Valera’s father, married into the Castilian nobility. Despite what the Partidas said, lineage had done little to prevent the unrest in the fifteenth century.

However, knighthood and nobility were not as straightforward in Castile as the Partidas suggest. Knightly identity was inseparably bound to Castile’s complex social hierarchy. The pressures of expansion and reconquest had left their mark on nobility and the diverse structure of Castilian noble society. Demand for manpower on the frontier led to the foundation in the eleventh century of well-armed urban militias in the frontier towns. Large urban militias, like those of the cities of Toledo, Segovia and Medina del Campo, played a prominent role in military campaigns, notably providing the bulk of the Castilian army which was victorious at Las Navas de Tolosa and much of Ferdinand III’s army which conquered Seville. Militia service was codified in the fueros or municipal charters, derived from those issued by Ferdinand III for most towns and cities. As Powers argued, this paved the way for non-noble residents to attain the rank of caballero by purchasing land, a horse and arms. This was particularly pronounced in frontier regions where there was a constant demand for well-armed soldiers. This knightly status typically carried with it residency requirements, and those wealthy enough to afford the trappings of knighthood were often rewarded with tax breaks. These benefits led to the establishment of a sizeable urban knighthood which persisted long after their military use had dwindled. The office was generally inherited, and many of the charters stipulated

46 Ibid., 89–91.
47 Ibid., 90.
48 Ibid. ‘gentility (nobility) was held in three ways, the first by lineage, the second through knowledge and the third by quality of customs and knowledge.’
49 Ibid., 91. ‘fidalguia according to what we have said in the previous law, is nobility that comes to men by lineage.’
50 Ibid. ‘for the great part nobility (fidalguia) is gained by men from the honour of their fathers’.
52 Ibid., 71.
53 Ibid.
that a newly made caballero leave his horse and arms to his son. These urban knights were the true, ‘fíjos de algo’, or ‘sons of something’, as they owed their status to their forbears upward social mobility. However, their place in the noble hierarchy was problematic at best. They were referred to by a multitude of names; caballeros villanos, caballeros urbanos, concejiles, pardos and ruanos. They were not knights proper, in that they had not been through the elaborate knightly ceremony which brought with it nobility, and they ranked below hidalgos. The did, however, share the martial and social functions of the lower gentry, serving as heavy cavalry on the battlefield and forming an urban middle class bound by ties of honour and ritual. They were not noblemen, despite being called caballeros. They fulfilled the military role of the knight and could claim some of the social trappings which accompanied knighthood. However, they were not a formal part of the noble hierarchy. These non-noble knights have been widely studied and their importance stressed by Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, Carmela Pescador, Elena Lourie and James Powers, amongst others, in a series of studies exploring the formation and role of this diverse social group between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. More recently, Theresa Vann has sought to unpick the realities of this, ‘society organised for war’, and has challenged the assertion that they were instrumental in victories against the Moors. Regardless of their military utility, these caballeros villanos formed an important part of the strata of Castilian knighthood.

Despite lacking noble status, these caballeros villanos were not entirely outside of chivalric society. In many cities, these urban knights formed confraternities, which have been the subject of an extensive study by Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco. In Burgos, Alonso de Cartagena’s brother and nephew were both active members of the Confraternidad de Santa María, and Pedro de Cartagena’s involvement highlights the diverse makeup of these groups. Pedro and his son had both been knighted yet, due to their lack of noble lineage, shared in the marginalised status of the city’s urban knights. Rodríguez-Velasco has argued that the development of these non-noble knightly confraternities ran parallel to the emergence of royal chivalric orders and provided urban knights with the same sense of belonging. These confraternities often appeared alongside titled nobility and featured prominently in the wedding reception staged for Blanca of Navarre at

54 For more on the social mobility afforded by this status see: Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, Despoblación y repoblación del valle del Duero (Buenos Aires, 1966).
55 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile, trans. Eunice Rodríguez Ferguson (Oxford, 2010), 49.
58 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile.
59 Ibid., 12.
Briviesca in 1441, where Pedro de Cartagena led a parade made up of knights from Burgos. Recent scholarship has shown that the vast majority of the knights of the Order of Calatrava in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries came from this social class, although their commanders were often of a much higher standing.  

Hidalgos were the lowest level of the Castilian nobility proper and were noble by virtue of their knighthood. As the Siete Partidas had asserted, their position was hereditary and their noble status was referred to by commentators as hidalguía, a term which Valera argued was synonymous with nobleza by the fifteenth century, ‘esta nobleza civil o política, por nosotros fidalguía llamada’. Hidalgos formed the bulk of the Castilian nobility, their place in society enshrined in law and passed down by inheritance. Keen identified them as part of a pan-European class of nobility by blood, defined by their ability to receive knighthood. The wealth and standing of members of this diverse social group varied massively. Diego de Valera’s mother, María de Valera, was from such a family and, although many remain nameless in the chronicles, a small number, such as the talented jouster Gonzalo de Quadros, appear on the fringes of court society. They, unlike the caballeros villanos, could claim to be the caballeros Alfonso X discussed in the Partidas. They were undoubtedly noble and much of their noble standing rested on their knighthood.

The highest tiers of the noble hierarchy were occupied by, what Alonso de Cartagena termed, the grandes omnes or ríos omnes, the great or rich men. These were the kingdom’s most powerful noble families. Cartagena, in the Doctrinal, defined these men as those holding the title of count or duke and looked to the great noble families of Old Castile as the examples of this noble class, identified by their close relation to the royal family. This definition meant that, over the course of Juan II’s reign, this top tier of Castilian noble society underwent considerable growth, as Juan distributed new titles to his loyal supporters. The Siete Partidas defined the ríos omnes as men rich in both lineage and quality. They were the counts, dukes and marquises of Castile and the main political actors of Juan II’s reign came from this noble class. The leaders of the rebellion against Juan and Luna, Gómez de Sandoval, the Admiral of Castile Fadrique Enríquez and the adelantado mayor Pero Manrique, were all members of this group. Others, such as Álvaro de Luna and Juan Pacheco, were not born into this tier, but rather rose to fill positions which arguably placed them amongst these families.

---

61 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 95. ‘civil or political nobility [is], by us, called fidalguía’.
62 Maurice Keen, Chivalry, 144–45.
63 Gonzalo de Quadros appears on numerous occasions in the chroniclers and is commonly cited as a very skilled jouster. He famously unhorsed the Infante Enrique at the Pasaje peligroso and jousted again amongst the sons of the Castilian high nobility at a tournament thrown by Álvaro de Luna in 1434 at Valladolid.
65 Ibid., 109–10.
For these great lords, lineage was central to their very existence rather than just a desirable characteristic for nobility. They possessed much more than the four generations of nobility which the *Partidas* demanded and instead looked back on glorious family histories. Their standing was further re-enforced by their spectacular wealth, displayed at the numerous chivalric festivities held during Juan’s reign. For these men, lineage was seen to bring an entitlement to both virtue and honour. The display of coats of arms created a visual link between the past and present with the noblemen of the Castilian court literally wearing their honour on their sleeves. Some, like the Count of Haro and Marquis of Santillana, founded hospitals as displays of wealth and power. This noble group was essentially a noble oligarchy dominated by around thirteen of the most powerful families. In the political sphere, they formed the heads of the powerful noble factions which dominated Juan’s reign. Their titles and vast landholdings brought with them the ability to command large numbers of retainers, something which became very clear to King Juan when he faced the vast rebel army in 1439. They led the life of the royal court, moving around the kingdom with the king, although independently powerful enough to not be reliant on royal patronage. Their standing in society meant that their co-operation was essential to the governance of the kingdom, something that Álvaro de Luna and King Juan found particularly problematic.

Between the extremes of the titled nobility and non-noble knights lay the bulk of the Castilian nobility. Knighthood was a unifying factor amongst noblemen, from the highest to the lowest ranks of the noble hierarchy. For commentators writing on nobility, knighthood was a way of addressing the widest possible audience. The *Siete Partidas*, whilst differentiating the various ranks of noble society, also held the kingdom’s knights to a common standard. The *Partidas* also highlighted what would come to be one of the greatest areas of contention with regard to noble status; the conflicting paths of lineage and virtue. Knighthood encapsulated this often-contradictory path to nobility. Knighthood was meant as a reward for virtue, an honour that was won through bravery on the battlefield or loyal service. The elaborate knighting ceremony itself represented this reward for virtue with the prospective knight dressed in white to symbolise their moral purity. However, as the *Siete Partidas* stated, it was an honour not open to all. Lineage remained one of the key components of knighthood and this changed little by Juan II’s reign. Rather, attitudes hardened as the Castilian nobility resisted change. The laws in the *Siete Partidas* created an impossible situation where knighthood could be given to those who were virtuous, but only to those who already fit the requirement of four generations of nobility.\(^{66}\) This created what was, in effect, a closed system with knighthood gifted to those who were born into their place in society. This development was part of what Keen has termed a ‘hardening of the rules’ determining nobility.\(^{67}\) This issue came to dominate the debate at the Castilian court during Juan’s reign and was inseparably tied to chivalry.

---

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 91.

\(^{67}\) Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, 144.
Chivalry was not an ideologically distant concept, but rather lay at the heart of court culture during Juan’s reign. The period saw a marked proliferation of jousts, pageants and feasts and knightly deeds of arms were celebrated through poetry and recorded by the royal chroniclers. Chivalry was, in its broadest sense, the knightly ideology which underpinned noble life. Keen termed it, ‘a word that came to denote the code and culture of a martial estate which regarded war as its hereditary profession’. Chivalry was the preserve of the warrior elite, the caballeros or hidalgos, and was inseparably linked to noble identity. Romances like the Libro del caballero Zifar or the Amadis de Gaula cycle remained popular, along with Spanish translations of French texts such as Tristan de Leonis and other Arthurian romances. Chivalry was, of course, more than simply a literary edifice. It had a practical side shaped by the deeds of real knights in the lists or on the battlefield. Chivalry also covered the physical realities of knighthood such as the use of arms, good horsemanship or the commanding of troops; a practical reality which Alonso de Cartagena was eager to address. Chivalry can thus be broadly divided into two parts, the literary and theoretical, and the practical reality. Addressing the second of these sections is considerably harder and, in most cases, outside the realms of possibility for historians. We simply do not know how individual knights thought and acted. Whilst chronicles go some way towards shedding light on this, there is little information compared to the wealth of literature on the theoretical aspects of knighthood. The two sides to chivalry are, of course, not exclusive. Works like the Doctrinal de los caballeros were chivalric manuals and commentators, like Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera, believed their writing on chivalry would change knightly attitudes and behaviour. It is difficult to say how much the idealised view of knighthood expounded in literature impacted knights’ own perceptions of chivalry and of themselves. The real deeds of knights, such as those of the Bishop of Jaén Gonzalo de Estúñiga or the Count of Buelna Pero Niño, come to us in literary form, rendered into verse and prose and cast in language befitting romances. However, much of this chivalric reality is lost to us. This division of chivalry into two parts goes some way to addressing the aforementioned problem of the several possible meanings of caballería.

The practical realities of knighthood came in a number of forms. Visitors to the royal court encountered knightly identity through elaborate chivalric pageantry. Feasts, jousts and tournaments punctuated court life and were an important part of the practice of knighthood for the upper echelons of the Castilian nobility. Both chivalry and the role of the knight were multifaceted. Knights were first and foremost

---

68 Ibid., 239.
70 Bishop Gonzalo de Estúñiga was famous for his very active role in combat against the Moors. He is vividly described in the Crónica del Halcónero leading the charge in a border skirmish in 1435 when he became unhorsed. His deeds of arms were remembered in an anonymous romance and in the chronicles. For the chronicle account of his deeds see: Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo (Madrid, 1946), 200–209. For more on the verse romance see: Antonio García Montes, ‘Aproximación a los romances antiguos: “Un día de San Antón”’, Estudios humanísticos. Filología 17 (1995): 179–98. For the deeds of Don Pero Niño see: Gutierre Díaz de Games, El Victorial: Edición de Rafael Beltrán Llavador, ed. Rafael Beltrán Llavador (Madrid, 2000); Gutierre Díaz de Gamez, The Unconquered Knight: A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, trans. Joan Evans (Woodbridge, 2004).
soldiers and, even within the courtly world of the fifteenth century, this remained the case. However, their role was changing and the knightly ideal changing with it. Knights were expected to be both puissant soldiers and refined courtiers, capable administrators and skilled commanders. In the chivalric ideal humility and piety sat uncomfortably alongside the glorification of military prowess and honour. Chivalric honour retained an almost inseparable connection to violence, but the commentators of Juan’s reign began to argue that there was another path to being a chivalrous knight.\textsuperscript{71} Wisdom and learning played a newly important role in their knightly ideal; a sign of the changing intellectual climate of court and the influx of new ideas from outside the Iberian Peninsula. Chivalry formed part of the changing nature of noble identity in Castile. The authors writing during Juan’s reign sought to change more than just how knights acted on the battlefield, they sought to change how they viewed the very office of knighthood itself. Their writings were subconscious responses to the question of what it meant to be a nobleman in fifteenth-century Castile, and they reveal the conflicting aspects of chivalric culture and knightly identity. Huizinga famously suggested that knighthood by the fifteenth century was in decline, the courts populated by knights romantically chasing an ideal that had long since broken its ties to reality.\textsuperscript{72} The chivalric commentators writing during Juan’s reign indeed cast the realities of knighthood as having become distant from the ideal. They portrayed the noblemen of the royal court as having lost their grasp on what it meant to be a knight. However, far from the dying ideology which Huizinga later portrayed, they saw chivalric thought as an active and changing body of ideas which could affect real change in the way the knights of the Castilian court understood their office. For the commentators, chivalry was simultaneously the problem and the cure.

At the heart of the issue lay the changing nature of knighthood itself. Knights were seen as more than simple soldiers. Noblemen were expected to aid the king in ruling and, in many ways, the debate about chivalry during Juan’s reign was as much about the expected role of a nobleman as it was about a knight’s military role. Chivalry was not just a military ideology and the ties which bound chivalric honour to the practice of violence were being eroded by the formation of a new knightly ideal. Weak kingship contributed to the debate and led to a growing sense of crisis. The chivalric commentary produced during the period was a vehicle for much broader political commentary, and works like the \textit{Doctrinal de los caualleros} can shed light on the political history of the period. Both Cartagena and Valera viewed the civil war in Castile as symptomatic of deep-seated issues in how Castilian noblemen saw their role in society, and the rules that governed it. Contemporaries naturally looked to chivalry as the guiding force in how noblemen acted and they did not have to look far to see manifold examples of noblemen acting badly. King Juan’s reign saw a series of major rebellions and two civil wars fuelled by endemic noble disloyalty. Their response came in the form of chivalric commentary. This response, although largely overlooked by political historians of the period, helps shed light on how contemporaries understood the problems of Juan II’s long reign. As the

\textsuperscript{71} For more on the link between chivalric honour and violence see: Richard W. Kaeuper, \textit{Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe}.

\textsuperscript{72} Johan Huizinga, \textit{The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries}. 
expected role of the knight changed, so did the chivalric ideal. As with much medieval thought, new ideas were presented as long lost traditions and the commentators looked to the past for a better knightly ideal.\textsuperscript{73} Increasingly, the commentators looked to the Roman past and to the ideal of the senator-soldier, a nobleman who could combine the duties and responsibilities of governance with military service. Some commentators favoured learning and wisdom as the most praiseworthy of knightly qualities. Their nostalgic dreaming of a bygone age masked a redefinition of knighthood and nobility which was shaped by the events around them. Leading these commentators was Alonso de Cartagena, celebrated as one of the leading intellectuals of his day, remembered as a humanist, but often overlooked as an influential author on chivalry and nobility.

For Cartagena, the gap between chivalric ideal and knightly reality could be bridged by the law. He saw Castile’s legal heritage as offering the perfect exemplar of good knightly conduct. The \textit{Siete Partidas}, produced during the reign of Alfonso X, offered a royally decreed definition of chivalry and is the closest thing to a chivalric code produced in Castile. Joseph O’Callaghan has labelled the \textit{Partidas} as unique in Europe and, unlike law produced in England and France, a true legal code.\textsuperscript{74} Produced in the wake of Fernando III’s conquest of Seville and Al-Andalus, the \textit{Partidas} sought to furnish Castile’s diverse territories with a unified and systematic set of laws.\textsuperscript{75} The product was a vast, and remarkably comprehensive, compilation of Castile’s laws, divided into seven parts. These seven parts, from which the code took its name, rigorously covered almost every aspect of royal governance and everyday life in Castile. Individual books were subdivided into titles and laws, prefaced by explanatory introductions and they bore a hallmark concern with definition and practical applicability. It is testament to its remarkable breadth that aspects of it are still in force today in Spain, Latin America and in the state legislatures of a number of American states.\textsuperscript{76}

The \textit{Siete Partidas} had a profound impact on chivalric thought in Castile. The \textit{Segunda Partida}, likely a product of Alfonso’s great interest in chivalry, was unique in Europe as a royally decreed book of chivalry. The \textit{Segunda Partida} was almost entirely devoted to knighthood and covered both its practical realities and intellectual underpinning. Rather than offering vague guidelines on the practice of knighthood, the \textit{Segunda Partida} rigorously laid out how knights should practice their office. The laws of the \textit{Segunda Partida} formed the basis for Alonso de Cartagena’s \textit{Doctrinal} and have been seen as the genesis of Castilian chivalric thought. They presented a broad and well defined view of chivalry focused around a practical approach to knighthood. Unlike almost every other chivalric guide produced, the \textit{Segunda Partida} carried the weight of


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

law. Cartagena’s use of the Siete Partidas, as will be discussed later, was likely a response to weak royal authority and knightly unruliness. The Partidas were also drawn on by almost all of the chivalric commentators, although none used them as extensively as Alonso de Cartagena. The ideas on knighthood set out by Alfonso X in the Partidas gave Castile a foundation in chivalric thought and an influential definition of a knight’s duties and place in society. However, by the mid fifteenth century Cartagena, and many of his fellow commentators, felt that the knights of their day had long forgotten these duties and overstepped their place in society by rebelling against the king.

Cartagena and his Contemporaries

The basis for this study will be Alonso de Cartagena’s views of chivalry and nobility. The best known of his works on the topic is undoubtedly the Doctrinal de los cavalleros, which was completed in 1444 at the height of the Castilian civil war. The Doctrinal itself has been the subject of two excellent critical editions by Noel Fallows and José María Viña Liste. However, the Doctrinal alone does not tell the whole story of Alonso’s views on knighthood. The Bishop of Burgos’ sizeable literary legacy has been thoroughly outlined by Viña Liste and Fallows in their editions of the Doctrinal, as well as by Luis Fernández Gallardo in his La obra literaria de Alonso de Cartagena. Both Luciano Serrano and Fernández Gallardo have written extensive biographies of Alonso’s eventful life. In order to grasp what Cartagena thought of chivalry and nobility, it is necessary to look beyond just the Doctrinal. A good starting point is his Respuesta to Íñigo López de Mendoza, the Marquis of Santillana, which was composed in 1444, shortly before he completed the Doctrinal. Alonso’s lengthy reply to his friend sought to answer Santillana’s question over whether the swearing of Roman military oaths, an idea he had taken from Leonardo Bruni’s De militia, might remedy the waning loyalty of the kingdom’s knights. Fallows and Viña Liste have seen these two works as the main expressions of Alonso de Cartagena’s views on chivalry. However, it is clear that Alonso’s views on nobility and his ideas on virtue and lineage found expression in a much broader section of his works. At

80 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’; Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la pregunta fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana’.
the heart of Alonso’s re-imagining of knighthood lay the notion of the learned knight, a recreation of the Roman model of the senator-soldier. This idea was one that had its fullest expression in the Epistola ad comitem de Haro, a letter written to Pedro Fernández de Velasco, the Count of Haro. In the letter, Alonso outlined his vision for a learned knighthood, an idea which lay at the heart of the later Doctrinal. The letter, preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, has been made into a critical edition by Jeremy Lawrance. Similarly, Alonso’s objections to nobility through lineage, found in the introduction of the Doctrinal, cannot be separated from his defence of Castile’s converso population in the Defensorium unitatis christianae. Alonso’s own social position as part of this group of new Christians led him to oppose the entrenched idea of limpieza de sangre which was present during Juan’s reign. Alonso and other conversos questioned the supposed superiority of Castile’s old Christians and their rapid rise up the social ladder challenged the kingdom’s old nobility. Furthermore, similar arguments for nobility through virtue found in the Doctrinal echoed Alonso’s speech before the Council of Basel in 1437, where he so eloquently argued for Castilian precedence over England. In short, in order to understand Alonso’s views on nobility and chivalry we must look beyond simply the Doctrinal. This literary corpus will form the basis for an analysis of Alonso’s views on knighthood and nobility.

The Doctrinal de los canalleros was not completed until 1444 and, by the time the work circulated, several other authors had already entered into a debate on chivalry and nobility at the Castilian court. Chief among this group of commentators was Diego de Valera, a close friend of King Juan and, by the 1440s, a promising young knight. Valera shared Alonso’s converso status and it is probable that the two men met each other at the rather unlikely venue of the Hungarian court of Albert II in 1438. Valera had been knighted in 1435 following his heroics at the Siege of Huelma and spent two years travelling around Europe making a name for himself as a jouster and soldier. It was this period of knight-errantry which brought him to the court of Albert II of Hungary at the same time as Alonso de Cartagena, who was there negotiating peace between Albert and Ladislas of Poland. Upon his return to Castile, Valera composed the Espejo de verdadera nobleza, a mirror of nobility dedicated to King Juan II. Valera followed this treatise with another in 1446, the Exortación de la paz, an impassioned plea for peace following the Battle of Olmedo and, more importantly,
a reassessment of the relationship between virtue and nobility which Valera had proposed in the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*. Valera continued to be a prolific writer on chivalry and nobility and he went on to write his *Tratado de las armas* and *Prebeminencias y cargos de los oficiales de armas* on duelling and heraldry. Valera’s *Cerimonial de príncipes* and his mirror for kings, the *Doctrinal de príncipes*, both shed light on his views on nobility and rulership. However, the works of greatest interest for this study are those which Valera completed around the same time that Alonso de Cartagena was writing, the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, the *Exortación de la pas*, *Tratado de providencia contra fortuna* and the wealth of correspondence he left. Valera also left his mark on chivalric thought in Castile through his translation of Honoré Bonet’s *Arbre des batailles* for Álvaro de Luna. His translation stands testament to Valera’s interest in the question of chivalric unruliness in Castile. Valera, despite his low social status, enjoyed a privileged position and rose rapidly through the ranks. His long life saw him serve as a chronicler, diplomat and royal counsellor to Juan II, Enrique IV and Ferdinand and Isabel. Valera’s earlier writings show the same preoccupations and concerns displayed by Cartagena, and the two men reached remarkably similar conclusions. However, unlike Alonso, Valera was an active participant in the chivalric world on which he commented. Valera’s extraordinary literary output will form one of the main points of comparison with Alonso de Cartagena’s ideas.

Amongst Alonso and Valera’s contemporaries at the Castilian court was Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara, better known as Juan Rodríguez del Padrón. Rodríguez del Padrón had been present at the Council of Basel with Alonso de Cartagena and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo as the secretary to Cardinal Juan de Cervantes. Rodríguez del Padrón is best remembered today as the author of the *Triunfo de las donas* and the *Siervo libre de amor* as well as being a prolific poet. In 1438, Rodríguez del Padrón composed the *Cadira de honor* or *Throne of Honour*. The *Cadira* was composed for, ‘algunos señores mançebos de la corte del Rey Don Juan el Segundo’, and Rodríguez del Padrón wrote it whilst he was in the service of Juan de Cervantes, the Cardinal of San Pedro. It is clear from the *Cadira* that Rodríguez del Padrón took a very different stance

---

91 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6605. Árbol de Batallas’ (s.xv), fol. 1r–48v. This is one of the original fifteenth-century copies of Valera’s translation, produced at the request of Álvaro de Luna in 1443.
92 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, in *Obras completas: Edición preparada por César Hernández Alonso*, ed. César Hernández Alonso (Madrid, 1982), 259–306. I will refer to the work as the *Cadira de honor* in the text, rather than *Cadira de onor*.
93 Ibid., 259. ‘some young men of the court of Juan II’.
on the issues at court to Alonso and Valera. The *Cadira* was a defence of nobility though lineage. Rodríguez del Padrón’s views stood in sharp contrast to those of Valera and Cartagena and the *Cadira* formed an important part of the debate. Rodríguez del Padrón’s view that nobility was not solely rooted in virtue, but rather in a combination of virtue and lineage, was an opinion that was no doubt held by many of the knights and noblemen at the Castilian court. The knightly biography of Pero Niño, written by his retainer Gutiérrez Díaz de Gamez, and the *Crónica* of Álvaro de Luna reveal the importance of lineage to those at the highest levels of the Castilian court. Proud displays of heraldry and lingering legal statutes, which stipulated that knighthood should be given only to those of good lineage, meant that lineage carried a great deal of weight as the cornerstone of noble identity. However, lineage was a complex issue and in the turbulent years of Juan’s reign it was no longer clear that lineage brought with it an entitlement to virtue. Rodríguez del Padrón’s arguments offer a view of another side of the debate and they are a natural counterpart to the arguments put forward by Cartagena and Valera.

The royal secretary, and later bishop, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo similarly joined the debate on chivalry and nobility. Sánchez de Arévalo had accompanied Alonso de Cartagena to the Council of Basel, but joined the debate much later than Cartagena, Valera and Rodríguez del Padrón. Sánchez de Arévalo had originally intended the *Suma de la política* to be presented to King Juan, but the work was completed in 1454 after Juan’s death. The *Suma* and its successor, the *Vergel de los príncipes*, completed around a year later, do not deal directly with chivalry in the same way that Alonso’s work does. Rather, Sánchez de Arévalo’s main preoccupation was rulership and the organisation of the kingdom and its cities. However, despite this differing focus, both works end up discussing knighthood and nobility at length, and it would be difficult to leave them out if we seek to place Alonso’s arguments in their proper context. Moreover, the criticisms of nobility and chivalry which Alonso voiced in the *Doctrinal* had significant ramifications for royal power and, as will be argued later, Diego de Valera’s arguments in the *Exortación de la pas* were aimed squarely at King Juan himself. Valera was very outspoken in his belief that King Juan had fallen well short of the mark and many of the problems in the kingdom could be attributed to royal incompetence. Hillgarth described Juan as never emerging from, ‘a kind of perennial minority’, and it is not surprising that guides to rulership appeared during the latter half of his reign. The office of knighthood was inseparable from royal power and the office of the king itself. For Valera, Alonso and Rodríguez del Padrón knighthood was the quintessential expression of Bartolus’ notion of political nobility and, as Íñigo López de Mendoza argued, the knighting ceremony created a bond of loyalty between knight and king. This relationship, enshrined in

---


the *Siete Partidas*, had been cruelly shattered in the upheaval of Juan’s reign. Moreover, it was evident to many that the relationship was two sided. For the office of knighthood to function as it should, a capable monarch was required and, at the very least, one who was virtuous and just. Whilst Sánchez de Arévalo’s works were completed after Juan II’s death, there can be little doubt that it was his reign which provided the context for their production.

These authors formed part of a complex patchwork of chivalric writing produced during the latter half of Juan’s reign. Indeed, the literary output produced between 1430 and Juan II’s death is astounding and it is clear that the events which occurred during this period left a substantial literary legacy. Concerns about the political situation in the kingdom were voiced in a variety of ways, and the serious legalistic approach which Alonso and Valera took was only one of several prominent expressions of concern about the growing issues in the 1430s and 40s. The period saw the production of the anonymous *Libro de la consolación de España*, a despairing attempt to understand the problems of Juan’s reign, now preserved in a single manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional de España.97 The *Doctrinal* belongs equally amongst this group of works seeking to grapple with the problems of Juan’s reign. The author of the *Libro de la consolación de España* was not the only one decrying the conflict in Castile. Íñigo López de Mendoza composed his *Lamentación de España* at around the same time. Poets like Juan Alfonso de Baena in his *Dezir que fizo Juan Alfonso de Baena*, Juan de Mena in the famous *Laberinto de Fortuna*, and the author of the *Coplas de la Panadera*, grappled with much the same issues, albeit in verse not prose. This wider literary and social context has seldom been explored and the historians writing on the chivalric commentators of Juan’s reign have made little attempt to link their work to this wider body of thought. I should state that, whilst this study is concerned with the chivalric literature of Juan’s reign, I will be approaching it from a historical, rather than a literary perspective. The study is primarily concerned with how contemporaries grappled with chivalry as a set of ideas. Writing on chivalry and nobility was, in many ways, a vehicle by which broader political and social comment could be made. Moreover, it is worth remembering that to Alonso and his contemporaries, chivalry was a very real thing and they believed that changing how noblemen acted and conceived of their political office could have a radical impact on the fortunes of the kingdom as a whole.

The final work to be considered is the *Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar*, an allegorical romance composed by Alfonso Fernández de Palencia.98 Alfonso was a student and friend of Alonso de Cartagena and went on to be a royal chronicler for Enrique IV, a distinguished diplomat, churchman and writer. Alfonso, like his namesake the Bishop of Burgos, was of *converso* origin and, along with Valera, should be considered as one of the most important *converso* commentators on chivalry in the mid fifteenth century. Alfonso also

97 *Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9216. Tratados morales, Libro de la consolación de España* (s.xv), fol. 83r–91r.
wrote the *Batalla campal de los perros contra los lobos*, another allegorical work on the failings of Castilian chivalric ethos. Although both works were written after Juan II’s death, they are closely related to the other chivalric works written during his reign and Alfonso appears to have carried forward several of Alonso de Cartagena’s ideas into his own work. The *Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar* stands testament to the ongoing issues with Castilian chivalry. In the tale, a knight named Exercicio, emblematic of Castilian knighthood, departs his homeland in search of Triunfo who has long since left Castile. His journey takes him to Aragon and through Italy as the dejected Exercicio discovers that, despite having Experiencia, Castile has been forsaken by Discreción, Obediencia, Orden, Vitoria and Gloriodeno. Retracing the footsteps of the great knight Julius Caesar, Exercicio travels south through Rome and towards Naples where he eventually encounters the elusive Triunfo, who had fled to Alfonso the Magnanimous’ Neapolitan court. The tale reveals the ongoing issues with Castilian chivalry and, although it was written after Juan’s reign, there can be little doubt that the disastrous events of the previous half century shaped his views. Fernández de Palencia’s writing will form something of an epilogue to this study and it stands apart from the other texts as the only work which could be considered a romance. Although, the message it contains is as serious as the other texts considered here.

These works mentioned above form what Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco termed ‘a debate’ on the nature and role of the office of knighthood in the kingdom of Castile in the fifteenth century. Alonso, and several of his contemporaries, questioned the position and role of knights within society. They believed that Castile’s knights had to be more than just soldiers. Far from what historians have termed the ‘arms versus letters’ debate, the chivalric ideal which was put forward in these works brought together arms and learning. As Ottavio Di Camillo argued, such a binary distinction is not helpful in discussing the complex relationship between the Castilian nobility and learning during the early fifteenth century. Whilst Di Camillo’s arguments have largely eroded the view that there was an opposition between learning and knighthood during Juan’s reign, there has been little work done to explore this relationship further. This study aims to shed light on a sizeable corpus of learned writing on chivalry at Juan’s court. The works of Alonso and his contemporaries were serious scholarly attempts to influence how knights viewed their office. Chivalry at Juan’s court was not a set of ideas confined purely to a knightly class, but rather, a fluid and changing body of thought which was subject to scholarly input from jurists and knights alike. A growing

---

99 These are of course allegorical figures.

100 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*.


body of theoretical literature made for knightly consumption supplemented the practical realities of knighthood during Juan’s reign. This body of literature surrounding knighthood has historically not been considered in the arms versus letters debate. The Doctrinal de los caualleros was popular as a treatise on knighthood and was circulated widely at court. By the end of the fifteenth century, it was one of the most popular chivalric treatises, even rivalling the popularity of Vegetius’ De re militari in Castilian library inventories. Valera’s works were similarly popular, attested to by the excellent survival of manuscripts of the Espejo de verdadera nobleza and his other works. Whilst the levels of Latin literacy in Castile were lacking in comparison to Italy, a lively noble scholarly culture thrived in Castile during Juan’s reign and it is no accident that historians have seen this period as marking the end of the Middle Ages in Spain.

The momentous changes during the latter years of the fourteenth century had a profound impact on the debate which emerged during Juan’s reign. Alonso de Cartagena’s family were conversos, Jews that had been caught up in the mass conversions and religious violence of the late 1300s. These converts formed part of a new social group in Castilian society. The Santa María family, of which Alonso was a member, were wealthy and well connected. They, like several other converso families, rose rapidly through the ranks of Castilian society. These changes brought dangerous social tensions, perhaps best seen in the famous laws passed by rebels in Toledo prohibiting those of Jewish descent from holding office. However, many did and several of the chivalric commentators writing during Juan’s reign were of Jewish descent. Some, like Diego de Valera, were self-made men and none of them could count on noble lineage to re-enforce their social position. Although, both Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera defended the virtues of their Jewish lineage. In his chivalric commentary, Valera poured scorn on the role of lineage in the process of ennoblement and instead suggested that nobility should be rooted in virtue. This converso view of virtue as the basis for nobility was a new take on an established topos in chivalric commentary. However, in Castile this was far more than a simple debate. The upheaval and presence in noble ranks of men like Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera was evidence of a new type of nobility which challenged the position of Castile’s long established families. They owed their place to personal virtue and their critical views on nobility were, to a degree, shaped by their converso status and the turbulent events happening around them.

Cartagena was more than just a chivalric commentator. In fact, he is better remembered as a theologian and leading intellectual of Juan’s court. As a respected and trusted member of Juan II’s court, and an esteemed diplomat, he participated in the Council of Basel where he argued forcefully for Castilian interests. During his long ecclesiastical career, he produced a number of theological and devotional treatises and succeeded his father as Bishop of Burgos. Cartagena is perhaps best known for his ardent defence of

---

105 For more on Cartagena’s devotional works see: Luis Fernández Gallardo, La obra literaria de Alonso de Cartagena (1385-1456): Ensayo de historia cultural, 245–81.
Castilian conversos in his *Defensorium unitatis christianae*. Cartagena presented those who attacked the conversos as dangerous schismatics and accused them of having turned against the word of God. John Edwards and Bruce Rosenstock have established the originality and importance of Cartagena’s theology in the *Defensorium*. The *Defensorium* was also a defence of royal authority and, as Rosenstock has argued, employed a view of royal governance rooted in divine and natural law which was later used by Francisco Vitoria and the Salamanca school. Cartagena’s view of Christianity, like his views on chivalry and nobility, was closely connected to his converso status. Cartagena also wrote on prayer and devotion in his *Oracional de Fernán Pérez*, engaged with the theology of John Chrysostom in the *Glosa y declaración sobre el dicho comienzo y prelacio de san Juan Crisóstomo* and produced a piece of Biblical exegesis with his *Apologia super psalmo indicus me Deus*. Whilst his theological works will not be examined in any depth in this study, they formed an important part of his literary output. Moreover, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the ideas found in the *Defensorium* were closely connected to Cartagena’s earlier writing on nobility.

Before tackling the literary work produced during Juan’s reign, it is first necessary to examine the turbulent events that dominated Castile under his rule. A catalogue of bitter family squabbles, religious unrest and armed rebellion shaped Juan’s long reign. These events, and the active role that the kingdom’s nobility took in them, are crucial to understanding not only Alonso de Cartagena’s views on chivalry and nobility, but also those of his contemporaries. The first chapter will tackle this complex political context and Alonso’s life and literary legacy.

The second chapter will argue that the civil war in the kingdom produced a corresponding chivalric crisis. It will argue that Alonso de Cartagena was not alone in viewing the conflict as a knightly issue and that, by the early 1440s, there was a widespread belief that the civil war was the fault of a misguided and unruly nobility. The third chapter will follow on from this and seek to examine Alonso’s *Doctrinal de los caualleros* in more detail. Covering the worst period of civil unrest between 1438 and 1446, this chapter will argue that Alonso was not alone in his critical view of knighthood. The chapter will examine Cartagena’s work alongside the writing of other commentators reacting to the crisis, namely, the Marquis of Santillana’s correspondence and Diego de Valera’s *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* and *Exortación de la pas*. This chapter will also serve to introduce the broader themes which will be drawn on in the subsequent sections.

---


The following chapter will address the broader debate on nobility and will seek to draw together the preceding chapters. Whilst Alonso and Valera were amongst the most vocal, they were not the only courtiers to produce pieces of chivalric commentary. This chapter will seek to place Cartagena’s work amongst a wider debate at court over the nature of nobility. A number of other texts, such as Juan Rodríguez del Padrón’s *Cadira de honor* and Gutierre Díaz de Gamez’s *El Víctorial* celebrated a view of knighthood based around lineage.¹⁰⁹ Their views stood in sharp contrast to the views of other writers. They offer a tantalising glimpse at another view of chivalry, the more traditional views which we assume Alonso and Valera were arguing against. This section will seek to examine what might be seen as the wider debate on chivalry and nobility and will seek to establish that there were two sides to the literary view of knighthood. The arguments put forward by these writers had wide reaching implications for how we should view knighthood and nobility during the fifteenth century and this chapter will seek to shed light on this intriguing debate.

The fifth chapter will examine the development of a new chivalric ideal and the impact of humanist thought on chivalry during Juan II’s reign. A number of chivalric commentators, notably, Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera and the Marquis of Santillana were amongst those seen by historians as Castile’s first humanists. However, there has been little attempt to address the impact of humanist thought on chivalric writing during Juan II’s reign. Humanism is as problematic a term as chivalry. The authors writing at the Castilian court showed more than just a passing interest in the Classical past. Chivalry became closely interwoven with what Hans Baron termed ‘civic humanism’, as writers sought to instil in Castilian knights a strong sense of duty and responsibility. Examples were taken predominantly from ancient Rome and they started to play an increasingly prominent role in the chivalric ideal favoured by commentators during the period. They expected the noblemen of their day to be learned and well-read and they celebrated both literary and martial feats. However, the relationship between chivalry and humanism is one which has frequently been characterised as a conflict between arms and letters. This view left little room for a more nuanced perspective and appeared rooted in a strict periodic division between the ‘medieval’ and ‘the Renaissance’.

Over the course of the fifteenth century, wisdom began to play an increasingly important role in the knightly ideal. Alonso de Cartagena believed that knights should have a scholarly understanding of their office and he offered an idealised model of learned knighthood. Cartagena, Valera and the Marquis of Santillana, amongst others, all championed a vision of knighthood where learning supplemented military experience and was an integral part of noble life. This chapter will examine the relationship between chivalry and learning and touch on the uses of the Classical past in Castilian chivalric writing. Chivalry was a changing body of thought and the period saw a number of the commentators seek to recast the chivalric ideal. Far

from being a conflict between arms and letters, new ideas were readily adopted into chivalric thought and thus, the new ideal of learned knighthood lay at the heart of the debate which developed at Juan II’s court.

The final section of the thesis will return to Alonso de Cartagena’s views and their legacy in Castilian chivalric writing. The chapter will focus on Alfonso Fernández de Palencia’s writings, produced some twenty years after Cartagena’s death, and they reveal the ongoing issues at the Castilian court. The debate, which began during the 1440s, did not lead to a radical change in the way knights behaved, but it did shape the way in which chivalry was discussed in subsequent years. This chapter will seek to conclude the thesis by looking to the work of one of Alonso’s most famous pupils. It will examine the legacy of the debate on knighthood and nobility against a context of continuing problems with knightly violence in Castile.

This study hopes to explore the development of chivalric thought during Juan II’s reign. By focusing on one of the period’s better known figures I hope to open up the period for further work. A complete examination of the chivalric debate during Juan’s reign is beyond the scope of this study. However, I hope that this limited examination of Alonso de Cartagena, and several of his contemporaries, will go some way to addressing how the knighthly ideal changed over the course of Juan’s reign. Chivalry was not a static body of thought, but rather a complex and changing ideal which was shaped by the events and influences around it. The question is not how we define chivalry, but how the authors of the period grappled with its many meanings. Their varying takes on the knighthly ideal offer a fascinating view of what it meant to be a knight in fifteenth-century Castile. There is not a single definition of chivalry which would fit the period, rather there are a multitude of differing definitions, produced in response to the extraordinary events of Juan II’s reign. These views act as a mirror for the intellectual life of court and shed light on the deep-seated concern of a number of courtiers that there was something very wrong with the way that noblemen acted. Their perspective offers a little studied view of Castile’s century of crisis and a complex answer to the question of how to be a knight in mid-fifteenth-century Castile.
Chapter I
The Reign of Juan II and the Life of Alonso de Cartagena

Introduction

Writing in the 1480s for Isabel the Catholic, Diego de Valera reflected on the reign of her father, King Juan II. After extolling Juan’s virtue and the length of his reign he lamented that there were, ‘tantas discordias y guerras y ayuntamientos de gentes y prisiones de grandes que a mí sería imposible poderlo escrevir ordenadamente cómo cada cosa pasó sin ver su crónica.’

Juan’s long, forty-seven year, reign was dominated by unrest, vicious factional politics as well as intellectual and religious upheaval. Members of Castile’s famously unruly nobility clashed with Juan II and his favourite Álvaro de Luna over the rule of the kingdom. It is testament to the instability of his reign that it is covered by not one, but three contemporary chronicles all presenting different views. It was against this turbulent context that Alonso de Cartagena and his fellow commentators wrote their chivalric works. Before we address the chivalric writing produced during the period, it is first necessary to outline some of this context. Alonso de Cartagena’s own life will be used as the basis for a short section examining the most important events of the period.

Cartagena’s life has been the subject of a number of extensive biographies and his work studied by numerous historians. The broadest biographies of his life are those of Luciano Serrano, Luis Fernández Gallardo, Benzion Netanyahu and Francisco Cantera Burgos. Alonso was regarded as a figure of note not just by historians but, arguably, by his contemporaries as well. By his death, he was already lauded as one of the kingdom’s foremost academics and his intellectual legacy earned him a place in the lofty ranks of Fernando del Pulgar’s Claro varones de Castilla. The first modern biography of Alonso’s life was Luciano Serrano’s Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena. Serrano’s biography gave a detailed

110 Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (‘Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera) (Madrid, 2009), 319. ‘such discord, wars, factions and imprisonments of great lords that it is impossible for me to record in an orderly way how each thing happened without seeing your chronicle’.
111 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balonero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica del rey don Juan segundo d’este nombre en Castilla y en Leon’, in Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde don Alfonso el Sabin, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel. Colección ordenada por don Cayetano Rosell, ed. Cayetano Rosell, vol. 2, Biblioteca de autores españoles, desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 68 (Madrid, 1877), 277–695; Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo., Colección de crónicas españolas 2 (Madrid, 1940).
112 Fernando del Pulgar, Claro varones de Castilla: Estudio preliminar, edición y notas de Robert B. Tate, ed. Robert B. Tate (Madrid, 1985).
113 Luciano Serrano, Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena, obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores.
and extensive account of Alonso’s life, with the focus falling on his career as a churchman and diplomat. Serrano’s biography was followed a decade later by Cantera Burgos’ study of the Santa María family. Luis Fernández Gallardo’s more recent biography has shed more light on Alonso’s earlier years, in particular his time at the University of Salamanca and his early career in the church. Both Benzion Netanyahu and Jose María Viña Liste have also detailed Alonso’s life as part of their studies on his written work. Alonso’s position as a converso and one of Castile’s first humanists has meant that his life and writings have come under considerable scholarly attention. His engagement with the political, religious and intellectual developments of the day make him a perfect figure to use to examine the wider context of Juan II’s reign.

Alonso de Cartagena’s Life

Alonso de Cartagena was born in 1385, the third son of Rabbi Solomó Ha-Levi of Burgos. The Ha-Levi family were one of Burgos’ most important Sephardic Jewish families and, since their arrival in Burgos from Aragon in the early fourteenth century, they had risen to prominence amongst the city’s mercantile elite. Alonso’s father was born in 1350 and was educated in Hebrew, Latin, Arabic and Castilian as well as studying the Talmud, law and scholastic theology. By 1380, he had been made chief Rabbi of Burgos, confirming the family’s social standing. However, Solomó’s position at the head of the city’s Jewish population was not to last. Castile’s Jewish population had, since the mid thirteenth century, enjoyed a degree of social acceptance. Following Alfonso XI’s reign, some Jewish families carved out positions as financiers, tax collectors and physicians. Diego de Valera’s father, Alfonso Chirino, was Enrique III’s physician and the author of two notable medical treatises, the Menor daño de medicina and the Espejo de medicina.

In 1389, Solomó found himself imprisoned in England, probably as part of a hostage exchange following the failure of John of Gaunt’s invasion of Castile. His so called Purim letter, written whilst in captivity, attested to his anguish at being separated from his family. Solomó returned to Castile as the peaceful coexistence between the kingdom’s Christian and Jewish communities broke down. The violent anti-Semitism came to a head in 1391 with rioting and forced conversions across the kingdom. Mobs attacked the Jewish quarters of Seville, Toledo and Burgos where the populations were either killed, or forcefully converted. The Ha-Levi family were amongst those caught up in the violence and Solomó, along with his brothers and five children Gonzalo, Alonso, Pedro, Álvar and María, converted to Christianity. The events

114 Francisco Cantera Burgos, Alvar Garcia de Santa María y su familia de conversos: Historia de la Judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios (Madrid, 1952).
115 Luis Fernández Gallardo, Alonso de Cartagena, (1385-1456): una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV.
of 1391 had a disastrous impact on Castile’s Jewish population and Haim Beinart has estimated that their numbers fell by two thirds, of which a third were killed.\(^\text{121}\) The Ha-Levi family became the Santa María family following their conversion and, no longer bound by their old social status, they rose rapidly through the ranks of the Christian nobility. The precise date of their conversion to Christianity is unclear. Pablo insisted it was in 1390, but this may have been an attempt to remove the family’s conversion from the context of the riots of 1391.\(^\text{122}\) Regardless of the exact date, the Ha-Levi family converted to Christianity against a backdrop of hostility towards Castile’s Jewish population. By converting, they became one of Castile’s many *converso* families, and, although as new Christians they were no longer identifiable by their faith, they were still distinct from the old Christian nobility.

*Conversos* largely continued in the same roles as they had before conversion and few moved away from traditionally Jewish neighbourhoods. Their new found social mobility, however, brought with it resentment from the kingdom’s established Christians. Tensions continued and the forced conversions of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century brought accusations that many were not genuine converts at all. Pablo de Santa María avoided such accusations and zealously took to his new faith, labelling 1391 as God’s vengeance for the death of Christ.\(^\text{123}\) A mere eight years after converting he was made Bishop of Cartagena, once again becoming a religious leader. Pablo appears not to have been marginalised and the Santa María family achieved great social standing.\(^\text{124}\) Pablo went on to be Chancellor of Castile, tutor to Juan II, Bishop of Burgos and author of punitive legislation aimed at the surviving members of Castile’s beleaguered Jewish community. Pablo’s brother Álvar became a royal chronicler and the probable author of at least part of the *Crónica de Juan II*.\(^\text{125}\) Of Alonso’s brothers, Gonzalo became a diplomat, Álvar, like Alonso, studied law at Salamanca and Pedro became a knight and founder of the house of Cartagena in Burgos.\(^\text{126}\)

In 1399, Alonso followed in the footsteps of his brother Gonzalo and entered the University of Salamanca to study law.\(^\text{127}\) His time at the University would shape his later career and literary interests. The decision to send two of his sons to university to study law was part of Pablo de Santa María’s ambition for social mobility.\(^\text{128}\) Alonso’s arrival at Salamanca co-incided with a period of investment and growth for the


\(^{125}\) Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’.

\(^{126}\) For more on the other members of the Santa María family see: Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos: Historia de la Judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios*.


\(^{128}\) Ibid., 59.
University sparked by Antipope Benedict XIII’s presence in Castile and Aragon. Salamanca was a prestigious centre for law, renowned for scholastic thought. However, changes were afoot and, in 1403, the University appointed an Italian scholar to fill the previously vacant Chair of Rhetoric. Alonso completed his degree in law in 1407, placing him amongst the first students to be taught rhetoric at Salamanca. Some eight years later, he obtained a doctorate and he remained an active member of the University throughout his life. His attack on Leonardo Bruni’s translation of Aristotle’s Ethica was first delivered as a lecture at Salamanca in the early 1430s. The Trastamara kings had greatly fuelled the demand for university educated men to fill positions in royal administration and, by the early years of the fifteenth century, Alonso’s family were well placed for him to pursue an ecclesiastical and political career.

Regency and the Start of an Ecclesiastical and Diplomatic Career

On Christmas Day 1406 King Enrique III died unexpectedly leaving the kingdom to his infant son Juan. Enrique left the care of the kingdom to his brother Ferdinand of Antequera and his widow, Catherine of Lancaster. Amongst those appointed to the regency council was none other than Alonso’s father, Pablo de Santa María. Pablo had been a prominent member of Enrique III’s council and, shortly before his death, he had been appointed to oversee Prince Juan’s education. Enrique’s death cannot have come as a surprise to many. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán in his Generaciones y semblanzas recalled how Enrique had been plagued by illness throughout his reign. Catherine and Ferdinand proved themselves to be capable regents. Ferdinand was every bit the perfect prince, handsome, charismatic and a skilled military commander. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán described him as a, ‘príncipe muy fermo de gesto, sossegado e benigno, casto e onesto, muy catolico e deuoto christiano’, and a, ‘príncipe de grant discricion e que siempre fizo sus fechos con bueno e maduro consei’. Pérez de Guzmán was considerably less complimentary of Catherine and she has been much maligned by historians for her distrust of Ferdinand. Juan Torres Fontes labelled Catherine a hindrance to the rule of the kingdom and suggested that her concerns were

---

130 Ibid.
132 Teaching between degrees was common for students looking to gain a doctorate and recent graduates like Alonso would have been expected to teach for two or three years. For more on this transition see: Alan B. Cobban, English University Life in the Middle Ages (London, 1999), 58.
134 ‘Crónica del rey don Enrique, tercero de Castilla e de Leon’, in Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel. Colección ordenada por don Cayetano Ruseil, vol. 2, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 68 (Madrid, 1877), 263.
136 Ibid., 21–22. ‘a prince of most handsome aspect, relaxed, mild, chaste, honest and a very Catholic and devout Christian’, ‘a prince of great discretion and who always acted with good and mature counsel’.
137 Ibid., 19.
nothing more than paranoia. However, her concerns were more than justified. Enrique’s death had left both her and her infant son in a perilous position. Ferdinand had amassed a vast amount of power by Enrique’s death. He controlled his own land holdings and held the masterships of Santiago and Alcantara for his infant sons. Combined with his charisma and military skill, his wealth and power made him an undeniably threatening figure. Whilst Ferdinand resolutely resisted suggestions from some of Enrique’s courtiers that he install himself as king in place of his nephew, he was never fully trusted by Catherine. The lack of trust led to the two regents effectively dividing control of the kingdom between them. Catherine maintained control of her son and the royal chancery in Segovia, whilst Ferdinand resolved to continue his war against Granada. However, in 1412, Ferdinand’s participation in Castilian affairs was cut short when he was elected King of Aragon as part of the Compromise of Caspe.

Ferdinand and Catherine left Juan a mixed legacy. On the one hand, their capable rule ensured a period of relative stability and guaranteed Juan’s place on the throne. However, the regents left a highly unstable balance of power in the kingdom. It was clear that Ferdinand envisaged that his sons would continue his privileged position at court as the king’s strongest supporters. Ferdinand’s younger sons Juan, Enrique and Pedro inherited his vast Castilian landholdings and took their place at the head of the Castilian nobility. Meanwhile, his eldest son inherited the Aragonese throne as Alfonso V. A series of dynastic marriages ensured that there would be lasting ties between the two sides of the Trastamara family. In 1418, King Alfonso married his cousin, King Juan of Castile’s sister, María of Castile and Juan in turn married Alfonso’s sister María of Aragon. This dynastic union was further re-enforced by the marriage of the Infante Enrique to Ferdinand’s youngest daughter the Infanta Catalina. However, Ferdinand’s dream of familial unity did not come to fruition and, rather than aiding their cousin King Juan in ruling the kingdom, the Infantes clashed repeatedly with him and his favourite, Álvaro de Luna, over control of the royal court. By 1425, the Trastamara family ruled over Castile, Aragon and Navarre with lands and vassals spread across the three kingdoms. The complexities of this dynastic arrangement extended beyond the family to their retainers. Castilian noblemen like Diego Gómez de Sandoval, the Count of Denia and Castro, found themselves owners of lands in two or more kingdoms and owing allegiance to more than one king. This complex web of relationships lay at the heart of the issues which would plague King Juan’s reign.

It was against this context that Alonso de Cartagena entered into his career in the church. By the time he graduated in 1415, he had already secured a post as maestrescuela at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

---

139 Ibid., 126.
140 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 342–43.
141 Ibid., 376.
142 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’.
and, a year later, was made Dean of Santiago.\textsuperscript{143} It was around this time that he completed his first scholarly work, a translation of the \textit{Vita beata} and embarked on a promising political career.\textsuperscript{144} His father’s position at court saw him appointed as an auditor of the royal \textit{audencia}, one of the royal councils. Alonso’s excellent connections and ability meant that he rose rapidly through the ranks. By 1419, he had been made a papal nuncio and collector for twelve dioceses, followed by an appointment to the \textit{Consejo Real}.\textsuperscript{145} Alonso’s position on the \textit{Consejo} was one of real political worth and reflects the high standing of the Santa María family. Alonso’s father Pablo and his brother Gonzalo had both represented the kingdom as part of the delegation to the Council of Constance, marking them out as amongst Castile’s most trusted diplomats.

Alonso’s position at court meant that he could no longer remain removed from the political events surrounding him. In 1421 Alonso, along with Álvar Pérez de Guzmán, was called on to try and help end a dangerous dispute between the Infante Enrique and his brother Juan. By 1420, the delicate balance of power in Castile was starting to unravel. The Infante Enrique, by now the Master of Santiago, had grown jealous of his brother’s influence over King Juan II. In 1420, Enrique took matters into his own hands and seized control of Juan by force at Tordesillas.\textsuperscript{146} Enrique wasted no time in issuing letters in the king’s name declaring that his brother Juan and his supporters, ‘habían hecho muchas cosas en deservicio del Rey é daño de sus Reynos’.\textsuperscript{147} Enrique believed that a privileged position at court was his birth right and, after his brother Juan had married Princess Blanca, the heir to the Navarrese throne, he believed that he should take his place at the head of the Castilian nobility. A tense standoff ensued between the brothers. The Infantes’ mother Queen Leonor of Aragon travelled to Castile to try and end the dispute between her sons.\textsuperscript{148} Leonor grasped the severity of the situation and understood that Enrique was dangerously close to committing treason. Both Leonor and King Juan’s sister María tried to end the dispute to no avail and, by 1421, it was abundantly clear to all at court that the Infante Enrique was acting against King Juan II’s wishes.\textsuperscript{149}

Alonso and Álvar Pérez were not successful in ending the standoff amicably. Leonor, fearing what the king would do once he was free of Enrique’s control, pleaded with King Juan both publicly and privately. Addressing the \textit{Consejo}, she, ‘pidióle mucho por su (Juan II) merced no quisiese acatar á las culpas, si en algunas era el Infante Don Enrique su hijo, mas al gran debdo que en Su Merced tenia, asi por él como por la Infanta su hermana, é á los muchos servicios que el Rey de Aragon su padre en su menor edad le hiciera

\textsuperscript{144} Luis Fernández Gallardo, \textit{Alonso de Cartagena, (1385-1456): una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV}, 87. Unfortunately this manuscript has since been lost. Gallardo identified it from a manuscript catalogue of the Santiago House of Jesuits in the 20th century.
\textsuperscript{146} Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 382.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 384. ‘they had done many things in disservice to the king and much damage to his kingdoms’.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 384–85.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 386.
con toda lealtad'. Leonor also invited her sons to remember their father’s wishes stating that, ‘el qual mandó al tiempo de su fallescimiento á todos sus hijos que guardasen á él, é siempre fuesen en su servicio’. It was, however, precisely this wish that had fuelled the conflict. The dispute paved the way for the rise of one of the period’s most contentious figures, Álvaro de Luna, and pushed the Infantes further from the king. Álvaro was a charismatic and skilled politician who rose to be royal favourite and led a noble faction opposing the Infantes of Aragon. The chronicler Pedro Carrillo de Huete described Álvaro as, ‘gracioso en el fablar, e en el cantar, e en el dançar, e en el arreo de su persona, que lo [que él] traya le parece mejor que a otro, e muy ventuoroso en todas cosas.’ Álvaro remains as much a divisive figure today as he was during Juan’s own reign with historians either seeing him as a stalwart defender of royal authority, or the power behind the throne ruling unjustly through King Juan. By 1421, Álvaro had masterminded a plot to remove Enrique and the constable, Ruy López Dávalos, one of the Infantes’ greatest supporters, from King Juan’s side. At a session of the Consejo, King Juan produced a number of damming letters allegedly written by the Infante Enrique and López Dávalos to the Moors. Enrique denied writing them, but the damage was done and he was arrested and escorted from the court in disgrace and López Dávalos exiled to Aragon. Álvaro was rewarded with the office of constable, making him one of the most powerful men in Castile.

Despite the earlier failure of Alonso and Álvar Pérez’s attempts to make peace, Alonso’s diplomatic acumen had been noticed and, at the end of 1421, he was appointed as ambassador to Portugal. Netanyahu has suggested that it was Luna who spotted Alonso’s skills and promoted him. Luna supported conversos holding positions at court and Cartagena may have owed his appointment as ambassador to Luna’s influence. Alonso was tasked with securing a lasting peace treaty between Castile and Portugal and the negotiations would occupy him until 1423. Relations between Portugal and Castile had been strained since the Aviz dynasty came to power in 1385 following the Battle of Aljubarrota. Memories of the Castilian defeat at Aljubarrota were raw, even during Juan’s reign. Diego de Valera famously responded angrily to a claim from a German knight that the King of Castile had lost his claim to Portugal after his defeat, by challenging him to a duel at a feast hosted by King Albert II of Hungary.

---

150 Ibid., 408. ‘pleaded much for his (King Juan’s) mercy not desiring him to act on the sins, if there were any, of her son the Infante Enrique, but to act on the great debt that he (Enrique) had to his mercy and likewise to the Infanta his sister and to the many other services that the King of Aragon did during his minority with total loyalty’.

151 Ibid. ‘he (Ferdinand of Antequera) ordered at the time of his death that all his sons should guard him (King Juan) and always be in his service’.

152 For more on Álvaro’s rise to power and fall from grace see: Nicholas G. Round, The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Álvaro de Luna (London, 1986).

153 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 177. ‘gracious in speaking, and in singing and dancing, and in the trappings of his person, in which he seemed better than others, and he was most fortunate in all things.’

154 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 416.

155 Ibid., 424–25.

156 Benzion Netanyahu, The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain, 520.

157 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 525.
a lasting mark on his career and he continued to be involved with the diplomatic relations between the two kingdoms until the 1450s. Alonso did not dedicate his time in Portugal solely to negotiations and, whilst there, he tutored Prince Duarte, heir to the Portuguese throne. At the Portuguese court he wrote the Memorial virtutum for Prince Duarte, which was later translated into Castilian as the Memorial de virtudes.158 The work is the earliest surviving piece of Alonso’s writing and the text drew heavily on Aristotle.159 Duarte’s keen interest in learning prompted Alonso to complete a translation of Cicero’s De inventione.160 The translation was the first of a number of translations of Cicero’s works which Alonso completed at the behest of the royal scribe Alfonso de Zamora.161 His translations of De senectute and De officis have been the subject of a modern critical edition by Maria Morras.162 The period was an extraordinarily productive one for Alonso and, whilst at the Portuguese court, he also completed a translation of Boccaccio’s De casibus virorum illustrium.163

Rebellion, Unrest and the Church Councils

Alonso’s skilful negotiation of a peace treaty with Portugal led to him being rewarded with a more permanent placement as Castilian ambassador to Portugal. Much of his time as ambassador was dedicated to the question of sovereignty over the Canary Islands.164 In 1424, Fernão de Castro launched a Portuguese expedition to the Canary Islands, and although it ended in disaster, it was a dangerous sign of Portuguese ambitions.165 Juan II ordered Alonso to counter the Portuguese claims. Cartagena dutifully did so by claiming that Castile was the true successor to both the Roman province of Hispania and the subsequent Visigothic kingdom.166 Alonso argued that the Canary Islands had fallen under the Roman province and

162 Alonso de Cartagena, Libros de Título; De Senectute; De los oficios, edición, prólogo y notas de María Morras., ed. María Morras (Madrid, 1996).
166 Ibíd.
thus, the Kingdom of Castile, not Portugal, had inherited the rights to the Islands. It was an argument which he used in the *Allegationes super conquesta canariae* written in 1437, his speech to the Council of Basel and would find its final expression in his history of Castile, the *Anacephaleosis*. Eugenius IV had banned Christian colonisation of the Canaries in 1434 and, two years later, King Duarte of Portugal wrote to Eugenius requesting he lift the ban and allow Portuguese conquest. The Portuguese claim rested on the desire of Portuguese missionaries to convert the population of the Canaries. Cartagena’s speech at the Council of Basel a year later was a powerful response to these Portuguese claims. Alonso petitioned King Juan to intervene and even suggested a Castilian invasion of the Islands as a means of securing them against the ambitions of Henry the Navigator. As Muldoon has argued, the dispute over the Canaries was an event which characterised the issues in canonistic thought over the relations between Christians and non-Christians. Alonso’s role at the Portuguese court was ultimately to negotiate the continued co-operation of the two kingdoms and, whilst the issue of the Canary Islands continued to be contentious, it did not prevent Alonso and the other ambassadors agreeing the Treaty of Medina del Campo in 1431. The treaty, in theory, secured Castilian rights over the Canary Islands and was also an important part of King Juan II’s attempt to secure his own position in Castile against his cousins the Infantes of Aragon.

In 1425, the Infante Juan’s succession to the Navarrese throne brought the threat of more instability. Juan and Enrique’s elder brother Alfonso was already King of Aragon and King Juan II now faced the involvement of two foreign kings in Castilian affairs. The Infante Juan, now King of Navarre was, however, reluctant to leave the Castilian court and seized the opportunity to try and remove Luna from the king’s side. The chronicler Pedro Carrillo de Huete records how the Infante met the kingdom’s great men to discuss, ‘secretamente cómo desbiaseen de la corte e de la voluntad del Rey al condestable.’ By 1426, the Infantes had set aside their differences and presented a united front against Álvaro de Luna. Thanks to the Infante Juan’s actions, they could count on the support of a growing faction of courtiers and noblemen. Despite both Juan and Alfonso being monarchs in their own right, they refused to abandon their positions as Castilian magnates.

168 Ibid., 122.
173 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 431.
174 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 11. ‘secretamente cómo desbiaseen de la corte e de la voluntad del Rey al condestable.’
The Infantes’ gamble paid off and King Juan eventually bowed to pressure from his courtiers to reassess his favourite’s position at court. Juan reached a compromise and appointed the Admiral of Castile Alfonso Enríquez, the adelantado Pero Manrique, the Master of Calatrava Luis de Guzmán and Fernán Alfonso de Robles to judge Álvaro’s position.\textsuperscript{175} The Infante Juan had convinced enough of the court to force the king’s hand and the four judges concluded that Álvaro de Luna should be exiled from court.\textsuperscript{176} With an Aragonese army on the border, and his own nobles threatening rebellion, Juan had little choice but to accept the judgement. However, Álvaro’s absence was not to last. In the latter months of 1427, the Infantes failed to secure their position at court and Álvaro began preparing for his return. By Christmas 1427, the Infantes were forced to allow King Juan to invite the constable back to court. Álvaro chose to make his entrance in February 1428 at the town of Turuegano. His return was nothing short of a Roman triumph, with Álvaro cast as the conquering hero, already convinced of his victory over his opponents at court. Bedecked in gold, Álvaro marched into Segovia accompanied by a large number of supporters in a lavish display of power.\textsuperscript{177} Over the next few months, the fierce struggle at court between Álvaro and the Infantes played out in the elaborate festivities of court. The Infantes responded with an extravagant triptych of tournaments held in Valladolid. The events were a last roll of the dice for the Infantes as they sought to woo King Juan with an overblown display of wealth, power and familial closeness. The first joust, organised by the Infante Enrique, was unlike anything seen before at the Castilian court. Enrique spared no expense and constructed an elaborate tournament set featuring a mock castle, bell tower and triumphal arch.\textsuperscript{178} The tournament, known as the Pasaje peligroso de la fuerte ventura, was followed only a week later by another opulent display of chivalric pageantry organised by the Infante Juan.\textsuperscript{179} At the tournament, the Infante Enrique fought under the motto ‘non es’, a pointed reminder that he, unlike his brothers and cousin, did not have a crown of his own.\textsuperscript{180} The final joust of the series was organised by King Juan II himself and concluded with the agreement of a treaty securing the Infantes’ interests at court.\textsuperscript{181} Álvaro de Luna’s re-appointment to the Consejo Real was to be balanced by the appointment of five of the Infantes’ supporters.\textsuperscript{182}

The following months brought rapid change. It quickly became clear that Álvaro had indeed won out in the struggle for power. Back at court, King Juan fell under his influence again. The Infantes’ response was

---

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 13; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 441–42; Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, 59.

\textsuperscript{176} Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del baluñcer de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 17–18; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 445–46; Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, 67–68.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 59.

\textsuperscript{178} Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del baluñcer de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 20–22; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 446.

\textsuperscript{179} The tournament name is taken from the triumphal arch built as part of festivities. The arch was named the arco del pasaje peligroso de la fuerte ventura. The tournament will henceforth be referred to as the Pasaje Peligroso.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 24. ‘he is not’.

\textsuperscript{181} Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 450.

\textsuperscript{182} Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del baluñcer de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 29–30.
this time much more serious. Juan of Navarre and Alfonso the Magnanimous began amassing troops on the border in preparation for an invasion of Castile. On the 23rd June 1429, a joint Aragonese-Navarrese army led by the brothers crossed the border into Castile at Hariza. Meanwhile, the Infante Enrique, his brother Pedro and a number of their supporters, most notably the commissioner of the Doctrinal de los caballeros Diego Gómez de Sandoval, rose in revolt against the king. Juan immediately dispatched a royal army under the command of Álvaro de Luna, Pero Manrique and Pedro Fernández de Velasco to halt the Aragonese invasion. The Castilian forces halted the advance at Sopétran and a tense standoff between the two sides ensued. An ambassadorial exchange, recorded by the chroniclers, reveals something of the Infantes’ motives. The ambassadors brought the reply to Juan that, ‘por esas mismas razones que ellos decian de las mercedes é gracias que el Rey Don Fernando su padre y ellos habian dél recebido, aquellas obligaban é constreñian á ellos de venir en Castilla para mostrar é declarar al Rey los daños de sus Reynos, y para que libremente los pudiese regir é governar, é su preeminencia real no fuese enbargada ni amenguada por ninguna persona’. However, despite their protestations that they were there to aid him, Juan was not swayed. Juan was determined to rid Castile of his cousins’ influence and, at a meeting of the Consejo, he ordered the seizure of, ‘las tierras e mercedes e mantenimientos e juro de heredades, e las villas e castillos e casas fuertes, e todos los otros logares que el rey de Navarra e el ynfante don Enrrique, e la reyna de Navarra e la ynfanta doña Catalina, sus mugeres, e don Carlos prínçipe de Viana, avían e tenían en los sus reynos e señoríos, e en los de sus libros.’ The move dragged Castile into civil war, and a series of oaths forced on the members of the royal court reveal King Juan’s concern about the loyalty of his courtiers. In February 1430, Juan made a thinly veiled threat to Alfonso the Magnanimous by welcoming to court the bastard son of King Martin of Sicily, Count Fadrique of Luna, who remained at court for four years until he was set aside as part of the reconciliation between Castile and Aragon.

The conflict ended without major bloodshed and, by the end of 1430, the Infantes had been decisively defeated in Castile and Luna’s power was unchallenged. Their confiscated estates allowed King Juan to substantially advance the position of a number of his loyal supporters. Writing decades later, Valera recalled that Juan, ‘acrecentó muncho (sic) el estado de los grandes d’estos reinos, fizo munchos condes’. By

---

183 Ibid., 37.
184 Ibid., 34.
185 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 453–54. ‘reasons which they (the Infantes) said were the gifts and graces of the King Don Fernando their father, and those they had received from him (King Juan of Castile) obligated and constrained them to come to Castile to show and declare to the king the damages in his kingdoms, so that he could freely rule and govern and his royal pre-eminence was not obstructed nor belittled by any person’. ‘Amenguada’ here could mean either belittled or dishonoured. I have translated it as belittled although dishonoured would be an equally valid translation.
186 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 42. ‘the lands, incomes, maintenances, property rights, towns, castles, strong houses and all other places that the King of Navarre and the Infante Don Enrique and their wives the Queen of Navarre and the Infanta Catalina, and Carlos Prince of Viana, had in those his kingdoms and lordships and in those of his books.’
187 Ibid., 51.
188 Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (‘Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera), 316. ‘much increased the estate of the great men of his kingdom and he made many counts’.
1431, the political landscape of Castile had changed dramatically as those who had remained loyal to King Juan were rewarded with lucrative new land holdings. Amongst the greatest beneficiaries were, Pedro Fernández de Velasco who was made the new Count of Haro, Íñigo López de Mendoza who gained substantial new landholdings and Pedro de Stuñiga who became Count of Ledesma. At Uclés on 24th January 1431, the knights and priors of the Order of Santiago ritually stripped a statue representing the Infante Enrique of the mastership of the Order, although a new master would not be appointed until Álvaro de Luna received the position in 1445. The loss of their lands and power meant that the Infantes were all but removed from Castile. The Infante Enrique eluded capture for another year; his bid for power a catastrophic failure. In 1431, Juan and Álvar resolved to reunite the court and they launched an attack on Granada. At Cordoba, King Juan, Álvaro and fifty of his retainers took the cross and the invasion was declared a crusade. The invasion ended with a modest victory at the Battle of La Higuera and led to dynastic change in Granada. After the victory at La Higuera, the invasion stalled due to, ‘división que se yvan comenzando entre los cavalleros contra el condestable’. It would seem that even the unifying force of the crusade had not been enough to iron out the lingering divisions left by the civil war. Nevertheless, on 28th August, Juan made a magnificent triumphal entry into Toledo where his victory was proclaimed to a huge crowd. However, writing later, Diego de Valera remembered the invasion not as a victory, but an example of King Juan being bought out by Granada.

Castilian fortunes on the frontier fluctuated over the coming years. The invasion in 1431 was the last time that there was a significant attack on Granada during Juan’s reign. Juan turned his attention away from the Moors and Castile increasingly became involved with its neighbouring Christian kingdoms instead. They continued to take tribute from Granada, but there was no serious or sustained campaign until the reign of the Catholic Kings half a century later. A modest victory was won at the siege of Huescar, but it was more than matched by the disastrous defeat of Castilian forces besieging Gibraltar in 1436. The Count of

---

189 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 52; Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, *Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’* (‘Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera), 316–17. Valera gives a complete list of the major redistribution of lands.
190 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 86–87. This ritual stripping of knighthood is extremely significant. The event was a public shaming of the Infante and a confirmation to all present that he had lost his authority in the order.
191 *Ibid.*, 100. This return to Cordoba to publicise a crusading bull from Martin V is not mentioned in the *Crónica de Juan II*.
193 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 107; Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, *Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’* (‘Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera), 319. ‘division which had begun between the knights against the constable.’
195 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 164–65. (for the siege of Huescar).
Niebla and a number of other knights drowned trying to flee from Moorish forces.\textsuperscript{196} From 1439 until 1446 the kingdom’s nobility were occupied by a bitter conflict as old arguments once again came to the fore.

\textit{Stability and the Council of Basel}

With the Infantes gone, the 1430s brought a period of relative stability as Álvaro de Luna stood largely unchallenged at court. In 1431, the Council of Basel was opened and Alonso, as a trusted diplomat, was sent. The Council of Constance had officially ended the papal schism, but the issues of papal authority were far from solved and the Council of Basel opened with the intention of curbing papal authority and asserting conciliar supremacy.\textsuperscript{197} However, the Council also offered a venue for the settling of disputes and Alonso arrived representing both Castilian secular and religious interests. At the Council, Alonso made one of his most famous speeches, the \textit{Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea}.\textsuperscript{198} Alonso used the speech to argue that Castile held precedence over England at the Council and drew on the ideas that he had put forward in his capacity as ambassador to Portugal. Alonso argued that Castile exceeded England in physical size, age and nobility of its royal family amongst other things. The speech was an elegant affront to the English and proved so popular that Alonso himself translated it into Castilian, at the request of one of his fellow delegates.

It was at the Council of Basel that Cartagena launched into his famous attack on Leonardo Bruni’s translation of Aristotle’s \textit{Ethics}. He was already familiar with Bruni’s work after meeting Portuguese students returning from Bologna in the 1420s. However, Bruni’s translation of Aristotle marked the first time that Cartagena actively engaged with Italian humanism, and his involvement led to a debate which included a number of the most prominent Italian humanists. Alonso launched his attack in the \textit{Declamationes}, a ten chapter rebuttal of Bruni’s translation.\textsuperscript{199} His criticisms centred on Bruni’s removal of Greek terms in his new Latin translation of the \textit{Ethics} and use of Ciceronian style.\textsuperscript{200} He asserted that the Greek, which Bruni had translated, already had an established meaning and required no translation.\textsuperscript{201} Moreover, he argued that it was the translator’s job to reproduce the author’s thoughts and intentions, something that Bruni had failed to do when he rendered the words of a Greek philosopher in the style of a Latin orator. Cartagena instead argued that Bruni should have glossed the text, as he himself had done, with his translations of

\textsuperscript{197} Benzion Netanyahu, \textit{The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain}, 521.
\textsuperscript{198} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea’.
\textsuperscript{201} Ottavio Di Camillo, ‘Humanism in Spain’, 73.
Cicero.\(^{202}\) The argument was not simply a clash of Italian humanism with medieval scholastic learning. Rather, as Jeremy Lawrance has argued, Alonso’s criticisms were especially difficult for Bruni to brush off and the debate involved some of the most prominent figures in Italian humanism, including: Pietro Candido Decembrio, Poggio Bracciolini, Francesco Filelfo, Lorenzo Valla and Cardinal Bessarion. Lawrance cast the exchange as exemplary of the differing character of Castilian humanism.\(^{203}\) Cartagena famously commented that Italian scholars, ‘torment the world with heaps of books as soon as they are old enough to hold a pen’.\(^{204}\)

Involvement in Italian affairs brought conflict of a different kind for the Infantes of Aragon. Alfonso the Magnanimous’ defeat at the Battle of Ponza against the Genoese saw the Infantes imprisoned in Milan along with King Alfonso. Their absence from the Iberian Peninsula meant that Juan II’s sister, Queen María of Aragon, and Queen Blanca of Navarre were able to exert a significant amount of control over relations with Castile. A friendlier ambassadorial exchange was followed by a personal visit to Castile by Queen María.\(^{205}\) The result was a treaty based on the continuing ideal of Trastamaran family unity which had underpinned relations between Castile and Aragon over the course of Juan II’s reign. The meeting also led to Juan sending his exiled sister Catalina, the wife of the Infante Enrique, a token of reconciliation in the form of four thousand florins worth of cloth, jewels and money.\(^{206}\) After her husband’s exile in 1431, Catalina had been confined to Aragon and lost all hope of ever holding the lands and title of the Dukedom of Villena. Despite the Infantes’ actions in the 1420s and early 1430s, the dream of a harmonious relationship between the children of Enrique III and Ferdinand I continued. The treaty also arranged the marriage of Juan’s son Prince Enrique to Princess Blanca of Navarre, the daughter of his cousin King Juan of Navarre.\(^{207}\) The solution to the unrest in the late 1420s was seemingly, once again, to join the two sides in dynastic union.

In 1438, Alonso de Cartagena was also involved in peacemaking efforts, but this time at the court of King Albert II of Hungary. Cartagena had made the journey to Hungary to broker peace between King Albert II and Ladislas of Poland.\(^{208}\) Albert had been involved in war against the Hussites and, jointly with his wife Elizabeth, he claimed the Hungarian throne. Albert had been elected King of the Romans and was already crowned King of Germany and of Austria, although he never lived long enough to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor. Albert had sought to take control of the Kingdom of Hungary but was prevented from doing so

\(^{202}\) Ibid.
\(^{204}\) Ibid., 227.
\(^{205}\) Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balcón: Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carrizos, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, p.212-3.
\(^{206}\) Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balcón: Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carrizos, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 221.
\(^{207}\) Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 537.
\(^{208}\) José María Viña Liste, ‘Introducción’, xxii.
by the Bohemians and their Polish allies. Ladislas of Poland would eventually end up taking the Hungarian throne after Albert’s death and, like Albert, died defending Hungary from the Turks. Whilst at the Hungarian court, it is likely that Alonso de Cartagena met Diego de Valera. Valera, also a converso, had risen through the ranks to become a doncel at Juan II’s court and fought alongside Pedro Fernández de Velasco at the siege of San Vincente in Navarre in 1429.\footnote{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 474–75.} Valera’s martial prowess distinguished him and, in 1435 at the Battle of Huelma, his skill at arms won him the honour of knighthood.\footnote{Ibid., 520–21.} Being knighted was a turning point in Valera’s life and, in 1436, he left Castile to travel around Europe as a knight errant. King Juan eagerly agreed and, armed with letters of introduction, Valera departed Castile for France. He visited the French court and fought in a tournament organised by Pierre de Brefremont at the Burgundian court.\footnote{Mario Penna, ‘Estudio preliminar’, in Prosisitas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), cv.} From Burgundy, Valera travelled to Albert II’s court in 1437 to fight against the Hussites, and his deeds were worthy of mention in the Crónica de Juan II.\footnote{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 533.} Cartagena and Valera returned to Castile in 1438 to find it rapidly slipping into civil war.

\textit{Civil War 1438–45}

Cartagena’s amabassadorial successes in Portugal and at the Council of Basel led him to succeed his father as Bishop of Burgos. The appointment was a prestigious one and secured his position at the highest levels of the Castilian court. His prominent position is reflected in the Cartagena family’s increasing involvement in the political events of Juan’s reign. The family played a prominent role in the reception staged for doña Blanca of Navarre at Briviesca when she arrived in Castile to marry Prince Enrique. Alonso de Cartagena is listed, along with Pedro Fernández de Velasco and Íñigo López de Mendoza, as one of the most important figures in attendance.\footnote{Ibid., 565.} The four day festivities began with a mêlée and featured hunting and religious ceremonies, culminating in a procession of the knights of Burgos led by Pedro de Cartagena.\footnote{Ibid., 566.} However, the Cartagena family found themselves part of an increasingly unstable political situation. Alonso and his family had undoubtedly benefitted from Álvar de Luna’s support of conversos at the Castilian court. However, by 1439, power was slipping from Luna’s grasp as the Infant of Aragon once again turned their attention to the Castilian throne.

On 3\textsuperscript{rd} August 1437 the adelantado mayor, Pero Manrique, was arrested on the orders of Juan II. It is likely that it was Álvar de Luna who pushed for the adelantado’s arrest, perhaps suspecting that he was involved in a plot against him. The adelantado was a powerful figure and the move set in motion events which would

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 474–75.} \cite{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 474–75.}
\bibitem{Ibid., 520–21.} \cite{Ibid., 520–21.}
\bibitem{Mario Penna, ‘Estudio preliminar’, in Prosisitas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), cv.} \cite{Mario Penna, ‘Estudio preliminar’, in Prosisitas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), cv.}
\bibitem{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 533.} \cite{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 533.}
\bibitem{Ibid., 565.} \cite{Ibid., 565.}
\bibitem{Ibid., 566.} \cite{Ibid., 566.}
\end{thebibliography}
lead to rebellion and culminated in the Battle of Olmedo in 1445. His half-brother was the Admiral of Castile, Fadrique Enríquez, and together they controlled a substantial number of towns and fortresses.215 By 1437, Álvaro evidently considered Pero Manrique enough of a threat to warrant imprisoning him and his family. On 20th August 1438, barely a year after his arrest, the adelantado escaped from imprisonment at Fuentedueña and wasted no time in gathering supporters against Juan and Álvaro.

Álvaro and the king were slow to respond, or perhaps, did not fully comprehend the danger that the revolt posed. It took until February 1439 for the king and Luna to muster an army and move against the rebels. By this time, the ranks of the rebellion had grown considerably as noblemen turned openly against the king. The adelantado and the Admiral had little trouble attracting Luna’s opponents to their cause and, by the time the royal army left Medina del Campo, their ranks had been swelled by Juan Ramírez de Arellano, Álvaro de Estúñiga, Pedro de Estúñiga, Diego de Estúñiga, Juan de Tovar, Rodrigo de Castañeda, Pedro de Mendoza and Pedro and Suero de Quiñones, both of whom had been stalwart members of the constable’s household.216 The adelantado and Admiral had largely subsumed the Infantes' noble faction into their own faction opposed to Luna. However, the presence of the Quiñones brothers reveals that they had also managed to attract members of Álvaro’s household to their cause. The Admiral and adelantado used their extensive network of family ties to quickly draw together other discontented nobleman and, before long, they had built a powerful opposition to Luna. It was likely these rebels which the reforming chivalric literature was aimed at.

The unrest gave the Infantes of Aragon an opportunity to return to Castile and, early in 1439, they crossed the border into Castile with five hundred men at arms at the behest of the rebels.217 The Infante Enrique stated that he had been asked to return by King Juan himself, and it is possible that the king had turned to his cousins in a last ditch attempt to control the rebellion. However, any hope that the Infantes would end the rebellion soon died. The Infante Enrique threw his support behind the rebels and, together with the adelantado mayor, they took control of Valladolid. Their arrival heralded a further wave of desertions as the counts of Castañeda and Benavente both joined the rebels.218 By the summer of 1439, King Juan and Luna were on the defensive and the rebels commanded an army of thousands; their ranks swelled by the Infantes’ supporters and the large number of high ranking noblemen that joined their cause. The Infantes sought to divide and rule, Juan of Navarre professed his loyalty to King Juan II and, at a meeting at Cuéllar, he was warmly received by his cousin the king.219 The rebels marched on Medina del Campo where they erected a

215 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 248–49.
216 Ibid., 256; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 549.
217 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 552.
218 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 281; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 552.
219 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 552.
huge palisade fortress which housed an army of twenty thousand men. For Juan and Luna, viewing the rebels from the walls of Medina, it must have looked a lot like a siege. Juan, in a final desperate attempt to avoid a civil war, charged one of his last loyal supporters the Count of Haro, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, with organising peace talks at Tordesillas. His efforts are recorded in the Seguro de Tordesillas, an exhaustive 148-folio account of the talks written by Pedro himself. The great mistrust between the two sides meant that considerable precautions had to be taken. Participants in the talks had to approach the town on foot, leave all weapons at the gates and provide notarised lists of their retinues. Negotiating for King Juan II was King Juan of Navarre, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, Diego Gómez de Sandoval and Álvaro de Luna. Opposing them was the Infante Enrique, Fadrique Enríquez, Pero Manrique, Pedro de Estuñiga and Rodrigo Alfonso de Pimentel. King Juan released all present from their naturaleza, the bonds of loyalty which bound them to the king, in an attempt to promote frank discussion and to ensure that all at the peace talks were of the same standing. The two sides quickly reached a deadlock. The Infante Enrique demanded both the removal of Luna and the return of the lands and titles removed from the Infantes. The second issue proved impossible to resolve as Juan had already distributed the lands to his own loyal supporters, including the Count of Haro. The failed peace efforts of 1439 marked only the start of six years of civil war and unrest.

The period was one of great intellectual activity for Alonso de Cartagena. In 1438, Alonso wrote to Pedro Fernández de Velasco advising him on the proper place of learning in the life of a nobleman and knight. His letter, the Epistula ad comitem de Haro, is the clearest expression of Alonso’s ideal of learned knighthood. In the letter, Alonso gave guidance on the texts that a nobleman should stock his library with and how to balance the active and contemplative life. The letter informed the ideas which Alonso subsequently used in the Doctrinal. During the same period, the newly installed Bishop of Burgos also penned his Duodenarium, answers to a series of twelve questions dedicated to his friend Fernán Pérez de Guzmán. The 1440s also saw Cartagena develop his views on chivalry with the Doctrinal de los caualleros in 1444 and correspondence with the Marquis of Santillana. The period marked the start of Cartagena’s most active years as an author. Despite his literary involvement in the civil war, Cartagena appears to have avoided
direct involvement in the political struggles of the 1440s. He was a strong supporter of King Juan II, but his presence at court, both under Álvaro’s control and under the control of the Infantes, reveals that he managed to avoid association with either faction. The *Doctrinal* was read equally by both sides and even carried dedications to both Diego Gómez de Sandoval and Álvaro de Luna. Cartagena was no doubt aware that his *converso* status made him vulnerable enough already.

The next few years saw the balance of power at court shift in favour of the Infantes. Álvaro de Luna was ousted at their insistence, but they proved unable to control the court and kingdom in his place. More defections followed in 1440, including that of Pero López de Ayala, the son of Chancellor Ayala. López de Ayala, like his father, delivered control of Toledo to the rebels, a move which brought a challenge to combat a year later.228 The chronicler Pedro Carrillo de Huete recorded despairingly that, in 1440, the rebels controlled Toledo, Segovia, Zamora, Salamanca, Valladolid, Avila, Burgos, Plazencia, and Guadalajara leaving few cities under royal control.229 However, their greatest victory was control of the king, marked in August 1440 by the marriage of Prince Enrique to Juan of Navarre’s daughter Princess Blanca, which cemented their position at court.230 Tensions continued despite the death of the adelantado mayor in September 1440 and, as Prince Enrique pleaded with the Queens of Castile and Navarre to help him make peace, violence erupted in the kingdom.231 Months of posturing and tension gave way to armed conflict as the Count of Benavente and the Admiral led an attack on Álvaro de Luna’s lands. Álvaro might have been removed from court, but he was not willing to back down. The attack marked the beginning of a tit-for-tat struggle between the two sides that continued until 1445, which even a peace agreement brokered by Queen María and Prince Enrique failed to end.232

The Infantes of Aragon had sought to rule by severely curtailing Juan II’s freedom and empowering the Cortes to act in the place of Álvaro de Luna. However, the arrangement did not lead to effective rule. Unable to act, and witnessing his kingdom collapsing through civil strife, King Juan became increasingly frustrated. The chronicler records how, in 1444, ‘el Rey estaba allí en Tordesillas muy enojado, porque se hallaba muy apremiado por la gran guarda que sobre su persona tenia, que no dexaban hablar con él persona ninguna sospechosa al Rey de Navarra.’233 Pedro Fernández de Velasco tried, and failed, to sneak King Juan out of Tordesillas and away from the Infantes and their supporters. The attempt seems to have provoked the king to take actions into his own hands and, along with his son Prince Enrique, he corresponded with Álvaro

---

228 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II*. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 319, 382–85.
229 Ibid., 334–35.
230 Ibid., 343; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 567.
231 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 575.
232 Ibid., 587–606.
233 Ibid., 615. ‘the King was very angry here in Tordesillas because he found himself much oppressed by the great guard that he had about his person and he was not able to speak with any person mistrustful to the King of Navarre.’
de Luna using the Bishop of Avila as an intermediary. King Juan moved rapidly, with a small army he personally took control of the Infantes’ strongholds, their garrisons relinquishing command of the towns and fortresses to him without question. King Juan and Álvaro managed to secure the support of a large number of noblemen after it had become apparent that the Infantes were openly acting against the king’s wishes. The civil war ended in a decisive confrontation and, on 19th May 1445, outside the walls of Olmedo, the royal army defeated the rebels. The Admiral Fadrique Enríquez and the Count of Castro, Diego Gómez de Sandoval, were captured on the field, King Juan of Navarre fled the kingdom and the Infante Enrique died of his wounds, his death marking the end of a troubled chapter in Castilian history.

1446-1453: Unrest, Attacks on the Conversos and the Downfall of Álvaro de Luna

Whilst the Battle of Olmedo marked the end of the Infantes of Aragon’s pervasive influence in Castilian politics, it did not mark the end of noble opposition to Álvaro de Luna or civil unrest in Castile. The victory led to rich rewards for supporters of the royal cause. Íñigo López de Mendoza, who had thrown his support behind King Juan II at Olmedo, found himself rewarded with Castile’s first Marquisate. Prince Enrique’s favourite, Juan Pacheco, was similarly made the Marquis of Villena in recognition of his loyal service. Álvaro himself was rewarded with Mastership of the Order of Santiago, which had lain vacant since the Infante Enrique was stripped of the office in 1431. The position made Álvaro the most powerful man in the kingdom and it brought with it vast wealth and power. In 1445, Álvaro was given another opportunity to extend his influence over King Juan II after his wife Queen María died. Álvaro oversaw the arrangement of a new marriage, this time to Isabel of Portugal, daughter of the Infante Juan of Portugal. However, Juan’s favoured bride was instead Princess Radegund, the daughter of King Charles VII of France, a match which King Juan had sent Diego de Valera to arrange. Juan’s marriage to Isabel was a source of great discontent between the king and Álvaro and it left a lasting atmosphere of distrust between the two men. Both the author of the Crónica de Juan II and Diego de Valera believed that this argument, so soon after Luna’s victory at Olmedo, was the event which turned the king against his favourite.

The King of Navarre, angered by his brother’s death and frustrated by Álvaro’s continued presence in Castile, continued to fight a limited war on the Castilian-Navarrese border. Emboldened by his victory at Olmedo, Álvaro began raising funds for an invasion of Aragon. Álvaro’s demands met with widespread discontent which grew into riots and rebellion in Toledo. The riots began at the Church of Santa María, a

235 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balomor de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 466–67.
236 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 633–34.
237 Ibid., 633.
238 Ibid., 633–34; Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (‘Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera), 324.
former synagogue, and quickly led to attacks on *conversos* in the city’s large Jewish quarter, most notably against the merchant and royal official Alonso Cota. The *conversos* were attacked because of their perceived association with Luna and their historic role in royal tax collection. The rebels accused Luna of giving royal offices to heretics and infidels and passed what became known as the *Sentencia estatuto de limpieza de sangre*. The *Sentencia* banned anyone of Jewish descent from holding office in the city of Toledo and led Alonso de Cartagena to compose one of his most famous works, the *Defensorium unitatis christianae*. In the *Defensorium*, Alonso launched a powerful attack on the anti-Converso movement in Castile, labelling them as dangerous schismatics. As Netanyahau has argued, the *Defensorium* was not solely a defence of the *conversos*, but rather a defence of the church. Cartagena argued for unity as he believed all were one in the eyes of God and he felt that the divisions imposed by the Toledans threatened to split the church and kingdom. Alonso was also quietly proud of his Jewish heritage and asserted that the Jews played a special role in the foundation of the church, something that could be said of no other group. He went on to argue that there should be no boundary to *conversos* entering the ranks of the Castilian nobility, as his own family had done. Christians were, after all, made through baptism not born, and in this sense the *conversos* were no different to any other Christians in Castile. The events in Toledo were a sign of both continuing unrest in the kingdom and lingering opposition to Álvaro’s control of King Juan.

The latter years of Juan’s reign were largely overshadowed by the slow fall of Álvaro de Luna. Against all the odds, Álvaro had survived the Infantes attacks, beaten back opponents and risen to the very top of the Castilian nobility. He was without doubt the wealthiest man in Castile and, through his titles and offices, effectively controlled the kingdom. Whilst the external threat might have been vanquished, Luna still had plenty of opposition from the Castilian nobility and, over the next five years, noble opposition to Luna grew. In 1453, Álvaro de Luna fell from power in spectacular fashion. For his chronicler, Álvaro’s fall from grace was tantamount to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. Later authors looked to Luna as the source of the kingdom’s woes and Valera in his *Crónica abreviada* stated that from him came, ‘tantas discordias y guerras y ayuntamientos de gentes y prisiones de grandes’. Álvaro’s downfall was a complex moment in Castilian political history. The constable had weathered a number of noble attempts to overthrow him, kill him or remove him from the king’s side. Despite this, he had always clung to power and ruthlessly removed those who opposed him. Nevertheless, Álvaro’s position had gradually weakened. Queen Isabel, instead of being a supporter of Álvaro de Luna, had become one of his greatest opponents and she likely had a hand in his downfall in 1453. Significant opposition also came from the Estúñiga family, who had become the de-facto leaders of the anti-Álvaro faction at court following the Infantes’ defeat in 1445. Álvaro’s victory

---

239 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 511–12; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 661–62.
241 Ibid., 532.
242 Ibid., 565.
243 Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, *Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera)*, 319. ‘such discord, wars, factions of men and imprisonment of great lords’.
in 1445 had come at great cost and his pursuit of power had lost him the support of many of those who had initially taken his side. By the early 1450s, Álvaro had few allies he could call on and, as his relationship with the king broke down, he was left vulnerable to attack by his opponents.

The constable met his end in Burgos during Juan’s stay there in Easter 1453. Present at the moment of the constable’s arrest were both Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera. Álvaro’s chronicler gives a detailed account of the events which led up to his arrest and execution. Central to the account is the rather dubious figure of the contador mayor Alonso Pérez de Vivero. Pérez de Vivero was likely the go-between, handling communication between King Juan and the Estúñiga family in the run up to the arrest, but to the chronicler the, ‘desleal e mal criado Alonso Pérez’, was the mastermind of Álvaro’s downfall.244 The plot seems to have taken Álvaro by surprise and he was slow to react.245 Rather than moving against the plotters themselves, Álvaro captured Alfonso Pérez de Vivero and had him killed in a botched assassination which was meant to resemble an accident. Rather than halting the plot, Pérez de Vivero’s death merely forced Pedro de Estúñiga to move against Álvaro. Pedro de Estúñiga managed to secure an arrest warrant from the king for Álvaro de Luna and, accompanied by twenty knights and two hundred soldiers, he marched to Pedro de Cartagena’s house, where Álvaro was staying, to arrest the constable. Alonso de Cartagena warned Álvaro of the troops heading for the house and offered him a route to safety.246 Álvaro refused and after a short fight was arrested. His fate was sealed and he was executed in Valladolid in June the same year.

Luna’s arrest and execution created a power vacuum in the kingdom. As Round argues, it was the first time during Juan’s reign that the kingdom had been without the figure of Álvaro de Luna.247 Unfortunately, King Juan did not live long enough to see what a kingdom without his favourite might look like and died just over a year later. Juan was remembered by the author of the Crónica de Juan II as a handsome, well-mannered and learned man who had presided over a period of great unrest and instability.248 His reign had been marred by political turmoil and prolonged instability. His mismanagement of the nobility had led to a series of civil wars and ended in the betrayal of his favourite. Juan’s death in 1454 did not mark the end of instability in Castile. Under the rule of his son Enrique, clashes between the king and his noblemen continued. Enrique’s reign was arguably more disastrous than his father’s and it was not until the reign of Juan’s daughter Isabel that the kingdom managed to regain its stability. The dynastic union which had been dreamt of by Ferdinand of Antequera and Catherine of Lancaster did eventually come to pass as Isabel married Ferdinand, son of King Juan of Navarre, who had become King of Aragon. Juan II’s long reign marked one of the most complex and turbulent periods of Castilian history. This political unrest shaped

244 Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo., 347. ‘the disloyal and bad servant Alonso Pérez’.
246 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 679.
248 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 692–93.
the literature of court and, despite being a period of instability and violence, it led to an unrivalled literary flowering. The latter years of Juan’s reign saw the crafting of a literary response to the civil war and courtly factionalism as courtiers and commentators sought to understand the problems besetting the kingdom. The political, social and religious instability of Juan’s long reign left a lasting legacy and shaped the understanding of chivalry and nobility in Castile.

It was in this period that Alonso composed his final two works. The first of these was the Oracional de Fernán Pérez, a treatise on prayer written for his friend Fernán Pérez de Guzmán. This was followed around a year after King Juan II’s death by the Anacephaleosis, otherwise known as the Genealogía de los reyes de España. The work was dedicated to the cathedral chapter in Burgos, as it was completed after Juan II’s death. Alonso made clear in the introduction that Juan had seen sections of the work before his death and the treatise was influenced by the king’s love of learning. The Anacephaleosis was a continuation of the ideas that Cartagena had developed during his long diplomatic career and a powerful statement of Castilian precedence. Alonso, in the Anacephaleosis, presented this material as a genealogical tree. He traced the lineage of the Castilian kings from the Visigoths to the reign of Juan II and argued, as he had before, that Castile was the true successor to both the Roman province of Hispania and the Visigothic kingdom. It was fitting that his final work was a treatise extolling the virtues of the crown which he had devoted his life to serving. The Bishop of Burgos died in 1456 and was buried in the Santa María family chapel at the Convent of St Paul in Burgos. His tomb now stands in the Capilla de la Visitação in Burgos Cathedral, although unfortunately the tombs of his father and family were lost following the destruction of the convent church. Alonso’s life was one of loyal service to the king and extraordinary intellectual output. He had successfully navigated the complex court politics of Juan’s reign and his writing has been seen as marking the start of the Renaissance in Castile. His works continued to be read throughout the fifteenth century and beyond.

249 Robert B. Tate, ‘The Anacephaleosis of Alfonso García de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos 1435-56’.
250 Robert Folger, Generaciones y semblanzas: Memory and Genealogy in Medieval Iberian Historiography, vol. 68, Romanica Monacensia (Tübingen, 2003), 151.
Chapter II

Chivalry and Crisis: The Literary Response to Civil War

Introduction

Commenting on the civil war in a letter to his friend, the Marquis of Santillana, in 1444 Alonso de Cartagena stated that, ‘tanta es la animosidad e brío de la nobleza de España, que si en guerra justa non exercita sus fuerças, luego se convierte a las mover en aquellas contiendas que los romanas cibdadanas llamaban - porque sobre el estado del regimiento de su cibdat se movían, aunque después se extendían por diversas partes del mundo- e nos, propiamente fablando, podremos llamar cortesanas, pues sobre el valer de la corte se mueven, aunque se extienden por las más provincias del reino.’ Cartagena’s assessment of the clash was devastatingly accurate. The conflict was indeed a courtly one and, although it manifested itself as a civil war, it was, at heart, a fight between opposing noble factions. Like Cartagena and his fellow commentators, the Marquis similarly laid the blame for the crisis squarely at the feet of the kingdom’s knights. He argued that their misguided sense of chivalry was the crux of the problem. The civil war contributed to a perceived crisis in chivalry and, for Cartagena, chivalry was both the sickness and the cure. If the conflict was the fault of the nobility, then it was their understanding of the office and its responsibilities which was to blame. Commentators, writing in reaction to the civil war, sought to end the conflict by changing the attitudes and understanding of Castile’s knights. This chapter will establish the existence of a literary response to the civil war and examine the literature of reform which developed at the royal court between 1438 and 1446.

Decades of civil strife in Castile produced a remarkable debate on chivalry and nobility. As Guido Cappelli has argued, the period was one, ‘when crisis, disorder and transition favoured experimentation’, and nowhere was this truer than in chivalric thought. It is no coincidence that the worst years of the civil war gave rise to four of the most influential works on chivalry produced in Castile in the mid fifteenth century. The civil war raised difficult questions and shed particularly negative light on the behaviour of the kingdom’s nobility. The debate arose in the late 1430s as the relationship between King Juan and his court came under immense strain and was scrutinised by commentators. Both the conflict, and the debate which developed from it, were intimately connected to the royal court. Factionalism was rife and Juan could hardly count on noble support. The rapid progress of the rebellion between 1438-9 demonstrated the presence of

---

251 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 237–38. ‘such is the animosity and vigour of the nobility in Spain that if they do not exercise their force in just war, then it is converted to those conflicts that the Romans called civil [wars], because they were motivated by the state of rule of their city, although afterwards they extended to diverse parts of the world, and ours, properly speaking we can call courtly [wars], as they are motivated by the worth of the court, although they extend to most provinces of the kingdom.’

deep seated political issues and the cracks were present long before the rebellion itself occurred. To Cartagena and his contemporaries, there were endemic issues with the understanding of chivalry and nobility at the Castilian court and they argued that these misunderstandings both exacerbated and helped create the crisis which engulfed Castile in the 1440s.

In 1441, Diego de Valera, recently returned to Castile from Hungary, composed the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* and wrote to Juan II urging him to find a peaceful solution to the problems of his reign. In 1444, at the height of the unrest, the Marquis of Sastiliana wrote to Alonso de Cartagena asking his advice on a question concerning the swearing of oaths by Roman soldiers, something that the Marquis believed might help secure the loyalty of Castile’s fickle knights. The Marquis had himself contributed to the literary response with his *Lamentación de España*, as well as a number of works in verse including his *Bia contra Fortuna* (1448) and *Doctrinal de privados* (1447–1453). Santillana was right to ask the Bishop of Burgos for advice, as his lengthy *Respuesta* shows. By 1444, Alonso was already working on the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, his magnum opus on chivalry and nobility. The work, commissioned by the Count of Castro Diego Gómez de Sandoval, was in many ways shaped by the crisis at court. Less than two years later, in the aftermath of the Battle of Olmedo, Diego de Valera penned his second work on chivalry and nobility, the *Exortación de la paz*. The *Exortación* is not typically seen as a chivalric work and was an impassioned plea for peace. However, it was also a re-examining of the relationship between the king and his noblemen in the wake of the civil war. Together, these works form part of what would become a much larger literary reaction to the political crisis and form the immediate context for Alonso de Cartagena’s chivalric writing.

---

253 Diego de Valera, ‘*Espejo de verdadera nobleza*’; Diego de Valera, ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al sereníssimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina del Campo se entrase por el rey de Navarra e por el Infante Don Enrique’, in *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), 3–5.

254 Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘*Questión fecha por el noble e magnífico señor don Íñigo López de Mendoza*, Marqués de Santillana e Conde del Real, al muy sabio e noble perlado don Alonso de Cartagena, Obispo de Burgos’, in *Obras completas*: Íñigo López de Mendoza, marqués de Santillana. Edición, introducción y notas de Ángel Gómez Moreno y Maximilian P. A. M. Kerkhof, ed. Ángel Gómez Moreno and Maximilian P. A. M. Kerkhof (Madrid, 1988); Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘*Questión’*.


256 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘*Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la pregunta fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana*’.

The Development of Chivalric Writing in Castile

The term ‘chivalric writing’ is one which will be used frequently in this study. However, its meaning is not immediately obvious. What fell under this broad term changed over time and, by the fifteenth century, came to encompass a wide variety of texts. Perhaps the first thing which springs to mind are the numerous chivalric romances which were popular during the period, fantastical tales of knightly daring and courtly love. However, none of the works under consideration here, with the possible exception of Alfonso Fernández de Palencia’s Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar, fit this genre. Texts like the Doctrinal de los cavalleros fit ostensibly into the genre of ‘books of chivalry’, guides for knights written to educate them on their office and instil good behaviour. These were frequently serious texts and intended for a knightly audience. Some of the most famous examples of this diverse genre include Geoffroi d’Charnay’s Livre de chevalerie, Ramon Lull’s Llibre qui es de l'ordre de cavalleria and Juan Manuel’s Libro del cavallero y del escudero. The Doctrinal, despite its rather unorthodox length and use of legal sources, falls into this bracket. However, quite what distinguishes a text as chivalric is not so clear-cut.

Several of the works which will be considered in the following pages are not explicitly ‘chivalric’ in nature at all. The Espejo de verdadera nobleza, as the title suggests, falls squarely into the genre of mirrors for nobility. However, quite where the boundary between a mirror of nobility and book of chivalry lies is hard to say. Both were moral works aimed predominantly at knightly audiences and dealt with many of the same questions. It is clear that works which tackle issues relating to ‘chivalry’ and ‘knighthood’ go far beyond the rather narrow genres of chivalric romances and books of chivalry. Rather, it is perhaps better to consider this genre as determined by knightly readership. Alonso de Cartagena, in the introduction to the Doctrinal, gave an interesting insight into what he considered expected reading for the knights of the Castilian court. He stated, ‘e como sean muchas cosas scriptas, asi en los tiempos antiguos como en los mas ceranos años, para despertar los corazones en los fechos de la caualleria’. He goes on to say that these can be reduced to three primary types, firstly the ‘doctrinas de sabidores’, secondly the, ‘enxemplos de los antiguos copilados por estoriadores en sus coronicas muy copiosamente’ and finally, ‘ordenança de leyes’. Alonso’s distinction is thus twofold. He firstly considers texts that are of interest to knights and serve to encourage good chivalric behaviour and secondly, texts which specifically fit into the three brackets which he specified. Knights could find examples of good conduct from a great variety of sources and romances, political treatises or poems might just as easily act as chivalric guides. Historians have rarely adopted such a broad approach. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, for example, does not cite the Exortación de la pas alongside other chivalric works in his study on the chivalric debate in Castile, despite its close link to the chivalric debate at

258 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los cavalleros’, 81. ‘As there are many things written, both in ancient times and more recent, to awaken hearts in deeds of chivalry’.

259 Ibid., ‘the doctrines of wise men’, ‘the examples of the ancients compiled copiously by historians in their chronicles’, ‘legal ordinances’.
the royal court. However, the Exortación formed an important part of the debate and built on Valera’s argument in the Espejo which was written some six years earlier. Similarly, verse works such as the Laberinto de Fortuna and Coplas de la Panadera, whilst closely linked to the political situation, do not easily fit into this bracket despite their courtly readership. The same can be said for works such as the Marquis of Santillana’s Lamentación de España and the anonymous Libro de la consolación de España, both of which commented at length on the unruly behaviour of the Castilian nobility without being books of chivalry. The question of what makes a work chivalric is a hard one to answer. The distinction between books of chivalry and works of political commentary was, during this period, artificial. Criticism and commentary on the behaviour of noblemen is found in a wide variety of works and contemporaries saw the genre as considerably broader than we do today, with the boundaries determined by what a knightly readership might find informative and useful.

Commentary on knighthood and nobility was not confined to the narrow genre of ‘books of chivalry’ and, as Cartagena argued in the introduction to the Doctrinal, knights could find messages of worth in a much broader range of texts. The Doctrinal’s unorthodox use of sources is exemplary of this. Alonso’s belief that law held the perfect balance of wisdom and authority in matters of noble conduct led him to place the Siete Partidas and Castile’s rich legal heritage at the heart of the work. As referred to in the introduction, it is perhaps helpful to view chivalry itself as having two distinct and interconnected parts, one theoretical and one practical. Chivalry was meant to be the guiding force for knights, governing how they acted both on and off the battlefield. The question of how to act honourably was of the utmost importance, especially within the context of a civil war. Knights had to tread carefully through vicious court politics and were forced to negotiate often competing ties of loyalty to the king, family and friends.

The Kingdom of Castile had a rich chivalric literary heritage and an unusual history of royal involvement in issues of knightly conduct. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco saw the mid-thirteenth century in Castile as the foundation point of chivalric thought, or at least of chivalric literature, thanks, in part, to Alfonso X’s creation of the Siete Partidas. The Partidas were a vast legal codification, in part modelled on the Corpus iuris civilis, and they came to shape how chivalry and nobility were viewed in the kingdom. The Partidas were characterised by their breadth and idealism and were one of the truly great intellectual projects of their time. Almost uniquely in Europe, it went so far as to offer a royal definition of chivalry and knighthood through the Segunda Partida. Rodríguez-Velasco has argued that the Partidas established chivalry in Castile as a political device. Moreover, Alfonso’s contribution, characterised by its rigorous attention to detail,

---

260 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballerosa castellana en su marco europeo.
261 Ibid., 18.
262 The impact of the Siete Partidas on chivalric thought has yet to be properly studied. The Partidas became one of the most cited cited sources for chivalric writing in Castile.
263 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballerosa castellana en su marco europeo, 19.
gave Castile, unlike its European neighbours, a royally approved chivalric code backed by the weight of law. The *Siete Partidas* dictated everything from the knighting ceremony itself, to the duties of knights during war and peace and gave Castilian chivalry a founding mythology. Later cited by Cartagena, it explained that, ‘caualleria fue llamada antiguamente la compañia o los compañeros de los omnes nobles que fueron puestos para defender las tierras. E por ende, le pusieron nombre en Latin militia’. The *Siete Partidas* drew heavily on the medieval notion of estates and cast knights as *defensores*, defenders of the king, church and land. These *defensores* were men who had originally been chosen as one out of a thousand because of their strength, virtue and above all, humility. Crucially, the *Siete Partidas* established knighthood in Castile as a distinctly royal endeavour and they had a lasting impact on Castilian chivalric thought. The mid-to-late thirteenth century also saw the production of some of Castile’s first doctrinal works on knighthood. Alfonso X’s nephew, Juan Manuel, produced a number of works on chivalry, most notably the now lost *Libro de la caballería*. The text is only known through excerpts in the *Libro de los estados* and scholars cannot reliably comment on its content. In the *Libro de los estados*, Manuel cast the knight as both a religious and a lay figure. Rodríguez-Velasco has characterised the view as a correction and expansion of the ideas put forward by Manuel’s uncle in the *Siete Partidas*. Manuel produced another work on chivalry, the *Libro del cavallero e del escudero*, alongside a raft of other works. However, despite his royal connections, Manuel’s chivalric writing fell into obscurity in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Following Alfonso X’s death, Castilian kings continued to foster a chivalric culture at court. His grandson, Alfonso XI, continued this royal approach to chivalry and, in 1330, founded the royal chivalric Order of the Band.

The Order’s foundation formed part of Alfonso’s attempt to strengthen royal power and, along with the confirmation of the *Siete Partidas* as law in 1348, it created an image of chivalry centred on royal authority. The *Partidas* and the Order of the Band gave a strong foundation for secular chivalry in Castile and its device, the *Banda*, became an image synonymous with royal authority. Alonso de Cartagena would later draw on the statutes of the Order of the Band in the *Doctrinal de los caualleros* as a model source for knightly conduct. The Order itself was very prestigious and membership confined to the upper echelons

---

264 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 89. ‘chivalry/knighthood was in antiquity called a company of noblemen or companions who were tasked to defend the land. For this reason they were given the Latin name *militia*.

265 Ibid., 88–89.

266 Ibid., 88.


269 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tradiutística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*, 20.

270 D’Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: Monarchical Orders of Chivalry in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (Bury St Edmunds, 1983), 53; Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 339–44. This foundation date of 1330 is disputed and unreliable. It is safe to say that it was between 1330 and 1350.


of the Castilian nobility, much like the contemporary English Order of the Garter and the Hungarian Order of the Dragon. The earliest surviving manuscript of the Order’s statutes is a magnificent display copy probably intended to stand in Alfonso XI’s chamber. Nevertheless, Alonso de Cartagena considered its statutes worthy of attention as a model for behaviour for knights of all levels. The foundation of the Order and confirmation of the Siete Partidas marked a codification of the chivalric ideal. In 1345, Giles of Rome’s very influential De regimine principum was translated by Juan García de Castrojeriz to educate Prince Pedro. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco has shown that, running parallel to this process, was the growth of urban knightly confraternities, often with their own statutes, made up of non-noble or lower ranking knights and men at arms.

Chivalric writing went far beyond these largely royal attempts at regulation. Developing alongside the codification of conduct was a lively chivalric court culture which was inseparably linked to the literary development of chivalry in the kingdom. The Order of the Band functioned as a tournament team as well as serving the more serious purpose of keeping the kingdom’s noblemen closely tied to the king. Chivalry at court was inseparably bound up with the practice of courtly games. This blending of reality and literature in chivalric court culture has been addressed by Martín de Riquer, whose Caballeros andantes españoles charts the numerous Castilian knights which cast themselves as knight errants in a deliberate imitation of literary models. Chivalric romances grew in popularity around the same time both through the production of Castilian works and the importing of French romances. Arthurian tales and others, such as Tristan de Leonis, grew in popularity. Whilst the popularity of romances would reach its high point in the mid-to-late fifteenth century, the fourteenth century saw the production of two of Castile’s most famous romances, Amadis de Gaula and the Libro del caballero Zifar. Chivalric romances remained popular in Castile and numerous fragments of fifteenth-century copies suggest that they remained popular throughout the period. The literary culture of romances developed alongside a rich culture of jousts, feasts and pageants at court which reached their zenith under Juan II. However, it is noteworthy that there were almost no romances written during Juan’s reign, with the Siervo libre de amor by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón and Enrique de Villena’s Doce trabajos de Hércules, being the closest things to chivalric romances produced during Juan II’s reign. Rather, as will be discussed in the following pages, chivalric literature took a serious turn during the first half of the fifteenth century. The chivalric guides produced during the period, works such as the Doctrinal and the Cadira de honor, were earnest and sober works. Classical military treatises, such as Vegetius’ De re militari, were amongst the period’s most popular military guides. Vegetius was known in a number of different

274 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile, 46–49.
275 Martín de Riquer, Caballeros andantes españoles.
276 Montalvo is usually credited with Amadis de Gaula. The first three books of the text predated Montalvo’s recompilation by at least a century.
277 The dating of the Siervo libre de amor is contested. The work was likely produced between the mid 1430s to mid 1440s.
forms and predominantly referred to as the ‘Libro de Vegescio’ or ‘Libro de guerra’ by Castilian commentators. Despite not being written as such, De re militari was both read as, and considered, a chivalric guide. Other Classical military works, such as Frontinus’ Strategemata, were less well read but similarly considered to be chivalric texts. This was in part thanks to the widespread belief that knights were the direct equivalent of the Latin ‘miles’. Vegetius had entered popular readership through Alfonso de San Christobal’s late fourteenth or early fifteenth-century translation, probably produced for Enrique III. The subsequent Libro de guerra, possibly the work of Enrique de Villena, was essentially an abbreviated version of Vegetius. The Dichos de Séneca en el hecho de caballería, often attributed to Alonso de Cartagena, was similarly a much-abbreviated version of the text.

The fifteenth century saw a rapid growth in the size and number of noble libraries in Castile. Book ownership grew and the period saw the foundation of several of the peninsula’s greatest noble libraries, such as those of the Counts of Haro and Marquisate of Santillana. King Juan, himself a great sponsor of literary pursuits, was largely responsible for assembling the vast royal library which was catalogued under the reign of his daughter, Isabel the Catholic. Castilian monarchs had a long history of sponsoring learning. Alfonso X el Sabio was largely responsible for the growth of vernacular scholarship at the Castilian court after he made Castilian the official language of court in preference to Latin. Like his cousin Alfonso the Magnanimous, Juan II was well known as a lover of learning. In his Generaciones y semblanzas Fernán Pérez de Guzmán commented that, ‘plaziale oyr los omes auisados e graçiçosos e notaua mucho lo que dellos oya, sabia fablar [e] entender latin, leya muy bien, plazianle muchos libros e estorias, oya muy de grado los dizes rimados e conoçia los viçios dellos, auia grant plazer en oyr palabras alegres e bien apuntadas’. Juan was central to the development of a debate at court and, under his patronage, literary life at court flourished. A significant number of the works which will be discussed in the following pages were dedicated to the king, including Valera’s Espejo and Exortación. Similarly, a lavishly decorated presentation copy of the Doctrinal presented to the king by Alonso de Cartagena survives in the collection

---

280 Christopher Allmand, The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages, 180.
281 Ibid., 184.
282 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 17803. Dichos de Séneca en el hecho de la caballería de Roma’ (s.xvi), fol. 111r–116v.
285 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 118. ‘he [King Juan] pleased in listening to those gracious and prudent men and wrote much of what he heard from them, speaking wisely and understanding Latin he read very well, procuring many books and histories, he heard many poems of high regard and knew of their vices, taking great pleasure in hearing upbeat and merry words’. 
of San Lorenzo de Escorial. King Juan’s love of learning gave him an active role in the intellectual life of court. He famously sponsored the court poet Juan de Mena who became the court secretary of Latin letters. The period is one which has been identified as the start of the Renaissance in Castile by Jeremy Lawrance and Ottavio Di Camillo. Several courtiers, notably the Marquis of Santillana and Alonso de Cartagena, corresponded with Italian humanists. This subject is one which will be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent chapters, but nevertheless, it is important to view the debate which began in the 1440s as one that happened against a wider intellectual context. Juan’s reign was characterised by widespread noble participation and saw the appearance at court of educated letrados. These men of letters, such as Alonso de Cartagena, were often university educated and active participants in court life. Their appearance at court heralded the emergence of the first openly political treatises. For many of these men, an interest in politics naturally meant a scholarly interest in chivalry.

Perceptions of a Crisis and the Growth of a Literature of Reform

The fifteenth century marked the peak of chivalric thought in Castile. It was a period of literary growth which Jesus Rodriguez-Velasco characterised as intellectual expansion. Fifteenth-century commentators could look back on a rich literary heritage in Castile. The period was also one which saw Castile’s entrenched nobility challenged through a new literature of chivalric reform. The presence of this debate has been argued for by Jesus Rodriguez-Velasco in his El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV and, more recently, by Luis Fernandez Gallardo. However, neither author connected the development of this debate to the unique political situation in Castile during Juan II’s reign, and Fernandez Gallardo did not link Cartagena’s ideas to those of his contemporaries, beyond his correspondence with the Marquis of Santillana. Castile was, by the mid-fifteenth century, playing host to a lively debate on the nature of knighthood and nobility which built on its rich literary heritage. However, it is worth noting that Castile was far from unique in this and, elsewhere in Europe, similar debates on chivalry and nobility were underway. Contemporary Burgundian treatises, such as the anonymous Enseignement de la vraie noblesse and Jean Mielot’s translations of Buonaccorso’s Controversia nobilitate, dealt with many of the same issues as the Castilian commentators. As Keen has

289 Jeremy Lawrance, ‘Humanism and the Court in Fifteenth-Century Castile’, 182.
290 Ibid., 184.
292 Maurie Keen, Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages, 189.
argued, these commentators offered little novel material on the topic.\textsuperscript{294} The topos of chivalric writing was one which dated to at least the twelfth century and treatises on chivalry and nobility grew rapidly in popularity during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, appearance of similar works critiquing chivalry and nobility elsewhere in Europe does not mean that we can simply write off Castilian chivalric writing as part of a wider European trend. Whilst chivalric commentary might have been common across Europe, the reasons behind its production differed greatly. The popularity of reforming literature in Castile owed much to the kingdom’s political situation and the debate was heavily influenced by both the unique events of the mid-fifteenth century, and Castile’s own history of chivalric thought.

The Castilian debate was also shaped by an influx of ideas from outside the Iberian Peninsula. Well known knightly treatises by the likes of Christine de Pizan, Honoré Bovet, Alan Chartier and Dante Alighieri made their way into noble libraries. In 1427, Juan II confirmed Bartolus’ commentaries on Roman law as usable in a Castilian context and in, doing so, opened the door to Italian jurisprudence.\textsuperscript{295} Bartolus had a large impact on the critiques of chivalry and nobility and, amongst Castilian commentators, Bartolus’ ideas are some of the most commonly cited.\textsuperscript{296} Castile enjoyed a healthy tradition of translation, resulting in French and Italian texts entering noble libraries during the period, such as Valera’s 1443 translation of Honoré Bovet’s \textit{Abre des batailles}. Diplomats returning from the church councils brought with them French and Italian treatises. It is almost certain that Castilian translations of Chartier’s \textit{Quadrilogue-invectif} and Leonardo Bruni’s \textit{De militia}, famously referenced by the Marquis of Santillana, entered Iberian libraries through this process of cultural exchange.\textsuperscript{297} These translations reflected Castilian interest in the wider European debate and the demand for Italian and French works ran parallel to the emergence of native chivalric commentaries. Jeremy Lawrance has suggested that Juan’s court was particularly good at, ‘transforming intellectual property from Italy into cultural capital’.\textsuperscript{298} Indeed, these imported works found their way into a debate which was already underway at the Castilian court. New ideas and new sources gleaned from the start of the Italian renaissance were put to good use critiquing the behaviour of Castilian noblemen. However, few Castilian works appear to have reached the rest of Europe. It is noteworthy that the reformers wrote in Castilian not in Latin. Alonso de Cartagena’s letter to the Count of Haro is the only work which is considered here that was composed in Latin and did not have a contemporary vernacular translation.\textsuperscript{299} The spurning of Latin in favour of the vernacular meant that these commentaries reached a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{294} Ibid., 191.
  \item \textsuperscript{295} Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, \textit{El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo}, 114–15.
  \item \textsuperscript{296} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea’; Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’; Diego de Valera, ‘Exortación de la pas’; Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’. These texts amongst others openly reference Bartolus’ work.
  \item \textsuperscript{297} Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, \textit{El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo}, 93.
  \item \textsuperscript{298} Jeremy Lawrance, ‘Humanism and the Court in Fifteenth-Century Castile’, 193–94.
  \item \textsuperscript{299} ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9208. Epistola directa ad inclitum et magnificum virum dominum Petrum Fernandi de Velasco’, fol. 1r–26r; Alonso de Cartagena, \textit{Un tratado de Alonso de Cartagena sobre la educación y los estudios literarios. El manuscrito, procedencia y contenido}. 
\end{itemize}
much wider Castilian audience. The *Espíaje de verdadera nobleza, Cadira de honor* and *Doctrinal de los caballeros* were written in a clear and uncomplicated style which was accessible to a large courtly audience.

As the political crisis in Castile worsened, it was met with a literary response and a scholarly interest in chivalry and nobility. The political tension and looming violence of the period made the debate a relevant one. Craig Taylor has argued that France, during the Hundred Years War, saw a similar crisis unfold as authors grappled with military defeat and knightly unruliness.\(^\text{300}\) In Castile, the chivalric crisis was born of similar concerns. contemporaries feared the damage that would be done to Castile if the political instability and civil war continued unabated. It is notable that the chivalric writing of the period in Castile dealt little with the military aspects of chivalry. Rather, the overwhelming concern was for the morality of the kingdom’s knights. Commentators like Alonso de Cartagena and Alfonso Fernández de Palencia, had a quiet confidence that Castile’s knights were competent soldiers and had not suffered any of the crushing defeats which the French had endured during the Hundred Years War. Rather, the crisis was characterised by persisting political instability and sporadic violence.

For many at court this continued instability was a serious issue. The horror many felt at the unfolding rebellion was captured by the Marquis of Santillana in his *Lamentación de España*, which was addressed to Castile itself.

> ‘Muy triste e desventurada España, de la qual el maravillosos trono de magnificencia tus altos fechos por luenga distancia de tiempo prosperaron, a do verdad, fortaleza en superno grado imperando e la tu grand nombradía a todos partes precediente, e la gloriosa famosidad de las tus virtudes todo el universo penetrante e de glorias, vicios, e abundancias de lo más humano trashumanante e cooperante, ¿qué fueron los tus grandes yerros? ¿por qué en tan terribles males eres venida? ¿e qué çeguedat es en ti? ¿e cómo no ves los tan terribles destruyimentos et danyos que se te açercan?’

In this short work the Marquis lamented the civil war which had destroyed his beloved Spain. Addressing the figure of ‘España’, he asked, ¿e non vees los altos pendones que se aparejan para estar sobre los muros de las tus ciudades et non vees las péñolas de las tus alas en saetas enerboladas venir contra ti para te ferir? ¿e non vees tus gentes contra tus gentes contra tus gentes, e tus pueblos contra tus pueblos, e los hermanos contra los hermanos, e los padres contra los fijos, e toda discordia e mal cercanos de ti, e fuyr de ti toda

\(^\text{300}\) Craig Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare During the Hundred Years War’, in *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen. Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen*, ed. Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman (Woodbridge, 2009), 74–76.

\(^\text{301}\) Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘Lamentaçión de España fecha por el marqués de Santyllana’, 410–11. ‘Most sad and unfortunate Spain, on the marvelous throne of magnificence your high deeds prospered, and I say truly, fortitude in the highest grade reigned, and your great name preceded you to all parts of the world and the glorious fame of your abundant virtues penetrated all the universe and of glories, vices and abundances of the most human movements and co-operation, what were your great errors? Why are you beset by such terrible evil? What ignorance is in you? How do you not see the terrible destruction and damages that are around you?’
paz, amor e verdade e segurança? The work encapsulated the desperation that the Marquis and many of his contemporaries felt as seemingly helpless bystanders to what they saw as the collapse of the kingdom. He invited Castile to, ‘despierta de tu litúrgico e maldito sueño, e abre los ojos al nombre de los tus terribles destruyimientos.’ The Marquis’ contemporaries grappled with the same questions he asked Spain and, for many, they could only be resolved by addressing the kingdom’s nobility.

By the late 1430s, there was a growing sense of crisis amongst Castilian chivalric commentators. The political situation in the kingdom gradually worsened as noble resistance to Luna brought an end to nearly a decade of stability. The revolt was not seen by contemporaries as a popular rebellion, but rather as part of a courtly power struggle. As such, the conflict was predominantly seen as a noble issue and one closely tied to noble behaviour at court. In this regard, chivalric literature was the perfect medium for addressing the issues at hand. Chivalry was a potent moral force underlying noble conduct at court. To courtiers like Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera, Castile’s knights were behaving far from chivalrously. Rebellion and open disregard for royal authority undermined the strong link between Castilian chivalry and royal authority, a connection which stretched back to the genesis of Castilian chivalric thought in the Siete Partidas. Addressing King Juan in the Espejo de verdadera nobleza, Valera stated, ‘yo muchas vezes aver oído, no solamente en vuestra magnífica casa e corte, mas aun en otras de muy altos reyes e illustres príncipes e grandes barones, de la nobleza o fidalguía tratar; e como muchos viese arredrados del verdadero conocimiento de aquélla.’ Valera’s argument was, in essence, that Castile’s nobility had forgotten what their office entailed. However, others went further and argued that it was not simply ignorance, but vice and a wilful disregard for chivalry which prevailed at court. The Marquis of Santillana cast the Castilian court as beset by vices worse than the infamous figures of the classical past. He commented that, ‘ca ciertamente aquí se vee e falla toda la soberbia de Agamenón e de Archiles; aquí la poca verdad de Ethiocles tebano; aquí los robos cithereos; aquí la cobdicia e avaricia de Mida; aquí la crueça e fericidat de Diomedes traciano, e la corrompida e poca vergüença de Nero.’ The crisis at court was, according to the Marquis, ‘un segundo labirinto, o casa de Dédalo.’ The vices that plagued the Castilian nobility were, he argued, ‘así como la trompa de Miceno, excitado, amonestado e provocado a los omes, e todos los días los llaman

302 Ibid., 411. ‘do you not see those high flags that adorn the walls of your cities and do you not see the pens that are made into arrows launched against you to wound you? Do you not see your people against your people, towns against towns, brothers against brothers, and fathers against sons and discord and evil all around you driving from you peace, love, truth and security?’ Santillana’s remark on pens and arrows works on two levels- quills taken to use as Fletchering for arrows and the authoring of critical works.

303 Ibid. ‘awaken from your lethargic and cursed dream, and open those eyes to the name of your terrible destruction’.

304 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 89. ‘I have heard many times, not only in your magnificent house and court, but even in those of other high kings, illustrious princes and great barons, of chivalry and nobility and how many have become put off the true knowledge of it’.

305 Inigo López de Mendoza, ‘Question’, 236; Inigo López de Mendoza, ‘Question’, 416. ‘certainly here [in Castile] is seen and found all of the pride of Agamemnon and Achilles, here the lies of Ethiocles of Thebes, here are the robbers of Citeria, the greed and avarice of Midas, the cruelty and ferocity of Diomedes of Thrace and all the unashamed corruption of Nero.’

306 Inigo López de Mendoza, ‘Question’, 236. ‘a second labyrinth, a house of Daedalus’.
The Marquis left his readers in little doubt that he believed it was noble vice which underlay the civil war. He despaired that nobody seemed to remember the, ‘cibdadanas batallas de Roma, de quien Lucano tan alta y elegantemente ha fablado; non de la Cathilinaria conjuración, nin de la rebatosa e loca audacia de Cetego; nin de las nuevas e crueldes guerras gállicas, las quales tanto nos son vecinas e de nuestro tiempo, que todos los días devríran ser ante nuestros ojos, de fecho ya olvidadas, ca lexos es de nos toda virtud, e todo desseo de pas, e todo amor de bien vivir.’

The Marquis thus characterised Castile’s noblemen as directly responsible for the unfolding political crisis. He argued that their ignorance, both of ancient history and events in France during the Hundred Years War, was deplorable and stated that their vice-filled lifestyle had contributed directly to the civil war.

The Marquis was not alone in his bleak assessment of Castilian chivalry, nor in blaming the nobility. Alonso de Cartagena in his Respuesta to the Marquis agreed wholeheartedly with his friend’s assessment of the state of Castilian chivalry. The Bishop, equally bleak in his response, cast the unrest as akin to a natural disaster. He wrote, ‘pues veedes que estos terremotos no son nubada que passa, mas pluvia continua del escurio invierno.’

Alonso cast Castilian knights as far removed from the Roman ideal which the Marquis had alluded to. Cartagena instead argued that knights were duty bound to protect the republic, the church and the people, like their Roman forbears. A similar ideal was drawn on by Diego de Valera in the Espejo where, in a series of mocking contrasts, he juxtaposed the failings of his day with an idealised past. He lamented that, ‘estonce se busca en el cavallero sola virtud, agora es buscada cavallería para no pechar; estonce a fin de honrar esta orden, agora para robar el su nombre; estonce para defender la republica, agora para señorearla; estonce la orden [de cavallería] los virtuosos buscavan, agora los viles buscan a ella por aprovecharse de solo su nombre.’

Valera believed that knights had lost touch with the noble origins of chivalry and had fundamentally contradicted its founding principles. Cartagena, through his use of the Siete Partidas, similarly harked back to a bygone golden age. The glory of Alfonso X’s reign and his grandson Alfonso XI’s victory at Río Salado in 1340 had long since faded. This idea that chivalry had drifted far from its founding principles was a recurring motif in chivalric writing and a reforming nostalgia underpinned
much of the chivalric commentary produced during the period. The conduct of contemporaries was always compared to an idealised bygone golden age and the reformers sought to return knighthood to these idealised founding principles.

For the members of Juan II’s court, there was no shortage of examples of how far knights had fallen short of the mark and the chronicles record numerous cases of knightly misbehaviour. However, few were worse than Diego Gómez de Sandoval who commissioned the *Doctrinal*. Gómez de Sandoval was exemplary of the very worst of the Castilian nobility. He was a leading member of the Aragonese faction at the Castilian court and was a stalwart supporter of the Infantes of Aragon. Pedro Carrillo de Huete identified him as the wealthiest nobleman in the kingdom after the Infantes themselves, and his extensive landholdings as Count of Castro and Count of Denia made him a powerful figure at court.³¹³ Fernán Pérez de Guzmán remembered Gómez de Sandoval as a well-built man with small eyes and a fierce temper, ‘un grant caullero’, who, ‘plazianle armes e cauallos’.³¹⁴ He was involved in the unrest in the late 1420s when he took up arms against the king, ‘a gran daño e ditrimento del reyno’, and again in the civil war during the 1440s.³¹⁵ His duplicity was infamous and his inclusion by name alongside the Infantes of Aragon in an oath sworn by Castilian noblemen, shows his position as one of the chief belligerents of the civil war.³¹⁶ He proved himself to be a serial liar, was exiled from court on a number of occasions and, during a judicial inquest in the 1430s, was found guilty of rebelling against the king and willingly deserting royal service.³¹⁷ Although Gómez de Sandoval escaped serious punishment by making a grovelling apology on his knees before the court, he continued to be a problem. In 1436, Gómez de Sandoval again caused scandal by contracting his nephew to murder his wife at the monastery of Villafrechos.³¹⁸ Gómez de Sandoval later returned to court as part of the Infantes’ retinue and, by 1441, he had once again established himself as one of the leaders of the rebel faction. In 1445, he fought at the Battle of Olmedo against King Juan II, his own formidable castles of Peñafiel and Portillo taken some months earlier. Gómez de Sandoval was captured on the battlefield by Álvaro de Luna. The defeat finally spelled an end to his troublesome presence at court and he died in exile in 1454.

Whilst Gómez de Sandoval serves as an especially bad example, he was far from the only knight to act rebelliously. The rapidity of the rebellion in 1439 reveals how the deep factional divides at court quickly split the nobility. Knights at court faced a very difficult situation and were pulled by often conflicting ties of loyalty and duty. In this uncertain world, family ties often took precedence over the bonds of loyalty to

³¹³ Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 74.
³¹⁵ Ibid., 88. ‘to great damage and detriment to the kingdom.’
³¹⁶ Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 67.
³¹⁷ Ibid., 117.
³¹⁸ Ibid., 253.
the king. The fracturing of the court in 1439-40 reveals that these familial networks were instrumental in the rapid pace of the rebellion. Such ties can explain the presence of prominent members of Luna’s retinue in the rebel ranks, including the Quiñones brothers and members of his wife’s family, the Pimentels. Within this problematic context of court squabbles and family politics, acting honourably was a difficult matter. Whilst it may not have been chivalrous and honourable to betray the king, was it any more so to desert your friends and family? Moreover, it was not clear in the late 1430s and early 1440s that the rebellion was opposed to the king himself. Rather, the rebels clearly based their opposition around the figure of Álvaro de Luna and the constable’s position and power was commonly cited in noble manifestoes as the main justification for armed opposition. Noel Fallows has asserted that Castile’s knights were particularly problematic, describing them as, ‘motivated by a frightening combination of venality, ruthlessness cunning and rapine.’

The attempts to reform chivalry were born of this rebellious atmosphere and driven by a mix of horror, despair and fear that the events of the mid-fifteenth century would lead to the collapse of the kingdom.

The Castilian nobility were certainly hard to control. Juan’s reign was plagued by rampant factionalism and it is easy to see how, by the early 1440s, there was a perceived crisis in chivalry. Chivalry governed the ties of honour and loyalty which bound together the Castilian nobility, ties that had been tested in 1429 and severed a decade later. The prominence of chivalry can be seen in the wording of the oaths that King Juan made noblemen swear during the crisis of 1431. Any oath breaker would be, ‘en todo reproche de ley de Dios e de onesta orden e vien de Cavalléreria, e grande peligro de sus ánimas, e denuesto de su onor e fama’, if they broke their oaths. Chivalry and honour were seen as powerful reasons to keep the oath, and loyalty to the king was explicitly connected with chivalrous behaviour. Honour was a potent check on knightly behaviour and the shame of being an oath breaker was something no knight wanted to endure. As the chronicler pointed out, reputation was everything to a knight. Referring to the loss of honour and fama he remarked that, ‘en cuyo respeto toda cosa temporal es nada.’ A letter of challenge sent by Lope de Mendoza to Pedro de Ayala reveals the venom directed at someone whose family broke their word. The act of rebellion which Mendoza described in his letter of challenge happened nearly a century earlier. In the letter Mendoza stated that Ayala had, ‘con desleal pensamiento perverso, pospuesto el temor e verguença de Dios e del mundo, osó cometer, según cometió, vn tan feo e tan ynico fecho de traición como es rreuelarse a la magestad rreal e leuantarse con su çibdad e alcáçar de Toledo, rronpiendo e quebrantando e traspasando, en grande condeñacion e perdición de su ánima’. For Mendoza who, in his own words was,

---

320 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del balconnero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, 84. ‘in all reproach of the law of God and the honest order and good of Chivalry, and in great peril of their souls and a great affront to their honour and fama if they broke their oaths.’
321 Ibid. ‘in respect to which, everything temporal is nothing.’
322 Ibid., 383. ‘with disloyal and perverse thought, setting aside the fear and shame of God and the world, dared to commit, a very ugly and very original treasonous deed, that is rebelling against royal majesty and rising with his city
‘como vno de los caualleros que lealtad ama e traición avorresce en estremo grado’ this betrayal had forever shamed the Ayala family. However, it was the events of Juan’s reign that led Mendoza to send the letter. Mendoza’s master, the Archbishop of Toledo, was the uncle of Álvaro de Luna and a staunch supporter of the king. In contrast, Pedro de Ayala delivered control of Toledo to the rebels in 1440, just as his father had during Enrique of Trastamara’s rebellion. For Mendoza, this treachery was proof that Ayala had inherited both his father’s shame and his treasonous nature. Shame, like honour, could be inherited. Mendoza felt that he could challenge Ayala to a duel for both his father’s treason and his own misdeeds and he fully intended to kill him for it. In a chilling remark he warned Ayala that if he disputed what he had said he would, ‘en mis manos prenderás muerte.’ The letter was also a pertinent reminder of the strain that the factional politics of the period put on individual relations between knights at court.

The crisis which engulfed the kingdom in 1439 was then a very real one and noble duplicity and disloyalty were genuine issues. The literature of the time was not bred from unfounded paranoia, but the painful reality of civil war. Juan’s entire reign had been characterised by political instability and it should be remembered that the texts produced in the latter years of Juan’s reign stood against a context of almost four decades of instability. The kingdom was, as Juan Alfonso de Baena explained, like a sick body. The poet in his Dezir, likened Castile to a wounded man crying out in pain and he warned Juan that Castile, ‘non fue purgado, por la forma que deuía, nin curado por la via, que deuiera ser rreglado; por lo qual quedó achatado, y muy lleno de vmore, que le dan asas tremores, y dolor en el costado.’ The metaphor of the wounded man was a recurring one in medieval political thought and, for Baena, the events of Juan’s reign had wounded the kingdom. The implication was that the unrest had damaged Juan’s kingship and the image of the kingdom as a wounded body was a powerful one. The idea of the royal body and the body politic has been famously explored by Ernst Kantorowicz and Francisco Manrique. Valera made a similar comparison in a letter to the king in 1441, where he likened the kingdom to a wounded body and the nobility to its limbs. Valera darkly asked, ‘¿quántos miembros serán de cortar? y estos cortados, dezidme, Señor: ¿qué tal quedará la cabeza?’ It is easy to overlook with hindsight the severity of the conflict from the point of view of contemporaries. Cartagena captured the despair he and his fellow courtiers felt when...
he commented that, ‘non creo que hay omne que los viese en este reyneyo nin aun los leyese en las coronicas que de los fechos de España se fizieron despues que la monarchia e imperio de los godos se abajo como nos los vimos de pocos dias aca, non vna vez mas muchas.’

The Battle of Olmedo marked the worst period of the conflict between Juan II and his cousins’ noble faction. Fernando Castillo Cáceres has suggested that Olmedo was much more like a tournament than a battle with low casualties and accompanied by a great quantity of pomp and ceremony. However, the horror amongst contemporaries that the battle had taken place at all was captured by the commentator Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, who looked back at the events of Juan’s reign in his Generaciones y semblanzas. He addressed the battle in his portrait of Alvaro de Luna and he laid the blame for the horrors of the civil war on Luna and the knights of the Castilian court. For Pérez de Guzmán, the battle was almost biblical and comparable to the war between King David and Saul. He captured the uncertainty of the situation, stating, ‘que si estos señores ouiera en la victoria, guardaran la persona del rey como otras vezes fizieron; pero esto digo por opinion, non determinando.’ He concluded that their motive was probably, ‘por interese e anhiiones e cobdiçias, non por dar buena orden nin rigimiento en el reyno’, and that, ‘en sus fechos la forma yua torçida e [errada con] escandalos e rigos’. However despite this he concluded that, ‘digo mi parecer: que de todos estos males fueron cabsa los pecados de los españoles, ansi de auer uen rey remiso e negiljente, como de un cauallero auer tanta presunçion e osadia de mandar e guernar tan grandes reynos e señorios, non escusando la cobdiçia de los grandes caualleros.’

Alongside the civil war itself, Castilian society was also feeling the weight of other social pressures. The mass conversions of the kingdom’s Jewish population at the end of the fourteenth century led to riots, unrest and even rebellion. Newly converted to Christianity, and thus no longer bound by laws governing their social standing, the conversos rapidly rose through the ranks of Castilian society. Some, including the Santa María family to which Alonso de Cartagena belonged, reached the status of nobility. Pedro de Cartagena, the founder of the house of Santa María in Burgos, had been knighted by the time his brother had been made Bishop of Burgos. Diego de Valera had similarly assimilated himself into Castilian noble society and he styled himself as every bit the chivalrous knight. The influx of conversos into Christian society caused huge tensions. Riots broke out in Toledo in 1449 and the rebels passed statutes banning anyone of

---

329 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 254. ‘there is not a man who has seen in this kingdom, nor read in the chronicles of the deeds of Spain that were made after the monarchy and imperium of the Goths, anything so low as we see in recent days, not once but many times.’


331 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 146. ‘that if these lords [the Infantes] had victory they might have guarded the king’s person as they had done on other occasions, but I say this as opinion, not as fact.’

332 Ibid. ‘for interest, ambition and greed and not for giving order nor rule to the kingdom’, ‘the form of their deeds was twisted and [marked with] scandals and harshness’.

333 Ibid., 144–45. it seems to me, that all these bad things were caused by the sins of the Spanish, so having a king that was remiss and negligent, as a knight having such presumption and arrogance to order and rule such great kingdoms and lordships, not excusing the greed of the great knights.’
Jewish descent from holding office. The threat of violence was very real and many viewed them as social upstarts, or even false Christians. When Álvaro de Luna was arrested in 1453, he initially thought the armed men in the city were there to attack Burgos’ *conversos* and he offered to protect Alonso de Cartagena. Men like Diego de Valera or Pedro de Cartagena could not rely on lineage to prove their worth and, instead, had to look to personal virtue. Despite emulating the lives of the established Castilian nobility, their views of noble status were heavily influenced by their own standing in society. Both Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera argued passionately that *conversos* could hold noble office. The place of *conversos* in Castilian society came to play an important role in the critiques of the kingdom’s established noblemen. The view of nobility rooted in virtue rather than lineage, favoured by both Valera and Cartagena, may have been influenced by their own social standing. The tension in Castilian society surrounding the place of *conversos* had an influence on the more general perception of a crisis in chivalry. Their presence was an uncomfortable reminder of another path to noble status and the *converso* commentators’ view of nobility rooted in personal virtue left little room for the rebellious behaviour of Castile’s old nobility.

For several prominent courtiers, this crisis necessitated a literary response. Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera and the Marquis of Santillana all expressed the belief that it was their duty to raise their pens in response to the drawn swords of the kingdom’s nobility. In his reply to the Marquis of Santillana’s *Questión*, Cartagena reminded him that, ‘si esperamos a que la fortuna nos dé tranquilidad e quiete, e en tanto que dura el tiempo turbado, tenemos la peñola queda, ¿no teneremos con grand razón que por ventura passe nuestra vida ociosa, sin dejar de si escriptura durable?’ For Alonso, writing was the path to ending the civil war. Changing knightly ideals would, he argued, yield peace and he praised the Marquis for having, ‘estudiar e leer, e aun escribir en estas cosas, que a muchos parescen superfluous.’ As Craig Taylor has argued, chivalric texts were not mirrors to the world around them, but were seen as a means of actively shaping views and ideals. The outpouring of chivalric writing during Juan’s reign was precisely this; an attempt to end the civil war. Valera felt, like Alonso de Cartagena, compelled to craft a literary response to the civil war and explained to King Juan in a letter that of, ‘la devida lealtad de súbdito no me consiente callar.’ Alonso invited his readers to remember Cicero who, ‘seyendo afflicto de muchos trabajos de la guerra cevil, bien lo muestran las Tusculanas, e los libros de los Oficios, e Thimotes, e De maior orador.’ The *Doctrinal* was, in many ways, his response to the civil war. The sentiment was perhaps best expressed

334 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 237. ‘if we wish for the fortune of tranquility and quiet in such a difficult time then we have the resolute pen, do we not fear, with great reason, that by chance we will pass our idle lives without leaving some lasting writing?’
335 Ibid. ‘studied, read and even written of these things that to many seem superfluous.’
336 Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge, 2013), 8.
337 Diego de Valera, ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al serenissimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina del Canpo se entrase por el rey de Navarra e por el Infante Don Enrique’, 3. ‘of the loyalty owed by a subject, I cannot remain silent’.
338 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 238. ‘having been afflicted with the great many labours of the civil war showed them well in his Tusculanes, in the books of De officiis, Thimotes and De oratore.’
by the anonymous author of the *Libro de la consolación de España* in the introduction to the work. He laments that, ‘los males muertes e otros dapños asy preseuernantes en España prouicia e abtriaio nuestro hay (han?) presentaria una a mis ojos y tambien mis orejas que amplen en lo que la vista non puede bastar easy certyfico mi coraçon (c?)nabio pensamiente y consideracion tal que mandado a la mano estcriuir ordeno la presente escritura para consolación de todos’. Valera likewise cast his *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* as a response to courtly ignorance about chivalry and a means of staving off the dangers of, ‘el occio sin letras’.

Chivalry was for these commentators simultaneously the problem and the solution, it represented both what was wrong with noble society and the means to change it.

The latter years of Juan II’s reign stand out as a period of exceptional literary production. The unrest at court fuelled the production of a large number of texts and the social pressures in Castilian society made the questions they posed ever the more relevant. As Cartagena had suggested, the Castilian nobility, bereft of other outlets for their violence, turned in on themselves. This was a conclusion which Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo later reached in his *Vergel de los príncipes* where, citing Valerius Maximus, he commented that, ‘luego que cesaron los romanos de destruir e derrocar con fierro los muros agenos, cayeron en tierra con vicio las propias almenas.’ The reference to the descent of Rome into civil war was a powerful reminder of the danger of civil conflict. For both Cartagena and Sánchez de Arévalo, the cessation in war against Granada had brought with it a terrifying descent into civil war in Castile, which threatened the existence of the kingdom. The political crisis had created a chivalric crisis which was expressed through the remarkable literary culture of Juan II’s reign.

**Conclusion**

The debate at the Castilian court was one which developed gradually over time and alongside the worst years of the civil war. Valera and Cartagena returned to Castile in 1439 as the kingdom slid rapidly into instability and unrest. The worst period of unrest, between 1441 and 1446, saw the production of five of Castile’s best known treatises on chivalry and nobility; their creators driven to set pen to paper by the events unfolding around them. The Marquis of Santillana, Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera all expressed very similar concerns about the conduct of noblemen at the Castilian court within a few short years of one another. Their writing offers one side of a debate, although the views that they were criticising were seldom voiced in literature. However, the poor conduct of the Castilian nobility cannot be ignored. The scale of noble disloyalty was laid bare when, in 1439, over the course of a few short months the rebellion grew from

---

339 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9216. Tratados morales, Libro de la consolación de España’, fol. 83r. ‘these woful deaths and other ills that are present here in Spain, proved and authenticated by our eyes and well by my ears, which amplify that for which my sight was not enough, my heart gave it such thought and consideration that it ordered my hand to compose this present writing for the general consolation of all’.

340 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 89. ‘leisure without letters’.

341 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, *Vergel de los príncipes*, 320. ‘when the Romans stopped destroying and demolishing foreign walls with iron, their own battlements fell to the ground with vice.’
a handful of noblemen to an army of thousands. For the commentators, chivalry offered a means to change knightly behaviour and reinstate in the Castilian nobility the values they had lost. This reforming drive shaped their vision of the knightly ideal and it found its strongest expression in Alonso de Cartagena’s *Doctrinal de los caudillos* and Diego de Valera’s plea for peace in the *Exortación de la paz*. Their answer was to unpick what it meant to be a knight and nobleman. Their response removed an entitlement to virtue and belittled the role of lineage in the process of ennoblement. For them, knighthood had to be earned, it was a gift and one which was bestowed with conditions. First and foremost amongst these was loyalty to the king. Their responses harked back to a golden age of knightly loyalty and discipline which was a far cry from the factionalism and duplicity of the royal court. This section has sought to show that the commentators’ notion of a chivalric crisis was one which was directly shaped by events in Castile during this period. The following chapter will focus on Valera and Cartagena’s responses to the civil war. Chivalric criticism, of the form which was commonplace across Europe became, in Castile, much more than a mere theoretical discussion as these men sought to bring to an end the vicious struggle which tore apart the court and kingdom.
Chapter III

Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera and the Response to Civil War

Introduction

The previous chapter sought to argue that there was a distinctly chivalric literary response to the civil war during Juan II’s reign. This chapter forms the second part to this argument and focuses exclusively on the work of Alonso de Cartagena and his contemporary Diego de Valera. Their work, produced between 1441 and 1446, forms one of the most intriguing, yet rarely compared, literary responses to the civil war. This chapter will centre on Alonso de Cartagena’s *Doctrinal de los caualleros* and correspondence with the Marquis of Santillana as well as Diego de Valera’s *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, *Exortación de la pas* and correspondence with King Juan II, whilst drawing on some of the other literary responses to the crisis produced during the period. Like the *Doctrinal*, the *Espejo* and *Exortación* were a response to the unfolding political crisis. These three works form the basis for the following chapter, before the wider debate on chivalry and nobility is explored in more detail in the final two chapters of the study.

The *Doctrinal de los caualleros*

The *Doctrinal* was heavily shaped by both Alonso de Cartagena’s own interests and the unfolding political crisis. Although Diego Gómez de Sandoval’s request for the work does not survive, it can safely be assumed that he commissioned it at some point between 1441-1444 when Juan of Navarre and his brother Enrique were in control of the royal court. Alonso de Cartagena had little association with the Infantes’ political faction before the 1440s, but the presence of Alonso and his brother Pedro at Prince Enrique’s wedding to Princess Blanca of Navarre suggests that the Santa María family had negotiated the change of factions at the Castilian court successfully. Alonso himself in the introduction states that Gómez de Sandoval requested the work so that he might, ‘ser enformado por ella de los estableçimientos e doctrinas de la caualleria’. The *Doctrinal* was then, at least on the surface, a book of chivalry, a guide to the office and duties of knighthood and, as Viña-Liste has suggested, perhaps more akin to other professional guides than comparable books of chivalry. Cartagena appears to suggest that the Count of Castro requested a specifically legal compilation and in the introduction he states, ‘he muy poca familiaridad con estas leyes, pero cumpliendo vuestru mandado recorrilas superficialmente e ayunte dellas algunas que me paresçian

---

342 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 84. ‘be informed of the ordinances and doctrines of knighthood’.
82

fazer a lo que vos quereys." Cartagena was of course being humble. He was one of the foremost intellectuals of his day and held a doctorate in law from the University of Salamanca. Cartagena brought this intellectual rigor to the composition of the *Doctrinal* and the work stands out for its breadth, content and approach to the topic. Subdivided into four books, it contains lengthy extracts from Castilian law prefaced by the Bishop of Burgos’ eloquent introductions. Cartagena looked to the *Siete Partidas* as his primary source for understanding and governing the knightly office, but complimented it with several other Castilian legal sources. The result was much more than the sum of its parts, it was a critical and rigorous examination of chivalry and the knightly office.

The *Doctrinal*, despite its length and unorthodox source material, became one of the most popular chivalric treatises in medieval Castile and the work attained relative popularity even within Alonso’s own lifetime. We know from surviving library inventories that the *Doctrinal* was owned by a number of Cartagena’s fellow courtiers on both sides of the factional divide at court. Twenty-four manuscripts of the *Doctrinal* survive housed in libraries across Europe. Noel Fallows, in his study of the *Doctrinal*, identified twenty-two of these manuscripts. This number has since been added to by Robert Archer’s discovery of another fifteenth-century manuscript of the work held in the Czech National Archives. I have since identified another previously unstudied fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Doctrinal* housed in Cambridge University Library. Of the surviving manuscripts, seventeen are fifteenth-century, two are sixteenth-century, one is seventeenth-century and the remainder are eighteenth and nineteenth-century copies. The *Doctrinal* also underwent two print runs, from which numerous incunabula survive. The first, in 1487, was printed by Friedrich Biel in Burgos and his excellent edition was followed a decade later by Juan of Burgos’ edition. Large numbers of incunabula survive from both print runs which attest to their popularity. Konrad Haebler and Noel Fallows have suggested that the work may also have been printed in 1492 in Seville. However, no incunabula survive from this print run and it is possible that it did not exist at all. More recently, the work has seen two excellent modern critical editions, one by Noel Fallows and another by Jose Maria Viña Liste. Unfortunately, Alonso’s autograph manuscript does not survive, although Friedrich Biel claimed to have based his 1487 print edition on Cartagena’s original manuscript. Both Fallows and Viña Liste have taken this claim on face value and, whilst it is possible that Biel used Cartagena’s original from the cathedral archives, we simply cannot say whether he did or not. The fact that the incunabula preserve the presumed

---

344 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 84. ‘I have little familiarity with these laws but I have carried out your command to superficially traverse them and I have yoked together some that seem to fit your wishes.’

345 Ibid., 47–48. A complete list or bibliographic study of these manuscripts will not be given here.


original dedication to Diego Gómez de Sandoval suggests that they were based on an early copy. Eleven of the seventeen surviving fifteenth-century manuscripts preserve an alternate dedication to his rival Álvaro de Luna, including Juan II’s own copy. The remaining fifteenth-century manuscripts, and the incunabula, carry the dedicatory passage addressed to the Count of Castro. Noel Fallows has argued that this dual dedication suggests that Álvaro de Luna himself commissioned a copy of the work after he captured Sandoval at the Battle of Olmedo. This is possible, however, considering Alonso de Cartagena’s carefully measured political stance it is not inconceivable that he produced two versions of the text carrying dedications to the leaders of the opposing political factions at court. Regardless, the two dedications reveal that the Doctrinal was widely read at court by noblemen from both court factions.

Surviving library inventories confirm that the Doctrinal had a wide readership, both during Juan II’s reign and after. Fallows’ work examining library inventories from the period has shown that the Doctrinal was one of the most popular chivalric manuals read in fifteenth-century Castile, second only to Giles of Rome’s De regimine principum and Vegetius’ De re militari. The text is recorded in nine library inventories and, from these, we can start to build a picture of contemporary readership during Alonso’s lifetime. Five of the surviving copies of the manuscript date from Alonso’s lifetime and we can add several known owners to the list of readers. It can safely be assumed that Diego Gómez de Sandoval owned a copy, although it is not known to survive. The alternative dedication to Álvaro de Luna suggests that the constable himself owned and probably commissioned a copy after the Battle of Olmedo. King Juan II also received a copy of the manuscript, attested by a library inventory taken by his daughter Queen Isabel. Juan’s lavish copy of the manuscript survives in the Escorial and was the only copy of the text to be illuminated. The illuminations show Alonso de Cartagena himself presenting the work to the king. However, the royal copy preserves the dedication to Álvaro de Luna which suggests that Juan did not receive a copy until after 1445. Pedro Fernández de Velasco also owned a copy and it is possible that BNE MS. 12796 was the Count of Haro’s copy of the work. Diego de Valera likely owned a copy of the Doctrinal, although no known

---

350 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 27. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 1r–157r; ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6607. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 1r–199v; ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6609, Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 16r–332r; ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12743. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 118r–148v; ‘San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS. h-III-4. Doctrinal de los caballeros’, fol. 1r–76v; ‘Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/2906. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 1r–215r; ‘Madrid, Real Academia de Historia, MS. 9-5-2/712. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 1r–173v; ‘Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca, MS.1767. Doctrinal de los caualleros’ s.xv, fol. 1r–249r; ‘Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 8586. Doctrinal de los caballeros’, fol. 1r–158v. The last manuscript’s dedication is unknown as the first folio is missing and has been replaced by a modern replacement. It cannot be reliably asserted that the dedication to Álvaro de Luna in the Cambridge manuscript is the original.

351 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 86.

352 Ibid., 37.


manuscript is associated with him. Valera’s *Doctrinal de príncipes* references the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*.\(^{355}\) Íñigo López de Mendoza, the Marquis of Santillana, was similarly a likely owner of a copy of the *Doctrinal*, although no known copy associated with his library survives and Schiff does not mention the *Doctrinal* in his reconstruction of the Marquis’ library. However, it is likely as a close friend of Alonso that he at least read the work and Fallows has suggested that Santillana’s *Doctrinal de privados* may have been a nod to Cartagena’s *Doctrinal de los caballeros*.\(^{356}\) A copy of the work is listed as part of the library of the Counts of Benavente in 1530 and it is probable that the Pimentels acquired their copy of the text during Juan’s reign.\(^{357}\) A significant number of the other manuscripts date from the end of the fifteenth century, including the Cambridge manuscript produced for Martín Alfonso de Montemayor, the Lord of Alcaudete, in 1478.\(^{358}\) It is safe to say that the *Doctrinal* was well read during Juan II’s reign and the text was owned by prominent noblemen on both sides of the factional divide at court.

**Diego de Valera’s Espejo de verdadera nobleza and Exortación de la pas**

Unlike Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera’s views are known through two much shorter works and a series of letters written to King Juan and his son Prince Enrique. These works address the civil war and many of the same issues as Cartagena’s *Doctrinal* and *Respuesta* to the Marquis of Santillana. The first of these works, the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, was composed in 1441 and dedicated to, although not commissioned by, Juan II.\(^{359}\) Valera makes this clear in the introduction to the work and that he felt, after some deliberation, that the work was most relevant to the king.\(^{360}\) Valera wrote the *Espejo* shortly after returning to Castile from a period of travelling around Europe. Valera was, like Cartagena, a *converso* and every bit a self-made man. He had been knighted following the siege of Huelma and, in 1437, had departed Castile for a period of travelling around Europe as a knight errant. Valera left a stable Castilian kingdom but returned in 1439 to find it on the brink of civil war. The *Espejo* was his first treatise on chivalry and nobility and, despite lacking Alonso de Cartagena’s education, he took a similarly scholarly approach. In the *Espejo*, Valera sought to unpick the question of what it meant to be a nobleman. He explained that the text had been composed in reaction to the misconceived views he had heard at courts across Europe. As a mirror of nobility, the *Espejo* was meant to inspire good conduct in its readers in much the same way that Cartagena intended the *Doctrinal* would. The *Espejo* was a much shorter work than Cartagena’s monolithic *Doctrinal de los caballeros* and it was divided into eleven short chapters, starting with the opinions of classical and early Christian writers, including, Cicero, Vegetius, Aristotle, Lucian and St Augustine.\(^{361}\) Valera took Bartolus’

---

359 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.
360 Ibid., 89.
361 Ibid., 90–92.
model of nobility as the basis for the work and equated knighthood with what Bartolus had termed 'civil nobility'. The latter sections of the work detailed the process of ennoblement and addressed a variety of issues, including the loss of noble status and whether conversos could hold noble office. Valera finished the work with a section on chivalry and the display of arms.

The *Espejo* survives in thirteen manuscripts, many of them compilations of Valera’s other works and correspondence. Until the nineteenth century, there had been fourteen known copies of the work but one manuscript, known as the *Cancionero de Barrantes*, has since been lost. Of the remaining manuscripts, twelve are dated to the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, with four datable to during Juan II’s reign. Whilst the work lacked the popularity of the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, the good survival of manuscripts from the period suggests that the *Espejo* was relatively well read at court and often used in compilations on chivalry and nobility. The audience for Valera’s work was broad. The *Espejo*’s dedication to Juan II was likely done to ensure that as many courtiers as possible would read the work. Of the four manuscripts firmly datable to Juan’s reign, three are datable specifically to 1441-1444 and it is possible that one of these is the copy owned by King Juan himself. It is hard to establish a concrete readership of the text in the same way that is possible for the *Doctrinal*. None of the manuscripts are reliably attributable to individuals during Juan’s reign and, beyond the king, it is hard to deduce who read it. In 1441, Valera was associated with neither Luna’s faction nor the Infantes. He was a member of Prince Enrique’s household, although not influential enough to be considered a political player. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Valera was friends with the king and had already made a name for himself by 1441. His deeds of arms in service to Albert II of Hungary were deemed worthy enough to be mentioned in the *Crónica de Juan II*. On his return to Castile, Juan honoured Valera with membership of the Order of the Scale. Valera’s correspondence with the king has a frank, but friendly tone, and Valera was not afraid to speak his mind to King Juan, something evidenced in the *Exortación de la pas*. It should be noted that the dating of the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* has recently

---


364 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, *Crónica de Juan II*, 533–34.

365 Diego de Valera, *Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al serenísimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina*
been contested. Federica Accorsi has argued that it was not composed in 1441, but rather around a decade later between 1449-1451. However, for reasons that will be explained in depth later, I favour Mario Penna’s argument that Valera completed the work in 1441.

The *Espejo* did not mark the end of Valera’s response to the civil war. During the period he sent three surviving letters. One in 1441 to King Juan II, which urged peace and detailed some of the same ideas found in the *Espejo* and *Exortación*. A second letter to the king sent after the conclusion of the conflict in 1447 and a final letter to an unnamed friend. In 1444, Valera also completed a translation of Honoré Bovet’s *Arbre des batailles* for Álvaro de Luna. Four manuscripts survive of his translation, two from the fifteenth century. The second major original work which Valera produced was the *Exortación de la pas*, completed in 1446. The *Exortación* was written in the aftermath of the Battle of Olmedo and was very different in tone and approach to the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*. Rather than an argument about the nature of nobility, the *Exortación* was an impassioned plea for peace. The work, written when the Infantes’ faction was seeking to use Prince Enrique as a new figurehead, addressed the relationship between the king and his noblemen. Valera urged King Juan to avoid seeking reckless vengeance against his enemies and sought to persuade him to prize justice above all other virtues. Gone was the clear language and simplistic style found in the *Espejo* and in its place was an eloquent and complex argument for peace written with a royal audience in mind. Lengthy Latin quotations reveal that Valera did not envisage his work being read by the noblemen of court, but rather, the *Exortación* appealed to King Juan’s excellent grasp of Latin and love of learning. In the *Exortación*, Valera gave voice to a view that no doubt many would have, that the issues might lie with the crown as well as the nobility. The *Exortación* is a very critical assessment of Juan II’s role as a monarch during the period and, through its focus on the relationship between the king and nobility, it forms something of a second part to the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*. Indeed, BNE MS. 1341 preserves both works together as treatises on arms and chivalry, re-enforcing the notion that the two texts could be read together. Due to its personal nature and far more complex literary style it is perhaps unsurprising that the *Exortación* never

---

367 Mario Penna, ‘Estudio preliminar’, cx.
368 Diego de Valera, ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al serenissimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina del Canpo se entrase por el rey de Navarra e por el Infante Don Enrique’; Diego de Valera, ‘Otra epístola suya al dicho señor rey, estando su Altesa en Tordesillas con el señor príncipe Don Enrique, su fijo, el año de quarenta e siete donde se fizo la Concordia de amos a dos’, in *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), 7–5.
369 Diego de Valera, ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al serenissimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina del Canpo se entrase por el rey de Navarra e por el Infante Don Enrique’; Diego de Valera, ‘Otra epístola suya al dicho señor rey, estando su Altesa en Tordesillas con el señor príncipe Don Enrique, su fijo, el año de quarenta e siete donde se fizo la Concordia de amos a dos’; Diego de Valera, ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió a un amigo suyo porque le reprehendió aver escrito la epístola ante desta’, in *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días 116 (Madrid, 1959), 7–8.
369 Diego de Valera, ‘Exortación de la pas’.
attained the readership of Valera’s other works. Only two manuscripts of the text survive, both held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España.\footnote{Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1341. Exortación de la pas’ s.xv, fol. 47r–59v; ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9263. Tratado de exhortación y comendación de la paz, escrito 1448’ s.xv, fol. 4r–15v.}

For both Valera and Cartagena, chivalry was the means of framing their critique of the civil war in Castile. The nature of knightly office, and even the process of ennoblement itself, were critiqued by both authors as they sought to get to grips with the events of the period. As has been established in the previous chapter, these texts should be considered part of a unique chivalric literary response to the political events in Castile. The following pages of this chapter will seek to examine their views in more detail and address how both author’s views were shaped by the events in Castile in the 1440s.

\textit{A Misguided Nobility}

At the heart of both Valera and Cartagena’s arguments lay the view that the Castilian nobility had a profoundly misguided view of chivalry and nobility. Valera, in the introduction to the \textit{Espejo}, commented on how he had encountered misguided views at courts across Europe. To remedy this, Valera stated that his work was, ‘por socorrer e ayudar a los que menos de mí leyeron, con afánoso trabajo curé los actores que della trataron, no solamente leer, mas aun acopilar e ayuntar sus actoridades, por las cuales sus principios, medios e fines perfectamente sean conocidos, e así pueda su actoridad ser conservada, loada e tenida en el caro precio que deve.’\footnote{Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 89. ‘to bring assistance to and to aid those that have read less than me and with eager labour I recovered the authors that write on [nobility], not only reading but compiling and blending together their authorities by which their beginnings, middles and ends might be perfectly known and likewise their authority preserved’.}

Both Cartagena and Valera shared the same ambition; to correct the views of their fellow courtiers. Cartagena explained, citing St Jerome, that, ‘así como a los medicos pertenesçe saber las cosas de la medeçina e a los ferreros tractar las de la ferreria, asi a los caualleros las reglas d[e] lo militar.’\footnote{Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 81. ‘as it pertains to doctors to know of matters of medicine, and to blacksmiths to know how to work iron, so it pertains to knights to know the laws of war’. ‘Militar’ here has a slightly ambiguous meaning. I have translated it as war but it could equally mean chivalry.}

For Cartagena, knights required a good understanding of their office. He explained that the knights of old had understood that, ‘las fuerças del cuerpo non pueden exerçer acto loado de fortaleza si non son guiados por coraçon sabidor.’\footnote{Ibid., 79. ‘the force of the body could not be exercised with laudable fortitude if they were not guided by a wise heart.’} Cartagena idealised a model of knighthood where knights prized both learning and martial prowess, the former giving them the understanding necessary to properly go about their office. Both authors went on to expound the failings of the Castilian nobility in the latter sections of their work, Cartagena in the third book of the \textit{Doctrinal} and Valera in the tenth chapter of the \textit{Espejo}. Thus, the intention of both texts was broadly similar, to educate the Castilian nobility on the duties of their office and the rules which governed knighthood. To achieve this, both authors wrote in a
clear and eloquent style which catered to a broad courtly audience. Both authors wrote in Castilian, a reflection of low Latin literacy amongst the Castilian nobility and Castile’s own vibrant culture of vernacular writing. The intended readership of these works was, what Alonso in the Epistula ad comitem de Haro referred to as, the ‘militares viri’, Castile’s knights and men at arms. Lawrance has argued that Cartagena believed this group should not be expected to read or understand complex works and it would appear that Valera took the same stance. The Doctrinal was, in many ways, an attempt to make a very complex legal compilation accessible for a more general knightly audience and Alonso’s introductions guided the knightly reader through the laws that followed, outlining how they should interpret them.

Whilst Cartagena wrote to correct the behaviour of one wayward knight, the Espejo was written to correct the misunderstandings that Valera claimed he had heard at court. However, both authors ultimately pitched their works at the knights of the Castilian court. Implicit in both works was the notion that they were arguing against opposing views. However, it is surprisingly difficult to define this opposing view of nobility as it was rarely committed to writing. Both Valera and Cartagena undermined, to some degree, the view that lineage bestowed nobility and rather, they argued that nobility rested on personal virtue. In taking such a stance, their criticisms were implicitly aimed at the upper echelons of the Castilian nobility, those grandes omnes from the kingdom’s great lineages. This group determined the kingdom’s politics and comprised about thirteen noble families who held the most wealth and power. Both commentators offered views on nobility which challenged the traditional basis upon which these noble families’ power rested. These views, and the debate at court, will be discussed in much more detail in subsequent chapters but they are worth bearing in mind when considering the audience for both authors’ texts. The works were aimed at knights like Gómez de Sandoval, individualistic and unruly political players who had a hand in destabilising the kingdom.

In contrast, the Exortación de la pas was not written with a noble audience in mind. Valera’s intended audience for the work was much more specific. Unlike the Espejo and the Doctrinal, the Exortación was written in a complex style and dotted with lengthy Latin quotations. The work was intended to be read by King Juan and few others. In the work, Valera adopted the same frank tone which he took in his correspondence with the king. He opened the work by reminding Juan that he should seek peace, a desire Valera stated, ‘a toda persona discreta asás deve ser manifesto.’ The implication of Valera’s opening words was immensely

375 Alonso de Cartagena, Un tratado de Alonso de Cartagena sobre la educación y los estudios literarios. El manuscrito, procedencia y contenido.
379 Diego de Valera, ‘Exortación de la pas’, 77. ‘it should be exceedingly obvious to every discreet person.’
insulting to the king. Whilst it addressed many of the same issues, the *Exortación* was not a guide to nobility aimed at a knightly readership. Rather, the *Exortación* should be treated differently to these other works. Whilst it offers a glimpse view of Valera’s views on chivalry and nobility in the aftermath of the civil war, it was not a work for general consumption. Consequently, it addressed a different aspect of the problems with the Castilian nobility. Valera, in the *Exortación*, focused on the role played by the king himself.

*Differing Approaches*

For Alonso de Cartagena the law was key to knights having a proper understanding of chivalry. The introduction to the *Doctrinal* sheds some light on his rather unorthodox choice of sources for a book of chivalry. Cartagena identified three main sources of good information on chivalry. Firstly, ‘son scriptas muchas doctrinas que en diversos e notables libros, asi de filosofos como de oradores griegos e latinos se contienen.’380 Secondly was the ‘exnemplos de los antiguos copilados por estoriadores en sus coronicas muy copiosamente’, and finally the, ‘muchas leyes de emperadores e reyes que por las partidas del mundo rreyaron, estableçidas para buen rregimiento de la rrepublica’.381 He clarified this stating, ‘de la primera manera de libros que dezimos, es a saber, de doctrinas militares, tengades algunos, e de la segunda, que es de las coronicas, ayades grand copia’.382 Of these three sources, Alonso went on to expound the virtue of law as a chivalric authority. He explained that rulers, ‘non oluidaron en ellas de poner muchas rreglas pertenesçientes a la disçipli na de la caualleri a.’383 Moreover, he cautioned against knights relying on chronicles, philosophers and orators. Alonso likened the reading of histories as looking at oneself in a blurry mirror and stated they were, ‘los quales non son bastantes nin tienen actori dad para apremiar, mas son sufíçientes para induzir los nobles coraçones a seguir el rrastro de la virtud.’384 Notably, Alonso neglected to mention chivalric romances and downplayed the place of what he termed books of ‘doctrinas militares’.385 His negative view of these ‘military doctrines’ reveals something of how he viewed his own work. Cartagena was no doubt referring to other guides of knightly conduct. His belief that they were of limited use as a source of good conduct suggests that he did not view the *Doctrinal* as a book of chivalry. Rather, he saw his own work as a legal compilation, a genre defined by its source material not its stated aim. The *Doctrinal* was a very clever sleight of hand. Cartagena had managed to pass off a very lengthy legal compilation as a book of chivalry. Whilst knights may not have been expected to read a legal compilation,

380 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 82. ‘many doctrines written in diverse and notable books that contain work by philosophers and Greek and Latin orators’.
381 Ibid., 81–82. ‘the examples of the ancients compiled copiously by historians in their chronicles’, ‘many laws made by the emperors and kings that reign in diverse regions of the world, established for the good governance of the republic’.
382 Ibid., 83. ‘in the first sense we speak of books of military doctrines, of which there are some, and in the second sense of chronicles of which there are many’.
383 Ibid., 82. ‘did not forget to place in these laws many rules that pertain to the discipline of chivalry.’
384 Ibid., 81. ‘not enough to have authority to encourage, but (were) enough to induce in noble hearts a trace of virtue.’
385 Ibid., 83. ‘military doctrines’.
any discerning nobleman would be expected to read a book of chivalry. As such, the approach Cartagena adopted in the Doctrinal was quite unlike any other chivalric guide.

In keeping with his belief that the law offered the best means to understand the office of knighthood, Cartagena chose to structure his book of chivalry as a legal compilation based heavily on Alfonso X’s Siete Partidas. He was not alone in choosing a legalistic approach to the topic. The French commentator Honoré Bovet took a similarly legalistic approach in his Tree of Battles, which had been translated into Castilian by Valera less than a year before Cartagena completed the Doctrinal. Whilst there is no indication that Alonso had read Bovet’s work, it does suggest that there was an interest in legalistic approaches to chivalry at the Castilian court. Nevertheless, Alonso’s approach was unorthodox. Despite the fact that books of chivalry frequently took the form of rules by which a knight should live his life, few authors turned to the law. In taking a legalistic view, Cartagena was deliberately avoiding the often poorly defined chivalric tenets found in knightly manuals. This lack of rigour and definition was likely why Cartagena was so dismissive of books of chivalry as worthwhile sources for good knightly conduct. Whilst Cartagena mainly used the Partidas, he also drew on the Ordenamiento de Alcalá, Fuero Juzgo, Fuero Real and the Libro de la Banda. Notably, Cartagena used exclusively Castilian legal sources in the Doctrinal and made no reference to other authorities, such as Bartolus, which might be expected in a legal compilation on knighthood. This was undoubtedly not a product of ignorance. Alonso made reference to Bartolus in the Discurso on the subject of nobility. However, Alonso neglected to use Bartolus’ ideas in the Doctrinal and instead used solely Castilian sources. Alonso’s choice of legal sources is not surprising considering his legal training. He would already have been familiar with the Siete Partidas from his time as a student at Salamanca. The approach that Cartagena adopted for his work on chivalry was then a sober and legalistic one. His focus for the text was almost exclusively Castilian and, whilst he drew on some examples from ancient Rome and Greece, the vast majority of the work looked only to Castile’s legal heritage.

In contrast to Cartagena’s domestic view, Valera embraced a much wider body of sources for the Espejo. Valera was a strong proponent of Bartolus’ views and once famously used the Italian jurist’s De insigniis et armis in an argument at the court of Albert II of Hungary. Valera quoted Bartolus to dispute that Castile had lost its claim to the Portuguese throne after the Battle of Aljubarrota. Indeed, he even challenged the Count who had offended him to a duel in case his argument was not persuasive enough. In the Espejo, Valera used Bartolus’ idea that nobility was divided into three distinct parts. The first of these was

---

586 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6605, Árbol de batallas’ s.xv, fol. 1r–48v.
587 For the intersection of law and chivalry see: Maurice Keen, The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages.
588 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea’, 208.
590 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 533.
591 Ibid.
theological nobility, which referred to God’s elect. However, as Valera explained, ‘estos tales nobles nosotros no podemos perfectamente conocer salvo por revelación; e muchos son predestinados a la gloria por nuestro Señor que cerca de nos son tenidos por viles’. The second form of nobility was natural nobility, something which applied to animals. Valera used the example of some birds being considered noble, such as hawks and gerfalcons and others not. The third, and most important form of nobility was civil nobility, ‘por la qual es fecha cierta diferencia entre el noble e el plebeo’. Valera explained that civil nobility mirrored theological nobility, as the king took the place of God on Earth and ennobled the virtuous, ‘como según la nobleza theologal es noble aquel a quien Dios por su gracia ante sí faze gracioso, así cerca de nos es noble aquel a quien el príncipe o la ley fazen noble.’ He defined nobility as a ‘calidad’ or quality that could be gifted or removed, won or lost. Bartolus’ ideas and his tripartite division of nobility were central to Valera’s argument in the Espejo.

Unlike Cartagena, Valera did not take a legalistic approach. The Espejo de verdadera nobleza was not a chivalric guide, but rather a discussion of what nobility meant. Thus, Valera opened the work by discussing three conflicting paths to nobility; lineage, wealth and virtue. Valera dismissed lineage as a route to nobility, stating that, ‘aquesta opinió yo no leí ningunt actor que la tuviere, mas muchos de la gente vulgar la tienen.’ Valera was similarly dismissive of wealth and instead argued that, ‘buenas costumbres fasen al onbre noble’. Valera went on to cite a number of other authors that supported his argument including Boethius, Seneca, Cicero, St Ambrose and Dante. Quoting Lucian, in a rejection of the traditional view of nobility, he remarked that, ‘de mayor honor son dignos los que por su virtud fueron engrandecidos que los que de sus antecesores por heredaminetos lo ovieron.’ In the following chapters Valera argued that knighthood should be rooted in virtue not lineage or wealth.

The Chivalric Ideal in the Doctrinal and Espejo

For both authors, the chivalric ideal revolved around the idea of knights as social defenders. The view was encapsulated in the Segunda Partida XXI laws i and ii. The section defined knights as ‘defensores’, ‘la

---

393 Ibid. ‘these nobles cannot be fully known by us except through revelation and many who are predestined for glory by our Lord are held by us to be villains.’
394 Ibid.
395 Ibid. ‘what makes the difference between a noble and a pleb’.
396 Ibid. ‘just as according to theological nobility a noble is he who God by his grace has made gracious, just as close to us a noble is he who the prince or law has made noble.’
397 Ibid., 93. ‘quality’.
398 Ibid., 91. ‘I have not read any author that has this opinion but many vulgar people hold it.’
399 Ibid., 90. ‘good customs made a man noble’.
400 Ibid., 91. ‘of greater honour are those titles that are gained by your virtue rather than those that come from your ancestors by inheritance.’
companía o los compañeros de los omnes nobles que fueron puestos para defender las tierras.\footnote{402}{Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 89. ‘the companions or company of noblemen that were placed to defend the lands.’} For Cartagena, the knight was the direct descendant of the Roman miles or eque.\footnote{403}{Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble y sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 240–41.} In the Respuesta, Cartagena gave a clear definition of what he considered a knight to be, ‘entendiendo miles por cavallerio armado por rey o por otro que armarlo pueda; e esta es su propia y estrecha sinificacion. E estos tales se dicen tomar la orden de cavallería, la qual tiene sus reglas e observancia.’\footnote{404}{Ibid., 241. ‘A mile is understood to be a knight, armed by the king, though another can arm him, and this is the appropriate and narrow definition. And these [knight] say they take the order of chivalry, which has its rules and observances’.} The Doctrinal was an attempt to definitively set out these laws which regulated knighthood. Both authors defined the knight as a defensor, a loyal defender of the king, church and land. The roots of this idea and the impact of the Roman past on Cartagena’s view of knighthood will be explored in much more detail in the following chapter.

To find Valera’s view of the chivalric ideal we need to look at the tenth chapter of the Espejo, where he set out his founding mythology of knighthood and ideas on chivalry. For Valera, chivalry was an important part of noble office and he saw it as the force which would govern noble conduct. Valera, like Cartagena, believed that chivalry was governed by strict rules, although he rarely equated them with the kingdom’s laws. Whilst the earlier sections of the work had outlined the path to nobility and the nature of the office, he concluded the work with two chapters on chivalry and the display of coats of arms. Valera used this foundation myth to firmly establish the tenets of knighthood. Valera stated that, ‘los antiguos començadores de la muy noble orden de cavallería tres consideraciones ovieron en su principio: la primera fue amor del bien público; la segunda deseo de atribuir honor devido a la virtud; la tercera dar a la orden devidos ministros e servidores.’\footnote{405}{Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 105–6. ‘those ancient founders of the very noble order of chivalry had three considerations in the beginning, the first was love of the public good, the second was the desire to attribute honour as it should to virtue and the third was to give the order leaders and servants.’} Valera presented an ideal of knights as social defenders and a foundation mythology similar to Cartagena’s. Valera, echoing the Partidas and Cartagena stated that, ‘de cada millar fue uno escogido de más noble coraçón, más aprovado por largo uso, más guarnido de buenas costunbres, más dispuesto para las armas.’\footnote{406}{Ibid., 106. ‘from each thousand one was chosen of more noble heart, better suited to long service, more inclined to good habits and more disposed to arms.’} Like the Marquis of Santillana, Valera ascribed a prominent place to the swearing of an oath in the creation of these historical knights and modelled his version on the Segunda Partida.\footnote{407}{Ibid. ‘the honour and service of the prince, the good of the republic, the command of the captain, the honour of the order (of Chivalry) and of the companions (fellow knights).’} Valera stated that, knights swore to guard, ‘el honor e servicio del príncipe, el bien de la repúlica, la ordenança del capitán, el onor de la orden e de los compañeros a ella recebidos.’\footnote{408}{Ibid., 240. ‘A miles is understood to be a knight, armed by the king, though another can arm him, and this is the appropriate and narrow definition. And these [knight] say they take the order of chivalry, which has its rules and observances’.} Valera continued, that knights, ‘las biudas e huérfanos que defendiesen, por los pobres e flacos que respondiesen; los sagrados ministros e servidores.’
dueñas e donzellas toda honestidad guardasen, e sobre todo, siembre la verdad usasen, debaxo de la qual toda virtud está.\textsuperscript{409} The oath drew on the wording dictated in the \textit{Segunda Partida}, which stated that a knight should swear to die to uphold the law, protect the king and defend his honour.

Both authors saw knights as defenders of society, bound by rules and oaths to uphold the law and defend the kingdom. However, by the early 1440s this was a duty that many knights in the kingdom had failed to uphold. In the \textit{Espejo}, Valera drew a comparison between the knights of his day and those of the idealised past stating that, ‘estonce a fin de honrar esta orden, agora para robar el su nombre; estonce para defender la república, agora para señorearla’.\textsuperscript{410} For both authors, the knights of their day fell well short of the mark.

Whilst chivalry might be seen as being in a constant state of crisis with commentators across Europe eager to assert that the knights of their day were failing, the situation was different in Castile. As the previous chapter argued, there was a growing sense of desperation amongst commentators at court caused by the political instability of Juan’s reign. Rife knightly disloyalty eroded the established basis of Castilian chivalric thought and this was reflected in the work of both Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera.

\textit{Chivalry Shaped by Crisis: The Critical Response to Civil War}

When Valera composed the \textit{Espejo de verdadera nobleza} in 1441, the court and kingdom had already been split by factional violence. Whilst violence had not yet broken out, tensions at court were running high as the two sides faced off against each other. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco had argued that Valera in the \textit{Espejo} was defending the position of Castile’s established nobility.\textsuperscript{411} This was not the case. Valera’s sustained criticism of nobility by lineage and insistence on a noble ideal rooted in personal virtue marks the \textit{Espejo} out as an attack on Castile’s old nobility. The attack, and the stance which Valera took in both the \textit{Espejo} and in the \textit{Exortación}, was shaped by the civil war and decades of unrest during Juan’s reign. As with the \textit{Doctrinal}, this contributed to a view of the state of Castilian chivalry which was far from flattering as both authors unpicked the established foundations of knighthood and nobility.

The \textit{Espejo} was concerned with Castile’s unruly nobility, who fell under what Valera termed civil or political nobility.\textsuperscript{412} Valera argued that nobility was a quality or ‘calidad’, gifted by princes or the law in recognition of virtue. It was a gift which could be removed, won or lost and it was bestowed with certain conditions.\textsuperscript{413} Valera was eager to assert that nobility was not permanent, but rather, was contingent on the continuing

\textsuperscript{409} Ibid. ‘defend the living and orphans, they are responsible for the poor and weak, they honour and serve holy temples, treating priests with respect and benignity, honestly protecting damsels and women and above all always being truthful, below all of which lies virtue.’
\textsuperscript{410} Ibid., 107. ‘then the end of honour was order, now it is robbing in its name, then it was to defend the republic, now it is to rule it’.
\textsuperscript{411} Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, \textit{El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo}.
\textsuperscript{412} Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 92.
\textsuperscript{413} Ibid., 93.
Virtue of its holder. Nobility, he argued, ‘es dada por sola gracia del príncipe, no por alguna nescesidad que a la dar le costriña.’ Whilst Valera accepted that there might be many reasons that a prince might want to give out noble titles, he argued that virtue had to be the guiding principle by which noblemen were chosen. Citing Aristotle, he reminded his readership that, ‘el honor es galardón de la virtud.’ Valera argued that virtuous acts should be rewarded with the honour of titles and offices. Using an Augustinian analogy of a temple, he stated that, there were, ‘dos templos, el uno consagrado a virtud y el otro a honor, los cuales eran en tal manera hedificados que ninguno podía entrar al de honor si primero no pasava por el de virtud, en significación que todo onbre deve ser ante virtuoso que meresca aver honor.’

Valera argued, therefore, that ennoblement was a two-step process. Firstly, it required that the individual themselves was virtuous and showed this through virtuous acts. However, such a person would not become noble until they were chosen by the prince. It was thus the role of the king to choose the virtuous and reward them with the honour of nobility. Valera warned that, ‘con mucha diligencia deven los príncipes considerar a quién dan las dignidades, porque a nuestro Señor den buena cuenta de los reinos e señoríos a ellos encomendados’. For Valera, the duty of choosing worthy noblemen was of the utmost importance to a king. To choose badly meant endangering the kingdom and even constituted a mortal sin before God.

The distribution of offices and titles hinged on the king having a good understanding of what Aristotle had termed distributive justice. Valera recognised that the choice was difficult, especially as virtue was hard to define. Drawing on Aristotle’s *Ethics*, he argued that virtues and vices existed on a scale of two extremes. A balance was required to be virtuous and this balance was often hard to distinguish. Valera’s view of nobility corresponded closely with contemporary views on knighthood. Knights were meant to be knighted in recognition of their great deeds of arms. In displaying their virtue through martial prowess they were ennobled through the elaborate knighting ceremony, as Valera himself had been following his bravery at the siege of Huelma.

Valera in the *Espejo* was eager to remind his readers that nobility could be lost and stated that, ‘por los delictos viene la infamia, e por la infamia la dignidad e nobleza se pierde.’ Valera, in a pointed reference to family conflict stated, ‘que Caín mató Abel, por lo qual perdió la nobleza de su padre.’ Valera gave his

---

414 Ibid. ‘given solely by the grace of the prince and not by some other necessity by which he is constrained to give it.’
415 Ibid. ‘honour is the reward for virtue.’
416 Ibid. ‘two temples, one consecrated to virtue and one to honour which were in such a way made that nobody could enter the Temple of Honour if he had not first passed through the Temple of Virtue, in recognition that all men should be virtuous before being deserving of receiving honour.’ The same idea is seen in Gonville and Caius College Cambridge where graduating students pass first through the gate of virtue and then through the gate of honour.
417 Ibid., 94. ‘princes should be very diligent about who they give offices to because good account should be given to Our Lord of the kingdoms entrusted to them’.
418 Ibid., 93–94.
419 Ibid., 98. ‘through crimes comes infamy and by infamy titles and nobility are lost.’
420 Ibid. ‘that in killing Abel Cain lost the nobility of his father.’
readers numerous examples from Ancient Rome of well-known figures whose misdeeds had led them to lose their nobility. For a Castilian readership, Valera’s words had a special significance. By 1441, the kingdom was filled with knights who were in open opposition to King Juan and, by the laws in the Siete Partidas, committing treason. The image of fratricide conjured up by Valera’s reference to Cain and Abel was a powerful one, as the kingdom stood on the brink of civil war. Valera never mentioned the civil war explicitly in the Espejo, but this does not mean that his views were not coloured by the events in Castile. Rather, the conflict shaped his critical stance on the Castilian nobility. He argued that they had no entitlement to virtue and the work served as a pointed reminder that nobility was a royal gift and one that could be removed at any time. Whilst Valera had proven his virtue and been ennobled as a result, the vast majority of his fellow courtiers owed their status and titles to inheritance. Valera recognised the difficulty of this status quo in the Espejo, but nonetheless remarked that whilst some were virtuous, ‘así otros viciosamente biviendo, perdieron la nobleza e dignidades que sus progenitores con grandes trabajos ganaron’. Valera’s argument was clear; those knights at the Castilian court who openly defied the king endangered their very existence as noblemen.

Alonso de Cartagena in the Doctrinal was much more explicit about how his views had been shaped by the political situation in Castile. Cartagena had made his views clear in a letter to the Marquis of Santillana. The reply, discussed in the previous chapter, revealed Alonso’s dismay at the civil war in Castile. It is unsurprising then to find that Cartagena devoted the third book of the Doctrinal almost exclusively to the civil war and its causes. Cartagena argued knightly violence was the issue and, like Valera, believed that there were fundamental issues with how the Castilian nobility viewed their office. Knightly violence had been a matter of great concern for clerical commentators on chivalry. As Kaeuper has argued, there was a fundamental connection between the practice of violence and chivalric honour. Violence through war, jousts or duels was, for many knights, a path to honour and martial prowess was central to knightly identity. In his biography of the knight don Pero Niño, composed during Juan’s reign, Gutierre Díaz de Gamez devoted great attention to describing his master’s great feats of arms. He described how, at the Siege of Tuy against the Portuguese in 1397, Pero Niño fought with a famous soldier named Gómez de Domalio. After a long fight Pero Niño, ‘dio al Gómez tal golpe por encima del escudo, que le fendió bien un palmo e[n] la cabeza fasta los ojos.’ He described Pero Niño as drenched in blood, his sword so worn from combat that its blade was toothed like saw.

---

421 Ibid. ‘others through immoral living lost the nobility and titles that their ancestors gained with great deeds’.  
422 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la questión fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana’.  
424 Richard W. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe, 149.  
425 Gutierre Díaz de Gamez, El Victorial, 252.  
426 Ibid. ‘gave Gómez such a great blow above the shield that he split his head at a hands width to the eyes.’  
427 Ibid., 253.
diga tanto deste cavallero en tan poco tiempo’, as he explained Niño’s prowess in battle was a gift from God and proof of his chivalric virtue.\textsuperscript{428} It was this link that Cartagena sought to break in the *Doctrinal*.

The third book of the *Doctrinal* poured scorn on the knightly obsession with honour based violence and forcefully argued that the culture of duelling and jousting had a causal impact on the unfolding civil war. Clerical opposition to knightly violence was nothing new, but Cartagena raised new objections. He complained that, ‘aquello en uno con los debates de casa mesclauan guerras honrosas de fuera.’\textsuperscript{429} Cartagena continued, ‘veemos el reyno lleno de platas e de guardabraços e estar en paz los de Granada, e el fermoso meneo de las armas exerçitarse en ayuntar huestes contra los parientes e contra los que deuian ser amigos, o en justas o en torneos, de lo qual lo vno es aboresçible e abominable e cosa que trae desonrra e destruyçion, lo otro vn juego o ensaye mas no principal acto de la caualleria.’\textsuperscript{430} Cartagena, in his argument, went far beyond Valera’s views in the *Espejo*. Whilst both commentators took issue with the way in which knights viewed chivalry, Valera did not link the practice of knightly violence in tournaments and jousts to the civil war. Rather, he had chosen to focus on the way in which noblemen viewed their place in society and their relationship to the king. However, for Cartagena, tournaments were no mere games but dangerous perversions of the chivalric ideal. If knights had no issue with maiming or killing friends and relatives for sport, then they would have little problem with doing it in war. His frustration was compounded by the lack of progress in the invasion of Granada, as the kingdom’s nobility became mired in factional struggles at court. As Fallows has suggested, Cartagena’s argument marked a departure from the view that tournaments were military training. For Alonso, the elaborate jousts and tournaments of Juan II’s reign served no such military purpose, but were dangerous distractions from a knight’s duties.

Cartagena’s focus on knightly violence led him to address the issue of rieptos or duels and desafios, challenges to combat. Like jousting, to Cartagena they were a dangerous aspect of the knightly obsession with misdirected violence. Cartagena’s aim was to try and stem the tide of interpersonal violence between members of the Castilian court. As he had remarked in his letter to Íñigo López de Mendoza, the conflict was a courtly one and much of the violence stemmed from the relations between a small number of the kingdom’s most powerful knights. In seeking to end such interpersonal disputes, Cartagena hoped to prevent the bloodshed of the civil war. He argued that anyone challenging a fellow knight without the authority of a judge was committing treason. This was a plea aimed at trying to keep the peace and an attempt to preserve royal authority. Tensions at court were running high and this inevitably brought

\textsuperscript{428} Ibid., 254. ‘no one should marvel that I have said so much of this knight in so little time’.

\textsuperscript{429} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 254–55. ‘those in one of those household debates confuse them with honourable external wars.’

\textsuperscript{430} Ibid., 255. ‘we see the kingdom full of plate and armour, at peace with Granada and the handsome use of arms practiced in armies against relations and against those that should be friends, or in jousts and tournaments of which one is abhorrent and abominable and is a thing that brings dishonour and destruction, the other, a game or trial and not a principal act of chivalry.’ I have translated ‘platas e guardabraços’ here as ‘plate and armour’, an exact translation would be ‘plate and arm guards’. The first translation was chosen to preserve the flow of the prose.
violence. Affronts to honour became inexorably bound up with the factional violence at court. The aforementioned letter of challenge sent between Lope de Mendoza and Pedro de Ayala is exemplary of this. Lope used the civil war as an excuse to bring up a near century old affront to his honour. Alonso stated that knights in Spain, unlike elsewhere, ‘tienen otro vinculo, es a saber, que entre ellos antiguamente fue fecha expresa amistad’. Alonso argued that challenges to combat were not only disloyal, but also treasonous betrayals of the very cornerstone of the Castilian knightly ethos. This erosion of the bond between men cannot have been clearer than during the early 1440s. The increasingly violent struggle for power between the rebels and Álvaro de Luna brought heated arguments between individuals. The Crónica de Juan II reveals that both Enrique and Álvaro challenged one another to personal combat on a number of occasions. The challenges were no doubt just knightly posturing as it is extremely unlikely that the two men had ever intended to meet in individual combat. The challenges were not limited to the commanders; other knights took the political stance of their opponents as cause to issue challenges. There are a number of letters of challenge surviving from the head of Juan II’s royal guard to members of the Infantes’ faction. Letters of challenge were common and, like the letter by Lope de Mendoza to Pedro de Ayala, they often took the form of long and verbose insults detailing the nature of the grievance. Combat of this sort did have a legal grounding. Judicial combat as a means of proof might be used when there was little evidence available for wrongdoing. Treason was precisely such a case. However, Cartagena’s opposition to the use of challenges to combat was plain to see.

Cartagena’s dislike for honour based violence extended to jousting. As he had said in the introduction to the work, he found it remarkable that Castile’s knights were willing to take up arms for sport, but not for a just war. He explicitly linked jousting to the violence at court and placed it alongside civil war as a misuse of arms. Cartagena’s concerns about jousting might be easy to dismiss as simple clerical opposition to the sport. As Cartagena reminded his readers, jousting had been outlawed by several popes. However, within a strictly Castilian context, Cartagena’s argument that jousting and the civil war were linked had real weight. Juan’s long reign had seen a proliferation of jousting and pageantry and he had largely been responsible for the rise in popularity of European style tournaments at the royal court. These events were often spectacular displays of wealth and power, as much pieces of theatre as military events. Over the course of the fifteenth century, they had increasingly become the staging ground for grand political displays linked to the factional violence at court. The most famous example was undoubtedly the tournaments staged in

431 Ibid., 263. ‘they had another bond, it is known, that between them historically was made a bond of friendship.’
432 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 554.
433 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. RES/27. Copias de cartas de batallas y textos del siglo XV’ (s.xv), fol. 4r–17r.
435 Ibid.
436 Teofilo F. Ruiz, A King Travels, 220–21.
Valladolid in 1428 by the Infantes of Aragon. The jousts were a last throw of the dice by the Infantes as power slipped from their grasp. Luna had been welcomed back to court only a few months before and, on the 18th May, the Infante Enrique responded with a display of arms like no other. The event, known as the *Pasaje peligroso* was a lavish and ostentatious display of the Infante Enrique’s power at court in the face of mounting opposition to the Infantes of Aragon’s presence. The stage for the event was ‘un castillo muy hermoso de madera cubierto de lienzos, en que habia muros é torres con sus petriles é almenas hácia la parte de fuera, é pintado todo de tal manera que parescia de piedra; é de la parte de dentro salas é cámeras así bien ordenadas como seria en una buena fortaleza.’ Near the lists stood a huge triumphal arch and the jousting was presided over by the goddess Fortune, seated on a golden throne and flanked by a wheel. The participants jousted dressed in lavish costumes, the king himself crowned with, ‘diademas de mariposas.’ Ruiz has estimated the cost of the event to have been between ten to fifteen thousand florins, an exorbitant cost for what amounted to an afternoon of jousting. However, Enrique was buying more than just jousting. The event was laden with political symbolism. From the place of Fortune, to the elaborate costumes and sets, a vast amount of effort and thought had gone into the joust. The significance of this joust will be explored in more detail in the fourth chapter of this study. Nevertheless, the event formed part of a much larger pattern of chivalric display at the royal court. Jousts and tournaments marked the rise and fall of the kingdom’s political factions. No mere games, these were integral parts of the factional politics of fifteenth-century Castile.

Cartagena and Valera had responded to the conflict in quite different ways, but reached similar conclusions. Both commentators had seen fault in the knights of Juan’s kingdom and their work invited their readers to reflect on the nature of chivalry. Both commentators argued there was an unbreakable link between noblemen and the king. For Valera, this came in the form of the process of ennoblement itself. Nobility hinged on royal approval and recognition and Valera was eager to argue that it did not exist independently of the crown. Citing Bartolus, he stated that, ‘si alguno por mill años virtuosamente biviese y el príncipe mucho lo amase, que sienpre quedaría popular o plebeo, hasta que por el príncipe le sea dada alguna dignidad o nobleza.’ Valera’s argument made nobility dependent on royal favour and the *Espejo* reminded his readers that it was a ‘quality’ which could be gained or lost. Within the context of the civil war, this was a powerful argument for noble loyalty. By rebelling against the king, knights risked severing the link to royal

---

437 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II*. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 20.
438 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, 'Crónica de Juan II', 446. ‘very handsome castle of wood, covered with cloth in a part of the square in Valladolid, and it had walls and towers and battlements on the outside of it, and it was painted in such a way that it seemed to be of stone and the interior of it had rooms and chambers, well ordered as if it was a good fortress’.
439 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II*. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 22. ‘diadems of butterflies’.
441 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 94. ‘even if someone lived virtuously for a thousand years and the prince loved him, he would always remain common or a pleb until he was gifted some dignity or nobility by the prince’.
favour needed for knighthood. There were, of course, almost no cases of noblemen losing their nobility as a result of their actions. Even the worst figures of Juan’s reign managed to cling to their offices and status, despite committing treason on multiple occasions. The ritual stripping of the Infante Enrique of the Mastership of the Order of Santiago is one of the few glimpses we get of such a ceremony taking place. At Uclés in 1431, the commanders of the order stripped a statue of the Infante of his sword, cape and spurs to signify his loss of the office. However, others like the Count of Castro, the adelantado mayor and the Admiral suffered no such humiliation. Valera’s royal-centric view of chivalry and knighthood was possibly a reaction to the events of his day. Whilst Valera never made this explicit, it is easy to see how rampant noble disloyalty might have produced a view of knighthood structured around royal authority.

Cartagena’s chivalric ideal also emphasised loyalty and importance of royal service and it is clear that he believed a rebellious knight could never be a chivalrous one. His choice of sources left the reader in little doubt that chivalry and royal authority were closely intertwined. The Siete Partidas, by their very nature, carried the weight of royal authority and this was, in part, why Cartagena considered them an ideal source for knightly good conduct. His view of knighthood, structured around the law, left little room for ambiguity. In taking such an approach, Cartagena sought to show that knighthood was governed by a very concrete set of rules. He largely dispensed with the poorly defined terminology favoured by many authors in favour of the Partidas’ precise terminology. Alonso’s ideal of knightly loyalty to the king, learning and restraint in chivalric violence seemed a far cry from Gómez de Sandoval’s brand of chivalry. Gómez de Sandoval rebelled against King Juan repeatedly, murdered his own wife over a matter of honour and was described as anything but learned by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán. The Doctrinal was both a reaction to the civil war and a very pointed criticism of Gómez de Sandoval himself. Noel Fallows has suggested that Sandoval was, ‘just the sort of noble whose semi-psychotic self-interest Cartagena wished to redirect toward more altruistic causes.’ Cartagena’s work was filled with many of the laws which Gómez de Sandoval spent much of Juan’s reign breaking. It would seem unlikely that the Doctrinal was an attempt at reforming Gómez de Sandoval; by 1444 he was well on his way to a direct clash with King Juan and Luna as part of the Infantes faction. Rather, it was a piece of pointed criticism. Gómez de Sandoval fell well short of Cartagena’s own chivalric ideal and, although he repeatedly referred to him as a, ‘muy virtuoso cauallero’, it’s doubtful this was anything more than authorial flattery. Like many of the Infantes’ supporters, Gómez de Sandoval held lands in both Castile and Navarre and owed loyalty to two kings. Cartagena, through his

---

442 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1159. Avisación de la dignidad real’ (s.xv), fol. 18r. The Avisación de la dignidad real produced during the fifteenth century describes a very similar ceremony for the ritual stripping of knighthood.

443 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 86–87. This ritual stripping of knighthood is extremely significant. The event was a public shaming of the Infante and a confirmation to all present that he had lost his authority in the order.

444 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 82.


use of law, sought to define knighthood within an exclusively Castilian framework. This is, perhaps, Cartagena’s most powerful point and it is one largely hidden from view. His use of sources defined chivalry in a way which was irreconcilable with the rebels arrayed against the king and Luna. The *Doctrinal de los Caballeros* also reinforced the link between king and nobility through the inclusion of the statutes of the Order of the Band, the only non-legal work to be cited at length. The *Doctrinal* represents one of the only extant records of the Order’s statutes and they are a valuable source in their own right. The presence of the statutes has been seen by Fallows as a concession by Cartagena to jousting in controlled circumstances. Cartagena was a pragmatist and he no doubt realised that no matter how much scorn he poured on knightly violence, his words were unlikely to diminish the popularity of jousting. However, the inclusion of the statutes hints at another important aspect of the relationship between the king and his nobility. Jonathan D’Arcy Dacre Boulton has suggested that the Order of the Band had declined to insignificance by Juan’s reign, having largely been replaced by the Order of the Scale (*Escama*). However, Juan made frequent use of the device of the Band, even having himself portrayed wearing it on coinage minted during his reign. The Order’s banner was one of the four taken to Toledo Cathedral to be blessed before the invasion of Granada and it was left with the newly installed Yusuf IV as a sign of Castilian authority. Juan used the Order as its founder Alfonso XI had, and the statutes fitted perfectly with Cartagena’s royal-centric view of chivalry. The Order’s close personal connection to the monarch re-enforced the strong link between the king and the knights of court, a connection which Juan II himself had sought to cultivate. Juan patronised two other chivalric orders alongside the Order of the Band, the aforementioned Order of the Scale and the lesser known Order of the *Ristre*. Juan appears to have understood the importance of these devices and chivalric orders in fostering links between the crown and nobility. These orders perpetuated a view of chivalry defined by rules, something that Cartagena himself was eager to promote. The inclusion of this section was likely a nod to King Juan II’s own interests, as well as representing another facet of the relationship between the king and the nobility.

Both Valera and Cartagena situated the king in pride of place in their chivalric ideals. For Alonso, the *Siete Partidas* as the governing force of chivalry meant that the king had a central role in the construction of knighthood and its continuing practice. Both authors’ views developed at a time of declining royal authority and open conflict between the king and his nobility. This conflict was reflected in their understanding of

---

448 Ibid., 291–302.
451 Pedro Carrillo de Hucete, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo*, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 90–106.
the king’s place in chivalry. However, there were two sides to this relationship and thus far the attention has fallen squarely on the nobility themselves. The final section of this chapter will look to the other side of this relationship, to the role of the king and the issues raised by Juan’s ineffectual rule.

The Problem of the King

Valera, in the *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, put forward an ideal where the prince would choose the virtuous from amongst his people and reward them with the honour of nobility. In the *Espejo*, Valera chose to largely focus on one side of this mechanism, the nobility themselves. In 1446, around five years after he had written the *Espejo*, Valera completed his second work, the *Exortación de la pas*. The work was, as the name suggests, a plea for peace in Castile and in the work Valera returned to the argument which he had put forward in the *Espejo*, albeit this time with a focus on the king and his failings in managing the nobility. Juan’s shortcomings have been recognised by historians, including Jocelyn Hillgarth, who stated that the king seemed to never emerge from a ‘perennial minority’ and Joseph O’Callaghan who labelled him a weak king with no aptitude for governance. However, Juan’s failings were rarely recognised by contemporaries, or if they were, those sentiments were seldom committed to writing. The *Exortación*, in many ways, formed a second part to the *Espejo* and represented a further reassessment of the nature of chivalry and nobility at the Castilian court in the wake of the civil war.

Valera opened the work in a tone reminiscent of his correspondence with the king. Addressing Juan directly he stated, ‘si las pequeñas cosas, Príncipe muy esclarecido, por concordia se augmentan e crescen e las muy grandes por discordia se consumen e gastan -como la razón natural, e todo entendimiento humano, quanto quier que sea baxo, claramente demuestra; e avemos manifestos enxeplos de Troya, Tebas, Roma, Cartago, Babilonia, Athenas, Macedonia, e otros grandes imperios e principados- quánto a todo príncipe convenga la pas e concordia procurar, a toda persona discreta asís deve ser manifiesto.’ The introduction set the tone for the rest of the work. The implication of this opening passage was deeply offensive. Valera’s point was simple. It was the role of the king to secure peace in the kingdom and this was something that King Juan II had woefully failed to achieve. Without peace, Valera argued, ‘todo reino se destruye; sin ella toda provincia se gasta; sin ella toda cosa se consume.’ In the opening sections of the text, Valera dwelt on the damage caused by the civil war and warned Juan that, ‘como bive la salamandra en el fuego, así en

---


455 Diego de Valera, ‘Exortación de la pas’, 77. ‘if the small things, most illustrious Prince, are grown and augmented through peace and the great through discord are consumed and spent, as natural reason and all human understanding, however low it is, clearly shows, of which we have the manifest examples of Troy, Thebes, Rome, Carthage, Babylon, Athens, Macedonia and other great empires and principalities- how it falls to every prince to procure peace and Harmony, to all discreet persons this is obvious.’

456 Ibid. ‘all in the kingdom is destroyed, without it every province is wasted and without it everything is consumed.’
la discordia biven algunos’. The reference was no doubt to troublesome courtiers, who sought advancement from the unrest in the kingdom, although it is not clear who he considered these ‘salamanders’ to be. By 1446, Valera had aligned himself with the Estúñiga family, who continued to oppose Álvaro de Luna after the Infantes’ defeat. Addressing King Juan he said, ‘Señor, vos solo, que de tales pasiones devéis ser ageno, mirad con los ojos de la discreción los innumerables insultos e daños, muertes e robos de infinitos onbres, despoblamientos de cibdades e villas, trastornamientos de coronas e reinos a que ha dado cabsa la muy dañosa enemiga discordia.’ He appealed for Juan to assume a position removed from the squabbles at court and to take up his primary role of making peace. However, for Valera this meant Juan understanding the nature of his failings and tackling head on his mismanagement of the nobility.

Valera’s focus on the role of the king would appear to be a reversal of the stance which he had taken in the Espejo. However, this was not the case. Rather, the Exortación sheds light on the other side of the relationship between the king and nobility. Citing Sallust and Ambrosius, Valera urged the King Juan to choose his counsellors wisely and he stated that now, more than ever, it was important that the men around him gave genuine advice. Valera was greatly concerned about noble duplicity and suggested that Juan made his counsellors take an oath.

Valera suggested there were few true men of stature and authority at court, who were removed enough from events, to aid Juan in making peace. Almost all of the great Castilian noblemen had been involved with one of the court factions and thus, as Valera argued, they were unable to place the good of the kingdom before their own needs. However, with whom did the fault lie for the shortcomings of the Castilian nobility? Both Alonso de Cartagena and Íñigo López de Mendoza had laid the blame for the troubles at the feet of the nobility and their works suggested that the nobility lacked virtue. However, if Valera’s argument in the Espejo was to be believed, then things were not quite so simple. The king had a vital role in the process of ennoblement. Nobility existed, according to Valera, solely by the grace of the king. It was the role of the king to choose the virtuous and reward them with the honour of nobility. As Valera had stated, this was a difficult task. The king had to be able to recognise virtue from amongst his people and be able to reward it appropriately. In the Exortación, Valera explained that this had a very real significance for the king. Citing Alonso de Cartagena’s speech to the Council of Basel, he argued that the quality of the kingdom’s noblemen

457 Ibid., 78. ‘like the salamander that thrive in flame, so some live in discord’.
458 Ibid. ‘Lord, you alone, who should be removed from these passions [court factionalism], look with eyes of discretion on the innumerable insults and damages, the death and robbery of infinite people, the depopulation of cities and towns, the upheaval of crowns and kingdoms which was caused by that most dangerous enemy, discord.’
459 Ibid.
460 Ibid.
461 Ibid. ‘If in our days we could return to life those two Catos, those two Scipios, Marcus Curtius, Gaius Marius, Tiberius, Paullus Aemillus, Attilius Regulus, Socrates or Diogenes, men of bearing and great authority, scorners of human affairs!’
would have an impact on Juan’s own standing in an international setting. There should be, he explained, four dukes, twelve counts and thirty seven men of quality.\textsuperscript{462} It was up to the king to distribute these titles prudently and justly. His argument was rooted in an Aristotelian understanding of justice, defined by Valera as, ‘dar a cada uno lo que suyo es o debe ser, la común utilidad guardada.’\textsuperscript{463} It was this issue that the rest of the \textit{Exortación} addressed.

Valera urged the king to be just and he explained that this meant the habitual doing of just acts.\textsuperscript{464} He pleaded with Juan that if he could have only one virtue, he should have justice as, ‘ésta verdaderamente exerciendo todas las otras virtudes se exercitan.’\textsuperscript{465} Using Aristotle’s definition, he divided justice into two parts, distributive and commutative. The \textit{Exortación} argued that for the public good the king had to distribute titles and offices to those that were deserving and it warned that, if the king did not do this then great problems would follow.\textsuperscript{466} The issue was not that Juan had been reticent in distributing offices, titles and lands. Valera himself commented in his \textit{Crónica abreviata} how Juan had created a vast number of new noble titles.\textsuperscript{467} The seizure of the Infantes’ lands in 1430 paved the way for a sizeable redistribution of wealth and titles to Juan’s loyal supporters. Amongst those who benefitted were, Pedro Fernández de Velasco who was made Count of Haro and Pedro de Estúñiga who was made Count of Ledesma.\textsuperscript{468} The defeat of the Infantes’ faction at Olmedo in 1445 had heralded another wave of substantial land grants, this time most notably to Íñigo López de Mendoza, whose loyalty earned him the title of Marquis of Santillana and to Juan Pacheco who was made Marquis of Villena.\textsuperscript{469} However, the chief recipient of royal favour had been Álvaro de Luna. His astronomical rise to power had seen him accrue vast land holdings, as well as the titles of constable of Castile and Master of the Order of Santiago. The implication of Valera’s words was that Juan had mismanaged the distribution of patronage. Valera here revealed his political standing. His words strongly suggest that he opposed Luna’s presence at court and had shifted his stance to oppose the constable’s faction at court. Valera’s argument was thus that the king had failed to reward the virtuous or, more worryingly, wilfully given lands, titles and offices to those who were underserving. Without a monarch that was capable of justly distributing honour, the very mechanism by which knighthood and nobility functioned broke down. Without effective distributive justice, the virtuous went unrewarded and this lack of royal attention bred unrest.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{462} Ibid., 79. I have here translated ‘varones’ to mean men of quality.
\item \textsuperscript{463} Ibid., 80. ‘giving to each one what is his own or should be, so protecting the common good.’
\item \textsuperscript{464} Ibid., 81.
\item \textsuperscript{465} Ibid. ‘truly through it all other virtues are exercised.’
\item \textsuperscript{466} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{467} Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, \textit{Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (Crónica abreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera)}, 316.
\item \textsuperscript{468} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{469} For more on Don Juan Pacheco’s rise to power see: Nancy F. Marino, \textit{Don Juan Pacheco: Wealth and Power in Late Medieval Spain}, 311:21–63.
\end{itemize}
In the final pages of the work, Valera turned his attention to punishment and to the king’s role in judging his subjects’ actions. Valera here argued for peace and clemency. His words reveal how fragile he felt the king’s position was in 1447. He warned Juan that, he must not be motivated by a desire for vengeance and, citing Seneca, he argued that the king should pardon all except the most serious criminals. Valera reasoned that, ‘ésta sola faze diferencia entre el rey e el tirano: ca el poder egual es, mas el tirano mata con crueldad, el rey no da pena, salvo por gran nescesidad e rasón, el tirano tiene las armas para ofender la republica, el rey para defenderla.’ Valera was trying to warn Juan away from pursuing vengeance against his enemies. The Infantes faction had seen widespread noble support. In 1441, at the height of the rebellion, only a handful of noblemen remained true to King Juan and Luna. Citing the examples of Nero, Cyrus, Diocletian and Diomedes of Thrace, Valera warned Juan of the perils of seeking vengeance against his own people. For Valera, justice and clemency marked the path to peace and the end of the civil war. His work sought to persuade Juan to remember his duties and role in society. He pleaded with Juan that if he could possess but one virtue then it should be justice. Rather than conflicting with his earlier ideas, the Exortación had examined the other side of the relationship between the king and his nobility.

Conclusion

Both Valera and Cartagena presented a view of chivalry focused on the king and it was a view that Juan himself sought to foster through chivalric orders and pageantry. However, it was clear to Valera that Juan had not done what was necessary to ensure peace and stability in the kingdom. His weak rule and poor management of the nobility had fundamentally undermined how he believed chivalry functioned in Castile. The traditional place of the king at the heart of the Castilian chivalric ethos demanded a strong figure, capable of managing the kingdom’s unruly nobility. In this regard, Juan had failed woefully. However, the king’s failings were matched by those of the nobles themselves. Both Cartagena and Valera poured scorn on the actions of Castile’s noblemen. Their views of chivalry were shaped by the conflict around them and the behaviour of the very highest ranks of the Castilian nobility. The emphasis on personal virtue found in both the Espejo de verdadera nobleza and the Doctrinal de los caualleros sought to dispel the idea that lineage brought with it an entitlement to virtue. Rather, nobility had to be earned. They constructed a view of knighthood which invited noblemen to prove their worth through loyalty and adherence to the law. Chivalry was the means by which these rebellious noblemen could be controlled and, for both Cartagena and Valera, it offered the definition of virtue to which they should be held. Their work stood against a feeling amongst the commentators of Juan’s court that there was something very wrong with the way in which the kingdom’s knights understood their office. In the turmoil of civil war, both sides of the complex relationship between

471 Ibid. ‘this alone is the difference between a king and tyrant, since power is equal, the tyrant kills with cruelty but the king does not give punishment, except for with great necessity and reason, the tyrant has arms to attack the republic whilst the king defends it.’
472 Ibid.
the king and his knights had broken down. Chivalry was a performance and one that required a royal audience. The only problem was that nobody was acting, and the audience had long since stopped watching.
Chapter IV

Chivalry and Nobility at the Castilian Court

Introduction

The latter years of Juan’s reign saw a lively debate on both chivalry and the definition of nobility. Cartagena and Valera’s works formed part of a broader discussion of knighthood and nobility. This chapter will seek to expand on the analysis of Cartagena and Valera’s work in the previous chapters and explore the wider literary context of their work. The idea of chivalry and nobility through virtue challenged the place of lineage. Armed with the ideas of Italian authors such as Bartolus of Sassoferrato, reformers sought to erode the traditional foundations of nobility. However, the chivalric debate had two sides. The Galician poet Juan Rodríguez del Padrón in the Cadira de honor launched a staunch rebuttal of the reformers’ arguments. Few others committed a defence of lineage to writing but, it is unlikely that Rodríguez del Padrón was alone in this. The chronicles and knightly biographies of Juan’s reign offer tentative clues of the other side of the discussion. The reformer’s arguments were given weight by humanist writing from Italy, the influx of new Christians into Castilian society and the upheaval of the civil war. Cartagena was a pivotal part of an intellectual network at court which determined the course of the chivalric debate in fifteenth-century Castile. The discussion continued well after he himself had ceased writing on chivalry and, in the 1450s, his students Alfonso Fernández de Palencia and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo continued the discussion on knighthood and nobility. This chapter aims to explore the changing nature of noble status at the Castilian royal court during the latter years of Juan’s reign and, in doing so, set Cartagena’s views in their broader context.

For many of the commentators writing in the latter years of Juan’s troubled reign, their arguments formed part of a concerted effort to end the civil crisis. Their criticisms were meant to be constructive and offer a path towards ending the political and civil crisis in the kingdom. The problem was one that they believed could be corrected by changing how the Castilian nobility saw their place in society. Chivalry, as the governing force of noble behaviour at court and on the battlefield, was the means to affect this change. Moreover, knighthood represented the most ubiquitous form of nobility in Castile. It was an office held by almost every secular nobleman, from the kingdom’s most powerful noble families, to those far lower down the social scale. Their arguments did not mean a destruction of the established order but rather, they argued, a change in how the knights of the royal court understood their office. Moreover, addressing noble behaviour invariably meant doing so through the lens of chivalry. The period was one which thus saw the emergence of two distinct views on knighthood and nobility at the Castilian court. Use of the term debate might be slightly disingenuous, as the authors in question did not engage directly with one another and there is little evidence they read each other’s work. Nevertheless, the idea of a debate does convey the sense of opposing views which, whilst not engaging one another directly, did so on a conceptual level. Rodríguez
del Padrón in his *Cadira de honor* engaged with the intellectual footing of Valera’s views on nobility and Valera similarly attacked the views which gave rise to Rodríguez del Padrón’s work.

The attempts at reform were ultimately motivated by a desire to see the kingdom’s nobility returned to loyal service to the king. However, reforming chivalry invited a broader discussion of nobility. This reform opened the discussion to other related issues, including the place of *conversos* in noble society. Cartagena and Valera were emblematic of a group whose place at court challenged the place of the nobility by blood. The *conversos* were not the only ones who were the target of accusations of unjust ennoblement. The turmoil of Juan’s reign saw the downfall of a number of powerful noblemen and the rise of others from the ashes of conflict, as lands were redistributed in 1431 and 1445. Chief amongst these social climbers was Álvaro de Luna. His ascendancy divided the court and brought both the praise of Juan de Mena’s *Laberinto de Fortuna* and the condemnation of Santillana’s *Doctrinal de privados* and Guzmán’s *Generaciones y semblanzas*.473 The debate also bore the hallmarks of humanist influence. Civic duty and service to the republic became closely woven into the discussion of knighthood and nobility. The chivalric ideal was shaped by literary echoes of the ancient past. These issues formed a backdrop to the development of the debate at the Castilian court.

The issues boiled down to the question of how to be a knight at the Castilian court. Factionalism, instability and intellectual change meant that this question had no clear answer. However, for commentators like Alonso de Cartagena writing in the mid-fifteenth century, grappling with it became essential to both solving the political crisis, and addressing the changing nature of knighthood in Castile.

**The Castilian Nobility**

The diverse nature of the Castilian nobility, and the complex terminology of knighthood, has been discussed at length in the introduction.474 This complex social structure underlay the debate surrounding nobility at the Castilian court. The work of the chivalric commentators raised questions over the path to nobility and sought to define its limits. Much of the debate reflected the ambiguity over whether knighthood brought with it noble office and, importantly, what that office entailed. For some, the bestowal of knighthood was enough to make a man noble, for others title and social standing had to be supported by lineage and wealth. The following pages will explore this discussion in more detail.

---

474 See pages 7-20.
This complex social structure formed the background to the Castilian debate on nobility. For the noblemen of the Castilian court, knighthood was central to how they viewed their office and many held a view that it revolved around faith, violence and lineage. It was an ideal which Cartagena referenced in the \textit{Defensorium unitatis christianae} where he considered what set the nobility apart from the rest of society.\footnote{Benzion Netanyahu, \textit{The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain}, 557–58.} For Cartagena, knighthood, and the knightly practice of war on horseback clad in armour, was a defining aspect of noble identity. Indeed, for him the two ideas were inseparable.

‘One of the differences among people is that some are considered noble and others ignoble. It is a characteristic of nobles to rise to higher pursuits, although they are difficult and separate their actions from all mean activities. On the other hand, it is characteristic of the ignoble people to lead their lives under more tranquil and laborious arts. Hence the fact that military exercise, which exceeds all other exercises in effort and danger is nevertheless considered peculiar to the nobles because it is the nearest to virtue and also full of grace and courage. And although the common people sometimes use arms and some of them brandish lances and swords they do it in a nevertheless rustic manner with both feet fixed on the ground. Nor do they dare resist the armed nobility. Military training, an equestrian charge and doing battle under the banners of princes with head and breast shielded and shinbones covered with iron mixed with steel and with trumpets blowing is surely an action of the nobility; the rustics and plebians so long as they remain plebians do not use this manner of fighting. They are intent therefore on the cultivation of fields and other occupations of rustic and urban care which although they are worthy professions are nevertheless not of the beauty or fortitude that is the military art.’\footnote{Alonso de Cartagena, \textit{Alonso de Cartagena y el defensorium unitatis christianae. Introducción histórica, traducción y notas de Guillermo Verdiño-Díaz}, 214–15; Benzion Netanyahu, \textit{The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain}, 557–58. The translation of the passage from the \textit{Defensorium} is Netanyahu’s.}

Gutierre Díaz de Gamez in \textit{El Victorial} gave a similar view of Castilian knightly identity. Díaz de Gamez composed his account of Pero Niño’s life in the mid 1430s. Pero Niño was an accomplished soldier who fought as a corsair against the Moors in the Mediterranean, and against the English by raiding the south coast of England as a mercenary during the Hundred Years War. He supported Juan II and Luna against the Infantes as one of the commanders charged with bringing the Infantes’ fortresses under royal control.\footnote{Gutierre Díaz de Gamez, \textit{El Victorial}, 518–19.} In 1431, he was made the first Count of Buelna as part of the mass grants of lands to royal supporters in the wake of the Infantes’ exile. He participated in Luna’s invasion of Granada and is listed in the \textit{Crónica del halconero} as one of the commanders of the royal army.\footnote{Pedro Carrillo de Huete, \textit{Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán}, 101.} His biography ends around 1434, but Pero Niño continued to be an active member of the royal court until his death in 1453. In the opening sections of \textit{El Victorial}, Díaz de Gamez gave an intriguing insight into the education of a young knight. Pero Niño’s
knightly education began much like those of his contemporaries, with a mix of schooling and training for war. He describes how, aged ten, Pero Niño’s education was entrusted to, ‘un hombre sabio e entendido, para que lo enseñase e doctrinas en todas las buenas costumbres que pertenezcan aver a fidalgo bueno e noble.’ The likely fictitious exchange between a young Pero Niño and his teacher sheds light on what Díaz de Gamez felt was the essence of noble life. First and foremost, the man reminded Pero Niño, ‘cómo soys de grand linage, e cómo aquella rueda del mundo que nunca está queda, nin dexa ser siempre las cosas en un estado, abaxó el vuestro muy honrado linage, e de los grandes fizo pequeños, e de los altos fizo baxos e pobres.’ He then urged Pero Niño to devote his life to chivalry. The learned man next exhorted Pero Niño to, ‘ante todas cosas conosçed a Dios’, as knowledge of God would lead to an understanding of all things. He encouraged Pero Niño to take up arms against the enemies of the faith and remarked that, ‘ésta es buena cavallería, la mejor que ningund cavallero puede fazer: pelear por su ley e fe, quanto más teniendo la verdad.’ Díaz de Gamez encouraged his readers to follow the example of ‘Santiago the knight’, who was driven by his love of God and concluded that, ‘ésta es buena cavallería triunfante.’ His view of nobility was thus one based around the tenets of lineage, chivalry and faith. He stressed the importance of protecting the church and advancing the position of his own family. El VICTORIAL paints a picture of a nobleman defined by his knightly status and the practice of violence in warfare, not against enemies of the faith, but his fellow Christians. Pero Niño was largely exemplary of the chivalric ideal which Cartagena denounced in the third book of the DOCTRINAL. Like many of the noblemen of his day, he held an obsession with honour, loved jousting and saw little issue with taking up arms against his fellow Christians, either as a pirate in the Mediterranean or fighting on the Iberian Peninsula. Whilst there was no absolute or uniform chivalric ideal during the period, Pero Niño exemplified a bellicose view of nobility founded in lineage and violence.

Whilst Cartagena praised the kingdom’s knights in his speech to the Council of Basel and in the DEFENSORIUM, he was far more critical in the DOCTRINAL. Cartagena’s own chivalric ideal appeared conflicted, and he presented very different arguments in his writing for a knightly audience. Although he appeared to praise violence in the DEFENSORIUM as the hallmark of knightly identity, he downplayed and dismissed it in the DOCTRINAL. In his speech to the Council, he praised Castile’s ongoing conflict with the Moors stating that Castilian kings had, ‘fought and warred with the Moors sin cesación’. This constant warfare had

479 Gutierre Díaz de Games, El VICTORIAL, 234. ‘a wise and learned man so that he might teach and educate him in all good customs that pertain to a good and noble hidalgo.’
480 Ibid. ‘that you are of great lineage and in that way of the world nothing remains nor stays in one state, it lowers your most honourable lineage, and it makes the great small and the high low and poor. And to you it falls to fight and labour to return to that estate and even surpass the greatness and nobility of those from whence you came.’
481 Ibid.
482 Ibid., 235. ‘before all things know God’.
483 Ibid., 236. ‘this is good chivalry, the best that any knight can do, fighting for his law and faith, and the greater having truth.’
484 Ibid. ‘this is good triumphant chivalry.’
485 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea’, 222. ‘fought and warred with the Moors without cessation’.
produced, he argued, orders of chivalry dedicated to fighting to protect the faith, ‘demás de aquella orden de los Hospitaleros que llamamos de Sant Juan, de que hay un gran prioradgo en el regno de Castilla, ay otras tres hórdenes de cavallería muy notables, conviene a saber la de Santiago de la espada’, ‘e la de Calatrava, e la de Alcántara, que abundan en rentas.’ However, the reality was quite different, and in the Doctrinal, he lamented the stalling of reconquest. Whilst he was eager to defend the conduct of Castile’s knights in his speech, he was less complimentary in the Doctrinal and Respuesta. The Doctrinal was a largely secular and highly critical take on the noble ideal. It was a work which placed a great deal of emphasis on an individual’s good conduct and Cartagena was quietly dismissive of lineage, stating in the introduction that, ‘claridad de la sangre e en el denuedo solo del coraçon’, were not all that were praised of knights but that, ‘estas dos cosas buenas son, pero mas es menester.’ However, this was not a view which was echoed in the Siete Partidas which formed the bulk of the Doctrinal. This subtle attack on lineage was not found anywhere else in Cartagena’s work and hints at its place in a wider chivalric debate. It is, of course, entirely possible that Cartagena changed his views and his more disparaging tone in the Doctrinal and Respuesta was a result of his frustration at the kingdom’s collapse into civil war. However, it is equally possible that he was presenting two different views to different audiences. His speech and the Defensorium were works in Latin and not, in Cartagena’s view, made to be read by knights. Ever the diplomat, he presented a different, more critical, view in Castilian for knightly readers.

Cartagena’s view of nobility appears, then, contradictory. In the Doctrinal, he had openly disagreed with the importance attached to claridad de sangre by the Castilian nobility. However, the laws he quoted placed great importance in lineage. However, Cartagena’s own beliefs were more complex and his views were not entirely contradictory. In the Defensorium, he argued that virtues were not inherited, but that a disposition to virtue was. This view was a subtle, but important, move away from the traditional understanding of lineage. It left the path open to non-noblemen rising into the ranks of the nobility through virtuous deeds, but acknowledged what was seen as the natural dominance of those who possessed nobility by lineage. The Doctrinal was, in this light, a guide to how this virtue should be displayed through knighthood. Cartagena saw the Doctrinal as a complete guide to knighthood and nobility and he hoped that reading it would bestow on knights an understanding of their office. In the Respuesta, Cartagena turned his attention to the meaning and etymology of the word cavallero. He stated that, despite the manifold meanings associated with the term it meant, in essence, a man, ‘deputado a actos de guerra, e defensor de la república por aquella especie

486 Ibid., 223. ‘Other than the order of the Hospitaliers, which we call San Juan, which has a great priory in the Kingdom of Castile and another three notable orders of chivalry, the Order of Santiago of the sword, and of Calatrava, and Alcantara, which are abundant in income.’
487 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 81. ‘nobility of blood and only boldness of heart’, ‘these two things are good but more is required’.
489 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 239.
de defensión que por vía de armas se face: e esto es su propia e estrecha sinificación.’

This chivalric ideal also underpinned his noble ideal. Knights were meant to be disciplined, dedicated and learned defenders of the republic and the Doctrinal was made to guide them to this ideal.

The civil war severely damaged the reputation of the upper echelons of the Castilian nobility. For the commentators viewing the behaviour of Castile’s great noblemen, it was difficult to argue that their lineage guaranteed virtuous behaviour. Valera, in the opening section of the Espejo, identified these competing paths to nobility as, ‘antiguas riquezas y heredamientos’, ‘antiguas buenas costumbres’ and finally, ‘desciende de padres o abuelos valientes.’ All three of these opinions were grounded in reality, although the latter two, virtue and lineage, held the greatest weight. Valera was particularly dismissive of wealth as a means of entering the ranks of the nobility and did not cite any authorities which support the view, beyond stating that Bartolus acknowledged the opinion. Rather, Valera emphasised virtue as the defining mark of nobility. The relationship between these three paths was complicated, considerably more so than Valera let on. Wealth had historically led to ennoblement through the municipal charters which allowed for wealthy urban residents to ascend to caballero status. Whilst many moderately wealthy members of the urban middle classes had, in the thirteenth century, shunned the military responsibilities which knighthood entailed, by the fifteenth century members of the urban upper middle classes were looking to purchase the trappings of nobility. Moreover, there was a general acceptance that wealth was a necessary part of knighthood. Knighthood was an expensive occupation. The cost of horses and armour, as well as the general trappings of nobility, made it prohibitively expensive, something that changed little over the course of the Middle Ages. Moreover, for the very top of the noble hierarchy, wealth was a means of distinguishing themselves and they mounted spectacular displays of largesse. Events, such as Suero de Quiñones’ Paso Honroso, the Pasaje peligroso and Álvaro de Luna’s numerous feasts, were marks of almost royal extravagance. Wealth did, however, remain a secondary concern and the Siete Partidas warned readers that, ‘ninguno non rescibiese onrra de caualleria por preçio’. Alfonso somewhat dryly remarked that, ‘bien asi como el linaje non se puede comprar’.

By Juan II’s reign, it seemed that neither wealth nor lineage was a guarantee of virtue. In contrast, Alfonso X had envisaged that lineage would control the behaviour of his noblemen. He believed that, not only would the sons and daughters of good men be of a similar quality, but also that the threat of destroying the good name of their family would be enough to keep noble behaviour in check. However, if honour was the reward for virtue and office, the political manifestation of this honour, then the inheritability of titles and

490 Ibid. ‘a man given to acts of war, and a defender of the republic by that means of defense that is by way of arms, and this is the proper and narrow definition.’
492 Ibid., 90.
493 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 97. ‘nobody should receive the honour of chivalry for a price’.
494 Ibid. ‘it is good that lineage cannot be bought’.
nobility posed a fundamental issue. Inheriting honour broke the relationship between personal virtue, honour and social standing. In Valera’s idealised view, personal virtue was rewarded with honour and this honour was recognised by the prince through the bestowal of nobility. The nobility were thus meant to be virtuous individuals; their standing a royal recognition of their good behaviour. However, lineage meant that this link was either broken or significantly stretched. In reality, nobility was much more permanent than Valera argued it should be. Those born into the highest levels of society appeared to owe little to the king and many felt entitled to their place. This entitlement to office was perhaps most evident in the behaviour and words of the Infantes of Aragon who, as members of the royal family and part of one of the kingdom’s great families, saw themselves as rightfully standing at Juan’s side. Following the Infante Enrique’s attempt to seize power from his brother, their mother Queen Leonor of Aragon came before Juan to plead for clemency. Leonor pleaded privately with the king and publicly in front of the Consejo, ‘por su [Rey Don Juan II] merced no quisiese acatar á las culpas, si en algunas era el Infante Don Enrique su hijo, mas al gran debdo que en Su Merced tenia, asi por él como por la Infanta su hermana, e á los muchos servicios que el Rey de Aragon su padre en su menor edad le hiciera con toda lealtad; el qual mandó al tiempo de su fallescimiento á todos sus hijos que guardasen á el, e siemre fuesen en su servicio’. In her plea, Leonor echoed the Infantes’ belief that rule of the kingdom was their birth right, a view King Juan did not share. For both Cartagena and Valera, lineage was no longer an effective means of ensuring good noble conduct and they argued for new controls, Cartagena through law and Valera through his vision of nobility by virtue.

Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera and Juan de Mena, to name but a few, emphasised the place of personal virtue over lineage in making a nobleman noble. Their response was a reassessment of the relationship between virtue and lineage as the building blocks of noble status. Whilst none completely dismissed the place of lineage in society, to do so would have meant overthrowing the social order, they nevertheless argued forcefully for a view of nobility which rested far more on individual virtue not inherited honour. However, lineage was not without its defenders and, for most noblemen, it would have been unthinkable to separate nobility and lineage. The question really came down to whether virtue was inherited. If lineage brought offices and honour then surely it also brought virtue, as virtue was the foundation of both honour and office. For Valera, this was not the case. Virtue had to be won by the individual not inherited and it was a quality which had to be proven and shown.

The debate was more complex than just an attack on the Castilian nobility. Despite his subtle questioning of the place of lineage, Cartagena never challenged the place of the nobility by lineage. Even texts like

493 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 408–9. ‘for his (King Juan’s) mercy, not desiring for him to act on the sins, if there were any of the Infante Enrique her son, but rather on the great debt that he (the Infante Enrique) had to Juan’s mercy and likewise for his sister the Infanta and likewise for the many services that the King of Aragon his father had done loyally in his childhood, which at the time of his death he had ordered all of his sons to protect him (King Juan II) and always remain in his service’. 
Valera’s *Espeso de verdadera nobleza* were aimed at men at court who were already noble. Both commentators sought to change how noblemen saw themselves. Their criticism was also likely linked to the political makeup of the kingdom. In reality, the king had little choice over much of the nobility, despite Valera’s words to the contrary. However, Juan II did have significant choice over who came to fill the newly created noble titles. The Infantes’ exile enabled Juan to greatly enlarge the estates of a significant number of his supporters. He created two new marquises, the Marquis of Santillana and the Marquis of Villena and a significant number of new dukes and counts. It is likely that Valera’s concerns in the *Exoración* and Rodríguez del Padrón’s criticism in the *Cadira de honor* were linked to these promotions. The problem was further exacerbated by the distribution of other prestigious positions, such as the office of constable, Mastership of the Order of Santiago and the desirable position of royal privado. Ascent to these lucrative positions was in royal hands and the rise to power of men like Álvaro de Luna greatly angered some at court.

There were then two, often conflicting, paths to nobility based around the relationship between virtue, honour and office. The debate which arose during the latter years of Juan II’s reign was characterised by a dispute over the inheritability of honour and the place of personal virtue in the noble ideal. The development of this debate was one which was, as has been previously argued, shaped by the civil war. The political situation in Castile and its unique social makeup meant that this debate was not simply hypothetical as it was elsewhere in Europe. The presence of *conversos* at court, like the Santa María family or Valera himself, along with other prominent social climbers like Luna or Ruy López Dávalos, meant that this debate had real relevance. The rebellious actions of many of the Castilian nobility led some to challenge their positions in society and help shape a new noble ideal which placed greater emphasis on individual behaviour rather than family standing. These arguments were supported by the work of Bartolus of Sassoferrato, whose views lent an added scholarly weight to the reformers’ arguments. However, others disagreed and, in 1438, Juan Rodríguez Padrón leapt to the defence of the titled Castilian nobility by arguing for the place of lineage in contemporary constructions of nobility. His *Cadira de honor* marked a Castilian noble response against the views of the reformers. However, whilst many no doubt agreed with Rodríguez del Padrón’s enthusiastic defence of the status quo, few others joined him in arguing for the established order. The following sections will unpick the development of these ideas and address the broader context of the debate on chivalry and nobility at the Castilian royal court.

*In Defence of Lineage: Rodríguez del Padrón and the Attack on Bartolus*

By the mid 1430s, there were two competing views of nobility present at the Castilian court. Nobility itself, traditionally defined by lineage, was coming under increased scrutiny and pressure. The approval of Bartolus’ commentaries as usable in Castilian context in 1427 gave a vital foundation for commentators
seeking to challenge the primacy of lineage. However, it was not until the early 1440s that Bartolus’ ideas on nobility began to appear in writing in Castile, with the exception of Cartagena’s speech at Basel. Shortly before the outbreak of civil war in the 1430s, the Galician poet and courtier Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, set out to challenge the reformers in his Cadira de hon or or Throne of Honour. The Cadira was ostensibly written as a guide to aspiring young noblemen seeking to navigate their way through life at court. Rodríguez del Padrón, in the work, set out what he felt to be the true definition of nobility and the path to the seldom-occupied throne of honour. The work constituted an aristocratic defence of noble office in its established form and a rebuttal against Bartolus’ views in the De insigniis et armis. Rodríguez del Padrón made little secret of his dislike of Bartolus and, in the Cadira de honor, he refused even to address him by name, preferring to call him ‘the Civil Doctor’. It was one of the few works on nobility produced during the period which argued for nobility by lineage rather than by virtue. However, whilst Rodríguez del Padrón claimed that he was refuting Bartolus’ views, the Cadira was really something of a compromise and it maintained much of Bartolus’ ideas.

Rodríguez del Padrón’s work stands on the opposite side of the debate to Valera and was, to a degree, closer to the Doctrinal. The Cadira did not, however, attain the popularity of either the Espejo or the Doctrinal. The work survives in eight mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth-century manuscripts and was never printed. In the surviving manuscripts, the text tends to be bound with other works on chivalry and nobility such as Enrique de Villena’s Doce trabajos de Hércules and Valera’s Espejo de verdadera nobleza, Tratado de las armas and Ceremonial de los principes. One manuscript, preserved in the Kongelige Bibliothek in Copenhagen, even holds a copy of the Doctrinal de los caballeros alongside the Cadira. Of the surviving manuscripts, only three were possibly copied during Juan II’s reign. The fact that the Cadira appears bound in manuscripts with the Doctrinal and the Espejo suggests that the texts were read together. This strongly suggests that contemporaries, by the mid 1440s, were aware of the chivalric debate, although there is no evidence that Rodríguez del Padrón’s work was read by Valera or Cartagena and vice versa. Nevertheless, it suggests that Rodríguez del Padrón’s work was being read by courtiers alongside works by Valera and Cartagena during the fifteenth century. Perhaps most intriguingly, the text forms part of BNE MS. Res/125, a manuscript identified by Schiff as forming part of the Marquis of Santillana’s library. The manuscript, like the others which feature copies of the Cadira, is a compendium of treatises on arms, chivalry and nobility including Bartolus’ De insigniis et armis copied in 1458. The Cadira immediately follows Bartolus in the manuscript, meaning the reader would be presented with both sides of the debate. The remaining folios of the

496 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo, 114–15.
497 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’.
498 Ibid., 259.
499 Ibid., 261.
manuscript include copies of Valera’s *Tratado de las armas* and *Ceremonial de príncipes* as well as parts of the *Siete Partidas*.\footnote{BETA Bibliografía Española de Textos Antiguos*, BETA-Philobiblon Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, accessed 20 April 2016, http://vm136.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/philobiblon/beta_en.html.} Despite the *Cadira*’s likely small readership, it forms an important part of the chivalric debate at the royal court and Rodríguez del Padrón’s refutation of Bartolus is crucial to understanding prevailing attitudes at court.

Rodríguez del Padrón opened the work by inviting the reader to gaze out onto an allegorical landscape. He explained, ‘en la montaña de buenos deseos es la selva del afán, en fin de la qual es el vergel de merecimiento, onde aquéstas dos plantas frutosas, virtud e nobleza, en nombre diversas, en frutos semejables, prenden; de las quales con perfecta mano es obrada la muy alta Cadira del onor que ansí pocos en nuestra (h)edad ocupan, que seyendo con derecha vista mirados, por ventura no pasan el número de las puertas tebanas, aun que sean vistos con falso viso innumerables en ella asentarse que más verdadera mente la silla del falso honor ocupan de aquellas dos salvajes plantas, ficción e fortuna, que en el valle de viçios prenden, e su obra.’\footnote{Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 260. ‘on the mountain of good desires is the forest of eagerness and at the end of it is the orchard of merit where those two fruiting plants virtue and nobility, in name diverse but in fruit alike, grow, from which, with perfect hand, is made the most high Throne of Honour, which in our time is little occupied, which being rightly seen cannot be reached through the many doors of Thebes, even though they may see it, catch a false glint of it and ascend it, in truth they occupy the Throne of False Honour made from those uncouth plants fiction and fortune that grow in the valley of vices.’} Rodríguez del Padrón’s allusion to the ‘throne of honour’ was a reference to the widely accepted view that nobility was a representation of honour. He saw honour and true nobility as a union of *nobleza* or noble status, reached by good intentions, hard work and merit. However, it was a goal often glimpsed, no doubt a reference to the stories told of the paragons of chivalric virtue, but seldom reached. Rodríguez del Padrón unfortunately gave no indication of who he believed attained this goal, but instead suggested that most who claimed to have reached it instead occupied a throne of false honour.\footnote{Ibid.} It is likely that Rodríguez del Padrón would have looked to noblemen like Ferdinand of Antequera as exemplary of his noble ideal. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán considered Ferdinand a perfect knight and, as brother of the king, he had an unrivalled lineage.\footnote{Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 21–29.} Ferdinand was a skilled military commander, well mannered, courteous and loyal. His accession to the Aragonese throne by election only further reinforced his virtuous image. Pérez de Guzmán remarked that he had, ‘gran homilldat e obidiençia que siempre guardo al rey, su hermano, e la lealtad e amor que ouo al rey don Iohan su fijo.’\footnote{Ibid., 22. ‘great humility, obedience and always guarded the king his brother, and the loyalty and love that he had for his son King Juan.’} For Pérez de Guzmán, Ferdinand was the perfect prince, a paragon of chivalric virtue and his status was one which rested both on his virtue and his impeccable lineage. Rodríguez del Padrón in the *Cadira de honor* sought to reach a similar middle ground, where the noble ideal combined both nobility by virtue and nobility by lineage.
Rodríguez del Padrón, like Bartolus, subdivided nobility into a number of categories. Escewing Bartolus’ tripartite division of nobility into theological, natural and civil, Rodríguez del Padrón instead divided nobility into theological, moral, political and vulgar.\textsuperscript{507} He labelled these types of nobility as, ‘essençias’, which exemplified aspects of contemporary constructions of noble status and reflected its multifaceted nature.\textsuperscript{508} Rodríguez del Padrón’s division of nobility into constituent parts was not unique. Both Valera in the\textit{ Espejo}, and Cartagena in the\textit{ Discurso}, similarly advocated a three-way division.\textsuperscript{509} Much of the\textit{ Cadira} focused on political nobility, just as Valera had done in the\textit{ Espejo}. His differing division of nobility reveals a subtle, but significant, difference in his thinking and his separation of moral and political nobility marked the greatest difference between him and his fellow commentators.

Rodríguez del Padrón first turned his attention to what he termed, ‘vulgar nobleza’.\textsuperscript{510} This was he explained, ‘industriosa e natural calidad que faze a las criaturas ser más valerosas en comparación de otras, e más agradables, segund que vulgar mente a una muger e a un buen compuesto omne, gentil suelen dezir.’\textsuperscript{511} Rodríguez del Padrón’s category of ‘vulgar’ nobility described what Bartolus and Valera had termed natural nobility; the presence of noble qualities. By using the category of vulgar nobility, Rodríguez del Padrón was also no doubt referencing contemporary popular usage of the term\textit{ noble} or\textit{ gentil}. It was also, perhaps, a reflection of the fact that Rodríguez del Padrón did not consider possession of these qualities a true sign of nobility. Rodríguez del Padrón, like Valera, largely ignored theological nobility as it was something unknowable by man. Moreover, it raised an issue that no commentator was willing to address, that, ‘del más pobre e menor de los onbres, que ningund virtuoso acto obrado aya, ser poseída.’\textsuperscript{512} The possibility that God’s own elect did not match those elevated to high positions in contemporary society undermined the view that the earthly order imitated the divine. This was an issue which was implied, but not addressed by either Valera or Rodríguez del Padrón in their commentaries. However, neither natural nor theological nobility were relevant to the structure of Castilian society. Rather, knighthood and the complex noble hierarchy fell into the category of political nobility.

In the remaining two parts of nobility, Rodríguez del Padrón diverged significantly from the three-part model which Bartolus, and later Valera, had used. Rodríguez del Padrón separated what Valera had termed civil nobility into moral nobility and political nobility. This division was not just symbolic. Rather, it was a way in which Rodríguez del Padrón avoided the issue of nobility by virtue and personal merit encroaching on the established order of nobility through lineage. The place of individual merit in nobility was a problematic issue. The idea that personal virtue might be a path to nobility challenged the place of lineage

\textsuperscript{507} Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 263.
\textsuperscript{508} Ibid. ‘essençias’.
\textsuperscript{509} Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 92.
\textsuperscript{510} Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 263. ‘vulgar nobility’.
\textsuperscript{511} Ibid. ‘industriousness and the natural quality that makes creatures more valiant in comparison to others, and more agreeable, according what is usually vulgarly said of a woman or well composed man.’
\textsuperscript{512} Ibid., 264. ‘the poorest and lowest of men, who have done no virtuous acts before, can possess it.’
in noble status. Rodríguez del Padrón himself came from the lower ranks of the Castilian nobility, from a Galician hidalgo family, although little is known about his early life. The stance he adopted in the Cadira reflected, to a degree, his own place in society but, more importantly, voiced how some of the established Castilian nobility likely saw themselves. In dividing civil nobility into moral and political nobility, he was able to reach a position of compromise between the established order and the new ideas.

Rodríguez del Padrón first turned his attention to moral nobility, which he described as, ‘una calidad de bien e onesto, por luengua usanza en la voluntad causado’. Rodríguez del Padrón did not ignore the arguments for nobility by virtue and engaged with Cicero and the sources typically used to justify arguments against lineage. He stated, ‘Tulio en la invictiva contra Salustio dize: “Mayor gloria es por mis buenos fechos floresçer que por las obras de mis predecesores; en tal guisa biviendo que a los de mi descéndientes exemplo e principio ser çierto de nobleza e virtud.”’ The question which Rodríguez del Padrón was engaging with was really one of inherited virtue versus individual worth. He cited Ovid, Juvenal, Valerius Maximus and Boethius, all of whom argued that the virtuous actions of an individual were of greater worth than any inherited virtue. Rodríguez del Padrón acknowledged that, ‘aquesta opinión de los antiguos en concordia poco menos siguieron todos los modernos poetas e oradores, singular mente Gualtero de Castellón’ ‘Matheo Vindecinensse’, ‘Enrique Samariense’, ‘Dante’, ‘Françisco Petrarcha’, ‘Juan Bocacio’, ‘Andrés Capellán’, ‘los quales más de sus virtudes que de la nobleza de su linaje confiando, solos llamaron nobles los virtuosos.’ This view, that personal virtue was the path to civil nobility, was challenged by Rodríguez del Padrón in the Cadira de honor. Whilst the authors which he cited equated personal virtue with true nobility, Rodriguez del Padrón took a different stance.

Nobility through virtue raised significant problems for a society which placed great stock in lineage and the inheritability of honour. As Rodríguez del Padrón stated, ‘e segund aquesta nobleza, que más con verdad moral virtud se deve dezir, un siervo es noble si es virtuouso; e un fijo de un príncipe más poderoso, más noble e más virtuoso del universo, aunque ningund viçioso auto obrado aya, si por sí no es virtuouso, no es llamado noble.’ Moral nobility fitted poorly with the established social order and, as Rodríguez del

514 Ibid., 264. ‘a quality of goodness and honesty which is caused by long usage’.
515 Ibid., 265. ‘Cicero in his invective against Sallust says, “greater glory flourishes more by my good deeds than by the works of my predecessors, living in such a way that I will be an example of nobility and virtue to my descendants.”’
516 Ibid., 264–66.
517 Ibid., 265–66. ‘the opinion of these ancients is a little less in harmony with modern poets and orators, especially Gualtero de Castellón, Matheo Vindecinensse, Enrique Samariense, Dante, Petrarch, Boccacio, and Andreas Cappellanus, as they trusted more in their virtues than the nobility their lineage conferred, only calling the virtuous noble.’
518 Ibid., 266. ‘according to this nobility, which should more truthfully be said to be moral virtue, a servant is noble if he is virtuous and the son of the most powerful, noble and virtuous prince in the universe, although he did not do any reprehensible deeds himself, if he is not virtuous then he is not called noble.’
Padrón stated, ‘the conclusion, which seems to me, not only odious to nobles but to all right men, and is against the authors, as it is truly known that virtue alone is never nobility, although nobility is sometimes virtue.’\(^{520}\) In contrast, Valera in the *Espejo* believed that there should be a direct link between virtue and honour and thus between virtue and nobility.\(^{520}\) Citing Aristotle, he stated that, ‘el honor es galardón de la virtud, y por ende sólo a los virtuosos debe ser dado.’\(^{521}\) Rodríguez del Padrón, in the *Cadira*, severed this link by dividing civil nobility into moral and political nobility. His approach matched the political reality of fifteenth-century Castile much more closely than Valera’s. Rodríguez del Padrón’s defence of lineage did not amount to an acceptance that all who held political nobility were truly noble, as evidenced by his scathing remarks that the throne of honour was, ‘pocos en nuestra (h)edad ocupan’.\(^{522}\) However, for Rodríguez del Padrón, the fact that personal virtue did not directly equate to nobility was self-evident. The noblemen which formed the upper echelons of Castilian society did not owe their place to personal virtue, but rather to their lineage and the cumulative honour built up by the deeds of their ancestors. As Rodríguez del Padrón argued, it was evident in the word *noble* itself. Citing Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*, he argued that the root of the word noble was *non-vileza* and that *notable* meant, ‘aquel cuya generación o nombre esclarecen por fama loable.’\(^{523}\) Rodríguez del Padrón argued that, ‘fidalguía, gentileza, nobleza, e generosidad, en poco defieren; aunque dize el insigne Dotor cévil en el título de Convicçión que generosidad, commo sea nobleza con virtud, es más que sola nobleza; al qual paresçe los maestros de los vocablos contradezir, en quanto afirman que noble e generoso es aquel cuyo nombre e linage es noble’.\(^{524}\)

Knighthood represented the perfect analogy for Rodríguez del Padrón’s view of the relationship between nobility, lineage and virtue. He explained that, ‘manifiesto es que un estrenuo o valiente mançebo que por su fortaleza çien trançes aya combatido, e mill castillos fuertes por fuerça aya entrado, e no menos batallas vençido, aunque los fechos tenga de muy glorioso e estrenuo cavallerio, e meresçedor sea más que algun otro del onor de la cavallería, si no es cavallerio, no goza de los previllejes e libertades cavallerosas, fasta que por algun otro que pueda la orden resciba.’\(^{525}\) Valera similarly acknowledged that virtue’s transformation to honour required the gift of a title or office. However, Rodríguez del Padrón saw virtue as only half of the Throne of Honour. Honour, represented by the illustive throne, was born of nobility and

---

\(^{519}\) Ibid. ‘this conclusion, which seems to me, not only odious to nobles but to all right men, and is against the authors, as it is truly known that virtue alone is never nobility, although nobility is sometimes virtue.’

\(^{520}\) Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 93.

\(^{521}\) Ibid. ‘honour is the reward for virtue, and thus it should be only given to the virtuous.’

\(^{522}\) Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 260. ‘in our time little occupied’.

\(^{523}\) Ibid., 261. ‘he whose descent or name is illuminated by laudable *fama*.’

\(^{524}\) Ibid. ‘fidalguía’, ‘gentileza’, ‘nobleza’ and ‘generosidad’ differ little, although that distinguished civil doctor in his work *De Convicçione* says that generosity, is like nobility with virtue, it is more than nobility, which the masters of vocabulary seem to contradict, in so much as they affirm that ‘*noble*’ and ‘*generoso*’ is he whose name and lineage is noble’.

\(^{525}\) Ibid., 267. ‘it is manifest that a strong or valiant youth which, by his strength, has fought a hundred battles, and taken and entered a thousand strong castles by force, and no less battles won, and although his deeds are those of a most glorious and strong knight and worthy more than any other of having the honour of chivalry, if he is not a knight, he does not enjoy the privileges and freedoms of knighthood, until from some other he receives the order.’
virtue together and, in his argument, virtue was not a path to nobility, but rather, a sign of it and a quality which could be held independently of noble status. Nobility could thus exist without virtue and virtue without nobility. On this matter, Rodríguez del Padrón stated that, ‘considerando que la nobleza es “non vileza” bien e justa mente, segund deven, defienden e rigen los pueblos, del justo bien e onesto sola mente usando; e aquestos son verdaderos nobles e la muy alta Cadira de onor’. True nobility was thus a combination of nobility and virtue and it meant holding noble office and acting virtuously whilst having it. Rodríguez del Padrón argued that, whilst acting virtuously was possible without nobility, it was a mark of true nobility to be noble, rule and act in a virtuous manner. He continued, ‘mas por el contrario aviene quando la virtud es sola por sí conviene saber, si rigen aquellos que nobles no son; los quales, del justo bien e onesto sola mente usando aunque tienen la virtud, no tienen la nobleza; lo cual afirma el Filósopho en el primero de las Eticas diziendo que algunos son, aunque virtuosos, privados de nobleza; como la virtud sola no sea nobleza, ni la nobleza verdadera virtud, mas señal de virtud, segund dize el doctor de Aquino en la segunda parte de la Segunda, por la vía que el meresçimiento, no es la merçed; e bien commo la merçed puede estar sin el meresçimiento, bien ansi la nobleza puede estar sin la virtud.’ Thus, Rodríguez del Padrón argued that nobility could exist independently of virtue. However, his earlier definition of nobility as, ‘aquel cuya generación o nombre esclareçen por fama loable’, implied that virtue did indeed play a role in the creation of nobility. However, he saw this role as happening through inheritance and, unlike Valera, he believed that honour was inherited. For Rodríguez del Padrón, there was a link between virtue and nobility, albeit one which was balanced by a continued link between nobility and lineage.

Political nobility and the throne of honour, thus represented a combination of nobility by lineage and nobility by virtue. Rodríguez del Padrón offered a definition of political nobility which was very similar to that given by Valera. Of political nobility he stated, ‘la raiz de la qual es onorable beneficio por méritos o graciosas mente avido del príncipe, o del principado, que faze al su poseedor del pueblo ser diferente’. Similarly, Valera had defined it as, ‘nobleza, es una calidad dada por el príncipe, por la qual alguno paresce ser más acepto allende los otros onestos plebeos.’ However, whilst Rodríguez del Padrón accepted that, on a basic level, nobility was a gift bestowed by the prince, he suggested that true nobility requires more than just the bestowing of an office. He commented, ‘a mí paresce, aunque el príncipe e el principado,

---

526 Ibid., 266. ‘considering nobility is “non-vileza”, accordingly they should justly and goodly defend and rule the people, using only good and honest justice, and those are true nobles and they alone possess the most high throne of honour’.

527 Ibid., 266–67. ‘but it happens to the contrary when virtue alone is known, if those that rule are not nobles, which only using good justice and honesty they have virtue, but they do not have nobility, which the Philosopher affirms at the start of the Ethic, saying that some are, although virtuous, separate from nobility, as virtue alone is not nobility, but a sign of virtue, according to what Aquinas says in the second part of the Segunda, like merit is not favour, as good as favour can be without merit, and likewise nobility can be without virtue.’

528 Ibid., 261. ‘he whose descent or name is illuminated by laudable fama’.

529 Ibid., 268. ‘the root of which is honourable benefice by merits or grace coming from the prince or principality that makes the holder different from the people’.

530 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 92–93. ‘nobility is a quality given by the prince, by which some seem to be raised above other honest plebs.’
puedan proveer de algunas dignidades que traen consigo los previlejos e principio de nobleza e otorgar por ley o por palabra los tales previlegios, que non puedan fazer verdaderos nobles, porque la verdadera nobleza requiera quatro dignidades es a saber, abtoridad del príncipe o del principado, claridad de linaje, buenas costumbres e antiqua riqueza.

531 In a direct challenge to the new noblemen at the Castilian court, Rodríguez del Padrón remarked that these qualities, ‘no pueden concurrir todas en aquel que nuevamente faze noble el príncipe o principado; por quanto, aunque tenga la abtoridad, por ventura no poseerá las antiguas riquezas; e si las riquezas, no las buenas costumbres; e si las buenas costumbres, es inposible, pues noble no es, que tenga claridad de linaje; e por consiguiente, no será verdadero noble, ni lo serán los que d[e]jél descendieren, fasta la quarta generación que sea purgada la oscuridad del linaje per olvidança e por luenga possession de buenas costumbres e riqueza antigua con el título del príncipe o principado se perscriva la nobleza.

532 For Rodríguez del Padrón, it was evident that anyone newly ennobled was not truly noble. Whilst they might, like Valera, hold a noble title they lacked the other qualities necessary. Nobility was not something which could be attained in a single generation, but rather marked the cumulative efforts of several generations of the same family. Whilst the deeds of one individual could be rewarded with the bestowing of a title, until that person or family attained the other perquisite parts of noble status they could not be considered truly noble in Rodríguez del Padrón’s view. The immediacy of Valera’s view of ennoblement, expressed in the Espejo, directly challenged this view.

The latter sections of Rodríguez del Padrón’s work were concerned exclusively with political nobility and the issues with Bartolus’ view of noble office. Rodríguez del Padrón stated that the bestowal of nobility, ‘es quando el príncipe graçiosamente o por sus meresçimientos, alguno faze duque, marqués, conde o varón; como estas dignidades e las otras semejables, segund dizen las humanas leyes, son principio de nobleza. E aquesto mismo digo de la cavallería, en aquellas provinçias onde los cavalleros son avidos por nobles, e non en otras partes; commo la cavallería non sea dignidad, segund común derecho, salvo en los cavalleros romanos e por consiguiente a ninguno otro da el privillejo de la nobleza.

533 Rodríguez del Padrón was careful to define knighthood as separate to nobility, a distinction which was not made by either Valera or Cartagena, both of whom defined knighthood as a type of nobility. Rodríguez del Padrón, however, was

531 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 268. ‘it seems to me that although the prince and principality can provide some offices (dignidades) which bring with them privileges and the beginning of nobility, the conferring by law of such privileges does not make true nobles, because true nobility requires four qualities, which are known to be, the authority of the prince or principality, nobility of lineage, good customs, and ancient wealth’.

532 Ibid., 269. ‘cannot come together in he that is newly made noble by the prince or principality, in so much as if by luck he has authority he won’t have ancient riches, and if he has riches he won’t have good customs and if he has good customs it is impossible, he is not noble and does not have nobility of lineage and is thus not a true noble, and this is not the case for those that descend from him until the fourth generation, purged from the obscurity of lineage by forgetfulness and by lengthy possession of good customs, ancient riches and the title by which the prince and principality prescribed nobility.’

533 Ibid., 271. ‘is when the prince graciously or by his merits makes some duke, count, marquis or noble, as these titles or others like them, according to what human laws say, are the beginning of nobility. And this is likewise said of chivalry, in those provinces where knights are regarded as nobles, and not in other parts as chivalry is not an office, according to common law, except for those Roman knights, and as a result it does not give the privilege of nobility to anyone.’
eager to distinguish the bestowal of noble office from the bestowal of knighthood. Unlike Valera, he considered knighthood alone insufficient to make its holder noble. For Rodríguez del Padrón, true nobility meant the holding of a title and the lineage to support it.

Rodríguez del Padrón’s argument reflected the established order in Castile. His insistence that nobility was a combination of a title, lineage, good customs and wealth echoed the Siete Partidas. These qualifications on ennoblement had been rooted in practical considerations. Law xii in título XXI of the Segunda Partida specifically prohibits the gifting of knighthood to poor men without an allowance being made, ‘por que pueda bien beuir.’

The concern that knights might become false or robber knights was an ever-present concern in chivalric writing. Knighthood was an expensive occupation, with horses, armour and the trappings of noble society costing vast amounts of money. However, for Rodríguez del Padrón these practical concerns had largely been forgotten and, instead, there was a general acceptance that noblemen should have both wealth and lineage as a part of their position. The Cadira de honor represents one of the clearest expressions of these views at Juan II’s court. It is assumed that most noblemen at the Castilian court would have agreed with Rodríguez del Padrón’s view of their office. However, there are few other open expressions of these views and, instead, we must look to other hints of the established view.

The knights of the Castilian court, like their European counterparts, proudly proclaimed their lineage and illustrious family histories. However, despite the supposed prevalence of this view, it is remarkably hard to find commentators who supported it. That is not to say that there are not examples, but merely that we must look harder to find them. For Pérez de Guzmán, lineage was a defining characteristic of the men of the Castilian royal court and one of the first things he commented on in the Generaciones y semblanzas. For noblemen like don Pero López de Ayala, he went into considerable detail, ‘don Pero López de Ayala, chancelleur mayor de Castilla, fue un cavallero de grant linaje, ca de parte de su padre venia de los de Haro, de quien los de Ayala deçenden; de parte de su madre viene de Çauallos, que es un grant solar de cavalleros. Algunos del linaje de Ayala dizen que uenien de un infante de Aragon a quien el rey de Castilla dio el señorío de Ayala, e yo ansi lo falle escrito por don Ferrant Perez de Ayala, padre deste don Pero Lopez de Ayala, pero non lo ley en estorias nin he dello otra çertidumbre.’

Fernán Pérez de Guzmán’s descriptions also reveal the tales woven by noble families at court to aggrandise their lineages, such as the Ayala’s claim to be descended from an Aragonese infante, or the rather inflated claim of the Osorio family to be descended

534 Robert I. Burns, Las Siete Partidas, 2:423; Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 96, ‘by which he might live well’.
536 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 37–38. ‘Don Pero López de Ayala, chancellor of Castile was a knight of great lineage, since his father’s side came from the Haro family, from whom the Ayalas are descended; his mother’s side comes from the Çauallos which is a great house of knights. Some of the lineage of Ayala say that they come from an infante of Aragon to whom the king of Castile gave the lordship of Ayala, and I have seen this written by don Ferrant Perez de Ayala, father of this Pero López de Ayala, but I have not read it in the histories nor have it on any other authority.’
from St John Chrysostom, about which Guzmán remarked, ‘yo nunca lo ley nin me paresçe cosa creible’.

Men like Pedro Suárez de Quiñones, the adelantado of Leon and brother of Suero de Quiñones, the organiser of the famous Pazo Homenso, received similar treatment with elaborate descriptions of their family history and standing. Of the Quiñones family he stated, ‘yo oy dizir a algunos deste linaje, que los de Quiñones deçienden de una infanta fija de un rey de Leon e, de otra parte, de un grant señor llamado don Rodrigo Alvarez de Asturias’, although Pérez de Guzmán states that he hasn’t read anything to corroborate these stories. Many of the noble families which Pérez de Guzmán described appear to have cultivated elaborate myths about their origins. These myths, faithfully and often sceptically reproduced in the Semblanzas, reveal the importance of lineage and family heritage to the Castilian nobility. The importance of lineage which Pérez de Guzmán’s work reveals is one echoed by chroniclers of Juan’s reign whose frequent interjections on the lineage of the men and women of the royal court reveal the importance of family history. It is also worth noting that this love of lineage was not just confined to Christians, but was similarly expressed by Jews and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula, who also placed great pride in their family descent.

For Rodríguez del Padrón, chivalry and nobility were inseparably connected. Like his contemporaries, he argued that chivalry was something held only by the nobility. He saw knighthood as an honour which could be held by every nobleman and earned solely by their standing in society. Citing Livy and Isidore of Seville, he stated, ‘a los más nobles e a los más virtuosos que eran en su hueste dio primeramente la orden cavallerosa’, though he conceded, ‘aquella çibdad que dos hermanos en su prinçipio non padesçió señores’. Citing Aristotle, he stated that, ‘los nobles son dignos de rescibir el honor’. His argument implied that those who were noble were already honourable, regardless of their actions. For both Valera and Rodríguez del Padrón, nobility was the embodiment of honour, although the two authors saw the relationship between virtue and honour quite differently. Despite implying that those born into noble status already held honour, Rodríguez del Padrón did not completely dispense with the argument that honour was the reward for virtue. The throne of honour itself was, he argued, made from both virtue and nobility. The two were necessary constituent parts of true nobility. Rodríguez del Padrón argued, like Valera and Bartolus, that the virtuous were deserving of honour. He asserted that, ‘claro se prueva que el honor sea el verdadero fruto de la virtud’.

However, he believed that honour could only be bestowed on the virtuous who were already noble and he was particularly disdainful of, ‘aquellos, en gran ofensa de nobleza, paresçen ser escuderos llamados comno non lo sean, fidalgos non seyendo’.

---

537 Ibid., 77. ‘I have never read this nor does it seem credible’.
538 Ibid., 79. ‘I have heard said of this lineage that those of the Quiñones family are descended from a daughter of the King of Leon and on the other side from a great lord called Rodrigo Alvarez de Asturias’.
539 Juan Rodriguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 273. ‘to the most noble and virtuous in his host he(Livy) gave first the Order of Chivalry’ ‘that city founded by those two brothers in the beginning did not tolerate lords’. ‘The two brothers referred to here are Romulus and Remus.
540 Ibid. ‘nobles are those worthy of receiving honour’.
541 Ibid., 274. ‘it is evident and proved that honour is the true fruit of virtue.’
542 Ibid., 273. ‘those in great offence to nobility who seem to be called squires, as they are not bidalgos nor will be.’
oficios y las dignidades que por virtud e meresçimiento se devrían dar, oy se dan a personas non meresçedoras e aquestos son los que pueblan la silla de falso honor, por desorden de los mayores. Rodríguez del Padrón’s remarks were quite obviously aimed at Juan II’s creation of new noble titles and the men like Álvaro de Luna who he chose to place around him at court.

Rodríguez del Padrón was clear that he felt that offices had been distributed to people undeserving of positions at court. Like Valera, he was critical of some who held noble office. Citing Isidore of Seville, he argued that ‘digna la persona, deve recebir el honor’. Despite his earlier arguments, he felt that those who held office had to be worthy of it and stated that, ‘e quantos son en las partes de Europa, ninguna província especificando, porque ninguno me sea odioso, los que ovieron en las cámaras de los príncipes sin piezas de armas aver sobre si lancado jamás, recebido la cavallería non consideran aquel dicho de Séneca en los Proverbiós “a la persona indigna non ser honor, mas injuria, la dignidad.” The lack of knightly skill displayed by some of Juan’s court was similarly mocked in the Coplas de la Panadera. In the Coplas few of the great noblemen of the kingdom escaped the pointed criticism of the poet and he took great joy in portraying the flower of Castilian chivalry as a group of drunken and incompetent cowards, many of whom seemed unable to even don their own armour. For Rodríguez del Padrón, the distribution of offices and titles to those unworthy of them was a significant issue. He lamented that, ‘los nobles virtuosos del nuestro tiempo es ver los príncipes a personas indignas destribuir sus beneficios; por lo cual, segund Casiodoro dice en el sesto libro de sus Epístolas, las virtudes e buenas costumbres de cada un día se veen peligrar.’ Rodríguez del Padrón in the Cadira reached much the same conclusion as Valera in the Exortación and the accusation that the undeserving held titles was explicit in both texts. Neither Rodríguez del Padrón, nor Valera, named the noblemen they believed had been falsely ennobled, although Rodríguez del Padrón made a pointed criticism of Juan de Mena’s Coronación del marques de Santillana, when he dryly stated that, ‘un poeta, aunque a Omero e a Publio Maro pase en eloquencia, non traerá la aureola fasta que por el príncipe a quien pertenesçe dar laurel o yedra’. Valera’s criticism in the Exortación, as has been argued previously, was likely directed at Luna in the aftermath of the Battle of Olmedo. However, Rodríguez del Padrón’s criticisms may

543 Ibid. ‘the offices and dignitudes which should be given for virtue and merit, today are given to people who do not merit them and those are the people who occupy the throne of false honour, to the confusion of the great.’ ‘Los mayores’ here may refer to the many or to the great- the highest levels of the Castilian nobility.

544 Ibid., 274. ‘a worthy person should accordingly receive honour’.

545 Ibid. “in many parts of Europe, in no specific province as none are hateful to me, there are in chambers of princes those without armour, never having fought, who received chivalry and not considering what Seneca said in the Proverbiós, that “a person unworthy of honour is most damaging to an office.” ’ The quote from Seneca could be read either as the bestowal of office is damaging to the person or to the office itself. Rodríguez del Padrón’s imitation of Latin word order leaves it ambiguous.


547 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 274. ‘the virtuous nobles of our time endure great pain seeing princes distributing benefices to those people underserving of them, which as Cassiodorus says in the sixth book of his Epístolas, the virtues and good customs each day are seen to be in danger.’

548 Ibid., 267. ‘a poet, although to Homer and Publius Maro (Virgil) he passes in eloquence, does not bring a halo until the prince bestows the laurel or wreath to whom it pertains’.
have been more broadly aimed. For Valera, the issue was one of inept royal management of the nobility, but for Rodríguez del Padrón, the issue was in the way in which chivalry and nobility functioned at court. He argued that erroneous views had enabled the ascent of men unworthy of holding office and stifled the progress of the kingdom’s virtuous nobility.

To counteract this problem, he saw it as necessary that noblemen had a hope of promotion. Citing Valerius, he stated that, ‘el honor e gloria son causa de acréscientamento de las virtudes’, and he warned citing Quintillian that, ‘negligente es el servicio que no tiene esperança de gualardón.’\textsuperscript{549} Rodríguez del Padrón argued that not only was the promotion of the wrong people dangerous in itself, but also that it had created a climate where noblemen at court had no hope for promotion in reward for virtuous behavior. The hope and genuine possibility for reward was instrumental in ensuring that chivalry worked at court. Citing Vegetius, Rodríguez del Padrón remarked that this hope, ‘faze ser mejores los cavalleros.’\textsuperscript{550} Deprived of this prospect, knights had little incentive to act chivalrously. Rodríguez del Padrón saw this reason as underlying the problems in Castile. He stated, ‘la poca merçed e menor esperança oy faze en nuestra (h)edad los nobles a tanta nesçesidad venir, que algunos, seyendo forçados por la fortuna, cometen robos, furtos e varios delitos, por ende se fazen infames, e pierden la nobleza; e otros se someten a ofiçios desonestos, e se dan al uso de las mecánicas artes; por ende así mesmo pierden la nobleza.’\textsuperscript{551} His omission of factional violence is surprising, but not unexpected. The Cadira de honor, unlike the Espejo, Doctrinal and Exortación, was written before the outbreak of civil war in 1439. As such, his work is free from the desperation of later commentators. Rather, his focus on unjust ennoblement and the distribution of offices was likely a response to Luna’s ascendancy during the 1430s. Nevertheless, Rodríguez del Padrón, like Cartagena and Valera, argued that it was a misguided sense of chivalry which underlay the problems of Juan’s reign. However, unlike Valera and Cartagena, his chivalric and noble ideal did not stress loyalty to the king or even individual good conduct. Rodríguez del Padrón’s view was individualistic in a different way. His chivalric and noble ideal instead appealed to the Castilian nobility’s sense of pride and entitlement in a hope of improving their conduct.

For both Valera and Cartagena, the answer to the issue of knightly disloyalty had come in the form of an emphasis on royal authority and personal virtue. They had sought to correct knightly behavior by fundamentally changing the relationship between the king and the nobility. The Cadira, in contrast, argued for no such change in the relationship. Rather, the king was absent from Rodríguez del Padrón’s argument, perhaps equally a reflection of Juan’s mismanagement of the nobility. His vague criticisms that the wrong

\textsuperscript{549} Ibid., 275. ‘honour and glory are caused by the increase in virtues’, ‘negligent is the service of he that has no hope of reward.’

\textsuperscript{550} Ibid. ‘makes knights be better’.

\textsuperscript{551} Ibid. ‘little reward and less hope of it, has made in our day nobles have such necessity that some are forced by fortune to commit robbery, theft and various crimes, by which they are made infamous and lose their nobility and others submit to dishonest offices and give themselves to the use of the manual arts and so likewise lose nobility.’
people held office and occupied the throne of false honour implied a critique of King Juan, but, unlike Valera, he never made it explicit. He, like Valera, saw nobility as a royal gift, albeit one which was given in the distant past. However, unlike Valera, he chose not to stress the impermanence of this gift. Rodríguez del Padrón did concede that nobility could be lost through bad conduct or by the dishonourable, ‘uso de las mecánicas artes’, but did not give it the same emphasis that Valera had done.552

For Rodríguez del Padrón, the ideal was succession to nobility by lineage not by personal virtue. It was clear, he argued, ‘que sólo aquel goza del privillejo de los fidalgos, al qual dio principio de nobleza el príncipe o el principado; e sólo aquel se puede llamar noble, que noble es por sí, e de noble linaje desciende; e ninguno otro, aunque las virtudes theologica, cardinales e morales, políticas, intelectuales, riquezas, fuerzas corporales, dones e gracios de la naturaleza junta mente posea, non se puede verdadera mente llamar noble, fidalgo, nin gentil ombre’. Rodriguez del Padrón’s arguments suggest that he saw lineage as a defining aspect of nobility. The other aspects were, as he had argued earlier, important and required to reach true honour. However, it was lineage that Rodríguez del Padrón saw as the key quality in making a nobleman noble. It was for this reason that he saw Bartolus’ works as especially dangerous. He rightly feared that they would be used by reformers to erode the place of lineage in determining nobility. Valera’s Espejo de verdadera nobleza, produced a mere three years later, must have seemed like proof of his fears. Rodríguez del Padrón described Bartolus’ three principal conclusions as, ‘a los fidalgos muy perjudicables’. 554 Rodríguez del Padrón identified these damaging conclusions as, ‘que el linaje no da la nobleza’, ‘que la nobleza sin dignidad non se estiene a la quarta generación’, and, ‘que más noble es aquel el qual es hecho nuevamente noble, que non es el que desciende de nobles e antigua generación’. 555 Rodríguez del Padrón immediately set out disproving these three conclusions, which he described as contradicted by, ‘todas las divinas e humanas autoridades’.556 Firstly, he argued that lineage did confer nobility as honour could be inherited, ‘ser la nobleza loor del meresçimiento de los padres desçendiente; por donde claro paresçe que el linaje por el qual subçedieron en el honor de sus progenitores, les dio la nobleza’. 557 Secondly, citing the example of Julius Caesar’s alleged descent from the royal house of Troy, he argued that nobility without office extended far beyond four generations. 558 Finally, he argued that it was implausible that someone who had just become

---

552 The ‘manual/mechanical arts’ which Rodríguez del Padrón made reference to in the Cadira are not identified. The term was likely a broad reference to manual labour.

553 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 276. ‘only he who enjoys the privilege of the hidalgos, which the prince or principality gave in the beginning, only he can be called noble, which is if he is noble and descended from noble lineage and no other, although he might possess together theological, cardinal, moral, political, intellectual virtues, riches, bodily strength and natural gifts and graces, he cannot truly be called noble, fidalgo nor gentleman.’

554 Ibid. ‘most damaging to hidalgos’.

555 Ibid., 276–77. ‘that lineage does not give nobility’, ‘that nobility without office does not extend to the fourth generation’ and ‘that the most noble is he that is newly made noble and not he that is descended from nobles and ancient lineage.’

556 Ibid., 277. ‘all divine and human authorities’.

557 Ibid. ‘being noble is praising the merit of your parents’ descent, it clearly seems that through lineage they succeed to the honour of their forefathers, giving them nobility.’

558 Ibid.
a holder of a noble office would understand the duties and responsibilities it brought as well as someone who had been born into that office. Moreover, he questioned who would be in a position to judge a newly ennobled person more virtuous than someone who had inherited the position. Instead, he argued nobility was something that increased with age, ‘e así comno en el terçero e quarto grado de las virtudes es mayor la exçelencia que en el primero, bien así la nobleza, que es virtud en efecto, es mayor e más exçelente en la terçera e quarta generación que non es en la primera; e quanto más alongada fuere del su escuro principio, segund que las virtudes, tanto más clarifacada e más exçelente será; por la vía que lo blanco es más claro e más exçelente de las otras colores, por quanto es sobre todas de lo negro más alongado.’

The Cadira de honor was, then, a rebuttal of Bartolus and an attack on the use of his views in a Castilian context. However, it would be overly simplistic to characterise Rodríguez del Padrón’s views as just an attack. Despite his open dislike for the Italian jurist’s views, the Cadira was an attempt to balance a traditional view of Castilian knighthood with changing views of nobility at court. It was, in many ways, a similar compromise to Cartagena’s views in the Doctrinal. Rodríguez del Padrón instead severed the link between moral nobility and political nobility and, in doing so, sought to preserve the place of lineage in constructing nobility. Rodríguez del Padrón’s insistence on lineage reflected a view that political nobility was the only real form of nobility. The other forms, whilst important, had little bearing on the realities of Castilian society. Unlike Valera, he did not stress the need for individual knights to prove themselves noble. Rather, nobility was something which was earned in the distant past and only increased with time. Valera, in contrast, had seen nobility at its best in those who were newly ennobled. For Rodríguez del Padrón, nobility was a construction which required multiple components and he likened true nobility to the construction of a house. He stated, ‘la piedra, el fierro, la madera e las otras cosas diverssas, en perfecta edificación de una casa vienen todas acordes, cada una por sí non podiendo la casa perfecta mente edificar, bien así las seis opiniones diversas, que son seis calidades verdadera mente de la nobleza, commo no sea cada una dellas por só bastante, vienen todas en su edificación acordes.’ Nobility was a combination of the required parts. Virtue played a role, but it was only one of several aspects that did and, alone, it was not enough to make someone noble. Rather, in a conclusion which echoed the words of the Segunda Partida, Rodríguez del Padrón decided that nobility was a combination of lineage, good customs and ancient riches. His views represented an attack on those at the Castilian court who, like Álvaro de Luna, had newly risen to power and was a defence written for those born to rule Castile.

559 Ibid., 278.
560 Ibid., 279. ‘Likewise the third or fourth grade of virtue is better than the first, much like nobility which is virtue in effect, it is better in the third and fourth generation than it is in the first, the more distant it is from its obscure beginning, just as virtues are so much more clear and excellent, in a similar way white is the most noble and excellent of colours and amongst all others the farthest away from black.’
561 Ibid., 282. ‘Stone, iron, wood and other diverse things come together in perfect accord in the building of a house, for if each one is not used then the house cannot be perfectly built, and likewise the six diverse opinions, that are truly six qualities of nobility, come together in your building.’
It was an unusual feature of the chivalric debate in Castile that many of the commentators were first or second generation converts to Christianity. Their involvement drove the production of a critical literature of reform which championed a view of knighthood based on virtue in preference to lineage. Amongst the commentators, Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera, Alfonso Fernández de Palencia, and the poets Juan Alfonso de Baena and Diego de Burgos, were all either conversos themselves or of converso heritage. Their involvement shaped the discourse on chivalry during Juan II’s reign and all of the abovementioned writers argued for a new knightly ideal structured around virtue and learning. They were similarly vocal in their criticisms of the political situation in Castile. Cartagena did not directly address his converso heritage in the Doctrinal de los cavalleros, but it had a significant impact on the way that he, and his fellow conversos, saw knighthood. His reference in the introduction of the work to ‘claridad de sangre’ being not the only thing which should be praised in knights was possibly a reference to the place of conversos in the Castilian noble hierarchy. Cartagena’s use of the phrase ‘claridad de sangre’ invoked the language later used in the attacks on conversos in Castile. The phrase ‘limpieza de sangre’ came to the fore in the Toledan uprising of 1449, which prompted Cartagena to write the Defensorium unitatis christiæae. Although Cartagena likely meant ‘claridad’ to mean nobility, the potential double meaning of the word and allusion to cleanliness cannot be overlooked. The Toledan race riots and uprising were centred around the issue of conversos holding office and Pedro Sarmiento, the city’s chief justice, cited a law made by Alfonso VII which prevented Jews from holding civic offices in the city. Much of the unrest stemmed from Luna using converso tax collectors to try and raise funds for an invasion of Aragon. However, the issues ran deeper than just Toledan opposition to tax collectors of Jewish heritage.

The integration of conversos into Christian society had caused considerable social tensions. Diego de Valera was the only one of the commentators to directly address the issue of noblemen who might have converted from different faiths. Valera raised the question in the Espejo, something that has led Federica Accorsi to argue that the work was composed in 1449-51 rather than in 1441. Valera asked, ‘que es si los convertidos a nuestra Fe, que segunt su ley o seta eran nobles, retienen la nobleza de su linaje después de cristianos, a esto respondo, que no solamente los tales retienen la nobleza o fidalguía después de convertidos, antes digo que la a crescentan’. Valera went on to cast conversion and baptism as ultimately a sign of virtue that should be celebrated. He, perhaps unsurprisingly, focused most of his attention on Jewish converts to

564 For more on the earlier history of often systematic persecution of Jews in France and Iberia see: David Nirenberg, Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages (Princeton, 2015).
566 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 102. ‘do those who convert to our Faith, who according to law are nobles, retain their nobility of lineage after becoming Christians, to which I respond that not only to they retain their nobility or hidalguía after they are converted, but they increase what they had before’.
Christianity. Valera argued that it was clear that the Jews themselves had nobility and, quoting Deuteronomy, he stated, ¿qué otra nación es así noble? 567 He argued that Jews, more than any others, could claim to be holders of theological nobility, as the prophets, patriarchs, holy fathers, apostles, the Virgin Mary and even God’s own son were all Jewish. 568 Moreover, he argued that Judas Maccabeus, Saul, David and Solomon were all examples of Jewish holders of civil nobility. 569 Valera’s attention given to conversos is not enough to give the Espejo a later dating. The section was more than just a general discussion of whether conversos could be noble, it was a justification of Valera’s own place at court. Valera had attempted to distance himself from his Jewish heritage, even going as far as to adopt his mother’s maiden name instead of his father’s surname. Valera had won his knighthood and position at court through his own virtue not inheritance, and his views on nobility reflected this. His use of the Catalan title ‘mosén’ in preference to the Castilian ‘don’ suggests that he perhaps saw himself as different to the noblemen around him. His arguments can be separated from the later limpieza de sangre riots and, perhaps, should be seen in light of his own status at court rather than just wider social tensions. There is good evidence to suggest that Valera was correct in believing that converts were still considered noble after conversion. The chronicles are filled with references to Moorish caballeros who crossed the border and converted to Christianity. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán also recorded how Gómez Manrique, the bastard son of the elder adelantado Pero Manrique, was given as a hostage to the King of Granada and, as a result, was raised as a Muslim. Guzmán commented that, ‘conoció el herror en que biuia e vinose a Castilla e reconçiliose a la fe’, although he appeared to have kept some elements of Moorish dress as he is depicted wearing a Moorish headdress on his effigy on his tomb. 570 Throughout this conversion, Manrique maintained his nobility and was regarded by Guzmán as a ‘buen cauallero’. 571

Displaying Virtue: Ceremony, Pageantry and Nobility in Practice

The final sections of the Cadira, like the Espejo, were concerned with the display of arms, a matter which was of the utmost importance to the knights of Juan’s court. Valera described nobility as, ‘un resplandecimiento de honrra delante los ojus de los onbres’. 572 A coat of arms showed a knight’s family history, titles and offices. To an observer, it immediately conveyed his standing and lineage and made manifest the intangible quality of nobility. It was through art, architecture and courtly ceremony that the nobility displayed their rank and reputation. Whilst this study is predominantly concerned with the literary side of chivalry, it would be impossible to consider chivalry and nobility without addressing these displays.

567 Ibid., 103. ‘which other nation is so noble?’
568 Ibid.
569 Ibid.
570 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 63. ‘he realized the error in the way he lived and came to Castile and was reconciled to the faith’.
571 Ibid. ‘good knight’.
572 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 90. ‘a displaying of honour before the eyes of men’.
Chivalry was a spectacle, and one which demanded an audience. Whether it was through the simple display of a coat of arms, or the building of lavish palaces, like Luna’s fortress-palace at Escalona, noblemen at the Castilian court, like elsewhere in Europe, embraced knightly ostentation. Displaying status invariably meant displaying virtue or lineage, whether through demonstrations of generosity and magnanimity, or through feats of arms on the battlefield or in the lists. Courtly festivities offered the means to display both individual virtue and lineage and participate in a collective knightly and noble identity. Unfortunately, much of this rich visual culture is lost to us today, but traces remain through buildings, art and the descriptions of the chroniclers.

On the 1st May 1434, a board was erected on the Calle de Rinconada in Valladolid bearing the names of thirty young and aspiring knights of the royal court who were to take part in a joust organised by Álvaro de Luna. The board proudly displayed their arms and names alongside the team which they would be jousting for. The public display of arms was a common feature of tournaments and illustrations of a display of arms, painted by Barthélemy d’Eyck, can be seen in René of Anjou’s _Livre de tournois_. The display was a show of the knight’s lineage and a chance for the judges to publicly shame those who were found to be lacking in either lineage or conduct. However, the jousts at Valladolid featured no such public shaming. Rather, the event, watched by two thousand people, offered the sons of some of Castile’s most prestigious families the chance to prove themselves worthy in the lists. Moreover, the event was an opportunity for Álvaro de Luna to display his position as royal favourite by leading one of the tournament teams, whilst King Juan led the other. Pedro de Silva and Martín Pérez de Guzmán proved themselves talented jousters, both removing their opponents’ helms and emerging with their own armour unmarked. After a feast, the judges, proclaiming themselves to be, ‘el dios de Amor’, announced the winners to be Juan Niño, son of Pero Niño the Count of Buelna and Pedro de Acuña, one awarded, ‘vna çelada, fecha por Bulcano, armero de Júpiter’, and the other, ‘vna barreta del dios Mares’. It was likely no coincidence that the victors were the sons of two of Álvaro de Luna’s most prominent supporters, and high-ranking members of the Castilian nobility. The chronicler exhaustively recorded the names of the participants, noting names of their fathers and the titles and offices held by their families. Participation in the joust, like many others organised by members of the royal court, was strictly controlled. The event was a piece of carefully choreographed political pageantry and demonstrative of the performative aspects of nobility at the Castilian court. For the young knights jousting on the 1st May 1434, and for the audience watching them, nobility and chivalric display were inseparable.

---

573 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, _Crónica del balonero de Juan II_. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 155.
574 See figure 1.
575 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, _Crónica del balonero de Juan II_. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 156.
Figure 1: The display of arms from René of Anjou’s Livre de tournois, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. MS. Français 2692, fol. 47v-48r.

Figure 2: The magnificence of knightly combat at a tournament captured by Barthélemy d’Eyck in René of Anjou’s Livre de tournois, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. MS. Français 2692, fol. 32v.-33r.
Both chivalry and nobility were performances, and ones which demanded an audience. As Huizinga commented, chivalry was an aesthetic ideal which assumed the appearance of an ethical one. The idea of noble display and the creation of identity has been explored in Stephen Greenblatt’s pioneering study Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare, and his ideas have recently been taken up by a host of historians working on late medieval and early modern Iberia. Monserrat Piera has even argued that the Santa María family undertook such a process with Pablo de Santa María, Alonso de Cartagena and Teresa de Cartagena all working towards social advancement. For the knights of Juan’s reign, chivalry played an integral part in the process of self-fashioning. However, chivalry’s ethics and aesthetics were closely linked. Coats of arms were a visual representation of a knight’s personal honour, family history and office. It is not surprising then, that both Rodríguez del Padrón and Valera dedicated considerable time to discussing the display of arms. Coats of arms denoted rank and lineage, as well as bringing with them a powerful connection to the deeds of past family members. Valera explained, ‘los cavalleros e gentiles onbres convenga traer armas o señales por las quales ellos e los de sus linajes sean conocidos’. However, the display of arms was much more than just a way of denoting who was who. It was the visual language through which difference displayed. If nobility was the honour bestowed in reward for virtue, then arms were the visible sign of this honour. The very idea of chivalry, in all its magnificence, was inseparably bound up with the idea of nobility. The practice and display of knighthood were integral parts of Castilian noble identity for the men of court. In the world of pageantry, jousts and tournaments this visual language was the way in which nobility and office were understood and transmitted. Arms meant the indirect display of honour and of virtue, both personal and familial. Their display was a serious matter. Bearing arms, or symbols of nobility, without rightfully owning them was a very serious offence, and one which Padrón was greatly concerned about.

Both Valera and Rodríguez del Padrón lavished considerable attention on the display of arms. The topic was one which Valera greatly enjoyed and he went on to compose a further two treatises on the subject after the Espejo; the Tratado de las armas and the Preheminencias y cargos de los oficiales de armas. Alonso de Cartagena similarly featured the display of arms and banners in the Doctrinal, as a result of his use of the

577 Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 67.
579 Monserrat Piera, ‘Debunking the “Self” in Self-Fashioning: Communal Fashioning in the Cartagena Clan’.
580 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 108. ’knights and gentlemen bring arms or signs by which they and those of their lineages might be known’.
581 Diego de Valera, ‘Preheminencias y cargos de los oficiales de armas’; Diego de Valera, ‘Tratado de las armas’.
Valera, in the *Espejo*, explained the link between the display of arms, chivalry and noble status. Arms were divided into two categories; *armas de dignidad* (arms of office) and *armas de linaje* (arms of lineage). *Armas de dignidad* were those attached to specific titles, such as the royal arms which were worn by whoever was king, or the arms of the Dauphin in France, or Prince of Wales in England. *Armas de linaje* were held, ‘en una de quatro maneras: o por herencia de los antecesores, o dadas por el príncipe, o ganadas en batalla, o tomadas por sí mismos.’ These arms were, he stated, ‘en cualquier manera destas que las armas se hayan, pasan a todos los descendientes legitimos de derecho común.’ He continued, ‘e que las armas se hayan por herencia, esto cada día lo veemos, que los fíjos e nietos, e todos los descendientes, acostunbran traer las armas que sus antecesores traían en cualquier manera que las ayan avido.’ Valera defined arms of lineage as any which passed to the bearer’s descendants and were independent of their title. Valera went into detail to provide evidence of the gifting of arms to, ‘los que nuevamente ennoblescen’, stating that, ‘esta es general costumbre en el mundo, mayormente en Alemania, Francia e Italia; e yo conocí algunos a quien dio armas el emperador Sigismundo, e miénbrome ser uno dellos Orssalaumi, un su privado, al qual fizo barón de Torneo seyendo fijo de un carretero.’ Valera commented that he had seen the same thing happen when he was in Prague at the court of Albert, King of the Romans. He likewise stated that the custom was upheld in Castile and remarked that, ‘algunos biven oy en vuestros reinos a quien dio armas el rey Don Enrique, de bein aventurada memoria, vuestro padre.’ Valera went on to state that, ‘las armas dadas por el príncipe son más nobles e de mayor actioridad.’ Both Valera and Rodríguez del Padrón agreed that the display of arms was a distinctly knightly and noble act, despite the fact that they disagreed on who should be able to hold noble office.

Rodríguez del Padrón stated, ‘pruévase non menos que las armas sean devisa e señal de la nobleza, por la prescripta e razonable costumbre que en todas las cortes de los príncipes se guarda; los cuales, entendiendo algunos fazer nobles, primera mente les dan el principio de nobleza, dándoles las dignidades cavallerosas que les dan las armas en señal e devise d[el]las.’ However, he qualified this view and stated, ‘los fidalgos

---

584 Ibid.
585 Ibid. ‘in one of four ways; by inheritance from ancestors, or given by princes, or earned in battle or taken by the same.’
586 Ibid. ‘in whatever manner they were held, passed to all legitimate descendants by common law.’
587 Ibid. ‘And these arms they have by inheritance, we see every day, which the sons and grandsons and all the descendants are accustomed to bearing the arms their ancestors bearing them in whatever way they had gained them’.
588 Ibid. ‘those newly ennobled’, ‘this is a general custom in the world, mainly in Germany, France and Italy and I know some to whom the Emperor Sigismund gave arms and I remember one being one of the Orssalaumi, his favourite, which he made the Baron of Tours, being the son of a cartwright.’
589 Ibid. ‘some live in our kingdoms today to whom your father King don Enrique, of good memory, gave arms’.
590 Ibid. ‘arms given by the prince are more noble and of greater authority’.
591 Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, ‘Cadira de onor’, 284. ‘it is proved no less that arms are a device and sign of nobility, by the given and reasonable custom, which in all princely courts is upheld, which is, understanding that some are made noble, firstly they give the beginning of nobility, they give to them knightly dignities which gives them their sign and device.’
Who could hold a coat of arms was, in theory, strictly controlled. However, as Valera acknowledged, in reality, the rules were more lax. He stated that in Castile, France and Germany, ‘todos los cibdadanos toman armas a su plazer, las cuales pintan en sus casas y en las iglesias donde son perrochianos’. The only distinction was that knights and gentlemen placed their arms on display in public hostels and on their surcoats, whilst common people did not and only displayed them in their homes or churches.

Valera displayed an impressive knowledge of heraldry and explained that arms could be painted in seven colours, although, ‘los oficiales de armas dizen dos metales e cinco colores.’ These colours conveyed certain characteristics and virtues, yellow, for example, evoked fire, the most noble of elements and representative of the virtue of temperance.

---

592 Ibid., 285. ‘hidalgos alone, and not any others, should on their shields have signs and arms by which they can be made known, and which they are accustomed to bring the same things which they wear, which are, flags, coats of arms, shields of chivalry, which only hidalgos bear, which is manifestly clear.’

593 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 109. ‘all the citizens take arms to their pleasure, which they paint in their houses and in the churches where they are parishioners’.

594 Ibid. See figure 3.

595 Ibid., 110. ‘the officials of arms said there were two metals and five colours.’

596 Ibid.
of arms, from the background colour to the design on the shield. As Rodríguez del Padrón suggested, the arms themselves served the very practical purpose of distinguishing individual knights on the battlefield and made noblemen instantly distinct from their fellow soldiers. Álvaro de Luna, for example, bearing his distinctive arms of a silver moon on a red background, would have been instantly recognisable. Something of the magnificence of the display of arms can be seen in contemporary manuscripts such as the Burgundian Grand armorial équestre de la Toison d’Or which depicts King Juan in his chivalric finery. 597 This distinction of status brought with it strong associations with honour and reputation. The display of arms meant that great deeds could be easily attributed to individuals, as could the shame of dishonourable conduct. The coat of arms itself, as Keen suggested, might remind its wearer of their duties and prevent them from acting dishonourably. 598 However, this appeared not to be the case in Castile. Indeed, personal honour appears to have contributed to a worsening of the conflict. There were strong links between individual honour and chivalric display. 599 Honour, virtue and chivalric display came to be inseparably tied together and, in Castile, closely linked to the political turmoil in the kingdom.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 4: King Juan II in his chivalric finery from the Grand armorial équestre de la Toison d’Or, folio 82r.

597 ‘Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Arsenal 4790. Le grand armorial équestre de la Toison d’Or’ 60 1430, fol. 82r. See figure 4.
598 Maurice Keen, Chivalry, 132.
599 Ibid., 133.
Arms were only one aspect of the ostentatious display of knighthood found at the royal court. The jousts, tournaments and pageants which punctuated Juan’s reign were an integral part of the practice of nobility and knighthood. Whilst lineage might have brought an inherited sense of virtue and honour, the good *fama* of past generations, it was still necessary to display this virtue to the assembled royal court. Events such as the *Pasaje peligroso de la fuerte ventura*, organised by the Infante Enrique, were carefully choreographed displays of noble virtue. The *Pasaje*, discussed in more detail in the following pages, was both a display of martial prowess and of the magnanimity of its organiser, the embattled Infante Enrique. Other events, such as Suer de Quiñones’ *Paso Honrso*, were similarly elaborate displays of knightly prowess and civic virtue. Álvaro de Luna was particularly adept at staging jousts and pageants and it was no doubt one of the attributes which helped him succeed at court. Luna staged many such festivities at his palace in Escalona. Luna’s palace, whose ruins still tower over the small town, was in itself a statement of his nobility and a carefully constructed stage for chivalric display. Its fortifications served him well during the civil war and it was a mark of the sort of political prudence which Valera had described in the *Tratado de providencia contra fortuna*. Chivalry and knighthood relied on this display and it was a performance which was inseparably connected to noble status itself.

*Made by the King or Law: A Royal Perspective*

The final part of the noble debate, of which Cartagena’s work formed a part, addressed the relationship between the king and the nobility. Rodríguez del Padrón, Valera and Cartagena, to varying degrees, saw nobility as a royal gift. However, the reality of the link between king and nobility was more complex. The king had little choice over who formed the ranks of the nobility, and noblemen like Gómez de Sandoval felt little attachment to the monarch to whom they supposedly owed their place in society. The murky world of court politics, factionalism and rebellion clouded this relationship further and the civil war highlighted the rift between Juan II and many of the Castilian nobility. The complexity of this relationship was reflected in the debate on chivalry and nobility. Valera’s analysis of this relationship and criticisms of the king were explored in the previous chapter. However, he was not the only commentator to turn his attention to the king. The relationship between the king and his nobility went beyond just the bestowal of the office itself. Juan II went to great lengths to promote a chivalric court culture which bound his nobility to him. Whilst books of nobility lauded the virtues of chivalry for noblemen themselves, Diego de Valera and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo turned their attention to the importance of chivalry for kings and princes. Sánchez de Arévalo wrote his *Suma de política* and *Vergel de los príncipes* for King Juan II, but they

---


were completed after his death and dedicated in his place to Pedro de Acuña and Enrique IV.  

Sánchez de Arévalo in the Vergel expounded the virtues of chivalry for the king and this shift in focus brought with it a very different view of knighthood and nobility.

Sánchez de Arévalo shunned his own life as a knight in favour of pursuing a career in the church and, after completing a degree at the University of Salamanca, accompanied Alonso de Cartagena to the Council of Basel and returned with him to Castile in 1440. He formed part of the intellectual court circle which included Alonso de Cartagena, the Marquis of Santillana, Alfonso Fernández de Palencia and Diego de Valera. Sánchez de Arévalo is remembered more for his contribution to the church councils than he is for his chivalric and political writing. He was, like Cartagena, an unlikely chivalric commentator, albeit one that wrote for a different audience compared to his fellow writers at court. Like Cartagena and Valera, he advocated a royal-centric view of knighthood which emphasised the role of the king. He appealed to Juan’s love of chivalric spectacle and encouraged him to promote an active chivalric culture at court, not simply for its own sake, but because he felt it would help the king to control his unruly nobility. He composed the Vergel de los príncipes, or Orchard of Princes, at the very end of Juan’s reign and, although it is dedicated to Enrique IV, it can be assumed that at least some of it was written with his father in mind. The work was comparable to his Suma de política written around the same time.

Both texts were, in effect, royal advice books. In the Suma, Sánchez de Arévalo discussed the proper ordering of towns, cities and society in general. The work contained a limited discussion of chivalry and knighthood through the lens of social organisation and civic defence. In contrast, the Vergel addressed the life of court and the virtues of the Castilian nobility. In the Vergel, Sánchez de Arévalo encouraged Enrique IV to cultivate a love of chivalry, music and hunting, three things which he believed essential to a good princely court. The Vergel was not, strictly speaking, a book of chivalry, but rather a mirror for princes, an advice book written for kings. However, the work contained an extensive discussion of the virtues of chivalry and the relationship between the king and his nobility.

In the introduction to the work, Sánchez de Arévalo likened the king to Julius Caesar, who he stated had been given rulership by fortune, but secured it by virtue. Caesar was traditionally considered one of the nine chivalric worthies, although he was not universally considered a model by Castilian authors. Valera declared him, ‘primero de los tiranos’ who had no right to rule. Sánchez de Arévalo was, however, much more eager to praise Julius Caesar as someone whose virtue more than matched the role which fortune had given them. He exclaimed, ‘O magnífico emperador! Grande es la de tu fortuna, pero mayor es la tu virtud. La fortuna te fiso poderoso, la virtud te fizo glorioso; la fortuna te dio que podieses, la virtud te dio que

---

602 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Suma de la política’; Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los principes’.
604 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Suma de la política’.
605 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los principes’, 311.
valiesen: la fortuna te dio que a muchos mandases, la virtud te dio que a aquellos que rigieses.\textsuperscript{607} For Sánchez de Arévalo, the link between fortune and virtue was especially important for a ruler. It was fortune which gave them their position in society, but it was by virtue that they would rule well. He saw the King of Castile as, like Caesar, blessed by fortune and he urged him to match this blessing with virtuous behaviour. Sánchez de Arévalo cast the King of Castile as greater than the caesars of old stating, ‘en aquéllos una imagen o semejanza de virtud dio necesidat de imperar, en vos la verdadera virtud dio continuidat de regnar.’\textsuperscript{608} However, Sánchez de Arévalo warned that Enrique IV’s rule would not be without issue. He reminded Enrique, ‘ásí a un tiempo mismo cresceron en vuestra excelente persona la real dignidad e vuestra república; de guisa que la primera ante de vos nunca fue mayor, nin la segunda fue tan bienaventurada. La primera creció, ca la fallastes llorosa e muy humillada por la injusta paz con los infieles, vuestros e sus enemigos; a la segunda non menos fallastes lacrimosa e mucho turbada por la interstina discordia de bollicos domésticos.’\textsuperscript{609} Sánchez de Arévalo was, however, optimistic that Enrique IV would undo the problems of the past by resuming war with Granada and pacifying the unruly nobility. To do this, Sánchez de Arévalo explained that he had, ‘delibre de plantar un deleitoso e honesto vergel para que en él vuestra muy alta Señoría, quando la muchedunbre de curas e negocios le dieren lugar, se pueda, virtuosa e loablemente, retraher; en el qual Vuestra Sacra Magestad brevemente fallará todos aquellos nobles e estrenuos exercicios e honestos deportes e loables delectaciones, en las cuales, según doctrina de los sabios antiguos, los muy íncitos reys e príncipes, e los otros magníficos e nobles varones, cada uno en su dignidad e proporción, se deven principalmente exercitar e ocupar.’\textsuperscript{610} Sánchez de Arévalo’s garden imagery was reminiscent of Padrón’s imagined landscape in the Cadira de honer. Sánchez de Arévalo saw the Vergel as a place of reflection for the king where he might think on the virtues of princely and noble pursuits. The work was a call for Enrique to foster a lively court culture and, whilst the work expounded the virtues of these pursuits for the Castilian nobility, it was principally directed at the king. This focus led Sánchez de Arévalo to present chivalry as a force which encouraged virtue and, in doing so, significantly changed the way that it was understood.

Sánchez de Arévalo then began his work on the premise that King Enrique should foster his own virtue and encourage virtue in his nobility, through noble sports and exercises, to correct what he saw as the two

\textsuperscript{607} Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 311. ‘O magnificent emperor! Great is your fortune, but greater is your virtue. Fortune made you powerful, virtue made you glorious; fortune gave you powers, virtue gave you worth, fortune gave you many to command, virtue gave you those that you rule.’

\textsuperscript{608} Ibid., 312. ‘in them an image or likeness of virtue gave them the necessity to rule, in you true virtue gives continuity of rule.’

\textsuperscript{609} Ibid. ‘at the same time the royal dignity and your republic both grow in your excellent person; in such a way that the first (dignity) before you was never greater nor the second (the republic) so fortunate. The first grows since you found it sad and very humiliated by the unjust peace with the infidels, yours and our enemies; the second you find no less fearful and much upset by the internal discord of domestic conflicts.’

\textsuperscript{610} Ibid. ‘decided to plant a delightful and honest orchard, in which in it, your most high lordship, the multitude of cures and business are given place, can virtuously and laudably retire, in which Your Holy Majesty, might concisely find all those noble and strenuous exercises and honest sports and laudable pursuits, in which according to the doctrine of the wise ancients, the most illustrious kings and princes and other magnificent nobles , each one in his dignity and proportion, should principally exercise and occupy.’
principal issues in Castile; peace with Granada and civil unrest. He thus divided the work into three parts, one dedicated to chivalry, one to hunting and one to music. He argued that these were no idle princely pursuits, but rather a vital part of a successful reign. Writing in the wake of decades of sour relations between the king and the nobility, Sánchez de Arévalo was eager to stress to the king the advantages which encouraging these pursuits brought; ‘dan otrosi al entendimiento recreación e gran vigor, e excitan a los coraçones nobles a cosas altas e a los actos de virtud e de nobleza.’ Cartagena had similarly argued that books conveying good chivalric advice awakened in noble hearts deeds of chivalry. However, Sánchez de Arévalo extended this to encompass martial exercise itself and the first section of the work focused on, ‘el magnífico fecho de la gloriosa milicia, o el ínclito exercicio de armas.’ In the section, Sánchez de Arévalo addressed the virtues and merits of chivalry and warfare in general for the prince. If Sánchez de Arévalo’s work was written with Juan II in mind, then he would have hardly needed to persuade him of the merits of chivalry. Juan had turned to chivalry as a means of binding his fracturing court together. He had sponsored two chivalric orders, the prestigious Order of the Band and the Order of the Scale (Escama), as well as giving out the device of the Ristre (Lance Rest). Little is known of the last of these and it was not a chivalric order in the proper sense. It lacked a formal structure and appears instead to have been a device closely associated with King Juan, and one which Álvaro Miralles suggests had specifically anti-Aragonese overtones. Juan appears to have gone to great lengths to present himself as a chivalric figure, although he lacked the military skill of his uncle, Ferdinand of Antequera. Coinage minted during his reign after the expulsion of the Infantes of Aragon displayed Juan dressed as a knight wearing the collar of the Scale, bearing a shield displaying the royal band of Castile and the caparison covering his horse decorated with the device of the Ristre. Juan supported this knightly image by staging frequent jousts and often participating in them himself.

In the first section of the Vergel, Sánchez de Arévalo outlined the twelve ‘excellences’ of martial exercise. Sánchez de Arévalo began with the seven virtues that a love of arms brought to the kingdom. Arms were essential, he argued, for the defence of the kingdom and the promotion of a healthy society. The first excellence was that war was natural and, he explained, that all reasonable animals, humans included, were involved in some way or another with wars of defence and conservation. However, as Sánchez de Arévalo explained in the second excellence, the king should encourage acts of war not just because it was natural for noblemen, but because wars fought for good reason produced good results. Sánchez de Arévalo

611 Ibid., 313. ‘they give recreational understanding and great vigour, and they excite those noble hearts to high things and deeds of virtue and nobility.’
613 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 317. ‘the magnificent deed of glorious warfare or the illustrious exercise of arms’.
614 Álvaro Fernández de Córdova Miralles, ‘Las divisas del Rey: Escamas y ristres en la corte de Juan II de Castilla’, 34.
615 See figures 5 and 6.
617 Ibid.
stated that, ‘segunt dizen los sabios antiguos, los nobles exercicios e fechos de armas fueron ordenados e fallados por buenas causas e necesarios fines.’ It was an argument that would form the basis for his later assertion that chivalry itself fostered virtuous behaviour amongst knights. Sánchez de Arévalo argued warfare fostered two types of prudence, political and military, which were of great importance for noblemen and princes alike. The first of these, political or civil prudence, brought an understanding of how to organise the towns and cities and the second, military prudence, an understanding of defence and the common good of the republic. The third excellence built on Sánchez de Arévalo’s argument that chivalry brought military prudence. Sánchez de Arévalo stated that ‘este noble exercicio e fecho de armas se guardan e conservan dos cosas, las más preciosas e más dulces e deseadas sobre todas cosas; conviene a saber, la vida propia de cada uno, e otrosi la liberdad.’ Sánchez de Arévalo argued then that arms ensured the defence of the kingdom and protection of individual life and liberty. The defence of the kingdom was both integral to the office of the king and to the office of knighthood. Sánchez de Arévalo’s argument was practical. The practice of arms ensured that knights understood that it was their duty to defend the kingdom. The Segunda Partida Title XIX discussed at length the duty of the king to protect the kingdom from its enemies and the role of knights in the royal army. For any prince, fostering a view of knighthood which emphasised the protection of the king and kingdom was prudent. Juan’s own reign served as a powerful example of how serious it was when knights forgot these duties.

Figure 5 (left): Gold dobla of King Juan II depicting the king wearing the device of the Ristre and the Band. Figure 6 (right): King Juan II’s tomb at Miraflores Monastery in Burgos depicting Juan wearing the collar of the Ristre.

---

618 Ibid. ‘according to the wise ancients, noble exercises and deeds of arms were founded for good causes and necessary ends.’
619 Ibid.
620 Ibid., 318. ‘this noble exercise and deed of arms guards and conserves two things, the most precious, sweet and desired above all things: which is to say, ones’ own life and moreover liberty.’
Sánchez de Arévalo was eager to stress the virtues that chivalry and warfare would bring to the king, the kingdom and the Castilian nobility. Sánchez de Arévalo promised the king that the practice of arms would bring him new lands and titles as well as peace, security and the glory of victory. Sánchez de Arévalo also saw the practice of arms as a means by which the kingdom’s knights might ascend to new titles and offices. He stated, ‘el ínclito fecho de armas los nobles varones, de virtuousos e notables deseos, merescen subir a estados de dignidades muy sublimes e altas; ca por este noble exercicio se alcançan no solamente los magníficos estados e títulos de condes, marqueses e duques, mas aun se alcança aquella gloria e cumbre de gran excelencia que es el soberano honor en todas los dignidades humanas, que es el reinar e el imperar’. His words were possibly a reference to Enrique of Trastamara, who won the crown of Castile by murdering his half-brother Pedro the Cruel. The comment may also have been a reference to Alfonso the Magnanimous, whose victory in 1442 over René of Anjou had made him King of Naples. Citing the example of Alexander, he stated that, ‘este noble e alto exercicio de armas no solamente alcança e gana reinados e altos honores, mas aun los multiplica e augmenta, fasta venir a imperios e a una e sola monarchía del mundo’. Arms then marked the path by which the king and his knights might increase their own estate and improve the kingdom. Cartagena, in his Discurso, had similarly linked the reputation of the kingdom to the practice of arms by praising the quality of Castile’s knights.

Sánchez de Arévalo went on to argue for the dangers of not practicing arms. In a pointed reminder to the king, he stated that, ‘cesando de las guerras, cesaron sus principados e poderes: de lo que concluye esto el Philósopho (Aristotle), que así como el fierro non usado fas e pierde, así los príncipes non exercitados en armas se corronpen e pierden; e por consiguiente sirven a quien avían de enseñorear.’ Whilst Castile had seen plenty of knightly violence, it had rarely been engaged in just warfare during Juan’s reign. Santillana, Pérez de Guzmán and Cartagena had all lamented how the kingdom had been at peace with its enemies, whilst internal discord festered. Most of the commentators seldom described the civil unrest in the kingdom as war. Instead, it was most commonly referred to as escáldados, bollícios, turbaciones or simply discordia. The invasion of Granada, led by Luna, had been the only significant conflict with the Moors fought during Juan’s reign. As Cartagena had despairsed, ‘veemos el reyno lleno de plateas e de guardabraços e estar en paz los de Granada.’ However, Sánchez de Arévalo saw the exercise of arms as the means by which the kingdom would achieve peace and bask in the glory of triumph. The sixth and seven...

622 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 318. ‘the illustrious deed of arms noblemen of virtuous and noble desires deserve to ascend to the most high and sublime estates and dignities; since by this noble exercise they reach not only the magnificent estates and titles of counts, marquises and dukes but even that glory and peak of great excellence that is sovereign honour in all human dignities, ruling and commanding can be reached’.

623 Ibid. ‘this noble and high exercise of arms not only achieves and gains kingdoms and high honours, but even multiplies and increases them, until it comes to empires and the one and only monarchy of the world’.

624 Ibid. ‘ending wars ends your principalities and powers, which the Philosopher (Aristotle) concluded that like iron that is not used rusts and is lost, so the princes that do not exercise arms are corrupted and lost; and as a result, serve who has dominated them.’

625 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 254–55. Alonso uses all of these terms in the introduction to Book III of the Doctrinal to describe the civil unrest.

626 Ibid., 255. ‘we see the kingdom full of plate and armour and at peace with Granada.’
seventh excellences of arms were, he argued, ‘el muy delectable e deseado beneficio de la paz’ and ‘aquel muy glorioso e famoso triunfo de la dulce victoria’.

Alfonso Fernández de Palencia, also writing in the 1450s, had similarly cast ‘exercicio’ as the path to triumph. Citing Vegetius, he reminded his reader that, ‘quien desea la paz, apareje la guerra.’

Sánchez de Arévalo’s most extensive argument was that the practice of arms promoted virtue amongst the Castilian nobility. He thus, like Cartagena, cast chivalry as a means by which Castile might solve the issues that underlay the civil war. The eighth to twelfth excellences presented the practice of arms as a means of eradicating vice from the ranks of the Castilian nobility and promoting virtue in the kingdom’s knights. Sánchez de Arévalo approached the relationship between chivalry and virtue somewhat differently to his fellow commentators. He argued that the practice of arms brought virtue to knights and kings alike and he saw chivalry not only as a standard to aspire to, but also as a force for promoting virtuous behaviour. This difference in approach was likely due to the Vergel’s intended royal readership. He presented the relationship between the practice of arms and virtue as a king might view it and encouraged his reader to foster a chivalric court culture, and promote the practice of arms as a means of encouraging virtue amongst his subjects.

In the eighth excellence, he explained that, ‘este magnífico ejercicio de armas’, ‘dispone e endereça a los ínclitos reys e príncipes e a los nobles varones que le siguen, a muchas e loables virtudes.’ Sánchez de Arévalo saw virtue as stemming primarily from military exercise, a view which was not shared by many of his fellow commentators. Citing Aristotle he wrote, ‘por ende desía un sabio que este noble exercicio es pradre e engendrador de todas las virtudes; e esto es lo que el philósopho Aristótiles dize en el segundo de las Políticas, adonde concluye que muchas virtudes resultan de la noble arte militar e del noble fecho de armas.’ From a royal perspective, encouraging virtue in the kingdom’s nobility was in the king’s interest and it is easy to see how, in the wake of the civil unrest in the kingdom, Sánchez de Arévalo was eager to encourage the king to make his noblemen more virtuous. Sánchez de Arévalo argued that, above all, war promoted the virtues of loyalty and obedience to the king; ‘los varones exercitados en actos de guerra son bien prontos a obedecer a su rey e príncipe, por costunbre que tienen en las guerras de obedecer a los reys e a los capitanes; ca sin obediencia non se puede la guerra faser nin continuar, e esta virtud es la más

---

627 Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 318–19. ‘the delectable and desired benefit of peace’ and ‘that most glorious and famous triumph of sweet victory.’
628 Ibid., 319. ‘he who desires peace, prepares for war.’
629 Ibid. ‘this magnificent exercise of arms arranges and puts in order illustrious kings, princes and noblemen and many and laudable virtues follow.’
630 Ibid. ‘to this end a wise man said that this noble exercise is father and producer of all virtues, and this is what the philosopher Aristotle says in the second book of the Politics, where he concludes that many virtues result from the noble military art and from the noble deed of arms.’
principal e substancial en la guerra. Cartagena, in the *Doctrinal*, similarly stressed that, ‘la experiencia e la razon claramente lo muestra, todo cauallero, qualquier que sea, deue mucho pugnar por ser obediente al cabadillo.’ Whilst the link between chivalry and virtue was strong, it was rarely discussed in these terms. Chivalry was frequently a source of exemplars of virtuous behaviour, but it was not generally seen as enough to simply practice arms to gain the virtues that Sánchez de Arévalo suggested. Rather, chivalric writing was rife with examples of ‘false knights’, men who engaged in deeds of arms without adhering to chivalrous conduct. Cartagena and the Marquis of Santillana appeared less convinced that a love of arms had brought peace, security and virtuous behaviour in Castile’s knights. Cartagena, in the *Doctrinal*, had instead suggested that a Castilian love of arms in duels, jousts and tournaments had helped create a view of chivalry which had contributed to the civil war. However, Sánchez de Arévalo’s work conveys the optimism which was similarly present in Cartagena, Valera and Santillana’s writing, that chivalry promised a solution to the problems plaguing the kingdom. The *Vergel* presented arms as a means of correcting some of the manifold issues of the period and, through it, Sánchez de Arévalo sought to persuade King Enrique of the merits of fostering a love of arms, music and hunting.

Sánchez de Arévalo reminded Enrique that warfare brought more than just the virtue of obedience. Sánchez de Arévalo argued that warfare and arms also brought knights the virtues of patience, perseverance and tolerance of the labours of war, a set of virtues which Enrique was no doubt eager to foster in the rebellious Castilian nobility. Warfare did, of course, also promote in kings and noblemen what Sánchez de Arévalo termed, ‘fortaleza e esfuerzo de coração’, two virtues which lay at the centre of chivalry. This was because, ‘los inclitos reys e príncipes e los nobles varones osan acometer cosas terribles e peligrosas, quando e como conviene: ca por el uso e exercicio de armas non solamente el cuerpo se abilita e rescibe mayores fuerças, mas aun el corazón toma más osadía’. Exercise in arms would give both the king and his noblemen strength of heart and body and, as Sánchez de Arévalo reminded Enrique, ‘los exercitados en armas non se maravillan de lo que muchas vezes han visto, nin temen de lo que han provado, nin fuyen del peligro que otras vezes han sufrido.’ The *Partidas* had similarly cast fortitude as the virtue needed by knights to face the dangers of war, and the *Segunda Partida* likened it to the hilt of a sword by which the rest

---

631 Ibid. ‘noblemen engaged in acts of war are quick to obey their king and prince as by custom in wars they (noblemen) have to obey the kings and captains since without obedience the war cannot continue and this virtue is the most principal and substantial of war’.

632 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 144. ‘experience and clear reason shows that all knights, whoever they are should fight and be loyal to the general.’


634 Ibid.

635 Ibid. ‘fortitude and strength of heart’.

636 Ibid. ‘illustrious kings and princes and noblemen dare to face terrible things and dangers when and as they should, since, by the use and exercise of arms, not only is the body equipped with and receives great strength, but even the heart takes great boldness’.

637 Ibid. ‘those practiced in arms do not marvel at what they have many times seen, they do not fear what they have tested and they do not flee from danger that they have other times suffered.’
of the weapon was borne.\textsuperscript{638} Fortitude was, unsurprisingly, considered an essential virtue for a knight to possess, although it was rarely considered a kingly virtue.

Sánchez de Arévalo suggested that arms promoted more than just military virtues and argued that, ‘deste íncito ejercicio procede la virtud de la magnanimidad’, and from magnanimity came the virtues of liberality and generosity.\textsuperscript{639} Moreover, arms encouraged both the virtues of justice and temperance as, citing Seneca, he argued that, ‘la mucha paz e folgança fase a los omes incurrir en muchos vicios e señadamentemente fase a los omes ser injustos.’\textsuperscript{640} Sánchez de Arévalo was thus arguing that the practice of arms itself promoted in knights the virtues of chivalry. The practice of arms led to; obedience, patience, perseverance, fortitude, magnanimity, generosity, liberality, justice and temperance. These were the chivalric virtues, although Sánchez de Arévalo himself did not use the term caballería. The list, with the exception of cordura, included the principal virtues which Alfonso X identified in the Siete Partidas as, ‘cordura e fortaleza e mesura e justiça.’\textsuperscript{641} The Vergel thus argued that, by encouraging the practice of arms through war, the prince would foster in the kingdom’s knights the virtues of chivalry. No other chivalric commentator at the time argued that the practice of arms alone was enough to make knights chivalrous. This difference in approach was a result of Sánchez de Arévalo composing the Vergel for a royal audience.

The exercise of arms not only encouraged virtue, but also eradicated vice. Sánchez de Arévalo asserted that, ‘la ociosa folgança fase a los omes ser delicados e viciosos.’\textsuperscript{642} Citing Valerius, he stated that, ‘que en quanto los romanos tovieron guerras o se exercitaron en armas, tanto fueron virtuosos, e quanto duró la guerra africana tanto floresció la virtud romana.’\textsuperscript{643} Sánchez de Arévalo argued that there was a direct link between the cessation of external wars of conquest and the terrible destruction of civil war, ‘que luego que cesaron los romanos de destruir e derrocar con fierro los muros agenos, cayeron en tierra con vicio las propias almenas.’\textsuperscript{644} The parallel between the collapse of Rome and Castile’s own recent history was inescapable. Following the cessation of war with Granada, Castile’s own battlements had similarly fallen to shameful civil war. Cartagena reached much the same conclusion and, in his Respuesta, even compared his own writing to Cicero’s response to civil war.\textsuperscript{645} Sánchez de Arévalo cast arms as the way in which the failings of the Castilian nobility might be corrected. Summing up the benefits of the practice of arms he commented that, ‘non solamente este noble e virtuoso exercicio causa e trae muchas virtudes segunt dicho es, mas aun

\textsuperscript{638} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 92.
\textsuperscript{639} Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los principes’, 319. ‘from this illustrious exercise proceeds the virtue of magnanimity’.
\textsuperscript{640} Ibid., 320. ‘much peace and idleness makes men commit many vices and usually makes men be unjust.’
\textsuperscript{641} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 91. ‘good sense, fortitude, restraint and justice.’
\textsuperscript{642} Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los principes’, 320. ‘idle leisure makes men delicate and viceful.’
\textsuperscript{643} Ibid. ‘when the Romans took wars or exercise in arms they were virtuous and during that hard African war Roman virtue flourished.’
\textsuperscript{644} Ibid. ‘when the Romans ceased destroying and overthrowing with weapons foreign walls, their battlements in their own lands fell to vice.’
\textsuperscript{645} Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 238.
destruye los vicios e pecados; ca por él los injustos robadores e ladrones son castigados e su codicia es pugnida, e después la soberbia e arrogancia es humillada, e generalmente todos los delitos e maleficios reciben pena; e asimismo la inocencia de los buenos es defendida e conservada.”

For Sánchez de Arévalo, arms promised a way of correcting the problems of noble society, and it was a promise that Valera, Cartagena and even Padrón similarly believed in. Like Cartagena in the Doctrinal, Sánchez de Arévalo presented the problems in Castile as resulting from failings in Castilian chivalry. As Cartagena had done in the third book of the Doctrinal, he suggested that just war presented a path to redemption for Castile’s knights.

The link to Castile’s own political instability was something which Sánchez de Arévalo explored further in the ninth excellence. He presented the civil war in Castile, and the failings of its knights, as the consequence of a lack of temperance. During war, or when exercising arms, noblemen were forced to live modest and temperant lives. He explained, ‘los ínclitos reys e los otros nobles varones que se ocupan en este estrenuo e virtuoso exercicio de armas e de guerra, non pueden en los tales tiempos entender nin vacar a deleites, señaladamente a buscar e aver equisitos e preciosos manjares, los quales en tiempo de guerra non se pueden asi aver nin aparejar: quanto más que el noble e virtuoso deseo que resulta, de los nobles fecho de la guerra, los fase olvidar e posponer toda curiosidad e diligenica en aver diversos e preciosos manjares; ca saben bien que si vacasen e entendiesen en ellos non podrían darse a los actos de fortaleza.’

The necessity for knights to avoid lavish lifestyles during war was similarly stressed in the Segunda Partida and quoted by Cartagena in the Doctrinal. Titulo XXI stressed that knights should dress modestly, taking care to avoid ostentatious fabrics, and wear their knightly cloak as a symbol of the need to be obedient to their lords and generals. The Partidas were also very clear that knighthood and military service meant being restrained in eating and drinking whilst engaged in warfare. It would appear that the knights and noblemen of Juan II’s reign had not shown such restraint. Sánchez de Arévalo lamented, ‘en los tiempos de agora, por el poco uso de armas e continuación deste noble exercicio de armas de guerra, ¡ya parece esta temprança de los manjares en los cavalleros, quando acaesce que alguna vezes están en los reales e uestes, ca más conbites se fasen en los reales que non en las cibdades!’

Sánchez de Arévalo’s mocking condemnation of the conduct of Castile’s

---

646 Rodrígio Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 320. ‘not only does this noble and virtuous exercise cause and bring many virtues according to what is said but it even destroys vices and sins; since by it the unjust robbers and thieves are punished and greed is punished and after pride and arrogance is humiliated and generally all sins and misdeeds receive punishment and likewise the innocence of the good is defended and conserved.’

647 Ibid. ‘those illustrious kings and other noblemen that are occupied in that strenuous and virtuous exercise of arms and war, cannot in such times enjoy and become idle with pleasures, usually looking for and having exquisite and precious delicacies, which in times of war they cannot have nor prepare, a more virtuous and noble desire results, that of noble deeds of war, which forgets and postpones all curiosity and diligence in having diverse and precious delicacies, since they know that if they are idle and enjoy them then they cannot give themselves to acts of fortitude.’


650 Rodrígio Sánchez de Arévalo, ‘Vergel de los príncipes’, 320–21. ‘in recent times, by the little use and continuation of this noble exercise of arms of war, it seems there is not this moderation of pleasures in knights, when it occurs that they are in armies and hosts more banquets are held in the armies than in the cities!’
knights was echoed in the *Coplas de la Panadera*. The opening stanzas of the work mocked the flower of Castilian chivalry as drunken, cowardly and weak.\(^{651}\) Sánchez de Arévalo warned the king that a lack of warfare made knights, ‘effeminados e mugeriles e por consiguiente flacos e thermerosos.’\(^{652}\) For Sánchez de Arévalo, the lack of warfare had led Castile’s knights to forgo the temperance which should have governed their lives in favour of ostentation and vice, which had directly contributed to the civil war in the kingdom.

Sánchez de Arévalo’s made the implication of his argument clear in the tenth excellence. He argued that military exercise and warfare were inseparably linked to the very nature of nobility. Arms and warfare were, he argued, the only means by which someone who was not noble might be made a knight or *hidalgo*.\(^{653}\) The previous sections of the work had stressed that the practice of arms created virtue. For Sánchez de Arévalo, deeds of arms were the very definition of nobility and, as such, those of low birth who excelled in arms displayed the virtue required for noble status. Valera was himself a perfect example of someone who had risen to knighthood through his deeds of arms. In a challenge to the sort of rigid noble hierarchy which Rodríguez del Padrón had argued for in the *Cadira de honor*, Sánchez de Arévalo stated, ‘contesció que algunos baxos e pobres omes fesieron algunos buenos e nobles fechos de armas, de guisa que por su industria e esfuerço e fortaleza vencieron algunas batallas, e libaron alguna cibdad, villa o tierra de algun trabajo, por lo qual la gente de la tal cibdat o tierra mucho los honraron, e dieron riquezas e fasienda, e quisieron que fuesen librados e exemptos de todos tributos e pechos, e dende en adelante los ovieron por fidalgos e nobles.’\(^{654}\) In Sánchez de Arévalo’s view, deeds of arms and chivalry were the foundation of nobility, they were he said the, ‘buena raiz’, from which, ‘un noble árbol’, sprung.\(^{655}\) The fact that he celebrated the potential for non-noble soldiers to be knighted as one of the most significant virtues of arms suggests that he, like Valera, welcomed the potential for social advancement through virtue. However, unlike Valera he did not ascribe a direct role to the king and, crucially, he did not argue that nobility was a royal gift. Rather, he saw ennoblement as happening without royal intervention as a reward for good service. The king’s role in the process was instead as an enabler, by promoting the practice of arms and war and, thus, providing the opportunity for virtuous men to ascend to the ranks of the nobility.

Despite his differing view of the process of ennoblement, Sánchez de Arévalo did, nonetheless, present a view of chivalry which was very much royal centric. The *Vergel* was a call for Enrique IV to promote the practice of arms amongst the Castilian nobility primarily through warfare. Sánchez de Arévalo cast the

---

\(^{651}\) ‘*Coplas de la Panadera*’.

\(^{652}\) Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, *Vergel de los príncipes*, 321. ‘effeminate and womanly and as a result feeble and fearful.’ ‘Thermerosos’ here would appear to be a scribal error, ‘temerosos’ would fit much better with Arévalo’s argument and as such I have translated it as ‘fearful’.

\(^{653}\) Ibid.

\(^{654}\) Ibid. ‘I reply that some low and poor men did some good and noble deeds of arms, in a way that by their industry, strength and fortitude they won battles, and liberated a city, town or land by some labour, by which the people of that city or land honoured them greatly and gave them riches and wished that they were free and exempt from all tributes and taxes and hence forth were held as *hidalgos* and nobles.’

\(^{655}\) Ibid., 322. ‘good root’, ‘noble tree’.
exercise of arms as fundamental to the very nature of the Castilian nobility and argued that it was a way of promoting virtuous behaviour amongst the kingdom’s unruly knights. However, he saw the relationship between chivalry and virtue very differently to his fellow commentators. For Sánchez de Arévalo, the practice of arms was the source of virtue. This fundamental difference was a result of his intended royal readership and Sánchez de Arévalo was eager to encourage Enrique to lead the kingdom’s knights back to war and, thus, back to virtue. The practice of arms was not, as he explained, simply a case of personal virtue but also a matter of the defence of the faith. The final two excellences of arms were, he argued, the defence of the faith and participation in a spiritual war against the devil.656 These final sections were a reminder to Enrique that war against the Moors offered an opportunity for the exercise of arms. However, as the previous excellences had made clear, ‘la persona que con grand ánimo e virtut sabe e puede resistir e vencer en la guerra terrenal, sabrá bien vencer en la guerra invisible, de la qual procede aquella grande e muy soberana victoria, que a todas las otras victorias precede’.657

Despite Sánchez de Arévalo’s suggestions otherwise, Juan II had used chivalry as a means of controlling the nobility and he had eagerly promoted a chivalric court culture, in which he played an active part. As noble disloyalty became a worsening issue, Juan turned to chivalry and knightly honour as a means of ensuring loyalty amongst the most powerful men in the kingdom. The clearest example of this were the oaths used by Juan to try and secure the loyalty of his knights. The swearing of knightly oaths was a common part of chivalric culture and there were some notable examples during the fifteenth century.658 Don Suero de Quiñones famously swore before King Juan that he would break 300 lances as part of the Paso Honros to free himself from the prison of love.659 Perhaps the most famous occasion of knightly oath making was the Feast of the Pheasant held by Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy in 1454. At the elaborate feast, the Duke and his noblemen swore to participate in a crusade to retake Constantinople.660 Similar vows had taken place in England in the fourteenth century when Edward I and Edward III held oath swearing ceremonies before going to war.661

Like his English and Burgundian counterparts, Juan turned to oath swearing on the eve of conflict and he increasingly turned to chivalric honour to try and keep his court together. On the 27th July 1430, near

656 Ibid.
657 Ibid., 322–23. ‘the person with great soul and virtue who knows and can resist and be victorious in the earthly war will know victory in the invisible war, from which proceeds that great and most sovereign victory from which all other victories proceed’.
658 For more on chivalric vows see: Maurice Keen, Chivalry, 200–218; Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 83–90.
661 Maurice Keen, Chivalry, 213.
Majano, King Juan gathered his courtiers together to hear mass in his tent. The event was a serious and sombre occasion, unlike the feasts which preceded the Burgundian and English knightly oaths. Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of León and, during the service, before communion was given, King Juan ordered that those present swear an oath. The chronicler states that, ‘el qual juramento fué en esta guisa: que juraban a Dios, allí do estaua consagrado, que fazían pleyto omenaje en las manos del Rey de guardar su servuicio e onrra, e de su condestable don Álbaro de Luna; e todas aquellas cosas que el Rey quisiese, que ellos lo oviesen por bien fecho, aunque ellos o alguno dellos entendiesen lo contrario, que todavía pasase según la voluntad del Rey.’ The oath was one of four sworn in the same ceremony. Following the oath to serve the king and constable and uphold their honour, the assembled noblemen swore not to correspond with the Kings of Aragon or Navarre, Queen of Navarre, Prince Carlos of Viana, the Infanta Catalina, the Infante Enrique or the Count of Castro. This oath was followed by the king and Luna swearing to protect the honour and estates of those who had just sworn the oath. The wording of the initial oath is very similar to the oath the Siete Partidas lists as part of the knighting ceremony, and corresponds with what Cartagena believed knights should swear. It is significant that King Juan felt it necessary to swear a corresponding oath to protect the honour and estates of his courtiers. The event drew heavily on the language of chivalry. The king ordered the oath swearing during a period when his authority was most threatened. The ceremony was part of an attempt to unite the Castilian nobility through chivalry, as the violent seizure of the Infantes of Aragon’s property continued and war with Aragon loomed large. Both Juan and Luna had astutely used the chivalric life of court to try and strengthen the ties between the king and the nobility. The frequent staging of jousts and tournaments created an active chivalric culture, of which Juan was a central part, and led to politics and chivalry being inseparably intertwined.

This connection between politics, chivalry and the Castilian nobility was no better displayed than at the triptych of tournaments staged in Valladolid in 1428. The tournaments were staged as the political balance at court shifted from the Infantes to Álvaro de Luna. The Infantes themselves staged two of the tournaments, the cost of which was staggering. However, these displays were not idle festivities, but serious political statements. In February of that year, Álvaro, in an open challenge to the Infantes, made a triumphal return to court, celebrated with a magnificent procession. Their response was two events on a scale never before seen in Castile. The first of these events, known as the Pasaje peligroso de la fuerte ventura, was staged

---

662 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del balonero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 66.
663 Ibid. ‘the oath was done in this way; that they swore to God when it was consecrated, that they made a pledge of homage on the hands of the king to keep his service (military service) and honour and that of his constable don Álvaro de Luna; and all those things that the king wished, and they rightly did it, although they or some of them understood the opposite, which all happened according to the will of the king.’
664 Ibid., 67.
665 Ibid.
666 Ibid., 17–18; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 445–46; Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo., 67–68.
Enrique’s event was laden with symbolism and the presence of Fortune was a reminder of the instability of court politics. The Goddess was a figure to be feared and one who, in the medieval imagination, rarely bestowed good luck. Rather, Fortune was a force linked to upheaval. Fortune was also closely linked to the distribution of offices and their place at court was no doubt at the forefront of the Infantes’ minds. In his Tratado de providencia contra fortuna, Valera likened Fortune to a storm and advised the discreet and prudent nobleman to prepare, ‘en el tiempo de la bonaza se apercibe e arma contra la fortuna.‘ Enrique’s tourney was precisely such preparation. Enrique’s pas d’armes was envisioned as an overblown demonstration of his power and, also, as a last-ditch attempt to bring the fragmenting Trastamara family together. Enrique’s Pasaje thus had a twofold purpose. The chivalric combat heightened his own reputation and the magnitude of the event was designed to inspire awe and delight the participants. The tournament was a display of his own knightly prowess and vast resources. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the joust served to bring the Trastamara family together and was a snub to Álvaro’s position at court.

Enrique’s spectacular pas d’armes was followed six days later by a similarly lavish event staged by the Infante Juan. Juan of Navarre jousted with a team of five knights, all dressed in royal arms, their gorgets richly decorated. Juan jousted, breaking many lances and was joined in the lists by Juan II, dressed in olive brown armour and accompanied by a team of ten knights. The king ran two courses, breaking a lance and almost losing his helmet. Last into the lists was the Infante Enrique, accompanied by five knights. Enrique then returned to the lists alone, wearing a richly adorned suit of armour boarded with gold displaying the motto, ‘Non es’, or ‘He is Not’. Enrique’s display was intriguing, the motto was no doubt a reference to the fact that he, unlike his cousin and older brothers, was not a king re-enforcing the importance of his place at court. The final joust, held on 6th June, was organised by the king himself and Pero Carrillo tells us that it was held explicitly in honour of King Juan II’s cousin, Leonor. King Juan himself was the star of the show. A tent made of cloth of gold was erected at one end of the lists and a stand equally richly decorated with French cloth was constructed at the other. In what would appear to be an almost blasphemous expression of royal power, Juan jousted dressed as ‘Dios Padre’ and the twelve knights of his team, ‘todos con sus diademas, cada vno con su título del santo que era, e con su señal en la mano cada vno del martirio

669 Ibid., 110–12; J. S. Bothwell, Falling from Grace: Reversal of Fortune and the English Nobility, 1075–1455 (Manchester, 2008).
670 Diego de Valera, ‘Tratado de providencia contra fortuna’, 141. ‘in times of bounty to be warned and armed against Fortune.’
671 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del halconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 24.
672 Ibid.
673 Ibid., 25.
que avía pasado por Nuestro Señor Dios.\textsuperscript{674} The Infante Enrique came next, also accompanied by twelve knights, six dressed as flames and the other six covered in moral sayings.\textsuperscript{675} Enrique’s costume continued the overtly religious tone of the event and likely referenced the coming of the Holy Spirit. The last to enter the lists was Juan of Navarre, dressed as a rock, and guarded by fifty knights.\textsuperscript{676} The jousts continued, ‘fasta que vbo estrellas en el cielo.’\textsuperscript{677}

The final joust held strong symbolic meaning. The previous two, held by the Infante Enrique and King Juan of Navarre, were both undoubtedly attempts to secure their place at court as the kingdom’s leading noblemen. At his joust, King Juan of Castile fought under the motto ‘lardón’ as God the Father.\textsuperscript{678} Juan’s appearance, ‘como Dios’, re-enforced the fact that he was king, something easily forgotten in the petty disputes between his family.\textsuperscript{679} The appearance of the king as God was a literal representation of the place of the king in the noble hierarchy, which Diego de Valera later presented in the Espejo.\textsuperscript{680} Valera argued that this royal act of ennoblement was a reward for virtue, just as God himself chose his own elect. At the tournament, this relationship was made explicit, King Juan appeared literally to take the place of God. The previous pageantry and tournaments thrown at the expense of the Infante Enrique and his brother were, in a way, a means of demonstrating their virtue. The feats of arms which they performed validated their standing as knights and the magnificence of their festivities was designed to broadcast their own personal virtue.\textsuperscript{681} Prince Enrique’s choice of motto was an act of humility, recognising his lower status at court and his appearance at the final joust, with he and his entourage covered in moral sayings, was no doubt meant to show Juan that he was a pious and virtuous knight. Similarly, the Infante Juan’s appearance at the joust as a rock was no doubt a reference to Christ naming Peter as the ‘rock’ on which the church would be built. Juan hoped that his cousin would similarly make him his favourite. This combined, with Enrique’s presence as the Holy Spirit, was no doubt meant as a display of familial closeness and as an echo of Ferdinand of Antequera’s wish that the cousins worked together to rule Castile. It was, of course, King Juan who had the power to decide the role which the royal cousins would play at court and he did so through the signing of a treaty which confirmed the Infantes’ place after this final, spectacular joust. The events were an example of Valera’s ideal at play. For the Infantes, the tournaments were a chance to display their wealth, power and virtue as members of the Trastamara family and loyal supporters of the king. Whilst Juan had little choice

---

\textsuperscript{674} Ibid. ‘God the Father’, ‘all with their diadems, each one with the title of the saint that he was, and each one with the symbol of his martyrdom in his hand by which he had died for Our Lord God.’ Accounts of the joust disagree over whether Juan’s team were saints or the twelve disciples. Don Pero Niño was one of the jousters and he states that the team were disciples. However, both the Crónica de Juan II and Crónica del halconero identify them only as saints.

\textsuperscript{675} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{676} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{677} Ibid. ‘until there were stars in the sky’.

\textsuperscript{678} Ibid. His motto was ‘Lardón’, a medieval Spanish version of the modern word ‘galardón’ or reward.

\textsuperscript{679} Ibid. ‘like God’.

\textsuperscript{680} Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 92.

\textsuperscript{681} For more on the link between tournaments and princely magnificence in the renaissance see: Cecil H. Clough, ‘Chivalry and Magnificence in the Golden Age of the Italian Renaissance’, in Chivalry in the Renaissance, ed. Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge, 1990), 25–47.
over who filled the ranks of the Castilian nobility, he had considerable power over those who had close proximity to him, and it was an attempt to exercise this power which led to the clash with the Infantes.

Conclusion

Sánchez de Arévalo’s work reflects a move amongst the chivalric commentators to re-enforce royal authority. Alonso de Cartagena in the *Doctrinal de los caballeros* argued for a royal centric view through the use of the *Siete Partidas* and the statutes of the Order of the Band. He presented a chivalric ideal which emphasised loyalty to the king and argued that adherence to the law represented the best path to good knighthood. Valera had similarly stressed the place of royal authority by creating a chivalric ideal where nobility was contingent on royal favour. His view of noble status as a royal gift, and one that could be removed, created a knightly ideal which stressed the importance of continued loyalty to the king. Sánchez de Arévalo’s vision of a royally led chivalric court culture was a natural continuation of these arguments, although one that reversed the relationship between chivalry and virtue. Cartagena had, in the *Doctrinal*, looked back to Alfonso X and a golden age of royal authority. His vision of a strong king, who took a leading place in the chivalric culture of court, was likely a response to Juan’s weak reign. For Sánchez de Arévalo, however, the link between chivalry and royal authority went further and he encouraged King Enrique to promote chivalry as a means of controlling the kingdom’s knights.

The debate over the nature of nobility came to dominate chivalric writing at the Castilian court during the latter years of Juan II’s reign. This chapter has sought to place Cartagena’s work in the wider context of the debate amongst commentators at the royal court on chivalry and nobility. The appearance of authors like Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera, the Marquis of Santillana and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, who argued for a substantially different chivalric ideal, marked a change in the way in which chivalry was seen by contemporaries. The debate which arose in response to the civil war, was but one part of a larger debate on chivalry and nobility at the Castilian court. Lineage and entitled nobility found its defender in the form of Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, whose eloquent arguments offer a brief glimpse of the opposing side of the debate. However, there were other issues at play and the debate was fueled by the growing sense of crisis amongst the Castilian chivalric commentators. Ultimately, the chivalric debate marked the convergence of a number of issues running parallel in Castilian noble society as authors grappled with the problem of noble disloyalty, with questions of lineage, with the place of *conversos* and with the continuing problem of weak kingship.
Chapter V

Chivalry and Humanism

Introduction

Addressing Diego Gómez de Sandoval in the *Doctrinal*, Cartagena wistfully looked back to an idealised past, lamenting how, ‘los famosos caualleros, muy noble señor conde, que en los tiempos antiguos por diversas regiones del mundo floreçieron, entre los grandes cuydados e ocupaçiones arduas que tenían para gouenar la republica e la defender e amparar de los sus aduersarios, acostumbraun interponer algund trabaio de sciencia por que mas onestamente supiesen regir’. 682 The ideal which Cartagena alluded to was one of learned knighthood, consciously modelled on an idealised view of the classical past. He believed that knights’ military experience might be supplemented by learning in peacetime. Cartagena advocated a union of arms and letters, within the framework of the medieval division of society. In this ideal, knights were both the bellicose defenders and learned governors of the republic. Cartagena’s approach should not be surprising he was, after all, one of Castile’s foremost intellectuals and is widely regarded by historians as being amongst the kingdom’s first humanists. His views were exemplary of the changing nature of the chivalric ideal at the Castilian court and were echoed by many of Cartagena’s contemporaries. Chivalry, as a body of thought, was shaped by the political and intellectual context around it. Whilst the previous chapters have focused on the profound impact of civil unrest on chivalric thought, this chapter will address the impact of the intellectual culture of the Castilian court. The first half of the fifteenth century saw rapid intellectual developments in Castile and the period is generally described as between the Medieval and the Renaissance. These developments were inseparably linked to the changing model of knighthood voiced by the Castilian commentators. Facilitated by a lively literary court culture, chivalry was gradually shaped by new ideas and authorities, with references for good knightly conduct increasingly found in the Roman past. This new intellectual and cultural framework had a profound impact on the chivalric debate born out of the political crises of Juan’s reign. This was not a case of arms versus letters, but rather of arms guided by letters. Civic humanism was readily incorporated into established models of knighthood and nobility. However, did this influx of new ideas, sources and ideals change how contemporaries viewed knighthood? This chapter will seek to address this question and examine the relationship between chivalry and fledgling humanism at the Castilian royal court during Juan’s reign. It will establish the place of these new ideas in the chivalric debate and shed light on the increasingly important role of eloquence and wisdom in the knightly ideal.

682 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 79. ‘those famous knights, most noble count, who flourished in ancient times in diverse parts of the world, between their great cares and arduous occupations that they had in governing the republic and defending and protecting it from adversaries, were accustomed to placing between these duties works of knowledge by which they might more honestly rule’.
Juan II’s reign saw a change in the literary chivalric and noble ideal, driven by the royal court’s intellectual climate and continued instability. The discussion amongst court commentators over whether virtue or lineage was the true path to nobility formed part of a wider reimagining of the knightly ideal. This discussion was facilitated by Castilian intellectual engagement with ancient Rome, Greece and Italian humanism. Ancient Rome functioned as both a warning from history of the dangers of civil war and as a bountiful source of idealised examples of good knightly behavior. Service to the republic became the ideal which authors, like Alonso de Cartagena, looked to. The period saw the appearance of a new and distinctly Castilian approach to chivalry. The knightly ideal advocated by Cartagena, Valera, Juan Alfonso de Baena and the Marquis of Santillana was a departure from the traditional foundations of knighthood and a move towards an ideal which stressed more than just martial prowess. This new knightly ideal had been shaped by civil war and the debate over lineage. However, it was also shaped by humanism, as a distinctly Castilian approach developed. Ideas spread rapidly at court, fueled by a noble-driven culture of translation. Nowhere were these intellectual changes felt more strongly than in the work of the chivalric commentators. Whilst its influence is seen to varying degrees in different texts, humanism had a profound impact on the chivalric debate. However, the relationship between humanism and chivalry, between arms and letters, is considerably more problematic. Chivalry has often been closely associated with a noble opposition to learning during Juan II’s reign. This chapter will seek to reassess this relationship in light of the chivalric debate and address the Castilian relationship with the classical past.

The relationship between arms and letters can be addressed in two ways. The first is by examining the intellectual culture of the Castilian nobility. That is, whether the Castilian nobility in general were opposed to learning. Secondly, by examining the impact of humanist ideas on chivalric thought. The first of these approaches has seen considerable attention from historians. As will be discussed later, both Nicholas Round and Peter Russell argued that the Castilian nobility were characterised by an opposition to learning and a belief that the pursuit of letters damaged their use of arms.683 Their arguments rest on perceived widespread noble opposition to the growth of a humanist court culture during Juan’s reign. However, to properly assess the relationship between arms and letters in Castile, we must examine the influence of humanism on chivalric thought during the period. Whilst the first aspect has been readily addressed by historians seeking to cast the period as either ‘medieval’ or ‘renaissance’ in character, this second aspect has been little explored. As the previous chapters have shown, chivalry was alive and well at the Castilian court and it formed an integral part of the discussion of the kingdom’s political strife. It is here that the greatest impact of humanism was felt. Civic humanism was readily incorporated into the debate on chivalry as traditional understandings of a knight’s duties were supplemented by a powerful idea of service to the republic and the common good. Authors, like Mena, Valera, Cartagena and Enrique de Villena, advocated a view of the chivalric ideal which brought together both arms and letters. Learned knighthood lay at the heart of the

proposed solutions to the civil war and shaped the literary response to the crisis. This chapter will largely be concerned with the role of humanist thought in shaping the chivalric ideal, as expressed through the writing of the time. Noble court culture was a reflection of the changing chivalric ideal and vice versa. It is one of the only aspects of chivalry in which there can be seen a strong link between the theoretical and practical side of knighthood. The following pages will first address the character of noble society during Juan’s reign before turning to the more nuanced impact of humanist thought on the knightly ideal.

Learned Court Culture in Fifteenth-Century Castile

The first half of the fifteenth century in Castile is generally seen as marking the tentative beginnings of the Castilian Renaissance. The period brought changes which had a profound impact on the knightly and noble ideal. In 1403, the University of Salamanca appointed an Italian scholar to fill the previously vacant Chair of Rhetoric at the University. However, the appointment, as Ottavio Di Camillo has argued, was an important change in the intellectual culture of the University. Cartagena was amongst the first Salamanca students to feel the effect of this change, and it is not surprising that his translations of Cicero were completed shortly after finishing his studies. His attendance at the church councils brought him into contact with his Italian contemporaries. He actively participated in the kingdom’s growing culture of translation with translations of Cicero’s De officiis, De senectute and De inventione and the first Castilian translation of Seneca.

His clash with Leonardo Bruni highlighted Castile’s differing intellectual culture, and the degree of contact between Castile and its Italian neighbours through the involvement of several leading Italian humanists including, Decembrio, Bracciolini, Fielfo, Panormita and Lorenzo Valla. Whilst Cartagena’s argument with Bruni has been labelled Castile’s first encounter with Italian humanism, by the 1430s Castilian intellectual culture bore the hallmarks of a prolonged and gradual change. There was no landmark moment which marked the beginning of the Renaissance in Castile, but rather the slow and incremental effect of cultural and intellectual exchange with Italy.

The place of learning in the late-medieval Castilian knightly ideal has been a hotly debated topic amongst historians. Writing in the 1960s, Nicholas Round and Peter Russell built on the work of Américo Castro amongst others makes this assertion.

---

and argued that Castilian noble culture was characterised by an inherent dislike and distrust of learning. Their work established the place of the arms versus letters debate in Castilian history. The idea of a conflict between arms and letters was, in essence, a development of the ‘sapientia et fortitudo’ topos and rested on a belief that an active and contemplative life were mutually exclusive. However, this conflict has more recently been challenged by Jeremy Lawrance and Ottavio Di Camillo, amongst others. Di Camillo and Lawrance have argued that, rather than being in opposition to learning, the Castilian nobility drove the creation of a learned court culture, albeit one which was distinctly Castilian. Viewing the development of Castilian thought as a simple opposition between arms and letters overlooks the complexities of noble literary culture during Juan’s reign. Instead, the period saw a union of arms and letters through the chivalric debate. The result was a new learned knighthood and a realisation of Cartagena’s dream of knights guided by wisdom. However, it was a union of arms and letters which appeared quite different to the humanist ideal in Italy. Knightly learning was restricted and the traditional separation of society remained. The result is what I have tentatively termed ‘humanistic chivalry’, letters put to use in the betterment of arms, albeit in a restricted sense. Moreover, it would be disingenuous to cast the entirety of the Castilian nobility as eager to embrace arms and letters. There were undoubtedly many who saw learning as unbecoming for a knight.

The first half of the fifteenth century saw growing intellectual links between the Iberian Peninsula and its Italian neighbours. Italian universities, like Bologna where Cardinal Gil Álvarez Carrillo de Albornoz had founded the Spanish College in 1364, had been a source of intellectual links between Castile and Italy, as returning students brought with them new texts and ideas. Alonso recalled that he first encountered Bruni’s translation of Aristotle from Portuguese students returning from Bologna. However, there was little substantial contact between Castilian and Italian scholars until the mid-fifteenth century. Quattrocento Italian writers, like Dante and Boccaccio, were well known, but few referenced the work of contemporary Italian scholars. Alfonso the Magnanimous’ conquest of Naples in 1442 opened another potential route for textual transmission and cultural exchange. Alfonso fostered a distinctly humanist court in Naples and he encouraged renowned scholars, like Antonio Beccadelli, George of Trebizond and Giovanni Pontano, to take up residence there. These humanists, under Alfonso’s direction, argued for the virtues of the Spanish

---

emperors of Rome and cast Alfonso as a successor to these great rulers. However, as Russell argued, this had little impact on textual transmission to either mainland Aragon or Castile. However, by the mid-fifteenth century there were tentative, but growing, intellectual links between Castile and Italy, facilitated by the church councils and a growing exchange of letters between Castilians and the Italian states. King Juan II himself appears to have engaged with Italian humanists and the Marquis of Santillana made reference in his Proverbs to a letter written by Leonardo Bruni to King Juan, ‘la qual recuenta los muy altos y grandes hechos de los Emperadores de Roma’. Some knights, including Valera, Juan de Merlo and Pero Tafur, travelled extensively across Europe and beyond and, in the 1450s, Alfonso Fernández de Palencia, one of Cartagena’s students, travelled to Rome, where he was taught by George of Trebizond. However, despite their growth, these links remained limited and, as few at court could read Latin, Castilian humanism maintained an introspective character.

King Juan II was a prolific book collector and played an instrumental role in the establishment of a learned court culture. Pérez de Guzmán commented in his Semblanzas that, ‘plaziale oyr los omes auisados e graçiosos e notaua mucho lo que dellos oya, sabia fablar [e] entender latin, leya muy bien, plazianle muchos libros e estorias’. Pérez de Guzmán’s description of the king as a gracious and mild mannered lover of music, poetry and learning was echoed by Valera in his Crónica abbreviata who stated, ‘fue gran músico, cantava y tañía y dançava y trobava muy bien, plaziale mucho la caça, leía de buena voluntat libros de filósofos y poetas’. Like his cousin Alfonso, Juan’s love of chivalric display was matched by his patronage of literature and art. Whilst not quite going to the lengths of Alfonso, who proclaimed his love of arms and letters through a suit of armour decorated with open books Juan, nevertheless, embodied Castile’s chivalric and intellectual culture. The importance of the king in the circulation of texts at court is evident in the introduction to the Espejo where Valera explained that he, ‘con grant diligence trabajase muchas vezes pensava quié sería este a quien más dignamente mi pequeña obra destinasse’, so that, ‘por cuyo favor si algo de bien escriviese podiese ser actorizado, aprovado e publicado, en tal manera que dello saliese tal fruto, por que los nobles siguiendo virtudes llegasen al fin de la soberana nobleza’. The king also had a

694 Peter Stacey, ‘Hispania and Royal Humanism in Alfonsine Naples’.
697 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 118. ‘it pleased him to listen to wise and gracious men, and he took note of much of what he heard of them, he knew how to speak and read Latin, and read very well, he took pleasure in many books and histories’.
698 Diego de Valera and Cristina Moya García, Edición y estudio de la ‘Valeriana’ (Crónica abbreviada de España’ de mosén Diego de Valera), 316. ‘he was a great musician, singer and he danced very well, he took much pleasure in hunting, read many books by philosophers and poets’.
699 This armour, bearing the Aragonese arms and a number of open books, can be seen on Pisanello’s medal of Alfonso V and also in Alfonso’s own book of hours. See figure 7.
700 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 89. ‘worked with great diligence, many times thinking who would be the most dignified person to whom my little work could be given’ so that ‘by your favour some good
much more direct role in the patronage of authors. The famous court poet Juan de Mena served as the king’s secretary of Latin letters and produced a vast quantity of work for his royal patron. Valera’s Exortación, correspondence with the king, and Juan’s ownership of works like the Doctrinal, suggest that the king was an active participant in creating a learned chivalric ideal. Juan’s own love of learning is perhaps no better represented than by the royal library which grew steadily over his reign. The collection of 400 books inherited by Isabel in 1474 were mostly accumulated by Juan, and they stand testament to the king’s ardent love of learning.\footnote{Ian Michael, “‘From Her Shall Read the Perfect Ways of Honour’: Isabel of Castile and Chivalric Romance’, 107.} The library formed the foundation of the Escorial’s magnificent collection and showed a bias towards classical military history, with relatively few chivalric romances gracing the royal shelves. The character of the collection matches the commentators’ general interest in the classical past as a source of military information during the period. In Naples, Alfonso the Magnanimous founded a vast royal library which became one of the greatest collections in Italy.\footnote{For a reconstruction of Alfonso’s vast collection see: Tammaro de Marinis, La biblioteca Napoletana dei Re d’Aragona, 4 vols (Milan, 1947).} Alfonso’s collection was, like Juan’s, distinguished by its collection of classical works.\footnote{Mario Santoro, ‘Humanism in Naples’, 298.}

Figure 7 (above and left): Image from Alfonso the Magnanimous’ book of hours (British Library MS. Add. 28962, folio 78r) showing the king wearing a suit of armour adorned with books. The same suit is shown on the image of Pisanello’s medal above.
Juan II’s own love of learning and admiration for the Roman past was one shared by many of his courtiers. Lawrance argues Juan’s reign was a turning point which marked the beginning of a true learned court culture in Castile. 704 Probably the most famous nobleman to embrace this new court culture was the Marquis of Santillana, who was part of a growing number of learned Castilian noblemen. Round and Russell both saw the Marquis as unusual, an anomaly whose love of letters set him apart from his contemporaries. 705 Russell argued the praise heaped on Santillana after his death was proof that he was unlike Castile’s other noblemen. However, the Marquis was not unique, although he produced more writing than many of his fellow noblemen and his wealth enabled him to collect a vast library. 706 A significant number of Santillana’s fellow courtiers were active participants in the literary life of court. Even the Infante Enrique left a sizeable literary legacy through his own books and works written about his ill-fated dealings with Juan II. 707 As Lawrance has argued, the approach which he embodied was not exceptional, but rather a sign of change in Castilian noble society as it embraced learning as part of the noble ideal. 708 Russell has argued that, due to its large population, Castile should have had more noble authors. 709 This was because, he argued, the patronage of learning, ‘affronted a deeply held prejudice amongst the knightly class’. 710

The idea that Castile’s noblemen were opposed to learning seems to correspond poorly with both the kingdom’s rapidly growing culture of noble book ownership and the chivalric debate with which this study is concerned. It is surprising, if such a culture was widespread, that the reaction of courtiers to the political crisis was to write works for a knightly audience. Rather, the very existence of the literary response to the civil war hints at a relationship between the Castilian nobility and learning that brought together arms and letters. Works such as the Doctrinal and Espejo were written with the intention of changing the behaviour of the kingdom’s unruly courtiers and, as the previous chapter demonstrated, they were well read at court. This simply would not have been possible without a sizeable number of learned noblemen at court. Notably, a number of the authors who were involved in the chivalric debate were knights themselves and, as Di Camillo has shown, Castile boasted a remarkably large number of noble authors. 711 The Castilian nobility were not merely consumers of this vast literary outpouring, but also producers of it. Diego de Valera, Álvaro de Luna, Íñigo López de Mendoza, Juan de Mena, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, Gómez Manrique, and the chronicler Pedro Carrillo de Huete, amongst others, were all both knights and authors. Poetry was especially popular amongst the Castilian nobility and Lawrance has identified around

706 For more on Santillana’s literary reputation see: Daniel Hartnett, ‘The Marques de Santillana’s Library and Literary Reputation’.
708 Jeremy Lawrance, ‘Humanism and the Court in Fifteenth-Century Castile’, 179.
710 Ibid., 56.
711 Ottavio Di Camillo, ‘Modern Historiographical Myths: The Case of the Nobility, Learning and Ethics in Fifteenth-Century Spain’, 64.
two hundred noble poets at the Castilian court.\textsuperscript{712} Juan’s reign saw a general increase in lay literacy which drove the development of the literary culture of the royal court and led to a lettered society amongst the Castilian nobility.

One visible sign of this learned noble court culture was found in the libraries of Castile’s nobility. Juan’s reign saw the foundation and growth of a large number of substantial libraries owned by the kingdom’s nobility. The gradual growth in interest amongst the Castilian nobility meant that, by the early fifteenth century there was, what Lawrance has termed, ‘a reading public’ amongst the Castilian nobility.\textsuperscript{713} This ‘reading public’ formed the audience for the chivalric debate and for humanist works from Italy. By the latter years of Juan II’s reign, a significant number of noblemen were actively engaged in book collecting and in the commissioning of works. The Counts of Haro and Benavente, like the Marquis of Santillana, gathered substantial book collections, which included French, Italian and Castilian works.\textsuperscript{714} The Estúñiga (Zúñiga) family, who masterminded Luna’s downfall, had a large book collection, which has been pieced together by Jeremy Lawrance. A short inventory details the books which Álvaro de Estúñiga had in his own chamber and the eleven manuscripts it lists include a vulgate Bible, a vulgate dictionary, a collection of chronicles, a number of devotional works and a copy of Giles of Rome’s De regimine principum with a commentary by García de Castrojeriz.\textsuperscript{715} Perafán de Ribera, the adelantado mayor of Andalusia, was also an avid book collector and, as Lawrance has shown, a number of high status copies of works were likely purchased by Ribera.\textsuperscript{716} Perafán commissioned a lavish copy of Alfonso XI’s Libro de montería, a copy of Nicholas Lyra’s biblical commentary and, like Álvaro de Estúñiga, a copy of the De regimine principum.\textsuperscript{717} Other notable libraries founded during the period were those of Gómez Manrique and Fernán Pérez de Guzmán. The magnificent Biblia de Alba, commissioned by the Master of Calatrava Luis de Guzmán, also dates from the same period and was the first Hebrew bible glossed in Castilian.

The most famous noble library of the period, alongside the Marquis of Santillana’s, was the library of Enrique de Villena. Villena was a famously recluse figure and spent much of his life dedicated to the pursuit of learning. The Crónica de Juan II described him as a, ‘muy gran Letrado’, ‘supo muy poco en lo que le cumplia.’\textsuperscript{718} Enrique was a prolific author, who had completed the first Castilian translations of Virgil’s Aeneid and Dante’s Divina comedia. His Doce trabajos de Hércules has been seen by historians as one of the first

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{712} Jeremy Lawrance, ‘Humanism and the Court in Fifteenth-Century Castile’, 183.
\textsuperscript{713} Jeremy Lawrance, ‘The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile’, 80.
\textsuperscript{714} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{715} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{716} Ibid., 84–85.
\textsuperscript{717} ‘Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/2105. Libro de montería’ (s.xv), fol. 1r–189v; ‘Seville, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, MS. A 332/145-149. Biblia sagrada, escritura glosada por Nicholas de Lyra’ (s.xv).
\textsuperscript{718} Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 519. ‘a great \textit{letrado} who ‘knew of little in which he was not accomplished.’
\end{flushleft}
expressions of a new type of knightly identity which combined wisdom and prowess at arms. Enrique wrote on topics as diverse as stone carving, medicine and knighthood, as well as producing a number of translations of classical works. Pérez de Guzmán portrayed him as quiet and withdrawn, more at home with learning than with chivalry, ‘naturalmente fue inclinado a las ciencias e artes mas que a la caualleria e aun a los negocioç eçules nin curiales’, ‘tan sotil e alto engenio auia, que ligeramente aprendia cualqüier ciencia e arte a que se dava’. Like the Marquis of Santillana, Villena’s life has been held up as proof of the prevalence of the arms versus letters debate. In 1434, Enrique died and left behind a sizeable library and its fate became one of the most commonly cited examples of a Castilian dislike for learning. Following Enrique’s death, much of Villena’s vast collection of manuscripts was burned under the supervision of Lope de Barrientos, the then confessor to King Juan II. The burning of the library took place, according to the chronicler, because it contained books of ‘malas artes’. It is not entirely clear what these books were which warranted such an extreme reaction from Barrientos. It is likely that they were deemed to be of a heretical nature. The confessor’s role in their destruction is also unclear as it would appear that Juan himself ordered the burning of the library, and Barrientos’ presence meant that some books were spared the fire. The decision to burn the library was not approved of by all at court. Juan de Mena in the Laberinto de Fortuna lamented that, ‘vegada yo lloro, porque Castilla perdió tal thesoro’ and decried the loss of, ‘los tus libros sin ser conocidos’. Villena was, he stated, ‘autor muy ciente’ and the, ‘onra d’España e del siglo presente’. The burning of the library was an isolated incident and the reasons for its destruction are largely unknown. Its importance as a marker of the Castilian attitude to learning must be carefully considered. Whilst its destruction would be unexpected in a learned society, it was not something which was approved of by all at court.

The events of 1434 highlight the more problematic aspects of Castilian learned court culture. Whilst Villena and King Juan were well versed in Latin, many Castilian noblemen were not. Even the Marquis of Santillana, despite his great interest in the classical past, was unable to read Latin. This lack of Latin knowledge led the Florentine humanist Vespasiano de Bisticci to label the Marquis illiterate. The accusation was one which could have been levelled at most of the Castilian nobility. Alfonso X’s establishment of Castilian as the language of governance had led to a decline in Latin literacy as the vernacular flourished. Castilian dominated the literary world of the royal court. This led to the rise of what Lawrance has termed ‘vernacular

---

720 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y semblanzas, 99–100. ‘he was naturally inclined to the sciences and arts more than chivalry and even not to civil matters nor ecclesiastical ones’, ‘he was sharp and had good wit with which he quickly learned whatever art or science he was given’.
721 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Alvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 519.
722 Ibid. ‘bad arts’.
723 Juan de Mena, ‘Laberinto de Fortuna’, 249. ‘it brings me to tears that Castile has lost such a thinker’ ‘your books without being known’.
724 Ibid., ‘honour of Spain and the present century’.
humanism’ and the growth of a secular reading public which contributed to profound intellectual upheaval at court.\textsuperscript{726} This lack of Latin learning brought with it condemnation from Italian scholars and has led historians to suggest that Castile lagged behind its neighbours in the development of a learned court culture. However, a more nuanced view is needed. The idea that the Castilian nobility were opposed to learning rests on a singular understanding of what humanism meant. For Italian scholars observing Castile, the kingdom appeared devoid of learning, even its most celebrated men of letters unable to read Latin. However, whilst Latin letters may not have flourished at Juan II’s court, a learned court culture driven by the nobility did. In contrary to the views of visiting Italians, writing in the vernacular did not occupy second place.\textsuperscript{727} Despite being unable to read Latin, the Marquis of Santillana had a keen interest in the classical past and his writing is filled with references to Roman authors and figures from classical mythology. Works such as his \textit{Bías contra Fortuna}, a hundred and eighty stanza poem dedicated to the Count of Alba, reveals his love of the classical past and, in it, he muses on Roman emperors, Greek gods and pagan philosophers.\textsuperscript{728} His \textit{Comedíeta de Ponça}, written in response to Alfonso the Magnanimous’ disastrous defeat at the hands of the Genoese in the Battle of Ponza in 1435, further reveals the Marquis’ humanistic approach.\textsuperscript{729} His description of King Alfonso and his brothers, the Infantes of Aragon, are laden with references to classical mythology, Christian theology and the Roman past. He comments how Alfonso was the equal of Virgil in his command of Latin, more than equal to Euclid in geometry and understood astrology better than the titan Atlas, whilst being guided by the ten commandments and, ‘todo la ley de sacra doctrina’.\textsuperscript{730}

A poem produced by one of Cartagena’s contemporaries, Juan Alfonso de Baena, gives further insight into Castilian reading habits. The \textit{Dezír que fizo Juan Alfonso de Baena}, described by Lawrance as ‘a versified reading list’, sheds more light on noble reading habits.\textsuperscript{731} The poem was addressed to King Juan II and explicitly links the troubled political situation with the kingdom’s intellectual climate. Baena opened the work by declaring, ‘creo que tomedes, grant plazer y gazajado, pues con el será aluiado, el trabajo que oy tenedes.’\textsuperscript{732} A significant quantity of the poem was taken up with a list of Baena’s extensive reading, which he hoped would aid King Juan. In this regard, his extensive reading and use of classical examples served much the same purpose as it did for the chivalric commentators. The list is clearly a piece of self-aggrandisement, as Baena sought to demonstrate to Juan the breadth of his literary interests. However, the mere fact that he

\textsuperscript{726} Jeremy Lawrance, ‘The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile’, 80.
\textsuperscript{727} Ottavio Di Camillo, ‘Modern Historiographical Myths: The Case of the Nobility, Learning and Ethics in Fifteenth-Century Spain’, 65.
\textsuperscript{728} Íñigo López de Mendoza, \textit{Bías contra Fortuna}.
\textsuperscript{730} Ibíd., 173. ‘all of the law of holy doctrine’.
\textsuperscript{732} Juan Alfonso de Baena, \textit{Dezír que fizo Juan Alfonso de Baena: Introducción y edición de Nancy F. Marino}, 27. ‘I believe that you (Juan) will take great pleasure and enjoy it as with it you will alleviate the labour that you have today.’
felt the need to show off to such a great degree is telling. Baena was, like Cartagena and Valera, a *converso* and he formed part of the significant group of new Christians which rose up the ranks of the royal court. He was a royal scribe and notary and, whilst he did not make it into the ranks of the nobility, as Valera or the Santa María family had, he nonetheless established himself at court. Baena was boastful of his wide reading and his invocation to all levels of Castilian society, ‘señores, y infantes y perlados, duques, condes, adelantados, los maestros y piores, mariscales, rregidores de ciudades y de villas’, suggests that he did not believe any of them would look down on him for his pursuit of learning.733

The breadth of Baena’s reading, or rather, the extensive list of authors of which he claimed knowledge, reveals something of the flavour of noble literary society. Baena listed an eclectic mix of literary and historical examples. Alongside medieval works, such as Alfonso X’s *General historia*, were a mix of Roman and Greek sources. Over the course of three stanzas he lists: Vegetius, Titus Livy, Boethius, Seneca, Lucan, Dante, Ovid, Virgil, Plato, Ramon Llull, Homer, Rogel, Policraticus, Ricardo, Celon, Aristotle, Strabo, Euclid, Natales, Boccaccio, Macrobius, Horace, Cicero, Tiberius, Zarquel and Valerius Maximus.734 Baena evidently aimed to impress through the sheer scope of his scholarly interest, although it is not clear whether he had actually read any of these works. However, the list reveals something of the intellectual climate of court. Relatively few Italian authors are mentioned, Dante, Boccaccio and Bartolus are amongst the only ones explicitly mentioned, others, such as Petrarch, are conspicuously absent. Their absence reflected the relatively sparse links between Castile and Italy during Juan’s reign highlighted by Peter Russell.735 Baena’s reference to Florentine songs and, ‘las artes liberales’, in, ‘prosas, cantos y latines’, in the following stanza, suggests that there was cultural transmission.736 However, the lack of many fifteenth-century Italian humanists suggests that relatively few were read at the Castilian court. This matches Deyermond’s assessment that Italian humanists seemed to have relatively little impact at the Castilian court.737 Rather, Baena’s *Dezir* echoes the picture gained from the royal library and those of Juan II’s courtiers, that a pragmatic interest in the ancient past characterised the Castilian relationship with early humanism. Like his contemporaries, Baena was interested in classical history for its wealth of examples and authorities. For Baena, it provided many examples of the dangers of warfare. The section lists a number of great military figures including, Judas Maccabeus, Joshua, Solomon, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal, Scipio and Trajan. Baena devoted significant time to discussing the Trojan War. Troy was a potent reminder of Castile’s own familial disputes and Baena feared that the civil war would end in a comparable tragedy.

733 Ibid., 29. ‘lords, infantes, prelates, counts, dukes and adelantados, masters and priors, marshals and councilmen of cities and towns’.
734 Ibid., 29–31.
736 Juan Alfonso de Baena, *Dezir que fizo Juan Alfonso de Baena: Introducción y edición de Nancy F. Marino*, 31. ‘the liberal arts’, ‘in prose, songs and latines’.
Santillana’s work was exemplary of another, less studied, aspect of vernacular humanism at the Castilian court. In his reply to Santillana, Cartagena praised his eloquent use of language. Addressing the Marquis, he stated, ‘ver vuestra linda eloquencia en nuestra lengua vulgar, donde menos acostumbrarse suele que en la latina, en que escrivieron los oradores pasados, cosa es por cierto que por su gentileza e singularidad deve a todo ome ser agradable; e ayuntado con la forma eloquente de vuestro escrivir el deseo de saber doctrina estudiosa e guiadora de re militari, de que vos sodes professor excellent, con grand raçon dulce es de lo oir.’ Cartagena’s comments on the eloquence of Santillana’s writing were not without merit. He rightfully pointed out that such eloquence was usually confined to Latin writing. However, whilst the Marquis could not speak Latin, his work in verse and prose betrays the impact of Latin on Castilian writing. The conscious imitation of Latin grammar and style became a hallmark of the influence of humanism on Castilian vernacular writing. The results had varying levels of readability, but demonstrate an effort to emulate Latin eloquence in Castilian Spanish. A notable example of this was Santillana quoting Cicero’s De officiis in his letter to the Bishop of Burgos. Santillana quoted a section concerning an oath made by Cato’s son upon joining the Roman army and a subsequent letter written by Cato to his son. In the section, he faithfully reproduced Cicero’s style, even imitating the Latin word order. Cicero’s words, ‘monet igitur, ut caveat, ne proelium ineat; negat enim ius esse, qui miles non sit, cum hoste pugnare’ were rendered by the Marquis in Castilian as, ‘esto porque Marco Catón niega aquí que alguno tenga derecho de pelear contra los enemigos, salvo aquel que cavallero fuere’. Despite being unable to read Latin, Santillana showed an awareness for Latin style and eloquence. The two passages show some differences, but elements, such as placing the verb at the end of the sentence, reveal an attempt to convey the style of the Latin original. In the letter, Santillana also used a considerable number of neologisms imitating Latin terms. Moreover, Santillana’s use of terms such as ‘consul’ in place of the Latin ‘imperator’, usually translated as ‘emperador’, reveals an awareness of Cicero’s original meaning. The Marquis was not the only writer to show an awareness of Latin style, or imitate the eloquence of Roman authors in their work. Valera similarly adopted a Latinate style in the Exortación, although the lengthy Latin quotations reveal Valera’s good grasp of Latin. These stylistic attempts at recreating Latin eloquence flourished alongside an increased understanding of the context in which classical works were written, as was shown by Santillana in the Bias contra Fortuna. Other authors such as Valera and Sánchez de Arévalo similarly showed an understanding of the sources they were using. This tradition of vernacular humanism, seen through the translation of classical works, the imitation of

738 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 237. ‘seeing your beautiful eloquence in our vulgar language, where it is less accustomed to see it than in Latin, which the ancient orators wrote in, it is certain that by your gentility and uniqueness it should be agreeable to all, and together with the eloquent form of your writing the desire of knowing that studious doctrine and guidance from the Re militari, of which you are an excellent professor, and with great reason it is sweet to hear of it.’

739 Marcus Tullius Cicero, De Officiis, trans. Walter Miller (London, 2005), 38; Itígo López de Mendoza, ‘Questión’, 235. ‘And this is because Marco Cato warns him that he does not have the right to fight against enemies, unless he was a knight.’


741 Ibid., 214.

Latin style and a scholarly understanding of sources, was instrumental in shaping the chivalric ideal found in the works of the chivalric commentators. The culture of translation and the rapid growth of noble libraries meant that new ideas were readily incorporated into chivalric writing. A new focus on the classical past brought with it an ample supply of examples and a literary style to present them.

Learned Knighthood: Chivalric Humanism or Humanistic Chivalry

In his recent article on Alonso de Cartagena and the chivalric debate, Luis Fernández Gallardo doubted that Cartagena’s view of knighthood could be termed ‘humanismo caballeresco’. Rather, he felt that Cartagena’s take on the chivalric ideal conformed much more closely with what he termed ‘escolasticismo caballeresco’. However, other historians, such as Lawrance, have readily labelled Cartagena as one of the kingdom’s earliest humanists. His view of knighthood did not exist in isolation from his other intellectual pursuits. Rather, his view of chivalry was shaped by his intellectual outlook and, as this chapter will argue, could be termed humanistic. The Doctrinal was perhaps one of the clearest expressions of an ideal of learned knighthood which became popular at court. The ideal was espoused in the work of Cartagena’s fellow commentators. It was a serious scholarly work guided by a strong sense of civic humanism and one written to appeal to a new class of Castilian noblemen eager to read.

On 21st April 1438, Íñigo López de Mendoza, the future Marquis of Santillana, led a Castilian army to victory at the siege of the Moorish town of Huelma. During the attack, Íñigo defended an attempted relief of the siege by Muhammad IX of Granada, a great feat of arms which the chronicler described in detail. Mendoza’s victory was celebrated by the king with a fiesta at Luna’s castle in Castilnovo near Segovia. The capture of the town and castle from the Moors inspired Juan de Mena to write the Coronación del Marqués de Santillana. The Coronación was not, however, just a celebration of Mendoza’s victory. Rather, the poem and its prologue lauded López de Mendoza for his intellectual and martial prowess. No figure embodied the changes at the Castilian court more than that of the Marquis of Santillana. The Marquis became famous during his own lifetime for his voracious love of learning which placed him at the heart of the kingdom’s intellectual culture. His nephew Gómez Manrique praised Santillana in a touching eulogy as, ‘el primero de semblante prosapia e grandeza de estado que en nuestros tiempos congre con la ciencia con la cavallería, e la loriga con la toga.’

744 Ibid., 117–18. ‘scholastic chivalry’.
745 Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Álvar García de Santa María, ‘Crónica de Juan II’, 547.
746 Pedro Carrillo de Huet, Crónica del balsonero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 252.
748 Gomez Manrique, ‘El planto de las virtudes e poesía por el magnifico señor don Íñigo López de Mendoza, marqués de Santillana e conde del Real’, in Cancionero. Edición de Francisco Vidal González, ed. Francisco Vidal
Santillana had indeed championed a view that learning should be combined with arms. After briefly siding with the Infantes of Aragon, he backed King Juan against his cousins and acted as a leading commander at the Battle of Olmedo. The Marquis was famed for his love of books and he amassed a vast library at his palace at Guadalajara. His library boasted twenty five translations of classical and Italian treatises which he had commissioned.\(^{749}\) Amongst his collection were translations of Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Sallust, Livy, Lucian, Paulus Osorius and the first Castilian translation of the Aeneid.\(^{750}\) López de Mendoza’s love of learning led him to engage with the work of Italian authors and he owned translations of Bruni’s *De militia*, Dante’s *Divina comedia* and a translation of Sigismondo Pandolfo di Malatesta’s *Oración* made by Nuño de Guzmán, who had procured a large number of Italian texts for Íñigo’s collection.\(^{751}\) López de Mendoza’s library was the basis for his humanist approach and a mark of his love of learning. Mario Schiff has undertaken a thorough study of the library and traced the survival of the collection.\(^ {752}\) Many of his manuscripts are easily identifiable by their lavish frontispieces which frequently display his arms. Santillana was part of a much wider movement of book collecting amongst the Castilian nobility. López de Mendoza was an avid scholar and Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 10186, a collection of various works including, Dante, Petrarch, Enrique de Villena, Ciciero, Boethius and the Marquis himself, displays his exhaustive marginal annotations and notes.\(^{753}\) He authored a vast collection of prose and poetry over the course of his life. Like many of his contemporaries, he felt compelled to take up his pen in response to the political problems of Juan’s reign, motivated by a strong sense of civic duty, inspired by his reading of Roman and humanist works. He corresponded with both his fellow courtiers and a number of Italian humanists. His life, military and literary achievements were celebrated in 1458 by the *converso* author Diego de Burgos in his *Triunfo del Marqués de Santillana*.\(^{754}\)

---


\(^{750}\) Ibid., 2:176.


\(^{752}\) Mario Schiff, *La bibliothèque du Marquis de Santillane.*

\(^{753}\) ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España. MS. 10186. La divina comedia.’ s.xv, fol. 1r–194v.

Figure 8 (left): Folio 1r of Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 10212, the Marquis’ copy of Leonardo Bruni’s *De militia* showing his coat of arms.

Figure 9 (right): Folio 1r of Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 1997, typical of the high quality of the Marquis’ books.

The Marquis was widely regarded as the embodiment of the union of arms and letters. In the preamble to the *Coronació*, Juan de Mena commented on López de Mendoza’s deeds of arms and knowledge. He stated, ‘testifican las coplas siguientes aver seído coronado el prudentísimo, magnánimo e onorable cavallero e señor Íñigo López de Mendoza. E aquesta corona de fojas e ramas de dos árvoles: de laurel, porque denota alabanza e gloria de sabiduria, de las quales fueron coronados Vergilio, Omero e Ovidio e otros; otrosí es coronado de ramas e corona de robles, que denota feorçidad e valentía e esperto conosçimiento de la militar diçiplina, de la qual corona fue coronado el grande Êrcoles’. In the *Coronació*, Santillana was crowned on Mount Parnassus, in the presence of four damsels representing the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude, which Mendoza was attributed with. The work was a celebration of

---

755 Juan de Mena, ‘La coronación del Marqués de Santillana’, 108. ‘these following verses testify that the most prudent, magnanimous, and honourable knight and lord Íñigo López de Mendoza has been crowned and this crown is of the leaves and branches of two trees; of laurel as it denotes the praise and glory of the wisdom of those which were crowned; Virgil, Homer, Ovid and others. Moreover, he is crowned with the branches and a crown of oak that denotes the ferocity, bravery and exceptional knowledge of military discipline, with which crown was crowned the great Hercules.’

756 Ibid., 201–3.
both Mendoza’s military might and his reputation as one of the most learned men at court. The poem also encapsulated a learned knightly ideal which placed wisdom alongside the traditional knightly values of fortitude and prowess in arms. It is unknown whether the fiesta which accompanied Mendoza’s victory incorporated a Roman-style triumph and a coronation with laurel and oak. Contemporary commentators talked wistfully of Roman triumphs and Valera referred to them in the *Espejo.* The allusion to the classical past was inescapable. For Mena, the Marquis’ intellectual feats warranted a crown of laurel and he saw wisdom alone as bringing glory and praise, rather than just his feats of arms. Santillana’s crowning with laurel was no doubt a reference to the famous temple of Apollo at Delphi on the slopes of Mount Parnassus. Apollo was the god of poetry and this image of Delphic laurel in Mena’s poem is a powerful one. The connection to Delphi and Apollo was one of the reasons suggested by Pliny for the use of laurel leaves as part of the ceremony of the Roman triumph. Mena’s choice of location and crowns was especially apt and, through the connection to Apollo, Delphi and the Roman triumph, he simultaneously celebrated Santillana’s literary and martial feats. Santillana was, in the poem, a writer the equal of Ovid, Virgil or Homer and a warrior to rival Hercules. Mena was not, however, the only author to celebrate a union of arms and letters and the Marquis was not the only knight to combine both learning and chivalry at Juan’s court.

The Marquis was hailed as both a great knight and a great scholar. However, these two sides of his personality were not distinct and his scholarly attitude to chivalry was revealed in his *Questiôn,* written to Cartagena during the civil war. Juan’s reign saw the development of a lettered court society as noblemen embraced learning. This development brought with it a greater emphasis on knightly prudence in the chivalric ideal. Wisdom and prudence had long been expected virtues for knights and their inclusion as part of the ideal was not a fifteenth-century innovation. However, over the course of Juan’s reign, the knightly model moved away from knights being just soldiers, to a more nuanced view of knights as royal governors and educated administrators. Wisdom and prudence were different, but linked, virtues. Prudence referred more to practical common sense and wisdom to educated thinking. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, in his study of the chivalric debate, established the prominence of prudencia as the most significant change in chivalric thought during the period. Prudence was also commonly linked with the virtues of discretion and wisdom and all three served a similar purpose in chivalry. These virtues were meant to guide how knights exercised violence and conducted themselves. However, what was meant by prudence did not remain constant over the course of the Middle Ages. Moreover, its place in the knightly ideal was supplemented by the increasing role of wisdom as a knightly virtue. Prudence was already a facet of knightly virtue and one of the virtues praised in the *Siete Partidas* and quoted by Cartagena in the *Doctrinal.* The idea that knights should possess a

---

759 Ibid., 246.
760 Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*, 327.
combination of wisdom and prowess in arms was nothing new. *Titulo XXI*, laws iv and v of the *Segunda Partida* shed some light on the role which Alfonso X envisaged wisdom playing in knighthood. Alfonso listed four principal virtues as lying at the heart of knighthood, good sense (*cordura*), fortitude (*fortaleza*), restraint (*mesura*) and justice (*justicia*). Of these, the most easily equitable with wisdom is *cordura*, although the *Segunda Partida* makes it clear that this was meant as practical, rather than scholarly, knowledge. The idea is elaborated on in the following law, which explained that, ‘los caualleros que han a defender a sí e a los otros, segund que dicho auemos, deuen ser entendidos.’ This wisdom was an important part of their office and defined as, ‘la cosa que mas enderesça al omne para ser complido en sus fechos nin que mas lo extrema de las otras criaturas.’ Not possessing such wisdom was, the law warned, dangerous, as it could lead to disloyalty and abuses. For Alfonso X, knights understanding the duties and nature of their role was not an ideal, it was a necessity. This was a view which Cartagena shared, and this same fear was ever present in chivalric commentary. For Valera, Cartagena and others, it was a lack of understanding which underlay the problems of Juan’s reign.

This combination of arms and wisdom was put forward by Villena in his *Doze trabajos de Hércules*. Villena’s Hercules was victorious, not only because of his martial prowess or physical strength, but also because of his intellect. Cartagena’s knightly ideal was similarly one where knights were guided by wisdom and matched their deeds of prowess with learning. In his *Respuesta* to the Marquis of Santillana, he commented that it is, ‘el animoso deseo del estudioso varón todavía falla alguna ora oportuna, en que en la selva de la sciencia tome honesto deleite.’ Cartagena envisaged knights learning alongside the pleasures and labours which typically occupied their time. However, this was not learning simply for the sake of pleasure. Cartagena believed it was a tool by which knights might better themselves and better understand their role in society. His view preserved the division of society into those who fought, those who prayed and those who laboured, and this was not a division he sought to challenge. Rather, in the *Doctrinal*, he attempted to demonstrate how learning could aid a knight. It would be disingenuous to cast the Castilian nobility as wholly embracing learning. Gutierre Díaz de Gamez in *El Vitorial* appeared to suggest that learning was something which no knight would be expected to do. Using the words of Pero Niño’s teacher, he reminded his reader that, ‘el que á de aprender e usar arte de cavalleria, non conviene despender luengo tienpo en

762 Ibid.
763 Ibid., 92. ‘those knights which have to defend others, according to what we have said, should be wise.’
764 Ibid. ‘the thing leads men to be accomplished in their deeds, but not to the extremes of other creatures.’
765 Enrique de Villena, *Los doze trabajos de Hércules: Edición, prólogo y notas de Margherita Morreale*.
766 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos’, 238. ‘the courageous desire of the studious nobleman to always find some timely hour in which he might take honest delight in the forest of knowledge’.
escuela de letras. Although, as Beltrán Llavador notes, we should probably see this as less of an attack on learning and more of a statement of how a knight’s education was expected to progress.

Cartagena was most concerned in the Doctrinal with giving noblemen useful information on their office and inspiring them to deeds of chivalry. Learning was something which was meant to complement the military aspects of chivalry and it was, for Cartagena, as important as the physical training a knight underwent. The Doctrinal was a distillation of what Cartagena felt it was essential for a knight to know. Whilst he hoped that the reader might understand its content already, it contained everything needed to give a knight a scholarly understanding of his office. Alonso had carefully selected the laws of the kingdom, from the Visigothic Fuero Juzgo to the Siete Partidas and, through his eloquent introductions, he explained what the reader should take from the following passages. The resulting work was something of an intellectual sleight of hand. It was more than just a book of chivalry and his approach established it as an erudite piece of scholarship. However, Cartagena’s approach in the Doctrinal also reveals something of Castilian society. Whilst many of the kingdom’s most powerful noblemen were embracing the collecting of books and actively reading a broad variety of works, it is likely that there were many knights who were not. It is likely that some knights shared Gutierre Díaz de Gamez’s view that a good knight should devote himself to the practice of arms and his faith, rather than learning. However, learning about arms was not only acceptable for knights, but also expected. In the Segunda Partida title XXI law xx, Alfonso X decreed that knights should hear and read of great deeds of arms over meals, to instill in them a better understanding of chivalry. This attitude was not entirely absent from Cartagena’s work. Neither Cartagena, nor his contemporaries, sought to erode the division of society into three parts; a view which Round stated should have been absent in any humanist society. Some, like the Bishop of Jaén, who was more at home in armour than a cassock, or Enrique de Villena, who was more a scholar than a knight, fitted poorly into this division of society. Knights were fundamentally soldiers and this was something with which Cartagena readily agreed. Rather than changing this social structure, he sought to alter what was expected of knights. He advocated a union of arms and letters, within the context of the office of knighthood. Knights were still expected to be soldiers, continued conflict and the uncomfortable peace with Granada demanded it. Rather, Cartagena saw learning as something done to complement the knightly office.

The questions of what a knight should read, and how he should stock his library, were of the utmost importance. As the burning of Enrique of Villena’s library showed, there were limits on what it was acceptable for a nobleman to read. Cartagena made the limits of a knight’s intellectual engagement clear in his letter to the Count of Haro. The Epistula ad comitem de Haro advised the Count on the proper stocking

767 Gutierre Díaz de Games, El Victorial, 234. ‘he that gives study and use to the art of chivalry cannot spend much time in the study of letters.’
768 Ibid.
of a noble library. The topic was of great interest to the Count who, as a holder of a new noble title, set about establishing a library. The letter, itself an argument for a new learned knighthood, survives in a magnificent presentation copy held in the Biblioteca Nacional, the front page bearing an image of Christ and the arms of the Counts of Haro. Following his death, the Count’s library was gifted to the Hospital de la Vera Cruz, which he had founded, and a library inventory from 1553 gives an insight into the collection. The catalogue, studied by Lawrance, set out the exceptional quality of Fernández de Velasco’s library and, along with the Epistula, it gives an excellent view of the learned ideal that the ‘militares viri’ might have aspired to.

Figure 10: Folio 1r. of Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 9208, the Epistula ad comitem de Haro, displaying the manuscript’s beautiful illumination and high status.

Cartagena did not advocate that knights learned simply to pursue an interest in knowledge. Rather, as he explained in the Epistula and the Doctrinal, knights should not study without bounds. He hoped that, like the idealised knights of the ancient past, they would put between their duties, ‘algund travaio de sciencia por que mas onestamente supiesen regir’. For Cartagena, the learned knighthly ideal was best embodied

---

771 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 9208: Epistula ad Petrum Velasco comitem de Haro’ (s.xv), fol. 1r. See figure 10.
772 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9211. Inventario de la Hospital de la Vera Cruz’ 1553, fol. 2r–30v.
774 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 79. ‘some labours of knowledge by which they might more honestly rule’.
by men like Valera and the Marquis of Santillana, knights whose literary exploits were dedicated to the betterment of chivalry. Russell cast this continued insistence on the division of society into, ‘oratores, defensores y labra dores’, as a defining characteristic of Castilian humanism.\(^{775}\) This division was not, however, a sign of a society dominated by an opposition of arms and letters. Rather, Cartagena, Valera and Santillana all saw letters as having an important place in the knightly ideal. Despite the limits which Cartagena imposed on knightly learning, his work presented a learned knightly ideal. The ideal which he looked to was one where knights would learn from the past and take wisdom from the kingdom’s laws. The question of whether this ideal was truly humanist is a difficult one to answer. The chivalric ideal Cartagena advocated was one which celebrated knightly wisdom, learning and prudence and roused knights, not just to deeds of arms, but, like the Marquis of Santillana, to deeds of knowledge. Cartagena’s view that knighthood was an art which had to be learned through study, not just military practice, was very different to the chivalric guides which had gone before. Even the Doctrinal itself was a radically different take on a chivalric guide. Cartagena’s warnings that knights should read pagan authors carefully, and preferably not at all, makes it difficult to argue that it was humanist in the Italian sense. However, it was humanist in a Castilian way. The ideal which developed was both a reflection of humanism at the Castilian court and a result of the continued need for Castile’s knights to fight, as defenders of the church, against enemies of the faith in Granada. In light of this, Cartagena’s caution about the reading of non-Christian sources appears sensible. It was an ideal that was in keeping with Castile’s own peculiar form of humanism. For the commentators, knights were meant to be defenders of the republic, inspired by a sense of civic virtue and bolstered by good Christian faith. They hoped that learning might lead knights to a better understanding of their office and, ultimately, a learned nobility would help avoid the problems which beset Juan II’s reign. This ideal of learned knighthood was one which was not just confined to literature, but was practiced by many of the Castilian nobility who read, wrote poetry and prose or built libraries. The period offered the first signs of a union of arms and letters as knights embraced learning as a means to better themselves. However, what was perhaps most interesting is where the commentators looked for their examples of good knightly practice. It was an ideal which also increasingly looked to the ancient past, to ancient Rome and, to a lesser extent, to ancient Greece and Visigothic Spain, as a bountiful source of both good examples and prudent warnings.

Knights in Service to the Republic: Roman Chivalry, New Models and Old Warnings

In the opening paragraphs of the Lamentación de España, the Marquis of Santillana addressed, ‘muy triste e desaventurada España’, who had lost, ‘el maravilloso trono de la magnificencia’, due to the events of Juan II’s reign.\(^{776}\) The Marquis compared the civil war in Castile to the civil wars which tore apart ancient Rome.

---

\(^{775}\) Peter Russell, ‘Arms versus Letters: Towards a Definition of Spanish Fifteenth-Century Humanism’, 52. ‘orators (priests), defenders and labourers’.

\(^{776}\) Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘Lamentación de España fecha por el marqués de Santillana’, 410. ‘most sad and unfortunate Spain’, ‘the marvelous throne of magnificence’.
Addressing Spain, he commented, ‘paréçeme que veo ante mí al César Pompeyo e las doloridas batallas cuidadanadas de Roma ser convertidas en ti, e assi como la triste França, corrida de ti mismo por todas las partes.’ The reference was one similarly made by the Marquis in his letter to Cartagena. To many commentators, Castile’s own conflict seemed reminiscent of Rome’s destructive civil wars. However, in almost the same breath, Santillana praised Rome for the might and discipline of its legions and the virtue of its leaders. Rome’s military successes were undeniable and many of the chivalric commentators looked to Rome’s legions as the foundation of knighthood. Despite his exhortation to, ‘los famosos caualleros’, who flourished in, ‘los tiempos antiguos’, and a multitude of references to figures from the ancient past in his introductions, such as Scipio, Zoroaster, Alexander the Great, Phoroneus and Numa Pompilus, Cartagena’s frame of reference for the Doctrinal was firmly medieval. For many of the chivalric commentators, Rome simultaneously provided examples of exemplary knightly behaviour and of civil strife and bad conduct. This conflicted and complex Castilian vision of the distant past was instrumental in the shaping of the chivalric ideal in the mid-fifteenth century. The final section of this chapter will explore this Castilian relationship with the ancient past and examine its place in the chivalric debates of Juan’s reign.

Castile’s relationship with the distant past was problematic at best. Castilian authors simultaneously celebrated the glories of Ancient Rome and the virtues of the Visigothic kingdom. This complex relationship has been explored by Thomas Devaney. As Devaney argued, the Castilian view of Rome was one of both conquering heroes and, often, decadent tyrants. Whilst Devaney has argued that the Goths provided the only proper exemplar for Castilian authors, this was not the case amongst the chivalric commentators who, for better or worse, relied heavily on Roman examples. This problematic relationship was no better conveyed than by Valera in the Espejo. In the sixth chapter of the work, he turned his attention to Julius Caesar, celebrated by some as a great knight. However, for Valera, Caesar’s rule was exemplary of the vice and tyranny which also plagued Rome. Valera gleefully exclaimed, ‘¡o Julio César! ayan ocupado por fuerça e tirania diversos reinos e principados, no sin razón a ti pongo por primero de los tiranos’, and he continued that, ‘nin te maravilles si yo el menor de los menores con tanta osadía tiendo mi pluma contra ti’. For Valera, a succession of low born Roman emperors who ruled by force marked a dangerous example of bad rule. Valera saw their ennoblement as an affront to the natural order. They were examples of people of low birth who had fought their way to power, rather than rising through the ranks due to their

777 Ibid., 411. ‘it seems to me that I see before me Caesar and Pompey and the painful battles civil wars of Rome recreated in you, like sad France which spreads from you the same in all parts.’
778 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Doctrinal de los caualleros’, 79. ’those famous knights’ ’those ancient times’. Phoroneus is an intriguing inclusion here. A character from Greek mythology he was regarded as being the first man and credited as bringing people together into a community for the first time.
780 Ibid., 722.
782 Ibid. ‘Oh Julius Caesar! Who occupied by force and tyranny many kingdoms and principalities, not without reason are you placed as first amongst the tyrants’, ‘nor should you marvel if I the lowest of the low with such audacity take up my pen against you.’
personal virtue. Valera listed a number of Roman emperors alongside Julius Caesar who were guilty of tyranny. His passionate dislike of Julius Caesar was likely a result of reading Cicero, who had denounced Caesar as a tyrant in his *De officiis*. Valera cited Maximian, Diocletian and Trajan as all having risen unjustly to the office of Emperor, although he conceded that Trajan’s virtues and good rule outweighed his status as a tyrant. Valera’s good opinion of Trajan may also have been due to the Emperor’s Spanish heritage. Alfonso the Magnanimous was eager to promote Trajan’s virtue and did so through the writings of Panormita, Bruni and Manetti. Valera’s view was less favourable and he saw these emperors, alongside Dionysius of Syracuse and Alexander Valerius, as powerful examples of the dangers of bad rule and ennoblement without virtue. However, Valera’s view of the Roman past was not solely coloured by these examples of Roman tyranny. Seneca, Vegetius, Cicero and Valerius Maximus underlay much of Valera’s argument in the *Espejo*. Seneca’s *De clementia*, written for Nero to stress the importance of clemency and virtue, was a prominent source for Valera’s chivalric ideal structured around virtue. Moreover, he nostalgically looked to the Roman knights, who he believed represented the true meaning of chivalry. He praised their use of triumphs to reward great deeds and exclaimed that, ‘¡ploguiesse a Dios en nuestros tiempos retornasen aquellas primeras costumbres!’ Valera’s views were markedly similar to Italian humanists who saw Roman virtue as underpinning their great victories. Leon Battista Alberti had argued that Roman virtue triumphed over Fortune; a view which Valera himself echoed in the *Tratado de providencia contra fortuna*.

This complex relationship is also seen in the exchange between Santillana and Cartagena. The Marquis in his *Questiôn* looked to Bruni’s *De militia* to try and find a solution to the crisis in the kingdom. The Marquis was particularly interested in the idea of oath swearing as a means of curbing knightly violence and disloyalty in Castile. Santillana nostalgically looked to the Roman example of military discipline and loyal service. Castile’s knights, whilst undoubtedly skilled soldiers, lacked the discipline and integrity of their Roman forbears. Santillana quoted at length the example of Cato’s son joining a Roman legion and cited the fact that he had to swear an oath to do so.

‘El cónsul Popillio tenía en Proença la hueste, en la qual el fijo de Catón, cavallero nuevo, guerreava; mas como a él fuese visto dexar una legión que número de cierta gente contiene, dexó así mismo al fijo de Catón, que en aquélla peleava; e como aquel, desexo de guerrear, quedase en la hueste,

---

786 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 107. ‘I pray to God that our times could return to these first customs!’
788 Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘Questiôn’, 235.
Catón escribió a Popillio, que si quisiese consentir que este su fijo quedase en la hueste, le ficiése obligar segunda vez por el sacramento de la cavallería…. ya non podía tornar a pelear con los enemigos, sin facer este sacrament.”

This oath was, for both Cartagena and the Marquis, a defining feature of Roman chivalry. The reference here to a *sacramento de cavallería* is intriguing. The phrase is undoubtedly a reference to the *sacramentum militare* sworn by Roman soldiers. To medieval readers, Roman *miles* were knights and the *sacramentum* a chivalric oath. The quote implies the oath was taken when Cato’s son joined the legion and, therefore, in Santillana’s view, when he was first made a knight. This places the oath as a direct parallel to the oath sworn during the knighted ceremony. The Marquis’ words suggest that he felt such oaths were no longer used, or at least not employed, as they should have been. However, oaths did play both an important role in the knighted ceremony itself and in governing the ties of loyalty between men. In theory, as part of the ceremony, a new knight would have to swear an oath to uphold the tenants of chivalry. The *Siete Partidas*, cited by Cartagena, details the place of an oath in the creation of a knight. The *Segunda Partida* dictates that after the new knight was ritually armed he should, ‘ponergela en la mano derecha e fazerle jurar estas tres cosas: la primera, que non reçele de morir por su ley si menester fuere; la segunda, por su señor natural; la terçera, por su onra.”

The oath dictated by the *Siete Partidas* is not particularly rigorous and its wording is vague. Its stipulations that a knight should not fear dying for his lord, his faith or his honour were not necessarily harmonious. It is easy to see how a knight defending his honour might come into conflict with his natural lord or go against the church. Santillana’s concerns suggest he felt that the oaths currently sworn by knights were not enough to curb knightly violence and, in his letter, he asked Cartagena to shed light on the content of the oaths which Roman soldiers would have sworn.

Cartagena’s reply to the Marquis was considerably more verbose and, in addressing his question, he first turned to the problematic nomenclature of knighthood. Despite not having read Leonardo Bruni’s *De militia*, he felt more than able to comment on the matter. Cautioning the Marquis, he stated, ‘este nombre de cavallero, que en latín miles se llama, quien bien lo catare, fallará que así en los libros como en el común uso de nuestro fablar, le trahemos de gran tienpo acá equivocado, entendiéndolo de diversas maneras. Ca a las veces le entendemos por una e a las veces por otra sinificación, pero todas ellas le toman por ome

---

789 Ibid. ‘The Consul Popilios, had in Provence an army in which the son of Cato, a new knight, fought, but as he wished to remain in the legion, which contained a certain number of people, he dismissed that same son of Cato who fought in it; and as he (the son) desired to fight and remain in that army, Cato wrote to Popilios that if he wished to consent that his son remain in the army then he should swear for a second time an oath of chivalry….since he could not return to fight without making this oath.’


791 Ibid., 99. ‘Hold up his right hand and make an oath on three things, the first that he would not fear death for his faith, if it was needed, the second for his natural lord and thirdly for his honour.’ The meaning of ‘ley’ here is ambiguous. It could mean either faith or law. Alfonso X likely believed his knights should be willing to die to uphold the law and protect the faith and it is unclear which is meant in the oath. Gutierre Díaz de Gamez in *El Victorial* referenced knights being willing to die for both ‘ley’ and ‘fe’. See: Gutierre Díaz de Gamez, *El Victorial*, 236.

792 Inígo López de Mendoza, ‘Question’, 415.
deputado a actos de guerra, e defensor de la república, por aquella especie de defensión que por vía de armas se face: e esto es su propia e estrecha significación. Cartagena, in his response, therefore raised the problematic issue of what it meant to be a knight. The very name itself caused significant problems. Cartagena’s definition was also one which linked the knight to an imagined Roman past, as well as defining the office of knighthood with distinctly humanist overtones. Cartagena addressed this issue further in the following pages. Citing Isidore of Seville, he explained that the role of the *miles* was invented by Romulus, one of the mythical founders of Rome. Romulus had chosen one thousand men to fight and declared their office praiseworthy. Cartagena’s words highlight the fact that, for any medieval reader, knights could look back to a history of knighthood which stretched back to the founding days of Rome. The idea of one man chosen of a thousand was reproduced in almost every chivalric guide and one which was enshrined in the *Siete Partidas*. However, as Cartagena went on to explain, the issue was even more complex. The proper Latin term for mounted soldiers was not *miles* but *eques*, and, within a strictly Spanish context, there was great variety between mounted troops, from the heavily armoured men-at-arms, to the lightly armoured *ginetes*. Knights were, however, something more than either of these and this additional meaning was to be found in the fact that knights were made by the king. This act made them a part of the *orden de caballería* which brought with it strict rules and observances. Despite his earlier trepidation, Cartagena, like most of his contemporaries, defined this *orden* in Roman terms and thus saw the knight as a special part of a much broader Roman military inheritance.

For Cartagena and Santillana, knights were defenders of the republic. The *Respuesta* revealed a longing for a nobility who saw their place in society as one of service. Cartagena looked back wistfully to ancient Rome, to a time where these knights of old were sworn to defend the republic. This view of knights as defenders of the republic was a hallmark of the influence of Cicero on Castilian chivalric writing. Cartagena saw a direct parallel between these Roman soldiers and the knights and noblemen of his day. He invited Santillana to consider, ‘éstos parecen en este reino representar aquellos milites o cavalleros que Rómulo en Roma escogió, pues con sus personas, cavallos e armas deven ser prestos a guerrear por la república, quando por el príncipe les fuere mandado, e viven de las rentas comunes, que a los reyes paga su reino.’ Cartagena was eager to point out that this Roman example of salaried soldiers in service to the republic was directly

---

793 Alonso de Cartagena, *Respuesta del muy noble e sabio Obispo de Burgos*, 239. ‘this name “knight” that in Latin is “*miles*”, which you examine well, is found in common use in books in our language, which is used interchangeably, is understood in many different ways. Since sometimes we understand it as one and another time by another meaning, but all times they are taken to mean a man disposed to acts of war, and a defender of the republic, which is that means of defence that is made by arms, and this is the proper and specific definition.’
794 Ibid., 240.
795 Ibid.
796 Ibid., 241.
797 Ibid.
798 Ibid., 245. ‘those that seem in this kingdom to represent those *milites* or knights that Romulus chose in Rome, as with their persons, horses and arms they should be charged to fight for the republic when they were commanded to by the prince, and they live from the communal rents, which the king pays their kingdom.’
comparable to vassals given land in return for military service. Cartagena and his fellow commentators looked back to an ideal which was grounded in the Roman Republic. It is notable that very few chose examples from Imperial Rome and Valera, in the Espejo, openly mocked some of the most celebrated emperors as tyrants. Cartagena’s view of the place of knights in society was heavily influenced by his earlier translations of Cicero and, like Santillana and Valera, he conceived of knightly office in a Ciceronian sense. They primarily saw knighthood as a public office which brought with it a strong sense of civic duty. The term oficio was rarely used by the commentators. Rather, knighthood was more often referred to as a dignidad or dignity. Cicero presented an ideal where soldiers had a clear understanding of their civic duty and acted in service to the republic. He argued that arms should always yield to the toga and presented, what Cartagena understood, as an argument for knighthood in service to the public good. Cicero cast the creation of law and good governance of society as a great deed which more than matched any military victory. This view was held by the author of the Qüistió and was likely, in part, behind Cartagena’s choice of law as the best representation of the chivalric ideal. Faced with a rebellious nobility, it is easy to see how this ideal of knights in service to the republic appeared attractive. This Ciceronian understanding of chivalry underpinned the reformers’ arguments and was instrumental in shaping their views of the knightly office.

An idealised view of ancient Rome played an important part in the construction of a Castilian chivalric ideal. For Valera, knighthood hinged on the just distribution of honour in reward for virtue. Many believed the best example of this distribution of honour was the Roman triumph. Valera, in the Espejo, lamented the loss of this tradition, despite the staging of mock triumphs at the Castilian court, such as the procession held by Luna on his return to court in 1427, King Juan’s triumphal entry into Seville after his victory over the Moors or the magnificent triumphal arch erected by the Infante Enrique for the Pasaje peligroso. Unfortunately, nothing survives of these Castilian pageants, beyond the chroniclers’ descriptions. Following his conquest of Naples, Alfonso the Magnanimous erected a magnificent triumphal arch at Castel Nuovo to mark his triumphal entry into the city. For Valera, and others, Roman triumphs were emblematic of the proper reward for virtue. Valera lamented, ‘Oh fortunate time when virtue flourished well and vices were well punished, as the virtues were lauded and the virtuous remunerated! Onde dize Valerio… que a los príncipes o cabdillos vitoriosos era dado triunfo. E asimismo era tal costumbre en Roma guardada, que los que fazían señalados fechos de armas eran coronados de corona de laurel’.

---

799 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la cuestion fecha por el magnifico señor Marqués de Santillana’, 433–34.
801 Alonso de Cartagena, _Libros de Tulio; De Senetute; De los oficios_, edición, prólogo y notas de María Morrás.
802 Marcus Tullius Cicero, _De Officiis_, 78–79.
803 See figure 11.
804 Diego de Valera, ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’, 106–7. ‘Oh fortunate time when virtue flourished well and vices were well punished, as the virtues were lauded and the virtuous remunerated! Where Valerius says… that the victorious princes or generals were given triumph. And likewise, such a custom was preserved in Rome, which those that carried out distinguished feats of arms were crowned with a crown of laurels’.
were recognised by the king and rewarded publicly with honour through the staging of a triumph. Alfonso Fernández de Palencia’s *Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar* similarly invoked this image through the knight Exercicio’s quest to find the illusive Triunfo. It was a dream of virtue properly rewarded and, of glorious knighthood marked by victory, not mired by defeat and shamed by civil war.

![Figure 11: Relief from the Aragonese Arch in Naples, depicting Alfonso the Magnanimous’ triumphal entry into the city.](image)

*The New Knightly Ideal*

In the *Coronación del Marqués de Santillana*, Juan de Mena celebrated the Marquis’ virtue through force of arms and learning. Mena’s praise was, perhaps, to be expected. After all, the Marquis was renowned at court as a prolific author and literary patron. However, his praise for the Marquis’ literary pursuits came in a poem composed to celebrate a military victory. Mena’s poem fulfilled an important function. His work marked the transformation of virtue through good deeds into honour through reward. The Marquis was quite literally crowned in both laurel and oak in a deliberate imitation of a Roman triumph. It was a move which earned the ire of Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, who quipped that, ‘no poco ofenden la magestad del príncipe
The poem caused Rodríguez del Padrón such offence because, by crowning the Marquis, Mena was adopting the princely role of distributing honour. However, Mena’s poem was significant for more than just its subversion of the established order. It was significant because of the link which it established between learning and honour. The crown of laurels, which Mena bestowed on the Marquis, was typically seen as a reward for great military victories. Valera, in the *Espejo*, explained that a triumph was the proper way by which a victorious general, or great knight, should be rewarded. On the distribution of crowns for great deeds he stated that, ‘los que fazían señalados fechos de armas eran coronados de corona de laurel, e quando alguno escusava a otro de la muerte en batalla, era coronado de corona de roble’, and, ‘davan corona de oro a los que primero entravan por fuerça cibdat, villa o castillo’, whilst, ‘los cibdadjnos que virtuosamente vivían (en Athenas) eran coronados de corona de oliva.’ Mena had the Marquis crowned with the laurels of military victory in recognition not of his feats of arms, but of his literary works.

The *Coronación* made a subtle point. Force of arms was no longer the only means by which knights might attain virtue. Virtue was the foundation of nobility and, alongside lineage, was seen as the basis on which knighthood rested. Whilst the *Coronación* did not sever the link between martial prowess and honour, it did offer an alternative path to knighthood and honour, and one which Mena presented as just as honourable as military victory. His stance in the poem was reflective of a much broader change in the knightly ideal found in the works of the chivalric commentators. The traditional link between martial prowess and honour was being gradually eroded in favour of a more nuanced view of knighthood which expected and celebrated much more than just feats of arms. The centrality of prowess to knighthood has been demonstrated by Richard Kaeuper. This attitude was shown in Gutierrez Díaz de Gamez’ *El Victorial*, where he celebrated don Pero Niño’s force of arms. However, Cartagena in the *Doctrinal* had sought to break the link between honour and violence, arguing that, ‘la claridad de la sangre e en el denuedo solo del corazón consiste todo el loor de los caualleros. Ca estas dos cosas buenas son, pero mas es menester.’ For Cartagena, the extra quality required was a learned understanding of the knightly office. It was not simply sufficient for knights to be proficient soldiers. Rather, their office demanded more of them and, in order for them to fulfill their role in society, they needed to combine both wisdom and prowess. However, for Cartagena, this prowess had to be properly exercised and he cast it as dangerous and shameful that knights devoted their attention to jousting, and not to war against Granada. Valera himself was notably silent on the matter, although he was...
as adept with the pen as he was with the sword and advocated a chivalric ideal which combined both arms and letters.

Whilst most knights would never reach the literary heights of Santillana or Valera, they might easily appear virtuous through the patronage of literature or building of a library. It was likely this desire which motivated Gómez de Sandoval to ask Cartagena to compose the *Doctrinal*. By the mid-fifteenth century, learning, and a correspondingly learned attitude to chivalry, had become an important part of the knightly ideal in Castile. Whilst the knights of Juan’s court revelled in magnificent and violent displays of knightly identity through jousting and tournaments, they also engaged with, and drove, the literary culture of court. The matter of arms and letters cannot, however, be completely dismissed. The relationship between learning and chivalry was under debate at the Castilian court. Composed around the mid-fifteenth century, the *Qüistión entre dos caballeros* brought the arms versus letters debate to the fore. The work, which survives in a single manuscript held in the Biblioteca Nacional, was likely composed by a Sevillian author and has recently been brought to scholarly attention by Julian Weiss. The author of the work set out to answer the question of, ‘¿qué alcanza mayor gloria, él que por trabajo de armas defiende y acrecienta la cosa pública, o él que por prudencia y diligencia de saber en igual grado trabajando la acrescienta y anpara?’ The work put forward an ideal of a learned republic governed by prudence and diligence and not through arms. Interestingly, it appeared to suggest to knightly readers that they had a choice, either to pursue a life serving the republic through arms, or through deeds of knowledge. Whilst the author suggested a knight might choose either path, it was still a long way from an ideal which combined both the practice of arms and letters.

Cartagena, in the *Doctrinal*, had aptly shown how prudent governance and arms might come together. However, the author of the *Qüistión* presented the two ideas as opposing. Like many other works of the time, its point of reference was predominantly the distant past and holy scripture. The fact that it is couched as a discussion between two unnamed knights suggests that the author may have intended the work to have a noble, not just princely, audience. The author took a strong stance against the practice of arms and, over the *Qüistión*’s thirteen chapters, he argued that it was prudence and diligence in governance which in fact brought greater honour and glory. The author’s rejection of governance by arms is unusual, even Alonso de Cartagena in the *Doctrinal*, whilst rejecting the practice of arms in sport, argued for their necessity in the governance of the kingdom. The author’s stance may be a response to the civil war in the kingdom, and the calls for just governance through law are somewhat similar to Diego de Valera’s calls for peace and clemency in the *Exortación de la paz*. The *Qüistión* built on a strong sense of the public good and invoked the

---

809 ‘La Qüistión entre dos cavalleros: Un nuevo tratado político del siglo XV’.
810 ‘Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12672. Prefación en respuesta de una questión fecha entre dos cavalleros del reyno de Castilla’ (s.xv), fol. 195r–214r; ‘La Qüistión entre dos cavalleros: Un nuevo tratado político del siglo XV’.
811 ‘La Qüistión entre dos cavalleros: Un nuevo tratado político del siglo XV’, 11. ‘who gains the greater glory; he that by labour of arms defends and increases the republic or he that by prudence and diligence of knowledge in the same grade labours to increase and better it?’
ideal of a lettered republic. The author of the work referred almost exclusively to Roman examples and works to support his argument. The *Qüistión* hints also at another development in the chivalric ideal. Little of the discussion in the work revolved around the actual exercise of arms, rather the work was much more concerned with the governance of the kingdom. The author explained that the good governance of the kingdom was really a matter of, ‘prudencia y diligencia’, and he concluded that, ‘paresce quánto es más de loar en la república el justo legal regimiento por prudencia que el exercicio militar.’

For the author, the prudent use of arms was not an act of true prudence, rather true prudence was to be found in good rulership. The work was a call for knights to find the virtues associated with warfare; prudence, glory and honour, in their role in the good governance of the republic. The author, as Mena had in the *Coronación*, suggested an alternative route to knighthood.

For the authors of the period, this idea of knighthood was closely linked to a new ideal of civic virtue. Civic humanism flourished in the Italian states as politics met with humanist thought. Civic virtue marked the point at which chivalry and humanism intersected, although the ideal of knights fighting to defend the public good was not novel. Humanism was, of course, much more than a literary revival and, as Hans Baron has argued, humanism in Italy had a great impact on how early fifteenth-century humanists viewed their engagement with society.

Humanism brought, he argued, a strong idea of social responsibility and a corresponding appreciation of history with examples taken primarily from the Roman Republic. Cicero provided manifold examples of the importance of this civic spirit and Baron argued that humanists of the Italian city states in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries aspired to a Ciceronian ideal. Civic humanism was not just an idea confined to the republican Italian city states. In Castile, the chivalric commentators were no different and civic humanism provided a bridge between the traditional ideas of knightly duty, and the renewed emphasis on the Roman past. Castilian authors reading the works of Florentine humanists readily incorporated their ideas into their chivalric writing. Texts such as Leonardo Bruni’s *De militia*, read by the Marquis of Santillana and Diego de Valera, were a means of transmission for these ideas. Consequently, it is not surprising that the works of Diego de Valera, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, the Marquis of Santillana and Alonso de Cartagena are all infused with a strong sense of civic virtue. Tate has argued that Alfonso Fernández de Palencia expressed this civic humanism through his mournful descriptions of Rome in ruins and his frustration at his own city of Seville.

---

812 Ibid., 16, 20. ‘prudence and diligence’, ‘it seems to me in the republic that just legal rule by prudence is more praiseworthy than military exercise.’
It was this sense of civic duty which the chivalric commentators of the period sought to instill in the kingdom’s knights. Cartagena looked to it in his ideal of salaried knights in service to the republic and Valera similarly drew on it. Baron argued that it was Florence’s own period of crisis in the early fifteenth century which saw humanism become civic, although this was disputed by Siegel who argued that the humanists were merely one of many intellectual groups who rose to meet the challenges facing society. Indeed, the *Siete Partidas* and other chivalric writing such as Llull’s *Llibre* presented knights as social defenders. These ideas were nothing new, but civic humanism gave new expression to these ideas. As Tate argued, these ideas of civic responsibility predated humanism and existed independently of it. However, the expression of these ideas in the chivalric writing of Juan’s court was humanist in character and inseparably linked to the changing intellectual climate of his reign. Alonso de Cartagena’s views on chivalry were humanistic, not simply because of his use of classical sources or his fondness for the Roman past, but because of the way in which he approached the topic of chivalry. His legalistic approach and scholarly understanding of knighthood’s classical roots set his work apart. The chivalric commentators embraced civic humanism in the face of crisis and their vision of knights as defenders of the republic was inspired by the deeds of their Roman forbears. Civic virtue played a central role in the creation of this Castilian chivalric ideal.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to argue that we cannot simply view the period as characterised by a conflict between arms and letters. Rather, chivalry and humanism were inseparably linked through the chivalric debate. Knights and noblemen drove the kingdom’s literary culture and embraced learning as part of a learned chivalric ideal. This ideal was one which bore the influence of humanism through the approaches taken by the chivalric commentators and the sources they used. The knights of Juan’s court were invited to see themselves as Roman soldiers reborn, guided by a strong sense of civic duty and an ardent love of both arms and learning.

---

817 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la questión fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana’, 421.
819 Robert B. Tate, ‘The Civic Humanism of Alfonso de Palencia’, 42.
In the late 1450s Alfonso Fernández de Palencia, friend and student of Alonso de Cartagena, penned the *Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar*. The tale was an allegorical romance and one with a very serious message. Like his namesake before him, Alfonso lamented the failings of Castilian chivalry, but looked beyond Castile’s borders in search of triumph. The debate during Juan’s reign was a snapshot of chivalric crisis and reform at a precise point in the kingdom’s political history. As Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco and Thomas Devaney have shown, the debate continued far beyond the late 1440s and, for Fernández de Palencia, there remained serious issues. His *Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar*, like his *Batalla campal de los perros contra los lobos*, was an allegorical tale attacking the failings of the Castilian nobility. Despite the lively chivalric debate in the kingdom which has been the subject of this study, there appeared to have been little change in the behaviour of Castilian knights. Juan’s reign ended with a return to factional violence with Luna’s dramatic betrayal, and Enrique IV’s reign would prove to be as troubled as his father’s. As Fernández de Palencia lamented, Castile was blessed with an abundance of good knights and a great wealth of experience, but was bereft of the victories it should have attained. Across the border in Aragon, chivalric writers were engaged in a very different discourse and basking in the glory of Alfonso the Magnanimous’ conquest of Naples. The writing produced at the Aragonese court stands in stark contrast to the pessimism found in Castile, although it was not free from criticism. Like their Castilian counterparts, they too looked back to the thirteenth century as a chivalric golden age. However, whilst Juan II struggled to control his nobility, his cousin Alfonso celebrated a victory which made him a true heir to King Pere the Great. The chivalric romances *Tirant lo Blanc* and *Curial e Güelfa* lauded this victory and urged Catalan knights to take up arms against the Turks, as their ancestors had done. Whilst Juan was lambasted for his weak kingship Alfonso was praised, his deeds and sayings immortalised by the Italian panegyrist Antonio Beccadelli ‘Il

---

820 Alfonso de Palencia, ‘Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar’.
821 Thomas Devaney, ‘Virtue, Virility and History in Fifteenth Century Castile’; Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*.
Panormita. Fernández de Palencia echoed and built on Cartagena’s chivalric criticism. His work reveals the legacy of Cartagena’s chivalric critique and marks a shift in the previously introspective Castilian chivalric debate. Fernández de Palencia’s allegorical tale highlighted the great difference between the chivalric cultures of the two Iberian kingdoms and his time spent in Italy gave him a taste of the triumph of conquest.

Alfonso Fernández de Palencia was born in 1423 and educated in Cartagena’s household and, like Cartagena, was of converso origin. He was part of a new breed of educated men at court who was neither noble, nor a member of the church. As Tate has argued, he was much more reminiscent of the sort of scholars found in the Italian city-states where Fernández de Palencia spent the 1440s and early 1450s. Despite not receiving any formal university education, Alfonso Fernández de Palencia was highly educated and attended the Council of Basel with Cartagena as part of the Castilian delegation. His work, like that of Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, who was also one of Cartagena’s students, reveals that he shared many of his teacher’s views on the Castilian nobility. Both Sánchez de Arévalo and Fernández de Palencia went on to write works which, like those of Alonso de Cartagena, bore the influence of civic humanism. His work was also a sign of the changing times in Castile. Both the Batalla campal and the Tratado were composed in both Latin and Castilian, produced for the educated ‘militares viri’ which Cartagena had alluded to in his Epistula ad comitem de Haro. His work is also exemplary of the union of arms and letters discussed in the previous chapters. Fernández de Palencia also felt that the issues of the period might be corrected, or at least understood, through chivalric writing. Like the earlier commentators, his views on chivalry and nobility were coloured by the unrest of the first half of the fifteenth century and they reveal the damaging legacy of decades of civil strife and political unrest.

An Ongoing Crisis: Fernández de Palencia and the Problems of Castilian Chivalry

Fernández de Palencia composed the Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar in 1459, two years after completing the Batalla campal. The Batalla campal was a tale of a fight between the dogs and the wolves, two factions brought into conflict through seemingly unavoidable circumstances. Tate has argued that the tale was a thinly disguised allegory for the conflict between the Infantes and Luna. The tale was likely heavily influenced by the events leading up to Olmedo and the legacy of violence that the conflict left in

---


825 Robert B. Tate, ‘The Civic Humanism of Alfonso de Palencia’.

Andalusia. The work also reflected anti-noble sentiment in Seville; another legacy of the region’s difficult political history. The Tratado was then Fernández de Palencia’s second attempt at political allegory and the tale was partly inspired by his time spent in Italy. The tale was, in many ways, a typical romance and told the story of a young and ambitious knight named Exercicio and his journey from Castile to Italy in search of the elusive Triunfo. Exercicio, his name in itself a byword for chivalry, was an embodiment of Castilian knighthood. Whilst Cartagena chose to make his chivalric critique a lengthy and sober work, Fernández de Palencia instead opted for a literary form which every knight would have understood, a chivalric romance. Exercicio’s quest to find Triunfo followed the typical structure of a chivalric romance. His quest featured jousts, damsels and the sort of great feats of arms expected. However, despite its light-hearted tone, the work emphasised the continued failings in the Castilian knightly understanding of chivalry.

Fernández de Palencia’s views were a legacy of fifteenth-century Castile’s political and intellectual turbulence. His view on chivalry was coloured by his time spent in Italy and bore the influence of civic humanism. Fernández de Palencia, unlike his predecessors, looked outside Castile’s borders and openly acknowledged the successes of Juan II’s cousin, which broadened the Castilian chivalric debate. However, his criticism in the Batalla campal and Tratado were a reminder of the scars which decades of strife had left and the continuing failings of Castile’s knights. Fernández de Palencia appeared, however, quietly hopeful. His fanciful portrayal of Exercicio’s exploits pointed to the promise which he saw in Castile’s nobility, although it would not be until the reign of Ferdinand and Isabel that Castile would find the triumph it had been searching for. Nevertheless, in contrast to the despondent ending of the Batalla campal, where the bloody battle between the dogs and the wolves had yielded no victory, Exercicio’s quest was a success and his discovery of Triunfo the result of marrying his own determination with order, discretion, exercise and obedience. However, despite Fernández de Palencia’s optimism, the chivalric debate in the kingdom had not yielded an answer to Castile’s woes. Little changed and Enrique IV’s reign brought only more instability and a lengthy period of civil war. His failure to produce an heir similarly led to further violence as the nobility split into rival factions, supporting either Enrique’s daughter Joanna ‘la Beltraneja’ or Juan II’s daughter Isabel. Nevertheless, writing in 1457 at the start of Enrique’s reign, Fernández de Palencia was optimistic about the future and convinced, like the commentators before him, that chivalric writing held the key to correcting Castile’s woes.

The Tratado opened with two prologues, one from the Castilian translation and another from the Latin original. Fernández de Palencia dedicated the Latin work to Alfonso Carrillo de Acuña, the Archbishop of Toledo, and the Castilian translation to Fernando de Guzmán, the Commander of the Order of Calatrava. In the introduction to the translation, Fernández de Palencia stated that, ‘me atreví colegir en latinidad los méritos del triunfar e los aparejos del perfeto triunfo militar, resumiendo cómo los antiguos mantenían la

827 Ibid., 182.
disciplina militar de la guerra, e a quien juzgavan digno de honor glorioso, e que condiciones se requerian para que alguno triunfase’. 829 The tale was thus meant to offer guidance to a knightly readership. Fernández de Palencia explained that he dedicated the work to the Archbishop of Toledo as, ‘fueme visto más razonable dirigirlo a Señor en quien nobleza e conocimiento de latinidad, e amor de virtudes, e enemistad de los vicios, e enseñanza militar concurresien’. 830 The Archbishop was a good choice, as he was as much at home on the battlefield commanding armies as he was leading his congregation. Fernando del Pulgar, in his Claros varones de Castilla, paints a picture of the Archbishop as a bellicose and astute politician. 831 Carrillo had played an important role in the political crisis during Juan II’s reign and owed his position as archbishop to his support for the king during the Infantes’ rebellion in the 1440s. 832 It is ironic that a cleric fitted Fernández de Palencia’s knightly ideal well enough to warrant the dedication of the work. The Archbishop was a pious, virtuous man who loved learning and warfare, almost an embodiment of the chivalric ideal proposed by Alonso de Cartagena, his clerical office notwithstanding. Fernando de Guzmán was regarded by Fernández de Palencia as holding similar qualities and he praised the commander in the introduction to the work. He stated that he hoped the tale would aid the knights of Calatrava in their war against the Moors and he argued, that to find triumph on the battlefield, they needed, ‘orden’, ‘obediencia’ and ‘exercicio’. 833

The tale begins with the young knight Exercicio who, ‘deseoso de saber la causa por que el Triunfo no visitava esta provincia como avía visitado a otras; e él fue avisado que la Discreción le fuese visto más consistía e óvola de ir a buscar a Italia a la parte de Toscana.’ 834 Fernández de Palencia cast Exercicio as embodying the best of Castilian chivalry. He was, ‘de alta estatura, fermoso en todos sus miembros, no covarde, antes principal en fuerte manera de guerrear, de ánimo espíerto, valiente e no perezoso, e muy sofridor de cualquier trabajo’. 835 Exercicio represented a new Castilian knighthood, who desired to correct the problems of the past. However, as Fernández de Palencia went on to argue, such individual drive alone was not enough. As Cartagena had, Fernández de Palencia balanced criticism and praise. Echoing Cartagena in the Discurso and Defensorium, he praised Castile for its great and famous ports and, ‘se fallan en ella cavallos maravillosamente ligeros innumerables e muy abtos para fazer rebatos e para pelea; e assimismo abasto de muy resplandecientes armas e, lo que se deve estimar por más glorioso, se fallavan varones dignos de ser

---

829 Ibid., 345. ‘dared to collect in Latin the merits of triumph and the means of the perfect military triumph, summarized as the ancients maintained the military discipline of war and to who they judged worthy of glorious honour, and what conditions they required for one to triumph’.

830 Ibid. ‘it was to me most reasonable to dedicate it to a lord in whom nobility and a knowledge of Latin and love of virtues and enmity of vices and knowledge of war come together.’

831 Fernando del Pulgar, Claros varones de Castilla: Estudio preliminar, edición y notas de Robert B. Tate, 117–21.

832 Pedro Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del baluarte de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carrazco, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán, 470.

833 Alfonso de Palencia, Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar, 346. ‘order’, ‘exercise’ ‘obedience’.

834 Ibid. ‘desired to know the cause by which Triunfo had not visited this province (Spain) as he had others, and he was advised by Discreción that he should go to Italy to search in the region of Tuscany.’

835 Ibid., 347. ‘of high stature, handsome in all his limbs, not cowardly, before all strong in the manner of war, of spirted soul, valiant and not lazy, and very suffering of whatever labour’.
This praise of Spain and its knights was reminiscent of Cartagena’s words in the *Discurso*, where he lauded the knights and noblemen of Castile, as well as praising its cities and ports. However, all was not well. Whilst in Castile, Exercicio met the old hag Esperencia, whose daughter Discreción agreed to accompany Exercicio to find Triunfo. Fernández de Palencia cast Spain as beleaguered and bereft of victory, but with a wealth of experience. Esperencia was, as the author of the *Quístión entre dos cavalleros* remarked, ‘madre de todas las cosas’. Fernández de Palencia mocked the Castilian nobility’s lofty view of themselves through an amusing encounter with a villager out hunting. The villager showed himself to be learned, eloquent and not the rustic which Exercicio had labelled him. Rather than backing down when Exercicio challenged him on why a simple peasant was engaged in the noble art of hunting, the villager openly mocked the Castilian nobles of his day. Addressing Exercicio, he asked, ‘¿Qué es el honesto trabajo que sufren los nuestros nobles? ¿Por ventura sostienen algun cargo que suso recounted? ¿O palabra que decir no se devría! ¡O desonesta confianza de loor que solamente se deve atribuir a la antigua nobleza! ¿Loor deven aver los presentes?’ Fernández de Palencia asked the questions which had motivated the production of much of the reforming literature of Juan’s reign. The villager conveyed the shock which many felt at the manifold failings and abuses of the Castilian nobility. Vicious infighting and poisonous court politics had given rise to a literary scepticism which eroded the very foundations of nobility. Like the commentators who came before, Fernández de Palencia lamented the shattering of the link between virtue and honour. To be noble meant being deserving of nobility. Fernández de Palencia, like Valera and Cartagena, looked at the differences between the noblemen of their day and the great figures of the classical past. He remarked that those great knights of old, men like Alexander, Philip of Macedon, Hannibal, Romulus, Manius Crius, the Scipios, Julius Caesar or Pompey, who devoted their time to the practice of knighthood, seemed to have little desire to idle their days away hunting. Fernández de Palencia rightly remarked that, in contrast with these great figures, the knights of his day were lacking.

This juxtaposition was not one which Fernández de Palencia confined to the distant past. Exercicio’s journey brought him next to a wealthy Catalan city where he learned that the illusion Triunfo had departed

---

836 Alonso de Cartagena, ‘Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basle’, 208–9; Alfonso de Palencia, ‘Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar’, 347. ‘are found in it innumerable and marvelously light horses very well suited for surprise attacks and for fighting; and likewise provisioned with resplendent arms which should be valued as the most glorious and there are found men worthy of being placed before all other mortals in strongly supporting the labours of war.’


838 ‘La Quístión entre dos cavalleros: Un nuevo tratado político del siglo XV’, 30. ‘the mother of everything’.


841 Alfonso de Palencia, ‘Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar’, 350. ‘what is the honest labour that our nobles suffer? By luck do they maintain some charge that they had before recounted? Oh, word that is said that should not! Oh, dishonest confidence in praise that should only be attributed to the ancient nobility! What praise should be attributed to the present?’

842 Ibid., 352.
Spain for Italy on Alfonso the Magnanimous’ Aragonese fleet. Exercício’s time in Catalonia reminded him of something that many Castilians were all too aware of. Whilst Juan II’s reign had seen the shame of civil war continue and worsen, his cousin Alfonso had turned the defeat at Ponza into a glorious victory over Angevin Naples. The contrast could not have been greater. The Marquis of Santillana had mocked Alfonso and the Infantes in his *Deicir contra los aragoneses* and the *Comedieta de Poncé*. However, by the mid 1440s, this had given way to begrudging admiration as the Castilians saw their Aragonese neighbours bathed in the glory of conquest. In February 1443, Alfonso staged a magnificent triumphal entry into Naples, his triumph later immortalised in a triumphal arch built at Castel Nuovo. His victory marked the realisation of Aragonese ambition in the Mediterranean. However, such glory was not forthcoming for the knights of the Castilian court. Alfonso’s reign saw the transformation of virtue into the honour and glory which the Castilian commentators longed for. The Castilian debate had been very introspective and, with the exception of Valera and Rodríguez del Padrón’s use of Bartolus, much of the debate had been inwardly focused. Fernández de Palencia instead looked to contemporary Italy and invited direct comparison between Italy, Aragon and Castile. When the Marquis of Santillana had commented on French failings in the Hundred Years War, he had said nothing of the reversal of French fortunes. In contrast, Fernández de Palencia looked outside Castile to find a more hopeful contemporary view of chivalry.

Figure 12: The Aragonese Arch in Naples which was built to celebrate Alfonso the Magnanimous’ triumphal entry into the city.

---

843 Ibid., 355.
846 See figure 12.
847 Íñigo López de Mendoza, ‘Questión’, 236.
Despite its geographical proximity, the Kingdom of Aragon had a very different chivalric literary tradition to Castile. Like their Castilian neighbours, the chivalric writers of Alfonso’s reign looked back to an idealised past. However, the Aragonese discussion of knighthood took a radically different form to the Castilian debate. Whilst the woes of Juan’s reign had provoked a serious and introspective debate, the Aragonese conquests fuelled the production of a radically different chivalric tradition. Alfonso V’s victory provoked the production of two chivalric romances, the lesser known *Curial e Güelfa* and the more famous *Tirant lo Blanc*.\(^{848}\) The dating of *Tirant* is harder to place due to the fact that it was substantially reworked after Joanot Martorell’s death by his friend Martí Joan de Galba. David Abulafia has suggested that it was likely composed between 1460 and Martorell’s death in 1468.\(^{849}\) Both romances linked Alfonso’s conquests with the Catalan expansion into the Mediterranean under Pere III a century and a half earlier. Pere oversaw the capture of Sicily following the Sicilian Vespers and the start of the war with Angevin Naples. Pere’s deeds were immortalised in the chronicles of Bernat Desclot and Ramon Muntaner, the latter of whom also chronicled the deeds of the Catalan Company as they fought both for and against the Byzantine Empire.\(^{850}\) The events left an enduring historiographical legacy. The chroniclers wove the disparate nature of Aragonese conquest into a coherent historical myth of Aragonese ascendancy.

It was this glorified past which the authors of the romances sought to link with Alfonso’s reign. In *Curial e Güelfa*, Curial travelled to France to fight a tournament at Melun where he encountered none other than King Pere III himself in a retelling of King Pere’s legendary journey to France to fight his Neapolitan rival, Charles of Anjou, in single combat.\(^{851}\) Curial’s encounter was only one of several instances in both romances where the accounts of the chroniclers were woven into the fabric of the stories, so connecting the earlier period of conquest with Alfonso the Magnanimous’ reign. This interweaving of myth and history has led Lola Badia to label *Curial* a ‘crónica poetada’.\(^{852}\) Júlia Butinyà i Jiménez has even suggested that the figure of Curial in *Curial e Güelfa* might be Alfonso the Magnanimous himself, although this is highly doubtful.\(^{853}\) Rather, the tale was allegorical and a much broader reflection of Alfonso’s reign. In contrast to the insular focus of mid-fifteenth-century Castilian chivalric literature, the Aragonese romances revealed a much


\(^{851}\) *Curial e Güelfa: Anònim; a cura de Marina Gustà; próleg de Giuseppe E. Sansone*, 158–74.


greater concern with events across the Mediterranean. Both romances told the stories of knights who travelled across the Mediterranean and fought the Turks in defence of the Byzantine Empire. Their outlook was shaped by the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and fears that the Turks would continue their conquest into Christendom. Two years after the city’s dramatic fall to Mehmed II, Alfonso V knelt solemnly in the Duomo in Naples to take the cross as the leader of a crusade to retake the city.854 However, Alfonso never led a crusade. Instead he turned his fleets against his northern Italian rivals and the last years of his reign were occupied with political squabbles in Italy.

The fall of Constantinople provoked fear and uncertainty across the Mediterranean. However, for the authors of the Catalan romances, it also presented an opportunity for Alfonso to match the deeds of Roger de Flor and the Catalan Company. Both Tirant and Curial told tales of knights whose prowess of arms saved Byzantium and, for many, Alfonso V appeared to offer the best hope of fighting back against the Turks. However, for the author of Curial, there was a more serious issue at stake. Curial’s tale was not simply one of love and knightly daring. Whilst the author extolled the virtues of the Catalan knights of old, he was equally eager to warn of the dangers of a knightly life. Curial’s quest to win the heart of Guelfa brought him triumph and glory at tournaments and jousts and made him a knight of great renown. The third book of the romance sees Curial transformed by his newfound fame into an arrogant and obnoxious character; the antithesis of the virtuous hero. Curial’s reckoning comes when he encounters a former adversary, a knight nicknamed the Boar, at a monastery in Jerusalem. The knight pleads with Curial to give up his life as a knight errant and begs him to change his ways, warning him that, ‘has morts hòmens; has trameses ànimes als inferns.’855 Curial’s redemption comes in the form of a crusade. Visited by none other than St George himself, Curial takes the cross and departs for Byzantium and finally turns his unparalleled martial might against the enemies of Christendom.856 This episode was possibly a veiled criticism of Alfonso V and the knights of his court whose fame and honour, like Curial, had come from killing their fellow Christians. The closing sections of the romance served as an encouragement for King Alfonso the Magnanimous and his knights to save both their souls and the Byzantine Empire.

The message was echoed in Tirant le Blanc, where Tirant and his companions saved the beleaguered Empire from the Turks. For the Castilian commentators, the imminent collapse of the Byzantine Empire was not a concern. Their focus remained fixed on the kingdom’s own bitter internal strife. Reform was a part of both chivalric traditions during the mid-fifteenth century. In both Castile and Aragon, writers looked to the thirteenth century for a chivalric golden age, alongside allusions to the ancient past. Reform was addressed in very different ways by the Castilian and Aragonese commentators and the introspective character of the

855 Curial e Guelfa: Anònim; a cura de Marina Gustà; próleg de Giuseppe E. Sansone, 247. ‘you have killed men; you have sent souls to hell.’
856 Ibid., 314–15.
Castilian debate contrasted greatly with the more outward looking Aragonese chivalric tradition. For the Aragonese authors, triumph and glory had already been found in the conquests of Alfonso V, but their concern for the cost at which it had been won was plain to see. For the Castilian commentators, the quest for triumph went on, their writings characterised by a melancholic longing for victory and stability, and their chivalric commentaries filled with increasingly desperate attempts to curb the rebellious behaviour of the kingdom’s knights.

From Aragon, Exercicio journeyed through southern France to Italy, following much the same route that Alfonso Fernández de Palencia himself took to Rome. In France, Exercicio encountered a French nobleman and his retinue staying at an inn. The innkeeper commented on, ‘la común tristeza atormenta la España’, and explained that the French were so merry because they had conquered their enemies.857 Fernández de Palencia was, of course, referring to the reversal of French fortunes in the Hundred Years War. Whilst Castile plunged deeper into a political crisis that, by the 1460s, appeared to have no end in sight, the French had emerged victorious against England. However, not all had been well with French chivalry. As Craig Taylor has shown, the Hundred Years War provoked a comparable chivalric debate in Valois France, as the kingdom’s chivalric commentators struggled to come to terms with a series of catastrophic defeats.858 Worsening military fortunes for the French had provoked the creation of a huge number of chivalric treatises. Despite the innkeeper’s pride in French chivalry, there continued to be an appetite for reforming literature in France. In 1460, Valera’s Espejo was translated into French by Hue de Salves and it became popular at the Burgundian court, along with Jean Miélot’s translation of Buonaccorso da Montemagno’s Controversia de nobilitate.859 The ideas in both Valera and Buonaccorso’s work were of great interest to French and Burgundian knights. Works which were critical of nobility and chivalry were produced in England, France and Burgundy during the fifteenth century. All three countries had their own lively chivalric traditions and, although different from Castile’s own chivalric culture, they faced many of the same challenges. Megan Leitch’s recent work on English romances written during the Wars of the Roses has argued that a comparably bleak assessment of chivalry in England was likely a response to the prolonged civil war and political instability in the kingdom.860 England was, however, lacking in a comparative tradition of chivalric guides. Nicholas Upton’s De studio militaris and William Worcester’s Boke of Noblesse, written in 1447 and 1451 respectively, were the only such works produced in England during the period.

Exercicio departed France for Northern Italy where he travelled through Lombardy and Florence. Here, he encountered, Orden (Order), Obedencia (Obedience) and Vitoria (Victory) and travelled on to Rome. His journey ended south of Rome where Exercicio met Gloridoneo, a brilliant military leader who had won

857 Alfonso de Palencia, ‘Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar’, 356. ‘the common sadness tormenting Spain’.
858 Craig Taylor, Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War, 2013.
859 Maurice Keen, Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages, 189.
two great victories. Following these victories, Exercicio finally encountered the elusive Triunfo, who recognised Gloridoneo’s great feats of arms with a magnificent pageant. Fernández de Palencia ended the work with a hopeful view of chivalry. As Cartagena had, he presented the reader with a solution to Castile’s woes which was based on a reformed idea of chivalry. His suggestion that military exercise must be accompanied by discretion, order and obedience was strikingly similar to Cartagena’s views. The work was a playful, but serious attempt to remind Castilians that they had everything which they needed to attain victory, all they needed to do was put the parts together.

The Castilian debate formed part of a much broader pan-European chivalric debate on chivalry and nobility. Exercicio’s journey in the Tratado brought him to places where similar debates were under way. The fifteenth century was a period of both unparalleled chivalric decadence and one of great criticism. As was argued in earlier chapters, historians have been eager to assert the similarity between chivalric culture and literature across Europe. However, to do so risks losing sight of the political, social and intellectual contexts which gave rise to these debates. The Castilian debate was driven by the kingdom’s social and political pressures. Similarly, the commentators’ responses were shaped by Castile’s unusual relationship with humanism. Castilian commentators were no doubt aware of these other chivalric debates, through word of mouth or the translations of Honoré Bovet’s Abre des batailles, the popularity of Bruni’s De militia and Castilian translations of French romances. However, Fernández de Palencia’s work marked one of the first attempts by Castilian commentators in the mid-fifteenth century to look beyond the kingdom’s borders to their European contemporaries. Despite the reformers best efforts, instability, unrest and knightly disloyalty persisted. When Martin Alfonso de Montemayor commissioned a copy of the Doctrinal in 1484, its words held as much relevance as they had done forty years earlier when Gómez de Sandoval asked Cartagena to compose the work.

---

Conclusion
Knights, Nobles and Courtiers at the Close of the Middle Ages

This study has sought to show that Alonso de Cartagena was not alone in taking a critical stance on chivalry during Juan II’s reign. His ideas and approach were shaped by the political turmoil of the period and, like many of his contemporaries, he saw chivalry as both the sickness and the cure. Chivalry was inseparable from the political, intellectual and social context of the period. This study has not sought to define a Castilian chivalric ideal. To do so would be impossible and would ignore the complexities of the chivalric debate. Rather, as Craig Taylor suggested, it has sought to focus on the differences. Cartagena’s view of chivalry was complex and he both praised and criticised the Castilian nobility in equal measure. Whilst he blamed them for the crisis at court, he also saw great promise in Castile’s knights and chivalry as a means of changing their behaviour. Cartagena and his contemporaries, men like Diego de Valera and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, grappled with chivalry’s many meanings. The Doctrinal and Respuesta were part of what I have argued was a chivalric response to the civil war. Along with Diego de Valera’s Espejo de verdadera nobleza and Exortación de la paz, they formed an impassioned attempt to halt the political unrest and fundamentally rethink chivalry and nobility. However, this study has also sought to show that they formed part of a much broader debate at the Castilian court on the question of what it meant to be a nobleman. This was a debate which was shaped by Castile’s own brand of humanism and the social changes afoot in the kingdom.

This study has sought to show that chivalry was not a constant or uniform body of thought by focusing on a period where it underwent great change and intellectual development. Chivalry reflected the political, intellectual and social context of the period and 1430-1455 saw the emergence of a remarkable debate on chivalry and nobility at the Castilian court. Castile was not unique in this, and the debate formed part of a broader movement in fifteenth-century Europe towards chivalric reform. However, in order to understand these changes, a focus on the relationship between chivalry and its political, social and intellectual context is needed. This study has sought to preserve the relationship between the chivalric debate in Castile and its political, social and intellectual context. The debate was one which had two parts. The first was those works which were an immediate response to the civil war, treatises like the Doctrinal, Questión, Respuesta, and Espejo. The second was the much broader debate on the nature of nobility and the role of chivalry, which saw the involvement of commentators like Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo and Juan Rodríguez del Padrón. Both the response to the civil war and the broader discussion were characterised not by a commonality of responses, but by a shared set of questions and issues which underpinned the discussion. Their writing sought to address the troubled relationship between Juan and his nobility, establish the place of the knight in Castilian

862 Craig Taylor, Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War, 2013, 4–8.
society and reconcile lineage and virtue in the construction of nobility. For Cartagena, Valera and the Marquis, writing in the wake of the civil war, problems of knightly disloyalty, treason and unrestrained violence also loomed large. The writing of each author represented their attempt to grapple with some of these questions and, whilst some were linked by shared approaches, each work was a vision of the chivalric ideal differentiated by the nuances of their responses. Cartagena’s response, unlike those of his contemporaries, bridged all aspects of this debate. Cartagena’s own unique view represented one of many Castilian chivalries which attempted to shape noble attitudes.

These attempts were facilitated by the development of a Castilian humanist court culture. The rapid growth of noble book collecting gave the reformers an educated knightly audience for their work. However, more importantly, the changing intellectual framework in Castile gave new sources and new ideals. Chivalry was married to civic humanism as Valera, Cartagena and the Marquis of Santillana re-imagined the role of the knight as a social defender modelled on ancient Rome. This study has sought to take this discussion beyond a debate over arms versus letters. Rather, the debate revealed arms being guided by letters and the works of the chivalric commentators were distinguished by their scholarly approaches and serious tone. They were written to be read by knights, in beautifully clear language and elegant style. The question of Castilian noble engagement in the debate remains problematic. We simply do not know how these texts and ideas circulated at court. However, if but a few knights were engaged in the discussion and read the chivalric texts being written at Juan’s court, then they would have encountered a learned view of knighthood. The good survival of manuscripts of both the Espejo and Doctrinal from the 1440s suggests that there was a knightly engagement in the debate. Cartagena never envisaged that knights would read freely. Rather, he produced a chivalric guide which contained everything a knight would need to know and advocated a learned chivalric ideal which could be considered humanist. The Castilian chivalric debate was one which, ultimately, developed within the context of Castile’s own unusual approach to humanism, and the ideas which it brought to the chivalric debate were essential for the reformers challenging the status quo. However, this study has not gone far enough in examining the complex relationship between chivalry and humanism. There remains much work to be done on the impact which humanism had on chivalry as a constantly developing body of thought and a study which tackled this complex relationship in Castile and Aragon over the course of the fifteenth century would be of great benefit.

This study has been of limited scope, focusing on the figure of Alonso de Cartagena and, predominantly, addressing the chivalric writing produced in the last twenty years of his life. However, even with such a limited span, much has been beyond the scope of this study. The vast quantity of works in verse produced during Juan’s reign, many of which addressed the same issues which the chivalric commentators did in prose, have scarcely been mentioned beyond a few works by Juan de Mena, Juan Alfonso de Baena and the Marquis of Santillana. Moreover, the picture which emerges of the chivalric debate is far from complete. The vast majority of the chivalric texts which survive from Juan’s reign are those of the reformers. As a
result, we are largely confined to seeing one side of the debate on chivalry and nobility. Padrón’s defence of nobility by lineage is the only work which survives that actively sought to defend the established view of nobility at the Castilian court. However, Padrón’s *Cadira de honor* and Valera’s *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, both hint at the presence of a debate which was never set down in writing. They cast their work as responses to arguments and misguided views they had heard at court and this suggests that much of the discussion was verbal and, consequently, forever lost to historians. The knights themselves are largely silent, their responses to the debate conspicuous by their absence. We simply do not know how the Castilian nobility responded to Valera’s attack on lineage, or to Cartagena’s attempt to establish the law as the governing rules of chivalry. Whilst the debate extended beyond literature, it also extended beyond the timeframe taken in this study. As was suggested in the epilogue, Juan II’s death did not mark the end of either the chivalric discussion or Castile’s woes. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco’s work has gone some way to exploring the wider debate on nobility over the course of the fifteenth century, but there remains much to be done on the transformation of Castilian chivalric pessimism under Juan II and Enrique IV into the triumphal optimism which heralded the end of reconquest. The question of how the Castilian debate developed also raises the question of a pan-Iberian approach to chivalry. The approach taken in this study means that it has remained closely focused on events and writing in Castile, in part a reflection of the Castilian commentators’ own insular views and a desire to preserve the link between the ideas and the political context which created them. However, the topic would benefit greatly from a comparative approach which would put the Castilian debate within its broader context. An obvious point of comparison for Castilian thought is the Kingdom of Aragon under the Trastamara dynasty and a comparative study would be of great use. However, there has been little scholarly attempt to look more broadly at Iberia and examine chivalric thought in either Navarre or Portugal in comparison with Castile’s own rich chivalric culture.

Alonso de Cartagena’s chivalric writing, and that of his fellow commentators, reveals the fundamental problems which Castilian chivalry faced during the latter years of Juan’s reign. They were problems which Cartagena sought to solve by renewing the link between knighthood and royal authority through Castile’s laws. He embraced neither Valera’s vocal criticisms nor Rodríguez del Padrón’s defence of the titled nobility. Rather, he trod a middle ground between the two, quietly critical of the Castilian nobility, but optimistic that they held the potential to correct their failings. Nevertheless, he was instrumental in the development of a debate which was carried on by his students after his death. His ideas were part of a rich tapestry of chivalric responses to the civil war and wider debate on nobility which formed the backdrop to one of Castile’s most troubled periods. A tapestry which was woven together by shared responses to Castile’s manifold problems, each text, each thread, a part of the ever changing, and remarkably complex, Castilian chivalric consciousness.
Appendix

Study of Cambridge University Library MS. Add. 8586

Introduction

This section will detail Cambridge University MS. Add. 8586, a previously unstudied copy of the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*. The following pages will outline the manuscript and seek to place it in relation to the other surviving copies of the *Doctrinal*. In particular, it will argue that the manuscript is closely related to Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 10107. The Cambridge manuscript sheds some light on the continued popularity of the *Doctrinal* in the late fifteenth century and is an intriguing addition to the known copies of the work.

I was lucky enough to encounter MS. Add. 8586 in November 2012, whilst in the very earliest stages of the research for this thesis. The manuscript formed part of Cambridge University Library’s additional manuscript series, which was still in the process of being catalogued. The manuscript had entered the University Library’s collection through the former Under Librarian and Hispanist Frederick John Norton, who was an avid collector of Spanish incunabula. The Norton Collection was acquired by the library in 1984 and included some 660 works, the vast majority of which were incunabula. Unlike many of Norton’s other books, MS. Add. 8586 was not an incunabulum, but rather a manuscript. This copy of the *Doctrinal* was not known by any scholar working on Alonso de Cartagena’s writing and has, before now, not been studied. Norton had himself acquired the manuscript from the vast collection of Sir Thomas Phillips, which was auctioned off after his death. The Cambridge manuscript in fact still bears Phillips’ distinctive crest on its flyleaves and Phillips’ own catalogue number of 4302. Little is known of the manuscript’s history between its creation or when it entered Phillip’s collection. The manuscript represents a significant addition to the known copies of the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*.

Noel Fallows has identified twenty-two known copies of the *Doctrinal* and numerous incunabula from the *Doctrinal*’s two print runs in 1487 and 1497. This total has recently been added to by Robert Archer’s discovery of another fifteenth-century copy of the *Doctrinal* housed in the Czech National Archives. With the addition of the Cambridge manuscript, this brings the total number of known surviving copies of the

---


867 See figure 13.


869 Robert Archer, ‘Un código desconocido del Doctrinal de los cavalleros de Alfonso de Cartagena’.
work to twenty-four. There has been no attempt by historians to establish the relationship between these surviving copies of the work, although Fallows did note some of the significant differences between the surviving manuscripts in his edition.

Figure 13 (left): Phillips’ distinctive library stamp and catalogue number from the flyleaves of the manuscript.
Figure 14 (right): A section of folio 63v, showing the red titles and typical layout of the manuscript.

**Outline of MS. Add. 8586**

Cambridge University MS. Add. 8586 bears great similarity to other fifteenth-century copies of the *Doctrinal*. The manuscript is written on paper in black ink, with the text in two columns of between forty to forty-five lines per page and adorned with red titles. The work is written in a beautifully clear book hand typical of manuscripts produced around this period in Castile. There is no watermark visible on the paper used in the manuscript and it may have been lost when the pages were guillotined to fit into the current binding.

The manuscript is stylistically in keeping with other surviving copies of the work, which tend to be plain and unadorned. Indeed, the only surviving copies which display ornamentation are Juan II’s copy, now held in the Escorial, and the Prague manuscript. The manuscript is comprised of 161 folios and contains a copy of the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, as well as a letter written in the same hand. The text of the *Doctrinal* occupies folios f.1r-158v with book one covering f.1r-49r, book two occupying f.49r-f.101v, book three filling f.101v-125r and book four comprising f.125v-159v. The manuscript is not fully foliated and folio numbers exist only on the first seventeen folios. The text of the *Doctrinal* is sadly incomplete as it is missing the dedicatory pages, contents and first folio of the introduction. Based on other manuscripts, and the length of the quires, it can be assumed that there are at least five folios missing from the manuscript. The

---

870 See figure 14.
first folio of the prologue is sadly missing and has been replaced with a modern copy. It is impossible to tell whether the replacement was a copy of the original, or simply copied from another manuscript. The modern copy of the first folio carries a dedication to Álvaro de Luna and this is shared by a number of the other surviving manuscripts. However, we cannot tell whether the original manuscript held a dedication to Diego Gómez de Sandoval or to Álvaro de Luna. Moreover, the second folio is incorrectly bound meaning that f.2r in fact displays the verso side of the folio. The manuscript has been repaired in several places and suffered somewhat from corrosion from ink, although the severity of this varies from some discoloration to holes in the paper rendering it unreadable. Besides the missing folios and minor ink damage, the manuscript is in excellent condition.

Figure 15 (above): Folios 14v and 74v showing the consistency in the hand throughout the manuscript.

Figure 16 (above): Folios 1r-1v showing the modern replacement for the missing first folio.

872 See figure 16.
873 See figure 16.
874 See figure 17.
The manuscript is securely dateable to 1478, thanks to a colophon at the end of the work.\(^{875}\) In the colophon, the scribe identified himself as Pedro de Baena and stated that he had copied the manuscript, ‘en la villa de Alcaudete por mandato de muy honrado cauallero e señor mi señor Martin Alfonso de Montemayor, señor de las dichas villas de Alcaudete e Montemayor.’\(^{876}\) The work’s commissioner, Martin Alfonso de Montemayor, was a minor nobleman and little is known of his life or deeds. However, he must have had enough of an interest in the work to commission a copy of the Doctrinal. The consistency in the hand throughout the manuscript suggests that it was the work of Pedro alone. It would also appear that Pedro copied the letter which fills folios 159r-161v, as the hand is identical.\(^{877}\) Despite the fact that the pages were guillotined, the marginal notes, which helped in the binding of the manuscript, survive on folios 18v, 57v and 68v, amongst others.\(^{878}\) Several scribal errors, such as a missing title on f.97v, reveal that the titles in red ink were added after the main body of the text was written.\(^{879}\)

Figure 17 (left): Repairs to the manuscript visible on folio 59r.

Figure 18 (right): The colophon on folio 158v. identifying the scribe as Pedro de Baena.

---


\(^{876}\) Ibid. ‘in the town of Alcaudete at the order of the most honourable knight and lord my Señor Martin Alfonso de Montemayor, lord of the said towns of Alcaudete and Montemayor.’ See figure 18.

\(^{877}\) See figure 15. (comparison of hands)

\(^{878}\) See figure 19.

\(^{879}\) See figure 20.
As was stated earlier, there has been little attempt to establish how the text of the *Doctrinal* was transmitted and to establish the links between the surviving manuscripts of the work. The Cambridge manuscript is largely the same text as the 1487 incunabula printed by Friedrich Biel in Burgos. The 1487 incunabulum is an excellent point of comparison for the text of the Cambridge manuscript. It shares the same structure, same textual layout and largely adheres to the same chapter divisions. However, there are a number of significant differences which help to shed light on the transmission of the text. Whilst a significant number of these differences can be simply attributed to scribal error, or errors in the copying of the manuscript, a study of these variances reveals that the Cambridge manuscript is closely related to MS. 10107, which was possibly produced between 1481-2 and is currently held in the Biblioteca Nacional de España. Little is known about either the production or ownership of MS. 10107 and the precise nature of the relationship between the two manuscripts is difficult to establish. However, the great similarity in the text of the *Doctrinal* in both works suggests a close relationship between the two copies. It is possible that MS. 10107 was copied from the Cambridge manuscript, or that the two manuscripts were copied from a common, but now lost, exemplar. The two manuscripts do not share a common dedication. MS. 10107 is dedicated to Diego Gómez de Sandoval, whilst MS. Add. 8586 is dedicated to Álvaro de Luna. However, as was suggested earlier, the fact that the first folio of the Cambridge manuscript has been replaced means we cannot draw

---

880 Noel Fallows’ edition of the *Doctrinal* based on the 1487 incunabula will be the basis for this comparison.
any conclusions from this difference. The majority of the variances between MS. Add. 8586 and the incunabula appear in the first book of the text and several of the significant variances are worthy of more attention.

Figure 21: Folio 1r. of Biblioteca Nacional de España MS. 10107, which shares the most similarities with MS. Add. 8586.

The ninth título of the first book holds significant differences between MS. Add. 8586 and the 1487 incunabula. The Cambridge manuscript omits the first four laws of the título and the scribe replaced them with a section not found in the 1487 edition. Cartagena’s own introduction to the título was similarly replaced with a short section. This variance is found in both the Cambridge manuscript and in MS. 10107 and is not found in any other surviving manuscript of the Doctrinal. Both versions of the introduction convey the same message, that men of lineage must defend their lord and aid the king in battle. However, the section copied into both MS. Add. 8586 and MS. 10107 lacks the characteristic eloquence of Alonso de Cartagena’s introductory passages. Moreover, a Biblical reference to David found in the 1487 print edition is entirely missing from the manuscript version. The fourth to sixth laws of the manuscript, which are

---

laws seven to nine in the incunabula, have large sections omitted and replaced with shortened versions. These omissions are similarly shared by MS. 10107. The ninth título of the Doctrinal contains a series of laws taken from the Fuero Juzgo and this section of MS. Add. 8586 and MS. 10107 also differs greatly from the incunabula. Both manuscripts feature a variant reading of the section and a series of laws not present in other copies of the Doctrinal. The addition is taken from título XI of the Fuero Juzgo and forms a scholarly contribution to the text, which adds significant relevant material to the section. The Fuero Juzgo was a work which Cartagena drew on throughout the Doctrinal and it is in keeping with the rest of the text. The added section is indistinguishable from the rest of the text in either manuscript and, for the scribes copying the text, the addition was part of Cartagena’s work. This addition is followed on folios 47r-49r by another large addition, this time from the Ordenamiento de Alcala. This section is again a scholarly contribution from a source which Cartagena used throughout the Doctrinal. It is likely that these additions were either the work of a trained jurist or Alonso de Cartagena himself. It is possible that they reflect changes to the text which Cartagena made himself and hint at varying versions of the Doctrinal. Indeed, given the nature of these additions it is surprising that they are not present in the incunabula.

The final folios of the manuscript include a copy of a letter seemingly copied along with the rest of the Doctrinal by Pedro de Baena. The recipient of the letter is identified as the King of Portugal and the writer as, ‘un natural de su reyno’, who was in Castile. A reference in the opening of the letter to Archbishop de Luna suggests that it was composed prior to his election as Pope Benedict XIII in 1394. King Juan I is identified in the letter as the King of Castile and there are a large number of references to the Battle of Aljubarrota, meaning that it was written prior to Juan’s death in 1390. This suggests that the letter was composed between 1385 and 1390, although the reason for the letter’s inclusion with the text of the Doctrinal remains a mystery.

This short appendix has sought to shed light on MS. Add. 8586 of the Doctrinal de los caballeros, a previously unstudied copy of the work, and argue that it is closely related to MS. 10107. Its presence reveals more about the history of Alonso de Cartagena’s remarkable book of chivalry and adds another name to the list of known owners of the text. Its production in Alcudete, shortly before the first print edition of the work, reveals its continued popularity amongst Castile’s knights. Its differences shed light on the transmission of

---


888 Ibid., fol. 161v. ‘a native of your kingdom’.

889 Ibid., fol. 159v.
the text. A thorough study of the transmission of the *Doctrinal* and the relationship between the surviving manuscripts of the work was beyond the scope of this thesis, but would be greatly beneficial to further study on Cartagena’s work.

Figure 22 (above): Folio 43v. showing the title introducing the addition from the *Fuero Juego*.

Figures 23-27 (overleaf): The letter to the King of Portugal which occupies folios 159r-161v.
El mui peregrino padre acertijo tele
broma me mostró la
ropa de la eternidad
y estos miserables celos ni
malos trabajos. Eso mismo
me hizo la sepultura de
álvarez, ruego que lo adviertas
en esencia te castilla a Dios
oficien y testigos demuestran
que del esta materia me
creo y enseño a viva alc
ad mi parecer. Q bien es
muy excelente el senor
sobre Cosa en altura y poder
Sea una cosa así plena y
divina y dama de hermosa
bella que en ella se adueña
y asesinato todas estas
de esa gloria real. y aco
contándote esa visión y
mas repite seguira. y para
ese mui potro de ser en
seguida en las otras gue
sñas no alcance. y perdudos
es de esta o negro him
pio de pasión. lo acerto me
lor. Se pueda disociar. mismo
españ. es de todos osas
aqui separar. Se de silte a
via y las dos a la ael sem
se y siempre los guia dale
atre y sus a y más gue
pas y estando asistir a
los que y diras. Fin y sus
hay un alma extra viva y
propio sea ganar vida enla
ta y juró que al atisarla
por la senora misa ya en
buna renie algo pecaminos de
rey su padre y es el sudor
á estos cuallos y del
y adon lo mismo y vie más 
recon mi sera. y por acero se
noci no dudo ser su justicia
pro veo y esto y vos llevar
man por estíoñor ella se
el acertijo torcido. y du
y se avenga los aires del
la muerte te siguió y alcanza
rau fiólogo y sucedió aquellos
y asimismo pronto España
y de si y ella publicar esta
senora no tener donde
a los pecaminos castilla a
tray con en mi mi potro y
justicia por nuestra es
presencia y asíoles cuando
colo de mi y sus discursos
señor divulgado alentando
to lejanía el nombre de
el y se siguió dije sin su
renovadieron su
falta en eso consa
lado efecto esta senora no
se haze ad castilla y siguió
to sobre ello pues efiénden
y cono la fallaron
agota legítima subfija a
y quiere juez con el que
Estas vedades muy suyo
...
mos atacás muy antiguas 
et preguntas si él vio sereno
acu gran allí niña en el
que su lecha de ser en
fue donde muer al ser en
no trastilla prensesías te
sólo; pero plegó moco su
que Dios el alto al
ser vía antuelo aquas batir
to y profeso tala otra tel
y por o esté vaico muy
lo este en no más de
mujer tragra vaya allá mula
y de castellanos gentilez
ejúitla notoria así mismo ces
pretenías que los seños de
castilla alba seño del sev
con puedo Perrinmo apra
indo el seño todos el
auto lo pujón en los es
sindientes del seño en em
que su hijo aqua bastazo
y siquiera en la altura en
exemplum modernus acer
vimos el seño en nigla
no pretenças al unir
sí se tel sev en la y vimos
la y pujo pasan absepy
duante quarto al papeél
sio. Como quies o bien
mos o cada en la y doce
estos semejantes otros
ni sonos ni podemos ser
ara jues de sus altas
español telos y sea
jues que Dios geños
ga jues en sus personas
vaciones vemos en las libra
son tejos hijos seguida
medida en sus vemos segui
los seños de seño
vuelven. Así agism en el
libro a la abadía recibo
disde el seño de Dios o
alto puede ser y no.
Que salimos pues muy
excelente pren seño a
el seño con enmig en su
da siento algunos preados
pout tenga Dios teja
en si seco en los de
porer te sus bienes en
esta manera tels los se
jus a serían y estos ca
naillos pruara sejar si
yo apollo y ala esos o
j desterrar le manera seño
los preados prudios
fue pujo en ella am
instaurada la justicia o
es allá por telos pre
es pruara si uno con ne
ligencia o sus seños
úmido en tal conmu
zermana de maná gañes
muchos días y ellos se
yo todo el poena cuanto
vista real tenga con
aro todo esto desterrado
que esa salvo quien esa
al te same entendir qui
no se yu disfue así
esto o via señoria vast
falle y esta guesa así
dese propia y se gran
y
la madrera de la religiosa entra el siglo y se queje de su soledad. Se
parcia de su antigüedad y valor. En su época se considera un
gran centro de estudio y reflexión. Su influencia se extiende
pues sus aulas se llenan de estudiantes y profesores de seminarios
y colegios. Su presencia es fundamental en la formación de
el sacerdocio. En este periodo se ven
los quehaceres de la iglesia a
través del ministerio pastoral. En
el tiempo de su vida, la iglesia
es un lugar de reflexión y
discernimiento. En su tiempo,
la iglesia es un referente
en el mundo del saber
y la cultura. En este
periodo, la iglesia
se ve enfrentada
a diferentes
desafíos. En este
contexto, la
iglesia
es
reflejada
en
el
universo
del
conocimiento
y
del
pensamiento. De este
modo, la iglesia
es un referente
en el
mundo
del
saber
y
da
la
cultura. En
este
periodo,
la
iglesia
es
un
lugar
de
reflexión
y
discernimiento. En
el
tiempo
de
su
vida,
la
iglesia
es
un
gran
templo
de
su
esencia
y
su
importancia.

Esta quiebra se comeñía
la reanudación de la
conversión final. Se
nota la presencia de
la resolución de los
problemas que se
enfrentan en este
momento. La iglesia
se ve enfrentada
a diferentes
desafíos y
retos. En este
contexto, la
iglesia
es
un
referente
en el
mundo del
saber
y
da la
cultura. En
este
periodo, la iglesia
es un lugar de
reflexión y
discernimiento.
En el tiempo de su vida,
la iglesia es un gran
templo de su
esencia y su
importancia.
aquí alguien pero ¿qué tenemos
faste que no tenía para de
pensar. Sí, lloraba, acerca dicha
sobrestabilidad, abría sobrina no
puede ser tétrico más que
la regia teología obrar en
los matrimonios de dientes
mundo o sos sos y latam
da as y ama lega la siete
ta ve tos nietas ve a vez
real persona contamos mucho
alas ventanas y siento que
ella por otro el mundo está di
mugrado de ser es mismo
sí, en algunos de uso, no
so no ha cuidado abija al
respalda gentes escasas
güeña se extiende en la
disiplina militar y las
o n que tal cual se que
el ego me tiene y no se una
to que tiendo aqivos y o
nos vose siméticos y seguir
este me parece que era tomar
a los castellanos por so pena
dor tres tiempos y señor
m a tal grado teología
gente e incluso tomar casos
de teología y soy misterio
no telos hachen simiente
teste trato y los dan en la
disordia telos cualidades y
gentes del como si fuese im
posible peculiar y todos e
tos contra vos y contra
vuestros gentes podemos tratar
qué el esto no ve es grego
y el lo ve y no lo digo y si
guardia señor no sean esto
tos que no seguir la
muy más se
hasta la voluntad de su par
loa mucha y para
mi alejo v muy poderoso
señor antes y con que
to ser contemplt ser que mi
do much la entrada de
múltiples gueña que no pueda
to puede pasar. Sí, tal se
no sino como los cañones
ta forma seco en los
que son tan varios xcluso
los que están hechos y
grientes no solo tiene como
ta con grandes y madura de
liberación y cosas muy barras
y actúa en pasadizos que
muy poderoso señor de
a demanda ser una
yo encajar con ones pasadizos
pe o trayendo pasando
bien proceso justo relático
y derrame el mismo sin
que se engrase de su manera
real si no han trono de
se parte y puede se si en
da cometer laguna o sin
proteger esto vemos gueña
ys inclinado afasoter.

En su parte de doble dirigía
da, ahora temporal por
un natural se uno trae con
una entrada cuando estos
tramos en castilla.
Bibliography

*Primary (Unpublished)*

Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 8586. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.


Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/100. ‘Caída de príncipes’.

Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/1341. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza (fragment)’.

Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/2078. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/2105. ‘Libro de montería’.

Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Real MS. II/2906. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 27. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1159. ‘Avisación de la dignidad real’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1341. ‘Exortación de la pas’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1341. ‘Tratado llamado espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 1997. ‘Viage del mundo con las armas de todos los reynos.’

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6605. ‘Árbol de Batallas’.
Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6607. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 6609. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 7099. ‘Tractado de las armas.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 7558. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9178. ‘Memoriale virtutum’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9208. ‘Epistula directa ad inclitum et magnificum virum dominum Petrum Fernandi de Velasco’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9216. ‘Tratados morales, libro de la consolacion de España’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9224. ‘Seguro de Tordesillas’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9263. ‘Tractatus de exortacione et comendacione Pacis’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9750. ‘Amors de Curial e Güelfa’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9985. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 10107. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 10186. ‘La divina comedia’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 10212. ‘Leonardo de Areco en romance’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12672. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.
Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12672. ‘Preface en respuesta de una cuestión fecha entre dos cavalleros del Rey de Castilla’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12690. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12701. ‘Tratado de la nobleza e fidalguía (fragment)’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12743. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 12796. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 17803. ‘Dichos de Séneca en el hecho de la caballería de Roma’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. Res/27. ‘Copias de cartas de batallas y textos del siglo xv’.

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 9211. ‘Inventario de la Hospital de la Vera Cruz’.

Madrid, Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, MS. INV. 15526. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros y Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, MS. 9/211. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, MS. 9-5-2/712. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’

New York, Hispanic Society of America, MS. HC 397/762. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza’.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nacional de France, MS. Arsenal 4790. ‘Le grand armorial équestre de la Toison d’Or’.


Prague, Praha Národní Archiv, MS. Augustiniánský Fond: 444 I E 7. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria de Salamanca MS. 1767. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS. f-III 17. ‘Alfonsi de Cartagena episcopi Burgensis secundum binarium duodenarii’.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS. h-III-4. ‘Doctrinal de los caballeros’.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS. h-III-11. ‘Memorial de virtudes’.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS. N-I-13. ‘Espejo de verdadera nobleza (fragment)’.

Seville, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla MS. 332/145-149. ‘Biblia Sagrada, escritura glosada por Nicholas de Lyra’.

Primary (Published)


Carrillo de Huete, Pedro. *Crónica del balconero de Juan II. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, estudio preliminar por Rafael Beltrán*, edited by Juan de Mata Carriazo. (Madrid, 1946).


Cartagena, Alonso de. *Libros de Tulio; De Senetute; De los oficios*, edición, prólogo y notas de María Morrás, edited by María Morrás. (Madrid, 1996).


Cartagena, Alonso de. ‘Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la questión fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana’. In, *Obras completas: Íñigo


Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, maestre de Santiago. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo, edited by Juan de Mata Carriazo. Colección de crónicas españolas, 2, (Madrid, 1940).


López de Mendoza, Íñigo. ‘Questió fecha por el noble e magnifico señor don Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana e el Conde del Real, al muy sabio e noble perlado don Alonso de Cartagena, Obispo de Burgos’. In, Obras completas: Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana. Edición, introducción y notas de Ángel Gómez Moreno y Maximilian P. A. M. Kerkhof, edited by Ángel Gómez Moreno and Maximillian P. A. M. Kerkhof, pp. 414-417. (Madrid, 1988).


Mena, Juan de. ‘La coronación del Marqués de Santillana’. In, Obras completas: Edición, introducción y notas de Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego, edited by Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego. pp. 105-208. (Barcelona, 1989).

Mena, Juan de. ‘Laberinto de Fortuna’. In, Obras completas: Edición, introducción y notas de Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego, edited by Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego, pp. 209-283. (Barcelona, 1989).

Muntaner, Ramon. ‘Crònica de Ramon Muntaner’. In, Les Quatre Grans Cròniques: Revisió del text, pròlegs i notes per Ferran Soldevila, edited by Ferran Soldevila, pp. 665-1000. (Barcelona, 1971).


Valera, Diego de. ‘Epístola que mosén Diego de Valera enbió al serenissimo príncipe don Juan, el segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla e en León, estando su Altesa en Avila el año de cuarenta e uno, ante que la villa de Medina del Canpo se entrase por el rey de Navarra e por el Infante Don Enrique’. In, *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV. Edición y estudio preliminar de D. Mario Penna*, edited by Mario Penna. Vol. 116, Biblioteca de autores españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días, pp. 3-5. (Madrid, 1959).


*Secondary Works*


Accorsi, Federica. ‘‘El Espejo de verdadera nobleza y la cuestión de los conversos’’. In, *Mosén Diego de Valera entre las armas y las letras*, edited by Cristina Moya García, pp. 21-52. (Woodbridge, 2014).


Bothwell, J. S. *Falling from Grace: Reversal of Fortune and the English Nobility, 1075-1455*. (Manchester, 2008).


Cantera Burgos, Francisco. *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos: Historia de la Judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios*. (Madrid, 1952).


Fallows, Noel. Jousting in Medieval and Renaissance Iberia. (Woodbridge, 2010).


http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/2172/1/Lawrance_Cartagena_on_the_affair_of_the_Canaries.pdf.


Marinis, Tammaro de. La biblioteca napoletana dei re d’Aragona. 4 Vols. (Milan, 1947).


Rodríguez-Velasco, Jesús D. *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*. (Valladolid, 1996).

Rodríguez-Velasco, Jesús D. *Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile*, translated by Eunice Rodríguez Ferguson. (Oxford, 2010).


Rosenstock, Bruce. ‘Against the Pagans: Alonso de Cartagena, Francisco Vitoria, and Converso Political Theology’. In, *Marginal Voices: Studies in the Confraternity Literature of Medieval and


Schiff, Mario. La Bibliothèque du Marquis de Santillane. (Paris, 1905).


Taylor, Craig. *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*. (Cambridge, 2013).

Taylor, Craig. ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare During the Hundred Years War’. In, *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen*, edited by Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman, (Woodbridge, 2009): pp.64–84.


