

**Humanist Networks and Keepers of Ancient Wisdom: Hermes Trimegistus in Medieval
and Early Modern Spain**

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Abstract	vi
Introduction	1
 Chapter I. From the Time Hermes Came to Hispania to the “Multicultural” Humanism of Alfonso X	
Introduction.....	9
<i>Praestigium vero Mercurius primus dicitur invenisse</i> . Heresy and Magic: Hermes in Visigothic Hispania.....	13
Isidore	20
The Early Development of Hermetic Knowledge in al-Andalus.....	25
Concealment and Secrecy in Andalusī Bāṭinism during the 10 th Century.....	34
Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurtubī, Author of the <i>Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm</i> (the Latin <i>Picatrix</i>).....	36
Medieval Networks of Translators and Hermes Trimegistus	42
Hugo de Santalla in Tarazona, a Node in the 12 th Century Network of Hermetic Scholars.....	46
The Medieval Humanism of Alfonso the Wise and Hermes Trimegistus	54
Hermes as the Model of Courtier Inspired in the <i>Adab</i>	61
Alfonsine Magic. Hermes and the Sciences beyond the <i>Trivium</i> and the <i>Quadrivium</i>	63
Unveiling Hermes	68
Conclusion	70
 Chapter II. Jiménez Patón, his Network, and the Spanish Early Modern Republic of Letters	
Introduction.....	73
An Unexpected Advocate of Hermes Trimegistus in the Spanish Baroque	75
The Lover of Wisdom.....	78
Early Steps in the Path of Wisdom	80
An Exemplary Master in the Court of Wisdom	85
The Beloved and Pious Teacher	90
Patón’s Network and the Spanish Seventeenth-Century Republic of Letters.....	92
Rigorous Catholics vs. Hermetic Utopians. Patón’s Censorship of Thomas More’s Translation	101
Alonso de Barros’ <i>Moral Proverbs</i> and Patón’ <i>Heraclitus</i>	112
Conclusion	118
 Chapter III. <i>Studia humanitatis</i> and the <i>Mercurius Trimegistus</i>: Patón’s works as The endeavors of a late humanist	

Introduction.....	120
Patón’s Works as a Humanist’s Endeavors	121
Baltasar de Céspedes’ <i>The Humanist</i>	124
Patón and his “Knowledge of Things”.....	127
The Action of Things: Patón’s Activities as a Humanist.....	130
Patón’s Rhetoric and the Model of orator for Humanism.....	132
How to be a Good Orator in Spanish. Patón’s <i>Spanish Eloquence in Art</i> (<i>Eloquencia española en arte</i>)	135
The Disciplines of <i>Language</i> in the Rest of Patón’s Production	138
Céspedes’ <i>Instrument of both Knowledge and Action of Things</i> as Patón’s <i>Necessary</i> <i>Instrument to Acquire all Sciences and Arts</i>	139
Human Letters as Pagan Sciences.....	145
Patón’s Moralistic Last Works and the Waning of Non-Christian Culture in Late Humanism	146
Occult Knowledge and the Boundaries of Wisdom according to Patón.....	151
Publishing and Marketing <i>Mercurius Trimegistus</i>	161
About the Title <i>Mercurius Trimegistus</i>	166
Conclusion	177

Chapter IV. *Ingressi salutis viam*: Neo-scholastic Thought and the Christian Salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus

PART I. The Answer of Patón to Fray Esteban and the “Problem of Paganism”	
Introduction.....	180
The “Problem of Paganism” in Early Modern Spain.....	182
Patón’s <i>Mercurius Trimegistus</i> under Suspicion	184
Fray Esteban’s Scolding Notes and the <i>Answer</i> of Patón.....	188
The Genre of Patón’s <i>Answer</i>	189
The Big Doctrinal Challenge	191
An Open Catholic View on Pagans	192
The Church Fathers, Lactantius, and the Early Association of Hermes with the Sibyls.....	195
A Biased Interpretation of Augustine	200
Aquinas on the Salvation of Pagans.....	205
Conclusion	209
PART II. Ancient and New Pagans in Salamanca’s Neo-Scholastic Theology	
Introduction.....	210
Patón’s Main Authority on Pagans: Domingo de Soto.....	212
Bartolomé de Las Casas and the intellectual setting of the Valladolid Debate	219
The Intellectual Outcome of the Valladolid Debate on Paganism: <i>An Apologetic</i> <i>Summarized History</i>	222
Conclusion	232
PART III. Proving the Salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus	
Introduction.....	234
Mercurius’ Idolatry in the <i>Asclepius</i> and Ficino’s Relevance for Patón: a Reassessment.....	237
Patón’s Sources and the Sphere of Late Humanism	247

Hermes and the Holy Trinity	251
Hermes Trimegistus and Jesus' Eternal Generation, Incarnation, and Last Supper ..	259
Back to the Prologue and Aquinas: Patón Closes his Argument in the <i>Answer</i> on Trimegistus' Salvation	271
Conclusion	278
Chapter V. The Final Christianization of Hermes. A Convenient Solution to the Problem of Paganism in the Neostoic Era.	
Introduction.....	282
The Path towards a Neostoic Christian Philosophy: from the Church Fathers to Lipsius.....	284
Neostoicism and Late Humanism	287
How Neostoic Philosophy Reached Patón, the Admirer of Seneca.....	289
Patón and the Spanish Neostoic Network.....	295
The Neostoic Sage in Other Contemporary Spanish Golden Age Writers.....	311
Hermes as a Neostoic Sage in Patón's Sources in the <i>Answer</i>	317
Conclusion	324
Conclusion	326
Works Cited	330

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how Hermes Trimegistus, legendary sage and author associated with the pagan god Mercury, came to be seen as a cultural mediator for learned men of different religious traditions in medieval and early modern Spain. Through this figure, who represented the ideal teacher and philosophical mentor to many pre-modern thinkers and writers, it explores the role of non-Christian culture in the growth of Christian literature and philosophy in Spain. Studies of this period have tended to focus either on the “three cultures” (coexistence, cultural exchange, polemics), or on the reception of the Classical tradition. This project shows that various themes and topics of Late Antiquity lay behind Jewish, Muslim, and Christian cultures alike, and thus served both as a cohesive factor among them and as a controversial influence within the particular orthodoxies of each of them. After explaining how the cultural, political, and religious circumstances of early modern Spain determined the reception and understanding of Hermes, this dissertation centers on a lesser-known but increasingly studied figure of Spanish Golden Age literature: Bartolomé Jiménez Patón (1569-1640).

Jiménez Patón is the center of this project because he not only wrote the most complete treatise about Hermes Trimegistus of his time (what can be called the *Answer*, a short text included in his rhetorical treatise *Mercurius Trimegistus*), but also because he had a well-established network which connected him with the most important writers, erudite men, and even celebrities of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain. Since Patón was able to publicize his work about Trimegistus through his extended network, the *Answer* is a starting point to show what Mercurius (Hermes) Trimegistus, the ancient God or wise pagan man, meant for the Christian scholarship of renaissance and baroque Spain. This study also examines how in the same way that the philosophical background of the Hermetic writings in Antiquity was a mixture of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, in the Late Humanism represented by Jiménez Patón there is an equally eclectic reception of all three of them. Those three schools of philosophy reinterpreted in the early modern period, and the controversies with Christian dogma associated with them and Trimegistus, are the nucleus of the last chapters. They show how Hermes’s place in each one of these trends of thought was epitomized by Patón’s treatise. The *Answer* is analyzed as referential of its contemporary culture, allowing Spanish early modern scholars to be situated in a wider struggle over the status and survival of all non-Christian culture in Europe.

INTRODUCTION

In 1621 the Latin and Rhetoric teacher Jiménez Patón published the most important work of his life and called it *Mercurius Trimegistus*. Jiménez Patón was a very religious man, to the extent that during the last decades of his life he also eagerly collaborated with the Spanish Inquisition, and published books in which he defended not only the institution, but also its most radical ideas about morals and how to treat the non-Christian elements of society. However, when Patón had to pick a title for the book that would consecrate him as a specialist in rhetoric, he chose to do it under the advocacy of a suspicious pagan figure, who had been associated with questionable practices like astrology, alchemy, and magic. And not just that, in the Prologue and one of the appendices which Patón finally included in the book, he defended his choice and also made problematic assertions about Mercurius Trimegistus; for instance, that he had been a Christian, he had been saved as such, and he also had been the inventor of all Rhetorics, including the sacred one used by preachers in the Church, not to mention in the *Bible* itself. In addition, the also exceedingly patriotic Patón affirmed that Mercurius Trimegistus had been a Spaniard. In short, according to Patón, a respected figure in 17th century literary and academic circles of Spain, Mercurius Trimegistus had been a Christian many centuries before Christ was born, and also a Spaniard back much before the Catholic Kings formed Spain by unifying their kingdoms in 1492.

In this work, I am going to answer the pressing question of why Patón devoted his book to the ancient sage Mercurius Trimegistus (or Trismegistus),¹ consider the inevitable tensions it provoked, and ask what this figure represented to the world in which Patón worked, wrote, and exchanged ideas with other Spanish learned men. My answers will be inextricably linked to Patón's relationship with the humanistic movement. Patón was a major figure of Late Humanism, that is, the Humanism after the year 1600 and just before the definitive vanishing of the movement.

¹ In ancient sources, Hermes's cognomen appears both ways. Although Trismegistus is more common in both primary and secondary sources today, in this work I will use "Trimegistus" since Patón, the center of my research, is doing the same.

In fact, for specialists such as Madroñal, Patón was the most representative among the late humanists, and embodied all the characteristics of this label. I am going to show how Mercurius Trimegistus had been associated with the humanist movement in the Iberian Peninsula for a long time, in particular, since what has been called the medieval Humanism or pre-Humanism of the 13th century—personified by the king Alfonso X in the same way that Patón represents Late humanism. For both the pre-humanist Alfonso the Wise and the late humanist Patón, Hermes was an example of the wise man of their respective times. To create the image of Hermes as an exemplary sage, both took into consideration two of the main currents of thought of their times: Neosticism and Arab *adab*, respectively.

In Spain, Humanism experienced deep changes throughout its three main phases: pre-Humanism in the Middle Ages, Italianate Humanism in the Renaissance, and late Humanism in the baroque period. Therefore, Mercurius Trimegistus had to change as well, not a difficult task for someone who had been a God associated with movement, instability, and change, in one word, ‘mercurial.’ Inasmuch as Humanism changed, Mercurius changed as well. Not only that, Mercurius’s changes in Spain were deeper than in any other place because, as we will see, he ‘was brought’ from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Iberian Peninsula upon the downfall of Antiquity and the beginning of the Christian Middle Ages; and he was brought again from the Arabic translation of Greek and Syriac works in the Abbasid Baghdad to the apogee of the Muslim Caliphate of Cordoba. Then from the cultural developments of the Caliphate, Hermes was transferred to the Christian kingdoms in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, where learned men once again translated and interpreted the Egyptian sage and his works—thus Hermes, the interpreter and translator of the Gods, was translated over and over again during his sojourn in the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, in the same way that the Abbasid Near East translated Hermes from Greek and Syriac works and projected him to all the Arab world, when the Christian erudite men of Castile and Aragon translated these Arab works on Hermes, they attracted other learned men from the rest of Europe, who in many cases learned Arabic just to collaborate in the translation process.

In this way, the translation movement which took place in the Iberian Peninsula launched Hermes’s wisdom to the so called 12th century Renaissance and then to the cultural splendor of the late Middle Ages, when important thinkers like Abelard and Aquinas made Hermes part of their intellectual works and achievements. My work is not strictly dedicated to the works allegedly

written by Hermes Trimegistus, but to the figure of Hermes Trimegistus himself, the defenders he found during this time, and what he represented in different stages of the cultural and intellectual history of the Iberian Peninsula. As a consequence of the processes that I examine, I argue that Hermes came to be seen as a cultural mediator for learned men of different religious traditions in medieval and early modern Spain. Through this figure, who represented the ideal teacher and philosophical mentor to many pre-modern thinkers and writers, I explore the role of non-Christian culture in the growth of Christian literature and philosophy in Spain, especially inside the humanist movement. To understand Hermes's admirers in the Middle Ages I will draw on contributions from Network theory which, as I will explain, is particularly useful to understand 'horizontal' organizations of learned men in interconnected nodes, and also their relationship with 'vertical' and more hierarchized social and political powers.

After an overview of medieval precedents and Hermes's evolution, the focus of my insight into Hermes's role in early modern Spain is a small work by Patón, barely 21 pages, that I will call the *Answer*. It is included as a paratext in a much larger work, entitled *Mercurius Trimegistus* (about 630 pages). Despite its brevity, we can consider the *Answer* as the most complete treatise about Hermes Trimegistus by a Spanish Golden Age scholar. With this work, Patón put Hermes again in the Spanish philosophical and intellectual mainstream. Some writers in Patón's network—among them some of the most important of the period: Lope de Vega, Quevedo, etc.—notably included Hermes in their books, and with the scholarly nuances with which Patón had characterized the Egyptian and his legacy.

The *Answer* mentions directly or indirectly all major currents of thought in the Renaissance and the Baroque, and shows the pervasive presence of Hermes in them. It allows us to understand the classical and contemporary sources on Hermes that really mattered, as well as the true role of the ancient philosopher in the 17th century, which rendered him not at all a minor authority. In brief, the *Answer* lets us know what Mercurius Trimegistus, the ancient God or wise pagan man, meant for the Christian scholarship of baroque Spain. Consequently, Patón's choices of authorities and his arguments about them can be considered as a rough view of what Hermes embodied for the last "old school" Humanism of Europe and Spain in the early modern period. Moreover, the *Answer* gives us an important clue as to how to accommodate an ancient pagan sage and his legacy in Catholic Spain during the Baroque period. Thus, through the lens of Hermes Trimegistus, still considered a marginal figure or merely a footnote by most modern scholars, the *Answer* provides

us with a fresh overview of the Spanish and European intellectual *milieu* of the 16th and 17th centuries.

In my search for Hermes, I will also examine the entire intellectual context of the period, including both famous and forgotten writers, rare works, and canonical ones. Less studied passages about Hermes appear in undisputed canonical masterpieces of Spanish literature; consequently, they will bring out Hermes's presence, prominence, and significance. It is possible to address and understand all of these traces by using Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and the *Answer* included in it as starting points. This is possible because Patón's framework is also the one of the Spanish Golden Age literature, and the huge intellectual and political domain in which it circulated. In his own travels through this domain, Patón found Hermes and revered him from his own deep Catholic faith. It could not be any different, since Hermes also epitomized the ancient Wisdom that Patón had contributed to preserving and even improving throughout all his life.

Modern scholars have defined the philosophical background of the *Hermetica* and Hermetic writings² as a mixture of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, which were the leading currents in the syncretic environment of the Hellenistic period.³ In the Late Humanism represented by Jiménez Patón, we will find an eclectic reception of the Philosophy of Late Antiquity, in which those three important schools of philosophy were reinterpreted. First, there was Neo-Scholastic philosophy, which was a successful Spanish adaptation of Aristotelian-Scholastic thought in the sixteenth century. Scholasticism had developed in French universities after the late medieval reception of Greek philosophy translated from Arabic (especially Aristotle), and in the sixteenth century, some Spaniards who had studied in Paris brought to their country this school as the followers of Thomas Aquinas had interpreted it. They elaborated a Neo-Scholastic philosophical curriculum in the University of Salamanca, the most brilliant Academy of the period. A second current was Renaissance Neoplatonism, which blossomed in Italy with figures such as Marsilio Ficino, who translated both the entire Platonic corpus, lost during the Middle Ages, and many Neoplatonic philosophers. Ficino and other relevant figures (Pico della Mirandola, Agostino

² They were written in II-III centuries CE and attributed to Hermes Trimegistus

³ Late Antiquity Greek philosophy, although still had specific representatives of the three main schools, was a mixture of Aristotelianism, Platonism and Stoicism. That is why these three currents, along with Egyptian and Near Eastern elements (including Christianity, Judaism and Gnosticism) can be found in the Hermetic writings. This blending has been pointed out by the main specialists of the *Hermetica* as Festugière (1951b: 486), Yates (1964: 4), or Copenhaver (2000: liv)

Steuco, Annio de Vitervo), updated and renamed in this Neoplatonic lore the Late Antiquity concept of *philosophia perennnis*. Neoplatonism reached Spain in the sixteenth century, and became the main current of thought and esthetic influence among leading writers and intellectuals (Garcilaso, Herrera, Cervantes), especially outside the official Academic institutions (where Aristotelian Neo-Scholasticism ruled). The third current, Neostoicism, appeared in Northern Europe when the Platonic and Aristotelian school were no longer able to serve the philosophical and ethical needs of learned men distraught by religious wars. When the Neostoic thought of Justus Lipsius arrived in Spain, it became a pervasive influence on prominent writers and theorists like Quevedo, Gracián, or Saavedra Fajardo. In these three philosophical movements, already present when he appeared for the first time, Hermes Trimegistus found again his niche, and in the case of Neoplatonic *philosophia perennnis*, he occupied a central place.

Thanks to Patón's writing, using logical reasoning with Aristotelian roots from the Neoscholastics, Hermes was saved from damnation; then he was Christianized and transformed into a Stoic sage through Neostoic philosophy; finally, he was placed in the center of the Ancient wisdom's chain of transmission known as *philosophia perennis* or *prisca theologia*, developed by Middle and Neoplatonist philosophers and updated in the Renaissance. All these renewed threads of thinking were interwoven in early modern Spain, but especially in the late humanist period after 1600, characterized as much by its eclecticism as by the Late Antiquity in which Hermes Trimegistus had been born. Jiménez Patón knew this and so was able to defend Hermes with all the argumentative weapons and authorities that the three most important currents of thought of his time provided.

This *Answer* by Jiménez Patón will also allow me to demonstrate how the importance of Hermes in the Spanish baroque period is greater than scholarship usually acknowledges, and his intellectual roots broader. Considering that recent works have defended the relevance of Marcilio Ficino's translations and treatises in the diffusion of Hermetic ideas in Spain⁴, it is necessary both to consider Hermes's place in the *zeitgeist* of 17th century Spanish, and to take fuller stock of the premodern background of Hermes's revival. According to Jiménez Patón's *Answer*, the ideas of the Church Fathers and Christian Theologians about Hermes appear to be more important for Hermes's picture than Ficino and his translations of the *Hermetica*. This influence places Patón in the European Christian Hermetism current that I will introduce later. Patón gathers together a huge

⁴ See Byrne (2015).

variety of ideas and beliefs from the ancient, medieval and renaissance Christian and Catholic tradition. From the beginning of Christendom, these ideas had to challenge the increasing antagonism against any integration of pagan and other religions' cultural achievements in the Christian lore. I argue that Jiménez Patón was able to allow Hermes to continue exerting his cultural-broker function between different peoples as late as 1621. In this way, Hermes still allowed his supporters to cross cultural, temporal, and religious boundaries.

Nevertheless, because of Hermes's protean nature, Jiménez Patón does not limit himself simply to gathering ancient and contemporary quotations to justify his defense. Rather, the Neostoicism developed by Justus Lipsius and some of his followers allowed and bore with it a process of Christianization of ancient pagan wise men as had never been seen before. This renewed Spanish popularity of Hermes came about in a moment in which erudite Protestants such as Casaubon chagened Hermes's credibility, arguing that he was neither as ancient as they thought nor as close to Christianity.⁵ Contrary to this, in Spain Hermes not only continued to be judged as an ancient theologian and pre-Christian wise man among treatise writers and erudite men, but also appeared even more in literary books of important writers such as Lope de Vega or Quevedo. These assumptions granted Hermes an uncontested popularity for decades in Spain, allowing him and what he represented to coexist with the pivotal times of the Scientific Revolution. This survival of Hermes in different European nations during the 17th century has been studied by experts in the field,⁶ but not once in Spain. Equally so, the problem of paganism and the salvation of pagans—pressing question, as we will see, among prominent thinkers and writers of the Spanish Golden Age—has never had a specific monograph either (or even a paper that I could find). Through the small but important, comprehensively written and well-placed work of Patón I will reconstruct that story.

But before I start my travel just in the border between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Hispania in the first chapter, I will briefly introduce Hermes Trimegistus. I will provide much more information throughout this work—especially from the perspective of Spanish pre-modern

⁵ See Grafton (1983).

⁶ For instance, Walker (1972 194 & ss) mentions the Cambridge school of Platonists or the French Jesuits in China as the last defenders of the tradition of Platonic Christianity based on the Ancient Theology. Moreschini (2012) has studied the Christian Hermetism from its Ancient beginnings to the last modern manifestations.

writers.⁷ To begin, Trimegistus was the clearest symbol of the religious syncretic movement in the Hellenistic world when the Greek god Hermes was assimilated with the Egyptian god Theuth or Thoth. Precisely because of this syncretism, he continued being present in many different religious traditions, converted to an ancient theologian, or remembered as the founder of disciplines of magic, rhetoric or writing—of which formerly both Hermes and Thoth had been gods. Probably just decades after Alexander’s conquest of Egypt in 331BCE, writings attributed to Hermes started to appear in the Near East, and many more circulated until the end of Antiquity. The writings attributed to Hermes are referred to *Hermetica*, and usually two kinds are distinguished: the philosophical and the technical *Hermetica*. The technical *Hermetica* was the first to appear and is associated with arts such as magic, astrology, and alchemy. There existed both short compositions or charm recipes—for instance in the famous magical papyri—and long treatises on alchemy or astrology, whose invention was frequently attributed to Hermes himself. The philosophical *Hermetica* appeared in Egypt in the 2nd to 3rd centuries, and it deals with philosophical and spiritual teachings about salvation or the attainment of true wisdom.

The philosophical *Hermetica* has influences from the main Greek philosophical currents—Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism—, and from the Christian, Jewish, and Near Eastern religions—specially the Egyptian one. The philosophical *Hermetica* used previous ideas such as the universal sympathy among all things, the existence of fate or destiny, and the influence of the stars, expressed through concepts like the *microcosm/macrocosm* which I will explain later. In addition, the *Hermetica* is more or less monotheistic (compatible with many spiritual beings). For this reason, from the Church Fathers until now many Christian thinkers have been fascinated with the *Hermetica*, and consider it part of a universal truth. The two main preserved works of philosophical *Hermetica* are the Latin *Asclepius*, a version of a Greek original called *logos teleios*, and the *Corpus Hermeticum* a collection of eighteen treatises compiled in medieval Byzantium and translated in the early modern period by Marsilio Ficino.

However, my research is not about the *Hermetica*, but about the figure of Hermes Trimegistus himself and how he was interpreted by Spanish authors from the Middle Ages to the baroque period, especially within Humanism. I will offer a portrait of Hermes according to his

⁷ For further information on Hermes I refer to the bibliography, and especially to contributions of authors such as Kristeller, Yates, Faivre, Festugière, Fowden, Garin, Hanegraaff, Lucentini, Newman, van den Broek, Walbridge, and Walker.

defenders or the “keepers of ancient wisdom” who were dedicated to the old god, I will examine how his figure favored a process of negotiation and translation between pagan culture and the Monotheistic religions—and then between Christian and non-Christian culture—and I will detail the changes that the old interpreter of the gods had to undertake to participate in those processes. Through this description of Hermes, I will offer different portraits of his defenders and their motivations. In short, by discussing why Jiménez Patón entitled his main work *Mercurius Trimegistus* and spiritedly defended his choice, I will offer some answers on why Hermes Trismegistus was such a popular figure in Spain from the Visigothic times all the way to the baroque period. Finally, I will provide a deeper explanation of why the ancient deity continued breaking down barriers between cultures and religions for such a long time.

CHAPTER I

From the Time Hermes Came to Hispania to the “Multicultural” Humanism of Alfonso X

Introduction

In this chapter I show how the figure of Hermes Trimegistus was transmitted to the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages first through contacts with the Near East and then by means of scientific and esoteric Arabic texts that reworked and updated classical knowledge and its Near Eastern influences. By explaining how Hermes came, evolved, and found advocates in significant figures of the three Monotheistic religions (Maslama al-Qurṭubī, Hugo de Santalla, Alfonso X, or Ibn Ezra) I demonstrate how Hermes was closely related to both the translation movement and the medieval humanism of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I also emphasize how through these translations, which took place in Aragon and Castile, Hermes was projected from the Iberian Peninsula and came to achieve an enduring presence in the Western World.

As we saw in the introduction, the *Hermetica* appeared in a context of Middle and Neo-Platonist thought—the culturally Hellenistic Near East of the 2nd–4th centuries. With much fewer books available—scarce remainders from Antiquity—Neoplatonic and Hermetic thought regained their former importance in 12th century Europe, especially through the School of Chartres, which soon reached the peninsular kingdoms through religious and political contact with France, not to mention the *Camino de Santiago* (pilgrimage road to Compostela). If the Iberian Peninsula first benefited from the culture of Northern Europe, soon scholars from France, Germany, and England found much bigger sources of knowledge in the south of Spain.

The Platonic influence of Chartres coincided in time with the consequences of the Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba in Muslim Spain or al-Andalus. The Iberian Peninsula had been occupied by Muslim conquerors in the year 711, who defeated the Visigothic kingdom which had been established at the end of the Roman empire. After one century of instability, wars with the resistant Christian kingdoms in the North, and cultural poverty, the rulers of the Muslim emirate decided to imitate the cultural splendor of Baghdad and began importing customs, books, and scholars.

Among those books imported to al-Andalus were those attributed to Hermes, and among the scholars who came there were some from Ḥarrān, the mysterious city (located in what is today southwestern Turkey) of star worshipers who had Hermes as their prophet. In the 10th century al-Andalus rivaled the Abbasid Baghdad and the emirate was substituted by the Caliphate of Córdoba (929). At that point, the number of books in the libraries of Córdoba exceeded that of the rest of the libraries in Europe together. But the glory did not last much. After a civil war the Caliphate disappeared (1031) and was divided into various independent Muslim-ruled principalities, the *ṭā'ifa* kingdoms. The now weaker *ṭā'ifa* kingdoms soon fell into the hands of Christian kingdoms, and with them, their libraries—substantively, the *Ṭā'ifa* of Toledo in 1085, which had a double symbolic meaning: Toledo had been the capital of the ‘lost’ Visigothic kingdom, and its libraries amassed part of the former richness of al-Andalus.

Most of the cultural production of al-Andalus was available first to peninsular learned men, and then to erudite scholars from Europe, who came with the promise of new and endless sources of knowledge. With a handful of books from Antiquity, the European scholars who formed the Platonic school of Chartres had developed scientific and cosmological ideas partly inspired by Hermetic thought and the figure of Hermes himself—present, for instance in the work of a Hispanic scholar from Visigothic times, Isidore of Seville. Suddenly, the libraries of al-Andalus were available, and with them countless new Hermetic and Neoplatonic inspired books attributed to Hermes or first written by Near Eastern scholars and then by Andalusian ones.

That Platonic and Hermetic thought from the school of Chartres served as breeding ground not only for new translations, but also for the creation of original European books inspired by them. When vernacular languages started to substitute Latin and became languages of culture, the Latin Hermes or Mercurius experienced a new transformation, similar to the one that brought him from the Hellenistic culture and Greek language to the Roman and Latin milieu in Late Antiquity; therefore, in the 13th century, stories about Hermes and his wisdom were written, for instance, in Spanish, and included in the heart of enormous cultural projects such as the one promoted by the Castilian king Alfonso X the Wise. Alfonso X’s collaborators included Christian, Jewish, and Muslim learned men, and actually the intellectual publications they made are only the tip of the iceberg of the intellectual networks and the cultural exchange between the three Abrahamic religions that took place in the Iberian Peninsula. Alfonso created a pre-Humanism, which shared many things with the later Italianized one, but he surpassed it in cultural sources and scientific

ambitions. I suggest that this pre-Humanism was favored and enhanced by the figure of Hermes Trimegistus as a cultural mediator who stirred the passion for knowledge in men who were of different religions but who shared common intellectual goals.

For these reasons, Alfonso X's cultural production will be my central object of study to determine the rank of Hermes Trimegistus in medieval Iberia. The main work I am going to refer to, the *Picatrix*, is not among the most commented by specialists of Alfonso X, however, it is clear that the Castilian king put an extraordinary interest in a book famous as recipient of occult and forbidden knowledge not only in Al-Andalus, but also in other Arab countries and even the Near and Far East.

According to most scholars—from Ibn Khaldun until now, the *Picatrix* is the most important book of magic in the Middle Ages, and arguably in any period. What we now know by the name *Picatrix*, was actually a Castilian and then Latin translation of a work by an Andalusian author entitled *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm (The Aim of the Sage)*. For the purposes of my research, the most important features of this book are two: on the one hand, the *Picatrix's* equal importance not only in the Arab and Christian cultures, but also in the Jewish one, which made its own translation of the book into Hebrew—in addition, the translator of the *Picatrix* into Spanish and Latin was also a Jew; on the other hand, the *Picatrix* shows a pervasive presence of Hermes Trimegistus, books attributed to him, and the late antiquity Hermetic and Middle-Neoplatonic thought in which the legends of Hermes were born.

The *Picatrix* is actually a surprising amalgam of very different magical, divinatory, and occultist traditions from Arabia, Persia, Egypt, Babylon, Syria or India, which led many scholars to think that it is a mere receptacle of whatever books of magic its author was able to include. Nonetheless, I sustain that there is a principle guiding the order of all its components, and that principle is precisely the Platonic traditions which characterized the Hellenistic eclecticism where Hermes Trimegistus was born. Once again, learned men conceived an “Oriental Plato,”⁸ and interpreted Plato's *Dialogues* as the revelation of ancient cultures to which the Athenian philosopher had had access in his travels. In the same way as Middle and Neoplatonic philosophers like Numenius, Iamblichus or Proclus valued or incorporated eastern traditions in their works and praised Hermes Trimegistus as the epitome of all of them, Arab philosophers embraced older and foreign traditions (Indian, Sasanid) as receptacles of the ancient Wisdom they were looking for.

⁸ Defined by Walbridge (*The Wisdom of the Mystic East* 17)

This Platonic and Hermetic revival is not surprising per se. It is good to remember that, when the Arab translation movement reached its zenith in the 9th-10th centuries in the Baghdad of the Abbasids, the Greek culture it received was not that of Classical Athens from the 4th-3th centuries BCE, with the philosophical schools perfectly distinguished; on the contrary, the Greek culture and science that Arabic scholars looked for and received was the one from the Hellenistic world, including both its eclectic combination of ancient philosophical schools, namely Neoplatonism, as well as the Hermetic, occultist and pagan imprint in which magic, alchemy and astrology as we understand them today were born—and most books of those disciplines were attributed to Hermes Trimegistus. These occult sciences were again in the center stage of the cultural movement in Baghdad, and actually they stimulated the entire translation process, as it would happen later in the Iberian Peninsula.

However, as Saif has demonstrated, Arab learned men did not limit themselves to translating and transmitting Greek and Arab knowledge, but also elaborated it into a comprehensive system which extended its influence through the Middle Ages into the early modern period (*The Arabic Influences* 196). Arab thinkers continued a process of reconciling Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic thought that started in Late Antiquity. Thus, in a Hermetic frame, the Platonic theory of man as microcosms, Aristotelian causality, and the Stoic *sympatheia* were harmonized by Hellenistic and then Arab philosophers. Recollections of all these theories are present in the *Picatrix*.

Therefore, the *Picatrix*, written by an Andalusian author in the 10th century, is the clearest example of how these Hermetic and Neoplatonic trends and theories were introduced in the Iberian Peninsula, where this process of evolution and development continued and made its way into the Christian Spanish culture. These currents were favorably received by Christian scholars already influenced by Platonic and Hermetic thought from the school of Chartres. These Christian scholars were able not only to take advantage of the ‘technical side of Hermetism’ (alchemy, magic, and astrology), but also from the theoretical and philosophical one.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, there existed a theoretical and a technical side of *Hermetica* in Late Antiquity. The theoretical part was derived from Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic philosophical traditions along with Near Eastern traditions, which included Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and of course Egyptian ideas—the Egyptian background of the *Hermetica*, long time contested and considered an Alexandrian forgery, is better understood today. In the practical part

would be the magical, alchemical, and astrological treatises attributed to Hermes Trimegistus. However, the theoretical and practical parts were actually closely interrelated, in such a way that the first one served as the conceptual and philosophical setting of the second.

In the second part of the chapter I will show how, after the Caliphate of Cordoba fell in the 11th century, and its books were dispersed among the small kingdoms that emerged from its ashes, interconfessional networks of translators absorbed both the technical and the theoretical part of the *Hermetica* within a climate of secrecy inherited from the last occultist writers of the Caliphate. However, when the Christian authorities sponsored the translations inside a big cultural project, Hermetic culture was divulged and diffused as never before, and Hermes became a main authority for the medieval Humanism of Alfonso X. To explain all these processes of transformation, translation and cultural exchanges undertaken by Hermes in the Iberian Peninsula I will first explain how he and his doctrines ‘came’ to Spain.

Praestigium vero Mercurius primus dicitur invenisse. Heresy and Magic: Hermes in Visigothic Hispania

The first quotations I have been able to find about Hermes Trimegistus in the Iberian Peninsula are from the famous Isidore of Seville (560-636 CE) in his *Etymologies*. Although I have not been able to find any specific reference to Hermes prior to Isidore it seems extremely possible that Hermes should have come before, either in books or linked to some of the Hellenistic gnostic or pagan syncretic cults which arrived in Spain during the Roman Empire. In this section I will show how Hermetic-related doctrines, associated with his cult in the Near East, were present in the Iberian Peninsula in Late Antiquity, just at the end of the effective presence of the Roman Empire and at the beginning of the Visigothic kingdom. I argue that Hermes’s manifestations can be found throughout the Visigothic period—from 418 to 711CE—in which Hermes worked as a mediator between the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean religious traditions. Hermes’s appearance in Isidore’s *Etymologies*, would demonstrate these previous contacts, and also that, through the important work of the Hispanic erudite, Hermes was projected to the European Middle Ages.

The classical study of Stephen McKenna demonstrated the presence in Hispania of Oriental mystery religions—not only through the scarce written sources, but also with archaeological and epigraphical materials. According to McKenna, Syncretic pagan rites of the

Ancient Near East probably intermingled with autochthone religious traditions (McKenna *Paganism and Pagan* I 21-23). Thus, the eclectic Hellenistic phenomena which had given birth to Hermes Trimegistus was soon imported into Spain; for instance, the Syrian *Dea Mater* or *Atargatis* has numerous inscriptions dedicated to her in the Iberian peninsula, along with others to the Egyptian gods Isis and Serapis, both closely related to Hermes's doctrines. Other existent (but scarce) traces of Hermes are the references to astrology, always linked to Hermes in his original Near Eastern sources. The numerous references to paganism, divination and magic in both the civil (*Lex romana visigothorum*, *Forum Iudicum*) and canonical laws (especially from Councils) point to this survival of these practices up until of the Muslim conquest in 711 (McKenna *Paganism and Pagan* I 108-126).

Also in Isidore, among many other medieval authors, I find a source of plausible and relevant early Hermetic influences in Hispania: the heretic Priscillian. Because of the relevance of this heresy not only in Spain, but also in all western Europe, I am going to expand on its features, which I suggest are the first traces of hermetic doctrines in the Iberian Peninsula. Among his 'illustrious men' (in *De viris illustribus*) Isidore included Ithacius, a Gallaecian bishop and historian (also known as Hydatius or Idacius, c.400-c.469). Ithacius witnessed the *de facto* end of Roman dominion in the Iberian Peninsula, which was substituted by new Germanic powers in the year 418 through a *phoedus* or pact with Rome. The 'barbarian' Suebi would occupy the Gallaecia (Northwestern region) of Ithacius, while the Visigoths the rest of the peninsula. Ithacius, a Hispanic-Roman, opposed both the Suebi and the heresy of a former Gallaecian bishop, Priscillian (c.340-385), whose doctrine had extended to the rest of the Peninsula and even parts of the rest of Europe. Priscillian received the first death sentence for heresy in the history of Christianity. Isidore says:

Ithacius, bishop of the Spains, famous in name and eloquence, wrote a certain book in apologetic form in which he demonstrates the cursed dogmas of Priscillian, his arts of sorcery, and his disgraceful acts of lechery, showing that a certain Mark of Memphis, expert in magic art, was the student of Mani and teacher of Priscillian (Isidore *De viris illustribus* 15).⁹

Thus, according to Ithacius, an Egyptian expert in magic named Mark of Memphis had been a disciple of Mani—the founder of the Manichean heresy—and also the teacher of Priscillian. This information was endorsed by Jerome, whom Ithacius had meet in a travel to Palestine. As Burrus

⁹ In Burrus (*The Making of a Heretic* 127)

indicates, in a series of five scattered passages dating circa 400 to 410, Jerome refers scornfully to the Priscillian heresy as “Spanish incantations,”¹⁰ “Spanish foolishness,”¹¹ and “Egyptian portents.”¹² As Burrus points out, Priscillianism was for Jerome a Hispano-Egyptian heresy. As we saw before, in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, magic and astrology in Egypt were closely associated with Hermes Trimegistus.

Menéndez Pelayo wondered why this form of Greek, Oriental, and Egyptian theosophy or gnosis became rooted in Galicia, a remote province of the Roman Empire in the Northwest of Spain (*Historia de los Heterodoxos* I 120-121), and he found an explanation in Manuel Murguía, the most eximious historian of Galicia. According to Murguía, the pre-Roman religion of the Celtic peoples in Northwest Spain had not completely disappeared in the 4th century. The Celtic religion, as Murguía highlighted, had many things in common with the Oriental cults of the Hellenistic world which Priscillianism integrated: pantheism, astrology, magic, necromancy, female priestesses, fatalism, nocturnal rites, metempsychosis, etc. (Murguía *Historia de Galicia* I 471). This Priscillianist cult soon extended from Galicia to the rest of the Roman Empire, and all important Christian writers of the period took it into consideration.

Augustine also wrote against the Priscillianists and, as McKenna highlighted (*Paganism and Pagan* I 63), he was in a position to know very well their doctrines: Augustine “was in Rome and Milan, 383-386, was a friend of Ambrose and Orosius, and corresponded with two Spanish Bishops, Ceretius and Consentius.” According to Augustine, the Priscillianists mixed gnostic and Manichean dogmas. The fact that Augustine identified Priscillianism with Manicheism is a valuable proof of their likeness to each other (one of the accusations against Priscillian) for Augustine himself had been a Manichean a number of years. Augustine attributed to Priscillian and his followers the doctrine that “the human soul is a part of the divine essence; that on its journey to earth the soul passes through the seven heavens and is cast into the human body by the ‘prince of evil;’ they also thought that man’s fate is bound to the stars.”¹³ This descent of the soul

¹⁰ Jerome (*Praefatio in Pentateuchum* and *Ep.* 120.10 407).

¹¹ Jerome (*Commentarius in Amos* 1.3 406).

¹² Jerome (*Ep.* 120.10)

¹³ *Hi [Priscilianistae] animas dicunt eiusdem naturae atque substantiae cuius est Deus, ad agonem quemdam spontaneum in terris exercendum, per septem coelos et per quosdam gradatim descendere principatus, et in malignum principem incurrere, a quo istum mundum factum volunt, atque ab hoc principe per diversa carnis corpora seminari. Astruunt etiam fatalibus stellis homines colligatos, ipsumque corpus nostrum secundum duodecim signa coeli esse compositum, sicut hi qui mathematici vulgo appellatur.* *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*. Chapter 70, Migne, P. L., XLII, 44. (McKenna *Paganism and Pagan* I 63).

mentioned by Augustine strongly reminds gnostic doctrines and Neoplatonic philosophers like Iamblichus, close to both theurgy and Hermetism. Sánchez relates Priscillian's 'prince' or 'principles of evil,' mentioned by Augustine,¹⁴ with the *Archons* of Gnosticism and Manicheism, who are servants of evil; however, as Sylvain Sánchez reminds (*Priscillien, un chrétien* 207), Iamblichus defines the *archons* as masters of the world (*kosmokratores*) who rule the sublunary elements (*stoichéia*). Sánchez also finds in the Priscillianists other possible influences of the Neoplatonic Iamblichus, especially when they combined the Plotinian doctrines of the One¹⁵ with different classes of deities inhabiting three realms (air, earth, heaven) and three orders (beginning, middle and end);¹⁶ echoes of all these doctrines can be found in Priscillian (Sánchez *Priscillien, un chrétien* 291). In his treatises, Priscillian talks about an infinite hierarchy of good and bad spirits, also in a similar way as Iamblichus, who discoursed about gods, daimons, angels, archangels, archons, etc.¹⁷ (Sánchez *Priscillien, un chrétien* 252).¹⁸

However, the insistence on the sources of Priscillian's connection not only with these aforementioned Near Eastern cosmological doctrines, but also with magic and astrology, allows me to relate him even more closely with the Hermetic doctrines, including their Egyptian origins hinted by Jerome and Ithacius. As Menéndez Pelayo pointed out, in the portrait that Sulpicius Severus made of Priscillian in the 5th century, he affirms that Priscillian cultivated profane arts and had practiced magic since his youth (*Historia de los heterodoxos* I.III, 99).¹⁹ Menéndez Pelayo also conjectures from Priscillian data that the heresiarch mixed magical tradition of his native Gallaecia with the arcane doctrines of the Orient, in the same way that Middle and Neoplatonism mixed philosophy with the religions of Near Eastern peoples. This would be the reason why Jerome called Priscillian not only a follower of Egyptian doctrines, but also *Zoroastris magi studiosissimum*.²⁰

Thus, Priscillian was not only associated with magic, but also with astrology, another part of the "technical *Hermetica*" connected to Trimegistus. References to astrology in Priscillian are among the first of their kind in Spanish soil. For instance, we have the condemnation of

¹⁴ In *De haeresibus* (70).

¹⁵ See Iamblichus' *De mysteriis* I, 19, 60, 2.

¹⁶ See Iamblichus' *De mysteriis* II, 7, 85, 7-8.

¹⁷ See Iamblichus *De mysteriis* II, 3.

¹⁸ For other influences of Iamblichus in Priscillian see Sánchez (*Priscillien, un chrétien* 303, 371, 228).

¹⁹ *Sed idem vanissimus et plus iusto inflator prophanarum scientia: quin et magicas artes ab adolescentia eum exercuisse creditum est* (Sulpicius Severus' *Historia Sagrada*, 1.2, Vol. 16 *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*).

²⁰ *Ep. Ad Ctesiphontem adversus Pelagium*.

Priscillianism by Pope Leo I (440-461), who had been informed of this doctrine by Thuribius, bishop of Astorga (close to Priscillian's area of influence). In his letter to Thuribius, in 447, Pope Leo asserts that the doctrines of Priscillian included the errors of previous heresies, and aside from that the belief in the power of demons and pagan doctrines of magic and astrology.²¹ Later in this letter, Pope Leo mentions that the Priscillianists in the middle of the fifth century taught

that the soul of man was a portion of the divine substance, and in punishment for sins committed in heaven had been sent upon earth. The devil, according to them, was the principle of evil, and the human body which he formed in the womb of the mother was essentially bad. The Priscillianists also preached the doctrine that the stars exercised a determining influence upon man's conduct, and that the harmful influence of certain stars could be obviated only by the practice of astrology.²²

In his letter, pope Leo points to a Priscillian doctrine also present in the *Hermetic Writings*: the negative view of the human body, often presented as a prison or grave of the Soul. This doctrine appears in the *Hermetic Writings* I.18,IV.6, and VII.2-3; as we will see in chapter 5, these Hermetic beliefs made a long journey in the Spanish letters—the baroque writer Francisco de Quevedo offered a version of it in the 17th century, including a Spanish translation of the Hermetic passages. In addition, pope Leo connects the belief in star influences and the practice of astrology in such a way that astrology would help avoid the bad effects of the stars, and also achieve their favor. As we will see, astral magic would later become the core of Arabic sources attributed to Hermes Trimegistus in Arab Spain during the Middle Ages—principally represented by the *Picatrix*.

But astrology for Priscillian would have had many more uses. Bishop Martin of Braga (c.510/515-c.579/580) admonished the people of Galicia in one of the canons of his *Capitula*, where he “censures those who practice astrology in order to find out the best days for building a house, planting the crops, and getting married.”²³ Due to this pervasive influence of astrology, the Church in Hispania soon had to take action against Priscillian. The first council of Toledo (397-400) was called to condemn all heresies—especially Priscillianism—and to reaffirm the Nicæan faith. After the canons of the council were published, the *Regula fidei contra omnes haereses*,

²¹ Edited in Migne, P. L., LIV, 677-692) *ut per magicarum artium profana secreta et mathematicorum vana mendacia, religionis fidem morumque rationem in potestate daemonum, et in effectu siderum collocarent.* (in McKenna *Paganism and Pagan* I 64).

²² In McKenna (*Paganism and Pagan* I 64).

²³ Non liceat Christianis tenere traditiones gentilium et observare vel colere elementa aut lunae aut stellarum cursum aut inanem signorum fallaciam pro domo facienda, vel ad segetes, vel arboles plantandas, vel coniugia socianda.” (*Canon* 72 in McKenna *Paganism and Pagan* I 64).

maxime contra priscilianistas, which refers to Priscillianists in these terms: “If someone gives credit to the astrology or the Chaldaean science, they should be excommunicated.”²⁴

Magic was also a prevalent charge against Priscillian; in his final trial, Priscillian was accused of enchanting the earth’s fruits through spells and chants. According to Menéndez Pelayo (*Historia de los Heterodoxos* I.VIII 132), these magical rituals seem to have been connected with a theosophical and pantheistic concept of the world—common in ancient Mediterranean paganism—which assumed the participation of divine nature in animals, plants, and stones, and explained the generation of things through a God with both a masculine and a feminine principle (just as the one described in the Hermetic *Asclepius*).

In the aftermath of these grave testimonies about Priscillian, the heresiarch was summoned to Trier (Germany), where he was to be held accountable for his crimes. In virtue of the evidence, Priscillian was executed under charges of sorcery and heresy—although some important figures such as Martin of Tours contested the terrible punishment. Regardless of his execution, Priscillian’s beliefs lasted many years in different parts of Europe. This would have been the first time in which doctrines associated with the Hermetic lore—i.e. astrology and magic—once transformed and elaborated in the Iberian Peninsula, would extend their influence throughout the rest of Europe. As we will see, this phenomenon would recur during the Middle Ages.

A century and a half after Priscillian’s death, the council of Braga (561CE) was convoked by Pope John III to wipe out the remains of this heresy. In the canons of the council we find the following caveats: “If someone believes, with the pagans and Priscillian, that human souls are fatally subject to the stars, he should be excommunicated;” and also: “If someone believes, as Priscillian said, that the twelve signs or the stars that the astrologers use to observe are distributed in each one of the members of the soul or body, he should be excommunicated.”²⁵

In these prohibitions we find, ascribed to Priscillian, the belief on fate, that is, the idea of *Heimarmene* which the Hermetic writings adapted from the Stoics, a fate that would come from astral influences according to doctrines that we would find associated with Hermes all throughout the Middle Ages. Even more linked to the *Hermetica* is the idea, also recorded in the Council of Braga, that each human’s organ is associated with its correspondent zodiacal sign. We can find

²⁴ In Menéndez Pelayo (*Historia de los heterodoxos* I.III, 105)

²⁵ In Menéndez Pelayo (*Historia de los heterodoxos* I.III, 109)

this motif from the Neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus (*De Misteriis*) to the Arab *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, always associated with Hermes.

Most of Priscillian's books are lost because the Church systematically destroyed all of them, however, we know that the sect used numerous texts. Actually, his entire oeuvre was lost for centuries. However, a codex from the end of 5th century was discovered in 1885 in the University of Würzburg, which reproduces eleven Priscillianist texts. It is otherwise difficult to determine to what extent these writings reflect the real, or entire, doctrine of Priscillian, because they are written in a clear apologetic tone, looking forward to defending Priscillian from the accusations of the Church.²⁶ As Menéndez Pelayo argued, it is understandable that Priscillian defended himself from the accusation of sorcery, because it involved capital punishment (*Historia de los heterodoxos* I 132); however, according to Menéndez Pelayo it should not be necessary "to insist on the importance of astrology, magic, and theurgic procedures in Priscillian" because all testimonies agree on that; even in those preserved and exculpatory testimonies from Priscillian himself, it is evident that for him astrology was the key to all anthropological phenomena (Menéndez Pelayo *Historia de los Heterodoxos* I.VI 120).

Many references point to innumerable books, apocryphal and real, used by the Priscillianists in their rituals. For instance, Turibius of Astorga (d. 460), talked about many 'secret' and 'occult' treatises used by the Priscillianists.²⁷ Since most of them were destroyed, we still have to reconstruct Priscillian's ceremonies from external testimonies, which also connect his doctrines and rites with Neoplatonic and Hermetic trends from the Ancient Near East. For instance, aside from books, all contemporary sources talk about many hymns and chants used by the Priscillianists. With that in mind, the Council of Braga forbade to sing in Galician Churches anything but the Psalms.²⁸ Neoplatonic authors like Iamblichus (*De mysteriis*) and Proclus (*De sacrificio et magia*) mention chants and hymns connected to theurgic and hermetic rituals in a similar way.

²⁶ Actually, at the time this codex was discovered some protestant thinkers considered Priscillian not a magician or heretic, but a precursor of the Protestant Reformation, unjustly executed by the Church, for instance, Friedrich Paret in *Priscillianus: Ein Reformator Des Vierten Jahrhunderts: Eine Kirchengeschichtlich Studie Zugleich Ein Kommentar Zu Den Erhaltenen Schriften Priscillians*. A. Stuber's Verlagsbuchhandlung (1891).

²⁷ *Quare unde prolata sint nescio, nisi forte ubi scriptum est per cavillationes illas per quas loqui Sanctos Apostolos mentiuntur, aliquid interius indicatur, quod disputandum sit potius quam legendum, aut fortisan sint libri alii qui occultius secretiusque servantur, solis, ut ipsi aiunt, perfectis paterentur* (Menéndez Pelayo *Historia de los Heterodoxos* I.V 114)

²⁸ See Menéndez Pelayo (*Historia de los Heterodoxos* I.V 114).

Menendez Pelayo also finds in the cult of Priscillian other elements closely associated with gnostic and oriental cults: amulets and talismans. Specifically, Pelayo associated with Priscillianists a talisman that portrays a Celtiberian warrior (from the Celtic tribes of western Hispania), under the protection of the twelve signs of Zodiac.²⁹ As we will see later in this chapter, astrological and talismanic magic was the distinctive sign of Hermetic magic during the Middle Ages, first in the Muslim world and, after the first translations, also in the Christian one. The *Picatrix* is mainly a book of astrological magic—most of its chapters are dedicated to the fabrication of talismans, which canalize the power of the stars. According to Menéndez Pelayo (who reports an extended opinion), the famous Cruz de los Ángeles (Cross of the Angels) has mounted on it two Priscillianist amulets—the Cruz de los Ángeles is an important part of the early history of medieval art in Spain, and is kept in the Cathedral of Oviedo.³⁰

As I have shown in this section, early testimonies of Near Eastern doctrines can be found in the Iberian Peninsula just at the end of the Roman Empire, and many of those converged in the accusations made against Priscillian and his heresy. Testimonies of the most important religious authorities of his time—Augustine, Jerome, Pope Leo I—connect Priscillian’s beliefs with Egypt and the Near East, and make him a practitioner of disciplines closely associated with Hermes Trimegistus, such as magic and astrology in a philosophical Neoplatonic frame. The insistence in these practices not only in the accusations against Priscillian, but also in canonical laws from the councils of Toledo and Braga, makes the connection between Priscillian and the Hermetic lore extremely probable. I cannot prove that Priscillian was the first relevant defender of Hermes Trimegistus himself in Spain, since most of his works—with probable references to Hermes—were destroyed or hidden. However, it is sure that Priscillian’s beliefs and practices paved the way for Hermes’s significance in the next century, intellectually represented by Isidore of Seville.

Isidore

The first mention of Hermes Trimegistus himself in a Hispanic author is also by one of the most conspicuous authorities of the Middle Ages: Isidore of Seville (556-636 CE). Isidore was a descendant of the Hispano-Roman nobility from his father, but his mother was from an important

²⁹ In Mattter *Histoire critique du Gnosticisme*. Planches, planche 8 fig 8 (115).

³⁰ See Menéndez Pelayo (*Historia de los Heterodoxos* I.V p. 114)

family of the ‘Barbarian’ Visigoths who progressively occupied the Iberian Peninsula after 418 CE, this Visigothic dominion extended until the Islamic Conquest of 711. Isidore cultivated himself with all ancient knowledge, and was able to merit the patronage of the only learned Visigothic king of Hispania, Sisebut (612-621), a unique alliance between power and wisdom before the Muslims came to Spain (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 6); this exceptional case would only occur again with some of the learned rulers of al-Andalus, and later with king Alfonso the Wise of Castile.

Isidore was the first important medieval compiler of the ancient world’s knowledge. His most significant work is the *Etymologies* (c.634), an enormous encyclopedia of pagan and Christian Antiquity, which systematizes all branches of knowledge from his time. Isidore incorporated a vast number of authorities, and had access to important Latin erudite works today lost, such as those by Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC – 27 BCE). In his works, magic, astrology, and Near Eastern doctrines occupied a relevant position.

In Isidore’s books there is a mixture of fascination and repudiation towards astrology. Isidore’s many condemnations against astrology show its persistent influence in the southeastern part of the Iberian Peninsula where he lived, a region with close links to the Near East through an interconnected Mediterranean since proto-historic times. Regardless of that, Isidore was also keen to gain a clear insight into astrology. According to Fontaine, Isidore’s oeuvre is impregnated by an astrological climate, which explains at the same time his intellectual curiosity, the scrupulous respect he had for his authors, and the atmosphere of the Baetica region (in the south of Spain) where he lived.

Most visibly, in Isidore we find the first Latin reference to the microcosm, an idea closely connected to Hermetic doctrines and Near Eastern astrology. The correspondences between the celestial and terrestrial worlds were the fundamental dogmas of both the astrological ideas of Babylon and the Hermetic philosophy of Hermes Trimegistus from Egypt. Actually, Hermes would be related to both Babylon and Egypt in ancient and medieval (especially Arab) sources. The philosopher Posidonius of Apamea (c. 135BCE–c.51BCE) developed the Stoic notion of a universal sympathy which bonds intimately all being in the cosmos. Later on, this idea of the correspondence between the Microcosmic and Macrocosmic lore, the human body and the entire

universe, became one of the most representative ones of Hermetism, and had a long History in both the Middle Ages and Spanish Literature, from Alfonso X to Calderón de la Barca.³¹

As Fontaine explains, the Macrocosmic-Microcosmic correspondence can be found all over the works of Isidore of Seville, for instance, in a conceptual form in *De differentiis verborum* or *De natura rerum*, but in its richest expression in *Sententiae libri tres* and the *Etymologies* (Fontaine “Isidore de Séville” 283). It is actually in the *Etymologies*, where the term *microcosmus* appeared the first time in its Latinized form: “But just as this proportion in the universe derives from the revolution of the spheres, so even in the *microcosm* it has such power beyond mere voice that no-one exists without its perfection and lacking harmony” (Isidore *Etymologies* III. xxiii.2).³²

Fontaine sees in Isidore’s ideas about celestial phenomena as the comets or even the Bethlehem star an influence of Roman schools of philosophy like Stoicism and the Church Fathers, but also from Oriental astrology. This influence of the Eastern Mediterranean is explained by Fontaine through the region of the Iberian Peninsula in which Isidore lived and worked, the *Baetica*, where commercial and cultural relationships with Eastern peoples (Phoenicians, Syrians, or Carthaginians) existed from the beginning of the first millennium BCE to Islam (Fontaine “Isidore de Séville” 299-294). Therefore, on the one hand, the bishop and canonist Isidore had to come to terms with the consequences of Priscillianism, the remains of astrological beliefs in the populations of the *Baetica*, and the infiltration of astrological practices in the hierarchy of the Visigothic church (Fontaine 297); on the other hand, the wise man of Seville was fascinated with the ancient wisdom of Antiquity, including astrology.

Isidore’s *Etymologies* includes several references to Hermes Trimegistus or Mercurius, in both a positive and negative view, which reflect the contradictions about this figure which, as we will see, would extend to eighteenth century Spain. Thus, for instance in *Etymologies* V.i when he is taking about “The originators of Laws” (*De auctoribus legum*) Isidore affirms that Mercurius Trimegistus was the first to give laws to the Egyptians,” and equals him with other celebrated legislators such as Moses, Solon, or Lycurgus (V.i. 117). Many medieval authors, and even early modern Spanish writers quoted this passage, including Jiménez Patón, on whom I will focus most

³¹ See Francisco Rico (*El pequeño mundo del hombre*).

³² In its Greek form, the term had already appeared in authorities of the western part of the Mediterranean in the *Liber de diffinitione*, an opusculum attributed to Boetius or most probably to Marius Victorinus: *ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ μικρόκοσμος τις*, *id est homo est minor mundus* (in Fontaine “Isidore de Séville” 283). Isidore was the first to translate the Greek word in a Latin context without giving its Latin equivalent.

part of my research.³³ Of course, among the many (more or less accurate) etymologies which give the book its name, Isidore includes one for Hermes Trismegistus

Hermes is named after the Greek term *ἑρμηνεία* (“interpretation”) in Greek, in Latin ‘interpreter;’ on account of his power and knowledge of many arts he is called *Trimegistus* (i.e. Trismegistus), that is, thrice great (*termaximus*). And they imagine him with a dog’s head, they say, because among all animals the dog is held to be the most intelligent and acute of species.” (*Etymologies* VIII.xi 186).

In this case, Isidore’s etymology is correct—something that not always happens with the imaginative Isidore—although the etymological relationship is actually inverse, ‘hermeneutics’ is a word derived from Hermes, and not vice versa. However, it is clear that the reputation of Hermes’s knowledge in all kinds of arts had reached the Iberian Peninsula, either through the Church Fathers or the more controversial disciplines which Isidore also related to Hermes, as we will see immediately. A literal quotation of the last part of this paragraph, in which Isidore said that Hermes was depicted with the head of a dog—and not an Ibis, as usually— was included by Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) in his *Apologetic Summarized History* (I will show it in chapter 4th). This demonstrates that Isidore still had important readers in the 16th century

These two positive quotations of Hermes-Mercurius contrast with the noticeable inclusion of Hermes/Mercury among the magicians and astrologers of one of the most famous and interpreted sections of the *Etymologies*: *On the Magicians* (*De magi* VIII.ix). The *magi*, originally Persian priests, had become in Late Antiquity “all manner of wise men, sorcerers, diviners, poisoners, astrologers and frauds” (Klingshirn “Taxonomy of magicians” 63). In this section, Isidore not only classifies the magicians, but also names several famous ones starting with the first, who would have been Zoroaster (*Etymologies* VIII.ix.1), but Hermes is not far behind, as I will show.

Thorndike (I:628-29) affirms that in *On the Magicians* Isidore “made magic and magicians the general and inclusive head under which he presently lists various other minor occult arts and their practitioners for separate definition,” however, as Klingshirn points out, since most of the categories presented in this chapter are actually diviners, Thorndike was led to make an inaccurate assertion, that “from the first Isidore identifies magic and divination,” which is not true (62). However, Klingshirn argues that, although Isidore placed magicians and diviners under the general

³³ As we will see, Jiménez Patón is quoting the important theologian of his time Domingo de Soto, who took inspiration from Isidore.

headline of *magi* and explicitly included divination among their arts (VIII.ix 2-3), he also took pains to organize the chapter in such a way as to distinguish magicians, who performed occult actions (VIII.ix 4-10), from diviners, who supplied occult knowledge (VIII.ix 14-29). Thus, for Isidore, there exists a distinction between magicians and diviners, and in a middle way between these two categories he also locates what Klingshirn calls “boundary-crossers;” these include: necromancers and hydromancers, practitioners par excellence of “magical divination” (VIII.ix 11-12), and *incantatores* (VIII.ix 15), whose incantations summoned demons for divination (VIII.ix 11), but also empowered healing amulets (VIII.ix 30) and harmful spells.

During the Middle Ages Hermes would be linked to all this kinds of magic and divination activities; however, already in the *Etymologies* and in a significant manner, Hermes-Mercurius was depicted as representative of the three kinds of *Magi*. Thus, according to Isidore there were three classes of *magi*: magicians, magical diviners, and diviners. In the first class, magicians, Isidore subdivides in three categories: 1) those who perform illusion, such as Pharaoh’s magicians, Moses, Circe and the Arcadians; 2) those who raise the dead, such as the witches of Massylian and Endor, and Mercury-Hermes himself; and finally those who do evil. As Klingshirn points out (70), the raising of the dead places Mercury (Hermes) in the central category. Thus, Isidore compares Mercury with the biblical witch of Endor, and quotes the Christian Spanish poet Prudentius (348-410) in his *Against the Oration of Symmachus* (1.90) when he spoke about Mercury in this fashion:

‘it is told that he recalled perished souls to the light by the power of a wand that he held, but condemned others to death,’ and a little later he adds, ‘For with a magic murmur you know how to summon faint shapes and enchant sepulchral ashes. In the same way the malicious art knows how to despoil others of life.’ (*Etymologies* VIII. ix 8)

This ‘evil’ depiction of Hermes by the Christian Hispanic poet Prudentius shows that the malign depiction of Hermes that we can find in the Egyptian magical papyri echoed in the Iberian Peninsula really early. Therefore, the necromantic arts of Mercury put him, according to Isidore, in the second category of magicians; in addition, Hermes’s *ars noxia* of sending the living down to death described by Prudentius puts him in the third of evildoers as well. Moreover, Mercury is the most renowned representative of the first category (performing illusions); as Isidore clarifies later, Mercury “is said to have first invented illusions. They are called illusions (*praestigium*) because they dull (*praestringere*) the sharpness of one’s eyes” (*Etymologies* VIII. ix 8). As we can observe, since Late Antiquity Mercurius Trimegistus was related to all kinds of magical practices in the Iberian Peninsula.

Although Isidore does not specify it, during the Middle Ages Mercury also would be closely related to other classes of Diviners described in the *Etymologies* VIII. ix, among them: *incantatores* (those who perform their art with words); *harioli* “because they utter abominable prayers around the ‘altars of idols’ (*ara idolorum*), and offer pernicious sacrifices, and in these rites receive the answers of demons,” (this class is close to the accusations made to the Hermetic *Asclepius* and his creation of statues, and remind us Augustine’s accusation against it); and the diverse kind of astrologers: *astrologi*, *genethliaci* (who describe the nativities, *genesis*, of people according to the twelve zodiac signs), *mathematici* (so called for their astronomical calculations) and *horoscopi*. Fontaine relates Isidore’s astrological condemnation with the still recent definitive prohibitions of Priscillianist dogmas which I mentioned in the previous section, including the astrological one, by the Council of Braga in 563 CE, and an even more recent Sermon of Pope Gregory the Great during the Epiphany (592 CE), which included specific references to astrology.³⁴ Isidore also refers to those who make “amulets consisting of curse-charms” (*Etymologies* VIII. ix 30), a practice also related to the Priscillianists, as we will see later, many books of amulets and talismans were attributed to Hermes, for instance, in the *Picatrix*, where he also appears as prominent astrologer.

Isidore’s classification of Magi—including Hermes in a distinct place—is actually very relevant, because Isidore’s *Etymologies* was one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages and even beyond. Haskins highlights that by the 12th century “Isidore’s *Etymologies* were still the great mediaeval encyclopedia” (*The Renaissance of the Twelfth century* 81). As we will see, before the cultural splendor of al-Andalus, Isidore’s work and Visigothic productions were also relevant in Muslim Spain.

This connection of Mercurius with magic in Isidore links Hellenistic sources like the magical papyri with the long-standing relation of Hermes with magic during the Middle Ages that I will discuss below.

The Early Development of Hermetic Knowledge in al-Andalus

Although the Muslim conquerors defeated the Visigothic kingdom in 711CE, the new society they created was, in its initial stages, very far from the cultural brilliance that al-Andalus would reach centuries later. In point of fact, the culture of the newly conquered Hispania/al-

³⁴ See Fontaine (“Isidore de Séville” 278-279)

Andalus continued to be Latin for many years to come, principally because few learned men came together with the Muslim troops. As Forcada affirms, the persistence of Latin culture extended at least until the rule of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (822-852) when Arabic culture began to blossom, and even “some scientific productions and practices inherited from Visigothic times survived until the 10th century,” particularly medicine (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 4). This surviving Latin science, “was embodied by the *Etymologies* and *De natura rerum* by Isidore of Seville” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 6). Therefore, the first erudite Muslims of al-Andalus probably could have encountered Isidore’s references to Hermes Trimegistus and his astrological speculations, which I showed above, at a very early stage. Among these sciences rooted in Visigothic traditions and inherited by the Muslim conquerors was astrology. As I will explain, the exchange of Hermetic sciences between Christian and Muslims started very early and initially the Christians provided resources to their conqueror, contrary to what is commonly assumed, but this would only happen centuries later.

The known history of astrology in al-Andalus starts when the amīr Hishām I (788-796) summoned the astrologer al-Ḍabbī from Algeciras to Cordoba to forecast the length of his rule. Algeciras was considered the center of this astrology, something which Cordova lacked. Algeciras is situated in the coast of Southern Spain, precisely the area which, as I showed earlier, had sustained longer contacts with the culture from the Eastern Mediterranean. As Forcada confirms (“Astronomy, astrology” 4), al-Ḍabbī used a basic astrological procedure in a Latin tradition, the so-called “system of the crosses” or *ṭarīqat aḥkām al-ṣulūb*. This system is well known through the 13th century *Libro de las Cruces* of Alfonso X the Wise. We know that king Alfonso based his book on a work from the 8th century because Juan Vernet found an Arabic Manuscript in El Escorial which comprises an assembly of excerpts from the Arabic original of the Alfonsine *Libro de las Cruces* (Vernet “Tradición e innovación” 745-747).³⁵ Vernet has proven that the aforementioned Arabic text used by Alfonso is based on the translation of a Latin astrological work which was known in al-Andalus towards the end of the 8th century (Vernet “Tradición e innovación” 747). As Samsó concludes, the Arab 8th century ancestor of the *Libro de las Cruces* is “one more item in the long series of contacts between Isidorian-Latin and Arabic culture in

³⁵ As Samsó indicates (“The early development” 234), Rafael Muñoz has also found three new chapters of the same work in another manuscript of the same library (Escorial 918 f.12v-13r).

Muslim Spain;” and, as I showed before “astrology was very much alive in the time of Isidore of Seville” (Samsó “The early development” 234).

By comparing the original Arabic and the Alfonsine text of the *Libro de las Cruces*, Samsó reveals that there are noteworthy interpolations in the latter. I interpret them as significant of the changes in the Hermetic sciences in al-Andalus, such as for instance when the Alfonsine translator establishes that the system he uses to forecast future events is the one employed by ancient astrologers of Northern Africa and Spain who did not use the subtleties of Hellenistic and Oriental astrology. Therefore, Alfonso is clearly distinguishing between an ‘ancient’ system of astrology from Spain and North Africa, and another one which, as I will show shortly, came from the Near East and incorporated the sciences of the peoples living there. Although Alfonso’s eagerness of knowledge led him to publish the ‘simpler’ *Libro de las Cruces*, most of his astrological production was based on the Near Eastern astrology which would come to al-Andalus soon after the original Arabic of the book of the crosses was published. Although Alfonso wanted to preserve this ‘out fashioned’ astrological book, according to the interpolations he included in it, the wise king could not avoid ‘updating’ it with some specificities of the Near Eastern astrology, among them, reassuring the authority of Hermes Trimegistus.

Other interpolations of Near Eastern astrology I would like to emphasize are the references to the generation and corruption of the bodies, (“sus fechos et sus accidentes en los cuerpos del mundo de generation et corruption”) and also influences of the planets among them (“de cuemo dan las planetas las fuerzas unas a otras, et como reciben unas a otras”), and the statement that all those contents would be found in books of eastern sages, both Babylonian and Egyptian (“que todo esto es departido en los libros de los sabios orientales, et los de Babilonia, et de los egiptios”).³⁶ In the rest of this chapter, I am going to cover the process by which these innovations, associated with Hermes, were accommodated in al-Andalus.

Samsó concludes that the original version of the *Libro de las Cruces* was the first Astrological book utilized in al-Andalus. The Latin original is entirely unknown, and the first Arabic version of the whole or part of the present text should be dated toward the end of the 8th century (Samsó “The early development” 234). However, not all the interpolations in the *Libro de*

³⁶ *MS Escorial 916 f190r and v.*, *Libro de las Cruces* p. 5 (in Samsó “The early development” 234)

las Cruces are from Alfonso's translator, because actually he was using a new edition of the Arabic text dating to the end of the 11th century. The Alfonsine translator deems that the author of the book is a certain "Oueydalla el sabio," whom Millás identified as Abū Marwān 'Ubayd Allāh b. Khalaf al-Istijī.³⁷ As Samsó explains, 'Ubayd Allāh rewrote in the 11th century the original *Libro de las Cruces* of the 8th, at a time when Muslim Spain had reached its golden century, not only in astronomy but in most other divisions of culture as well. Undoubtedly "he improved the book, explained obscure passages, and introduced quotations of authors inaccessible to Andalusian astrologers of the past" (Samsó "The early development" 243). Thus, 'Ubayd Allāh updated the original with references to Ptolemy, Abu Ma'shar, and Hermes Trimegistus. However, Hermes's interpolations by 'Ubayd Allāh are not in the version used by Alfonso's translator.³⁸ Although these allusions to Hermes were not in the version used in Alfonso's court, another significant one was introduced. The chapter of astrological geography, which is most probably an Alfonsine addition to the *Libro de las Cruces* (Samsó "The early development" 243), establishes that the "sign of Spain" (i.e. its ascendant) is Gemini, according to Spanish and Egyptian astrologers, as well as Hermes (*Libro de las Cruces* 7). I want to highlight that this last interpolation suggests Hermes's knowledge of Spain, a relationship that would also be emphasized by Jiménez Patón in the 17th century. The identity of Alfonso's translator also provides us an interesting explanation. As the *Libro de las Cruces* states, it was translated by Yehudah b. Mosheh ha-Kohen and Johan Daspa in 1259. The Jewish Yehudah b. Mosheh ha-Kohen had just translated the *Picatrix* a couple of years before,³⁹ and this is the book of astrological magic in which all Arab Hermetic currents appear.

Significantly enough, when both 'Ubayd Allāh in the 11th century, and Alfonso's translator in the 13th, wanted to 'update' the Arab translation of a Visigothic treatise of astrology (the *Libro de las Cruces*), both introduced the figure of Hermes, who apparently had not appeared in the original text since (although, as we have seen, the origin of that early astrology should have come from previous contacts with the Near East as well). This leads me to suggest that, in fact, Hermes

³⁷ Abū Marwān 'Ubayd Allāh lived in the time of Qādī Šā'id of Toledo (1029-1070) and corresponded with him (Millás "Sobre el autor del 'Libro de las cruces'" 230-234). Vernet has endorsed this identification (Vernet "Tradición e innovación" 745-6)

³⁸ They are in MS Escorial 916 f. 192v. and 193r., as Samsó clarifies that the quotations do not appear in the Alfonsine text (which should have been based on a slightly different text) and the latter corresponds to Hermes' Kitāb al-'ard fī'l-as'ār (Samsó "The early development" 243).

³⁹ See Pingree ("Between the Ghāya and Picatrix. I: the Spanish Version.")

came two times to Spain; the first one in the late Roman and early medieval times, since strains of Hermetic ideas are one clear element in Priscillian's heresy, and the figure of Hermes Himself appears associated with magic and astrology in Isidore's *Etymologies*. But since the *Picatrix* is the first Andalusian book in which Hermes appears (and in a prominent place), when was the second time in which Hermes came to Spain?

As Forcada has studied, after that first mention of the astrologer al-Ḍabbī summoned to the court of amīr Hishām I (788-796), there are evidences in the Cordovan court of a group of astrologers active during the reigns of al-Ḥakam I (796-822), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (822-852) and Muḥammad (852-886). After the end of the 9th century, indication of their activity wanes (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 1). Actually the traces of this group of astrologers disappeared even for the important Andalusian polymath of the 11th century, Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī, who wrote the most important History of Science in al-Andalus: *The Book of the Categories of the Nations (Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Umam)*.⁴⁰ Fortunately, through two recently discovered books on the ventures of this group of astrologers, including the traces of Hermetic sciences, it is possible to reconstruct it.⁴¹ The group was responsible for the introduction in al-Andalus of the “sciences of the ancients,” which progressed in Eastern Islam during the golden age of Baghdad, and involved not only important aspects of philosophy and theology, but also Hermetic sciences such as magic, alchemy, and astrology. I suggest that this introduction signaled the coming of Hermes to al-Andalus.

The activities of this group of astrologers is related to the beginning of the cultural development of al-Andalus, which I in turn relate to that second ‘coming’ of Hermes Trimegistus to the Iberian Peninsula. That cultural flourishing was late in coming with respect to the splendor in Baghdad that started a century earlier. The ‘Abbāsīd science could not have thriven without the impulse of the dynasty and the influence of Persian culture.⁴² However, as Forcada explains, the first andalusī Umayyads “lacked similar models in their own dynastic tradition and in the Hispanic context,” which explains that between ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (756-788), the first Umayyad amīr, and

⁴⁰ They did not appear either in the *Ṭabaqāt* by Ibn Juljul and in the one by Ṣā‘id or in Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-Fiṣal*.

⁴¹ As Forcada studied, these two new sources are the first part of the second book of the *Muqtabis* by Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1076) the most significant chronicle of early Andalusian history, which includes many references to this group of astrologers, and the *Treatise on Stars* written by the mālikī faqīh and polymath ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. 853); this is the one of the earliest surviving astrological treatise written in al-Andalus, and “appears to have been written as a counterpoint to the astronomy and astrology in the Classical and Hindu-Iranian tradition that had become “fashionable” at the court of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II.” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 2).

⁴² Studied, for instance, by Gutas (*Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*)

‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, al-Andalus was “little more than a rural society and a cultural desert” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 7).

However, between al-Ḥakam I (796-822), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (822-852) a cultural change emerged, which coincided with a shift from the Syrian/Umayyad to the Persian/‘Abbāsīd model, in spite of the dynastic rivalry. The goal of this “baghdadisation” was to strengthen the bases of their own government by emulating the most successful empire of the epoch (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 7). Al-Ḥakam I, other than being a warrior leader—he fought the Iberian Christians, the Carolingians, Andalusī rebels and even his own neighbors in the bloody “arrabal revolt” of Cordoba—was also an effective governor who consolidated the state’s finances, and a learned ruler. Al-Ḥakam I wrote poetry and brought Iraqī singers to Cordova, distinctly, the famous Ziryāb who, as Lévi-Provençal narrated, completely changed the way of life in the city in the “Baghdad way.”⁴³ By doing so, Al-Ḥakam I benefited from the process of translation in Baghdad some decades earlier, in which Hermetic sciences like alchemy, magic, and astrology had undoubtful prominence. Therefore, I think that when Al-Ḥakam I decided to import the cultural advances of Baghdad he ‘imported’ Hermes Trimegistus as well. Moreover, Al-Ḥakam I educated his heir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (822-852) in such a way that most probably he was the first relevant advocate of Hermes in the Iberian Peninsula. I consider that it was precisely at this moment when al-Andalus was integrated into the Islamic world as defined by Marshall Hodgson in the first volume of his *The Venture of Islam* (1974).⁴⁴ In the 11th century, Ibn Ḥayyān described the education of the future āmir in these terms:

[al-Ḥakam I] introduced [‘Abd al-Raḥmān II] in the most elevated sciences until he succeeded in the knowledge of wisdom and in the reading of the treatises of the ancients. He sent to Iraq the Algeciran ‘Abbās b. Nāṣiḥ, with a substantial amount of money to search for and copy ancient books, and he brought him the *Kitāb al-Zīj*, the *Qānūn*, the *Shindhind* and the *Arkand*, the *Mūsīqā* and the rest of treatises on philosophy and science, books on medicine and others of the ancients as well ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was the first to introduce them

⁴³ Ziryāb introduced anything from fashionable music to “cuisine” and “haute couture”, thus transforming the manners and customs of the court. See Lévi-Provençal (*Historia de España.711-1031* 169-143).

⁴⁴ Hodgson coined the term to surmount the confusion surrounding such terms as ‘Islamic,’ ‘Islam,’ and ‘Muslim’ when they are used to describe features of society and culture in the Muslim World. Hodgson used the term to describe cultural manifestations which do not refer directly to the Islamic religion but to the “social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims” (*The Venture of Islam* 59). Hodgson used the term to demonstrate the importance of Islam as a cultural force that influenced non-Muslim forms of art, literature, and custom.

in al-Andalus and made them known to its inhabitants. He himself studied them (...) obtaining a thorough knowledge (*Muqtabis II/1*, 139v.).⁴⁵

Therefore al-Ḥakam I imported the books of science and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II spread them to the inhabitants of al-Andalus, to whom he transmitted his own enthusiasm.⁴⁶ Of course, these cultural deeds remind us of Alfonso the Wise, who would disseminate the same kind of books to his Christian subjects four centuries later. The list of books cited by Ibn Ḥayyān is significant of the mixed Greek and Oriental sciences brought to al-Andalus from Baghdad, a blend which echo the Hellenistic world in which Hermes was born. Among these books, the *Qānūn* can be identified with Ptolemy’s *Handy Tables* in a version by Theon of Alexandria,⁴⁷ whereas the *Shindhind* and the *Arkand* belong to Hindu astronomy.⁴⁸ Fueled by the achievements of this father, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II recruited the most important astrologers of his time, whom he consulted before undertaking any important enterprise. As Forcada explains, the sciences of the ancients spread this small group among the Andalusians, and this knowledge engendered doctrinal debates that were to some extent public. The amīr and his circle “probably accumulated the first stratum of one of the largest libraries of the Middle Ages, that of al-Ḥakam II, around which the Umayyad culture of al-Andalus was to reach its highest peak” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 19). As we will see, part of that library would fall under the power of Christians in 1085 with the conquest of Toledo.

Eastern sciences not only reached al-Andalus through the import of books but also through another system: the near Eastern scholars who moved there. The identity of some of them is extremely interesting for the purposes of my work. For instance, al-Ḥarrānī, about whom not many things are known. However, as Forcada points out, this name, al-Ḥarrānī, “opens up a wide range of possibilities regarding the transmission of science” because “he was surely knowledgeable of the materials that made up the ‘Sabian’ culture of Ḥarrān, which included worship of the stars,

⁴⁵ In Forcada (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 10).

⁴⁶ As Forcada highlights, two other fragments of *Muqtabis II/1* bear witness to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II’s enthusiasm for Hermetic related sciences such as astrology and astronomy. “He was knowledgeable of (...) philosophical sciences, of the computing of the planet’s positions, of the science of astronomy and of upper influences (al-āthār al-‘ulwiyya)” (*Muqtabis II/1*, 140r.) In Forcada (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 10).

⁴⁷ See Forcada (“Astronomy, astrology” 21).

⁴⁸ The *Shindhind* is the Arabic translation of the *Brāhmasphuṭasiddhānta* of the Hindu Brahmagupta, composed ca. 629, which was known to the Arabs through a midway text, the *Mahāsiddhānta*, brought by a Hindu embassy to Baghdad and translated by order of the caliph al-Manṣūr (754-755) by Ya‘qūb b. Ṭāriq, al-Fazari and a Hindu astronomer who accompanied this embassy named Kanaka. This translation was revised by al-Khwārizmī under al-Ma’mūn. (Pingree 1973). The *Arkand* would be another book of Brahmagupta, the *Khaṇḍākhadyaka*, (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 21)

magic, talismans, Hermetic doctrines and so on” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 24). As we will see, Hermetic knowledge from Ḥarrān is pervasive in the *Picatrix*. Thābit b. Qurra, whose book of Talismans is quoted several times, is another famous native of the city. Another eastern sage who came to Cordoba was Ziryāb, who left Baghdad with his whole library. Ziryāb was very well-informed in the sciences of the ancients, and especially in astrology, as shown by the *Muqtabis* “his study of cosmology and his knowledge of the spheres and their movements, the stars and their paths, the computation of their rising time and the kind of advice they give concerning their influence and decrees.”⁴⁹

Among the astrologers of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II related to the Hermetic lore was also ‘Abbās b. Firnās, who according to the *Muqtabis* was an expert in alchemy and magic, specifically in a discipline called Ṣāḥib al-nīranjāt.⁵⁰ As Burnett has studied, the *nīranjāt* are a category of charms specifically related to the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica*, which made a long journey in the posterior movement of translations in the Iberian Peninsula.⁵¹ As I will show here, the *nīranjāt* also appear many times in the Arabic version of the *Picatrix* (although the Spanish and Latin translator had problems finding a word for this category). This relationship is not surprising, since ‘Abbās b. Firnās was said to practice magic and alchemy and his religiosity was frequently condemned.⁵² As the other scholars in the court of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, ‘Abbās b. Firnās was also a poet, and in his poems he talked about the lunar mansions, which were known to several eastern astronomical traditions, but not to the Greeks.⁵³ Forcada draws attention to the fact that lunar mansions appear in an astrological context only in two andalusī texts, the *Picatrix* (I.IV) and the *Libro de las Cruces* (1), although in the latter they seem to be posterior interpolations of the kind I explained before.⁵⁴

The last member of this group of astrologers/poets I would like to mention is Yaḥyā al-Ghazāl who in some of his poems, seems to share the Neoplatonic doctrines of union with the One from which we all come. As Forcada remarks, Yaḥyā al-Ghazāl

⁴⁹ *Muqtabis* II/1 (150v), in Forcada (“Astronomy, astrology” 24)

⁵⁰ In *Muqtabis* II/1, 130v-131r. See Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 24.

⁵¹ See for instance Burnett (“*Nīranj*: a category of magic (almost) forgotten in the Latin West”)

⁵² *Muqtabis* II/1, 130v-132r. As Forcada underlines, a bill of indictment for heresy was imposed upon Abbās b. Firnās and in the presence of the judge a group of people witnessed against him and said, for instance that ““I have seen the outlets of his house run with blood a night of January” (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 39).

⁵³ As Forcada points out, they appear in Arabic folk astronomy without astrological purposes, but play an important role in Hindu astronomy and astrology, where they are called *nakṣatra*, and in the Persian astronomy as well (Forcada “Astronomy, astrology” 33). Lunar mansions are also related to Egyptian astrology.

⁵⁴ See Forcada (“Astronomy, astrology” 33).

bears a resemblance with the epistles that al-Kindī (d. 873) dedicates to the soul. Al-Kindī was the most illustrious representative of Baghdad's *Falsafa* (Greek-inspired Arab philosophy), and some of the doctrines on the soul he uses belong to the Hermetic corpus that he might have known through the peoples of Ḥarrān I already mentioned (Genequand "Platonism and Hermetism in al-Kindī" 14-16). As I have shown in this section, clear signs of Hermetic sciences can be found in the court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I, and specifically in the circle of astrologers who worked and collaborated with him. The appearance of this circle is fruit of the cultural politics that 'Abd al-Raḥmān's father, al-Ḥakam II, instilled in his son. According to these politics, culture, costumes and specialists from Baghdad were brought into the Iberian Peninsula, and with them, Hermes Trimegistus himself and the sciences he promoted, in such a way that he could exert the function of cultural mediator I am defending in this work. This group of astrologers collaborating among them and sponsored by the āmir, would have been the first network of hermetic practitioners of which we can keep track in the Iberian Peninsula. Although, as we have seen, their practices of magic, alchemy, and astrology were not free from controversy among the common people, they could to act with impunity because 'Abd al-Raḥmān II was probably the most enthusiastic practitioner of all of them. Forcada explains this immunity with the classical Islamic distinction between the *'amma* (common people) and the *khāṣṣa* (the elites); thus, astrology and other sciences related to Hermes concerned, "with few exceptions, the ruler and his associates, as if those matters were an extension of the non-orthodox practices implicitly allowed to the king, or, better, practices that no one dared to reproach" (Forcada "Astronomy, astrology" 38). This would have been another importation of the "baghdādī way of life" in which 'Abd al-Raḥmān apparently permitted a fairly large number of his courtiers to share his keenness on astrology. I agree with Forcada that the other Hermetic subjects, like alchemy and magic most probably developed in these circles.

However, as I will show in the next chapter the situation would change in the next century, when Hermetic sciences in al-Andalus wavered between favor and prosecution by Islamic powers. That's why the next generation of followers of occultism in al-Andalus, the one of the 10th century, either exiled itself or hid its activities under a veil of secrecy. That was the generation of Ibn Masarra and Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, the author of the Arabic *Picatrix*. As Forcada points out, most probably the thought of Ibn Masarra and Maslama "bloomed in the breeding ground" prepared by Yaḥyā al-Ghazāl, Abbās b. Firnās and their fellow poet/astrologers. Despite the Hermetic evidence I have shown, it is precisely that secrecy and concealment of the 10th century

that prevent us from affirming the direct connection with the precedents of the 9th century. As I will show later, that secrecy would last during the first phase of translations in the Christian kingdoms, until the vernacular pre-humanism of Alfonso the Wise would open some of the Hermetic knowledge to all his learned subjects.

Concealment and Secrecy in Andalusī Bāṭinism during the 10th Century

‘Abd al-Raḥmān II was succeeded by his son Muḥammad I (852-886), in whose emirate new difficulties arose in the form of war and rebellions. Those turbulences would extend under al-Mundhir (886-888) and ‘Abd Allah (888-912) until the time of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (912-961) who established a new era for al-Andalus by declaring an independent Caliphate in 929. The peak of Andalusī power coincided with the most important Hermetic work written in the Iberian Peninsula, the *Picatrix*, which would be known in all the Western world during centuries. In this section I am going to explain the circumstances in which the *Picatrix* was written, and the evidence of its author’s contentious relationship with the caliphal power of the time.

There is, actually, a relationship between the contents of the *Picatrix* and the political circumstances that led ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III to declare an independent caliphate in Spain in the year 929. Previously, the Fatimid caliphate had been declared in the North of Africa after the conquest of Raqqāda (in modern Tunez) in 909. With this takeover, the Aghlabid emirate of Africa, which was, like the emirate of al-Andalus, nominally dependent on the Sunni Caliphate of Baghdad, was overthrown by a Shi‘i-Isma‘īlī sect that established its own Fatimid caliphate in the North of Africa. For this reason, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III feared that his own emirate could suffer the same fate. In addition, al-Andalus’ communications with Baghdad became more complicated, since the entire North of Africa was controlled by the enemy Fatimids.⁵⁵

Moreover, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had the Fatimid problem inside his own frontier, because the famous rebel Ibn Ḥafṣūn had established contacts with the Fatimids. Ḥafṣūn was a Muladī (descendant of a convert to Islam), who rebelled against Cordoba in 878 and resisted its power during many years. As Fierro has studied, two Fatimid missionaries visited Ibn Ḥafṣūn and honored him, “with evidence that points to earlier Isma‘īlī missions in al-Andalus” (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 125), and nothing could be more dreadful for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III than an alliance between the Fatimid Caliphate and his domestic rebel Ibn Ḥafṣūn. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s final

⁵⁵ A situation which will extend to the year 1171, when Saladin defeated the Fatimids.

victory over Ibn Ḥafṣūn’s rebellious descendants was a major factor leading ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III to adopt the caliphal title himself in 316/929. In addition, the Fatimids not only represented a military challenge, but also posed, with their Ismā‘īlī doctrines and pretensions to supernatural knowledge and infallibility, “a political and religious threat that undermined Umayyad legitimacy” (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 126)

After he became a Sunni caliph, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III distinguished himself from the Ismā‘īlī *imām* of North Africa by emphasizing exotericism (*ẓāhir*) over the esotericism (*bāṭin*) of his enemies.⁵⁶ However, as Fierro has also studied, possibly ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III also played the card of an ‘Umayyad’ esotericism to answer the Fatimid *bāṭin* (occultism).⁵⁷ It would explain the fact that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III incentivized a comprehensive education for his sons al-Ḥakam and ‘Abd Allāh, since in many doctrines of Islam, especially the esoteric ones, political and religious authority derived from knowledge, or at least it was connected to it. Among those currents was probably the Ismā‘īlī one of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, whose influence on al-Andalus’ Hermetism I will comment soon. Not for nothing the main rival for the Umayyads was the Fatimid ruler “an Ismā‘īlī *imām* who claimed infallibility and knowledge of the occult (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 138).

It would also explain the fact that Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, the alleged author of the Arab *Picatrix*, was teacher of the Umayyad prince ‘Abd Allāh, and maybe of another son of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III as well. By these means, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III would provide his sons the necessary wisdom to use as leverage against the Ismā‘īlī dynasty. However, once ‘Abd Allāh acquired fame of virtue and wisdom, he became distrustful and was accused of conspiring against his father. For this reason, Fierro conjectures that the political atmosphere of al-Andalus became hostile against Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī and other occultists like him. From this atmosphere would derive the secrecy which characterized Maslama’s magical book *Picatrix* (*Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*) and the references in his Alchemical book, *Rutbat al- Ḥakīm*.

Another interesting connection between the occultism of the *Picatrix* and the Caliphal power is the one established by Acién between the decorative marble panels (ataurique) found in the so-called ‘Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’ in the palatine town Madīnat al-Zahrā’ —built by the Caliphe Near Cordoba—and the Arabic *Picatrix* (*Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*). The writing of the *Picatrix*

⁵⁶ See Fierro (“La política religiosa de ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III”).

⁵⁷ See Fierro (“Plants, Mary the Copt” 138).

(343–348/954–959) nearly coincides with the period when the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was being constructed (342–345/953–957). Acién (“Materiales e hipótesis 188-191) suggests, for instance, the possible influence of the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* in the vegetal decoration of the Hall, since the *Picatrix* also establishes a relationship between stars and plants. Plants play a notorious role in the *Ghāya* “because of their connection with the stars and planets, their use in different kinds of filters and enchantments, and also because of their place in the chain of creation and in the chain of scientific knowledge” (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 127). In addition, Acién considers that the ataurique (marble panels) decorations of the ‘Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III are a representation of Paradise with astrological connotations connected with the *Picatrix* (“Materiales e hipótesis 188-89). This kind of decoration appears in a Hall destined to receive both foreign delegations and governors from provinces, to whom ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III would probably want to suggest supernatural powers. This representation of Paradise would be particularly effective with Cordoba’s Berber allies in North Africa—close to the Fatimid Caliphate—to whom ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III would want to ensure “their right guidance in this world and their salvation in the other.” The Paradise symbolism of *Madīnat al-Zahrā’* would have moved in that direction.⁵⁸

Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the Hermetism represented by the *Picatrix* and the most powerful political power in the Iberian Peninsula in the 10th century, the new Caliphate of Cordoba. This connection between Hermetic knowledge and political power would happen again in Alfonso X’s court in the 13th century; until then, due to the circumstances I have just explained, Hermes’s advocates would have to occult their activities under a veil of secrecy.

Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, Author of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (the Latin *Picatrix*)

Now I will refer to the author of the *Picatrix*, Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (906-964), the most important advocate of Hermes Trimegistus and the Hermetic doctrines in the Iberian Peninsula in the 10th century. Maslama was a *muwallad* or muladi. In his early years he followed the normal steps of a Sunni scholar in al-Andalus. He was student of important Maliki jurists and traditionists as well as of the ascetic Sayyid Abīhi al-Murādī al-Ishbīlī (d. 936). He travelled to the East before the year 932, where he studied with many teachers. He was in Qayrawan, Tripoli, Crete, Alexandria, old Cairo, al-Qulzum, Jedda, Mecca, Basra, Wasit, Ramla, Baghdad, Siraf,

⁵⁸ See Fierro (“Plants, Mary the Copt” 127-128; and “*Madīnat al-Zahrā’*, el Paraíso y los Fatimíes” 316-321)

Mada'in, Yemen and Syria. Most of his thirty-nine teachers were traditionists, but there were mystics such as al-Shiblī (d. 334/945), Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī (d. 341/952) and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sālim al-Tustarī (d. 356/967), a student of the famous Sufī thinker Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896).⁵⁹ Maslama could in fact have met Ibn Masarra in Cordoba, having left this town approximately at the time of Ibn Masarra's death (year 319/931), although no mention of any contact between them is made in the sources. Ibn Masarra is the most famous Andalusī Bāṭinī (occultist) whose doctrines have been variously interpreted. Having collected a great number of prophetic traditions, Maslama came back to al-Andalus after the year 936. He became blind shortly after his return to Cordoba, where he had many students; among them, as we saw, the prince 'Abd Allāh, who was executed on the day of the Festival of Sacrifices of the year 950 or 951.⁶⁰

Maslama wrote a book on women (*Kitāb al-nisā'*) which is lost, and a biographical dictionary of traditionists. The other work mentioned by his biographers has to do with magic and divination, and the casting of lots (*ḍarb al-qur'a*). Maslama also translated a work on *oneirocritics* (interpretation of dreams) and another one, written by the Egyptian Bāṭinī Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī on the characteristics of the believer (*Su'āl ba'd al-zuhhād 'an ṣifat al-mu'min*. Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 1013) gives information about suspicious activities of Maslama, for instance, he was accused of being *kadhib*, a charge which, in the framework of *'ilm al-ḥadīth*, implied that Maslama "was suspected of transmitting unreliable Prophetic material;"⁶¹ Ibn al-Faraḍī also indicates that Maslama mastered enchantments and talismans (*ṣāhib ruqan wa-nīranjāt*), an account that Maribel Fierro did not find applied to any other Andalusī in Maslama's times (Fierro "Plants, Mary the Copt" 128). As I mentioned before, the *nīranjāt* are a specific category of magic that appears in the *Picatrix*.

However, only recently the two most important works of Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī have been attributed to him: the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* (*The Scale of the Sage*), the first (known) book of alchemy written in the Iberian Peninsula; and the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*The Aim of the Sage*), a

⁵⁹ Both these two teachers wrote refutations of the Cordoban Ibn Masarra's doctrines which they probably knew through Andalusī scholars visiting the East, perhaps through Maslama himself.

⁶⁰ See Fierro ("Plants, Mary the Copt" 128)

⁶¹ According to some sources he was slain by his own father in substitution of the sacrificial animal. As Fierro also indicates, some of Maslama's biographers wrote that he was accused of being a *qadarī* (Ibn Ḥajar describes Maslama as *rajul kabīr al-qadar*) which probably meant that he believed in predestination and not that he was a supporter of free will. As stated by another biographer, al-Dhahabī, Maslama was also notorious for his anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) (Fierro "Plants, Mary the Copt" 130).

book on magic which is better known by its Latin name *Picatrix*. In both works Hermes Trimegistus has a prominent role. Both of them consist of a prologue and four books, and they were destined to form the two final steps of a philosophical ladder. Maslama himself chose to call these two treatises ‘the two conclusions [of philosophy]’ and “stresses in both works how deficient and imperfect ‘the Sage’ would remain until he mastered these twin-sciences” (Callataÿ “Towards the critical” 386). Therefore, the conclusion of the Andalusī occultist, inspired by the example of ancient sages like Hermes Trimegistus, is that the final steps for the wise man—having dominated the entire classical curriculum of sciences—are alchemy, magic, and astrology (since the three arts are closely interrelated).

However, Maslama’s two works have had an uneven popularity.⁶² The *Ghāya* was translated into Spanish, Latin, and Hebrew. Especially through the Latin translation, the *Picatrix*, it extended its influence throughout the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance. Some of the most important hermetic thinkers of the Renaissance such as Marsilio Ficino or Pico della Mirandola knew the *Picatrix* and interpreted its message according to the Corpus Hermeticum and the other work of Hermes Trimegistus they worked with. All over the 20th century and even today, many academic works have been dedicated to the *Picatrix*.⁶³

Its importance has been enormous also in the Arab world; the famous historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) regarded these two works as very relevant, among the most prominent of their subject—despite his general criticism against occultist lore. Actually, Ibn Khaldūn considered the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* as “the best and most complete treatise on magic ever written in Arabic and the writer of the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, its alchemical counterpart, seems to indicate that he thought highly of that work as well” (Callataÿ “Towards the critical” 386). However, just as many other learned men of his time,⁶⁴ Ibn Khaldūn considered that the works had been written by the famous Andalusī astronomer Maslama al-Majrīṭī (d. c.395/1004) and in some sections of his *Muqaddimah* he described this scientist as the leader of both all Andalusian mathematicians (a known fact) and

⁶² Callataÿ is now preparing a translation and critical edition of the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, which hopefully will boost the studies on this work.

⁶³ From the ground-breaking investigations about the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* by Reinhart Dozy and Michael Jan De Goeje in 1885 to the symposium on ‘*Picatrix* entre Orient et Occident’ held in Paris in 2007, Maslama al-Qurṭubī’s has drawn worldwide attention from researchers—among the highlights we have to mention Hellmut Ritter, Martin Plessner and David Pingree, editors of the Arabic text and of its Latin adaptation. See a comprehensive summary of the research on *Picatrix* in Burnett (“Le *Picatrix* a l’Institut Warburg: histoire d’une recherche et d’une publication,”)

⁶⁴ Before Ibn Khaldūn also the Persian Alchemist Jildakī attributed the same (Holmyard “Maslama al-Majrīṭī and the *Rubtatu ‘l- Ḥakīm*” 298).

magicians.⁶⁵ Ibn Khaldūn’s mistake is easily understandable, because most manuscripts of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* attributed them to the famous astronomer of the 11th century Maslama al-Majrīfī (Thoman “The Name Picatrix” 294), however, that credit is not possible based on other indications inside the books.

Following her research on heterodoxy in al-Andalus, Fierro put together the incongruencies between the attributed author and the rest of the information available, both in the books and in the history records of al-Andalus. Finally, in a famous article Fierro, who had been studying heterodoxy in al-Andalus, pointed to Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī as the most possible author (Fierro “Bāṭinism in al-Andalus”). Nowadays most specialists of the *Picatrix* agree with her.

Among the reasoning given by Fierro, and endorsed by other authors are that in the classical sources about al-Majrīfī, neither the *Ghāya* nor the *Rutba* are mentioned—starting with the important *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* by Ibn Ṣā‘id. On the other hand, the preoccupations of al-Majrīfī do not seem to be very compatible with those of the author of the two treatises (Callatāy “Magia en al-Andalus” 311). In addition, all manuscripts of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* clarify that it was written between the years 343 and 348 of the Hijrah (954-960), although the manuscript of the *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* are not unanimous, but the most common date would be 339/950-342/953.⁶⁶ These dates exclude Maslama al-Majrīfī, who died in 1004 or 1007, and whose scientific activity coincides with the epoch of al-Ḥakam II (r. 961-976).

In order to correctly assign a date to these two books, specialists have repaired on a detail in the introductory text of the *Rutba*, where the author says several interesting facts, among them that he wrote the treaty after the *fitna* (in Arabic ‘civil strife,’) and that 150 years separated him from Jābir b. Ḥayyān (the famous author of alchemical books). Regarding the second, since Jābir was active in the second half of the second century hijrī, “if we take the year 180 as the date of Jābir’s death and we add 150 years, we have the year 330, which coincides with Maslama’s life span.” (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 130). The sources of the book also discard the authorship

⁶⁵ For instance Ibn Khaldūn in the *Kitāb al-‘ibar* (I, p. 497) affirms: “Luego vino Maslama ibn Aḥmad al- Majrīfī, el imam de los andalusíes por las matemáticas y por la magia. Hizo el resumen de todas esas obras y sintetizó sus métodos en un libro suyo llamado *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*. Nadie ha vuelto a escribir de eso desde entonces” (Callatāy “Towards the critical” 386).

⁶⁶ See Callatāy (“Magia en Al-Andalus” 309).

of al-Majrīfī, because, as Holmyard has studied (297) not one is posterior to the year 1000, and the latest author mentioned in the *Rutba* seems to be al-Rāzī (d. 925).⁶⁷

In Peninsular historiography, traditionally the *fitna* is interpreted as a reference to the period of turmoil which characterized the end of the Caliphate with the deposition of Hishām II b. al-Ḥakam in 1009. Nevertheless, Fierro (“Plants, Mary the Copt” 130) interprets the *fitna* mentioned in the *Ghāya* and the *Rutba* as a period of persecution against those who dealt with philosophy and esoteric wisdom (*ḥikma*); this period would have started with the execution of Maslama al-Qurṭubī’s pupil ‘Abd Allāh, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s son, in the year 338/950 or 339/951, and continued a year later with the persecution of Ibn Masarra’s followers, they were also condemned in decrees read in the mosque of Cordoba in 340/952, 345/956, and 346/957.⁶⁸ In the year 350/961, the same year in which the Caliph died, the jurist Ibn Yabqā permitted the Masarris to repent if they burned their books; then Maslama passed away in 353/964, during the reign of al-Ḥakam II. (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 130).

Under my interpretation it is precisely this *fitna* aroused against Maslama, the author of the *Picatrix*, and the followers of Ibn Masarra, which relegated Hermetic sciences from the privileged position they had held during the 9th century in al-Andalus to a forced hiding and secrecy—not strange for them since Hellenistic times. I argue that, when the Caliphate fell and the cultural wealth of al-Andalus started to be translated by Iberian and European scholars, that commitment to secrecy remained with them until the 12th century, when an official program of translation was undertaken in Toledo.

Since this is not a work about the specific contents of the *Hermetica*, but rather about the figure of Hermes, those who supported him, and their cultural contexts, I should not enter now into the specific content of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*. I just want to emphasize two things. The first, that it is mainly a work on astral magic, that is, how to perform magic by taking advantage of the influence of the stars on the terrestrial things. The principal tool of the magician are talismans and a specific category of charms known as *nīranj*.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Fierro clarifies that the latest sources mentioned in those works are Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246/861), Abū Ma’shar (d. 272/886), Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/901), Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (who died in 311/923 or 320/932), Abū Bishr Mattā b. Yūnus (d. 328/940) and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950). The author of the *Ghāya* also mentions that he consulted a work of the mystic al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 130). See also Pingree, “Some of the Sources” 2)

⁶⁸ In addition, as Fierro points out in 338/950 or 339/951 the prince was “accused of conspiring against his father, the caliph together with some other people, among them the Shāfi’ī scholar Abū ‘Abd al-Malik Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Barr (Fierro “Plants, Mary the Copt” 137).

⁶⁹ See Burnett (“*Nīranj*: a category of magic (almost) forgotten in the Latin West”).

For these reasons, this is a kind of magic relatively more acceptable for both Christian and Muslim authorities, in opposition to the demonic or ‘black’ magic, which uses the power of demons. The second important feature of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* is that it incorporates all the different traditions of Arab *Hermetica* and traditions on Hermes. It has been tempting to make here a short study of those traditions, especially because they have never been studied from the perspective of al-Andalus or the Iberian Peninsula, but the main focus of this work is the early modern and not the medieval period. In his *The Arabic Hermes*, van Bladel has made an important contribution, however, this author only mentions in passing, and only a couple of times, al-Andalus or Spain, despite the deep influence of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* or the translations of Arab *Hermetica* in Iberia in both the Arab and the Western world. In a private conversation van Bladel encouraged me to undertake that work, which I hope will be a natural continuation of these lines. I just mention that the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* gathers influence of:

1) The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica*, so defined precisely by van Bladel, and studied in a multitude of articles by Burnett (see Bibliography). These books (for instance, the *Kitāb al-Iṣṭamākhīs*) collect the alleged teachings from Aristotle to Alexander according to Hermes’s wisdom.

2) The *Rasā’il ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (*Epistles of the Brethren of purity*), a collection of about 50 letters compiled in Basra in the 9th-10th century which probably reflect the teachings of a Shī‘ī-Ismā‘īlī esoteric brotherhood, in which Hermes appears in a prominent place.⁷⁰ As I explained before, the Cordoban Caliphate feared the esoteric aspiration of their Shi‘i enemies of North Africa.

3) The Hermetic doctrines of the Sabeans of Ḥarrān, where pagan worshippers of the stars, allegedly mentioned in al-Qur’ān, were allowed to keep their religion and write philosophical treatises. In those books Hermes was mentioned many times as the main deity of the Sabeans. Important philosophers and scientists were from Ḥarrān, such as Thābit b. Qurra, directly mentioned in the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*.⁷¹

4) Books of astrology, alchemy, and magic, disciplines attributed to Hermes since Antiquity but coming from many traditions (like Indian, Persian, Mesopotamian) and authors such

⁷⁰ See in the bibliography the works of Marquet and Callataÿ on this tradition and its relationship with the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*. A complete recent bibliography in Callataÿ (*“Magia en Al-Andalus”*).

⁷¹ On the Ḥarrānians see for instance the comprehensive study of Green (*The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran*).

as the important astrologer Abū Ma‘shar or Jābir b. Ḥayyān, the famous compiler of alchemical books.⁷²

All these categories of Arab Hermetism were available for Maslama al-Qurtubī, and therefore in al-Andalus, before or after he came from his travel to the Near East and wrote the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*. These different kinds of magic and astrology were also available for the Western Christian world not only when Alfonso the Wise translated the *Picatrix* in the 13th century, but two centuries before, when the Caliphate of Cordoba collapsed and the activity of both Spanish and European translators started in Spain. As we will see in the next section, these translators organized themselves in interconfessional networks of learned men. These networks preserved the secrecy decreed for Hermetic works in the last years of the Caliphate, and continued to venerate Hermes as the main representative of the ancient wisdom they were looking for. In correspondence, Hermes mediated between the ancient world and what now we call “the Spain of the three cultures.”

Medieval Networks of Translators and Hermes Trimegistus

In this part of the chapter I explore the place of Hermetic knowledge in the Iberian Peninsula after the period of political turbulence that followed the breakdown of the Caliphate of Cordoba in 1031, which led to the subsequent creation of small Andalusī *ṭā’ifa* kingdoms.⁷³ Initially, every *ṭā’ifa* was ruled by a family or dynasty, for instance, the Banū Hūd in Saragossa whom I will touch on later. The *ṭā’ifa* kingdoms quickly started to fight among themselves, both military and culturally, but the very interesting fact for my study is that often they competed for the same resources regardless of their religion. Therefore, in the same way that, lacking military power, they hired Christian mercenaries—such as the celebrated Cid Campeador—the *ṭā’ifa* patronized famous poets, artisans, and scholars. For instance, in Saragossa the Banū Tuyib protected both the Jewish scholars Yoná Ibn Yanáh (d. 1050), Ibn Gabirol (1020-1058), and

⁷² On Abū Ma‘shar see Pingree (*The Thousands*).

⁷³ From the moment that the Caliph Hisham II is forced to abdicate in 1009 to the formal abolition of the Caliphate in 1031 there were nine Caliphs in Cordoba among a total confusion of the different powers (military, political, and religious) and races (Berbers, Arabs, Muladi, and Slavic freedmen), as a result of which nine smaller *ṭā’ifa* kingdoms abandoned the centralized power of Cordoba: Almería, Murcia, Alpuente, Arcos, Badajoz, Carmona, Denia, Granada, Huelva, Morón, Silves, Toledo, Tortosa, Valencia y Zaragoza (Saragossa). When the last Caliph, Hisham III, lost power, the rest of the provinces of al-Andalus proclaimed their independence as well.

Hasday ibn Hasday (d. 1093) as well as the Arabs Abd al-Rahman al-Kirmani (975-1066)⁷⁴ and Ibn Bājja (d.1138), also known as Avempace.

The absence of a strong centralized power in these small Muslim kingdoms made it difficult for them to resist the advance of the Christian kingdoms in the north, however, it is precisely this lack of a powerful unified authority which created interesting cultural phenomena in which I argue that Hermes had a strong protagonism. In a recent work, Dangler considers that network theory concepts are particularly useful to analyze both this ‘decentralized’ period and the cultural and political processes that took place in it; Dangler follows Kea when he described, as I examined above, that starting in the eleventh century, “political associations and power relations between Iberian domains manifest shifts in a malleable, polycentric formation comprised of interaction networks.”⁷⁵ Dangler also complements the Islamicate cultural domain defined by Hodgson with a progressively stronger ‘Hispanicate’ influence from the northern Christian kingdoms. However, especially during the 11th-13th centuries, between the kingdoms of *ṭā’ifa* and Alfonso the Wise, the Islamicate and Hispanicate cultural worlds worked together to configure a particular network framing in which Hermes had an important involvement.

Dangler also reminds that these political realignments starting in the 11th century between Hispanicate and Andalusí polities “cannot be reduced to a simple Christian, Muslim struggle, but rather, reflected larger changes in the Islamicate world-system and in Europe” (Dangler 94), thus, European economic and political expansion “was bolstered by substantial aid in Hispanicate territory by religious groups at Cluny and later Cîteaux;”⁷⁶ as we will see, the reception of Hermetic culture was favored by the Neoplatonic school of Chartres, and some of the scholars and translators who came to Spain were directly related to Cluny (such as Robert of Ketton).

Therefore, during the cultural and political interaction of the *ṭā’ifa* kingdoms in the absence of a prevalent peninsular power there appeared what we can define as ‘networks.’ Dangler follows network theory as conceived by Manuel Castells, which defines the network “as a series of decentralized, interconnected nodes that are adaptable and flexible rather than fixed and static”

⁷⁴ And al-Kirmānī (d. 1065), a disciple of al-al-Majrīfī allegedly introduced the *Rasā’il ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* in Spain, although they were previously known by the author of the Picatrix as well.

⁷⁵ See Kea (“Expansions and Contractions” 726) in Dangler (Edging toward Iberia 93).

⁷⁶ In this way “Hispanicate kingdoms were recast to fit European models with, for instance, the change from the Mozarabic to the Roman liturgy, a move facilitated by monks from Cluny” (Dangler 94).

(Dangler 94); in this formulation, nodes are significant “in a system, not for their inherent characteristics or qualities, but because of their contribution to the network’s goals,” in addition, when the involvement of a node weakens “networks tend to reconfigure themselves by possibly relinquishing and adding nodes” (Dangler 94). I am going to refer to a network of elite scholars among the three Abrahamic religions who were especially active during the period of the *tā’ifa* kingdoms. During this convulse period, the political circumstances constantly weakened, strengthened, or changed, and so did the nodes. Actually, since no strongly hierarchized state controlled these scholars, they benefited from patrons and small leaders but were able to develop their own goals as a system, since their network consisted in horizontal relations between nodes, in contrast to the vertical hierarchies which were prevalent just before the *tā’ifa* period, in the Caliphate of Cordoba, and immediately after, with the Castilian kings Fernando III and Alfonso X. In this way, as Dangler points out, Network theory provides a framework “for interrogating conditions in medieval Iberia, including vertical and horizontal arrangements, the role of technology, collective and individual identities, conditions of exchange, regulations in commerce and travel, and the organization and function of political realms” (Dangler 42). I suggest that in the network of learned men I investigate, Hermes Trimegistus himself had a ubiquitous role as cultural mediator. Following Latour, as cultural mediator I understand an agent beyond a mere intermediary, because his presence modifies and “multiplies the difference” in the exchanges (*Reassembling the Social* 81&ss). As we will see, peninsular and European scholars did not limit themselves to translating and transmitting the Hermetic knowledge in books, but also created and developed their own Hermetic wisdom in works like *De essentiis* by Herman of Carinthia and the *Secret of Creation* by Hugo de Santalla, always written as a vindication of the science of Hermes himself.

Therefore, the convoluted political situation in al-Andalus in the 10th-11th centuries which I have just described provoked the access to an immense cultural wealth, far beyond the spoils from the wars among Christian and Muslim kingdoms. In this environment, networks of learned men could proceed freer, and their activity attracted scholars from beyond the Pyrenees who joined or created their own networks and started to collaborate in a formidable translation process:

Abelard of Bath, Herman of Carinthia, Daniel of Morley, Robert of Chester, etc.⁷⁷ Among the peninsular population, refugees from different areas, scholars who remained in conquered cities, or just those attracted by new nodes, joined the activity in many places—one of them was probably Hugo de Santalla, on whom I will focus soon. These processes, demonstrate that, as Dangler points out, al-Andalus was not only a core component of the Islamicate trade network but also served “as a hub of cultural, diplomatic and economic exchange among people from diverse regions” and also as an essential conduit for the transmission of cultural and material goods “from Baghdad and Damascus to Gaul and northern Europe” (*Edging Towards Iberia* 53). As Haskins studied one hundred years ago “the Arabs of Spain were the principal source of the new learning for western Europe” (Haskins *Studies in Mediaeval* 5). On the other hand, this phenomenon also proves that Iberia was integrated in the Islamicate world “even in Hispanicate-dominated territory” (*Edging Towards Iberia* 53).

Among the culture which those learned men wanted to achieve the most desired was that from the books of Hermetic sciences (alchemy, astrology, and magic). But this kind of wisdom was still impregnated with that secrecy dating to the 10th century in the Caliphate of Cordoba when, as we saw, scholars such as Ibn Masarra were prosecuted during the *fitna*. This heritage intermingled with the fact that, as Burnett points out, before the days of mass education and universal literacy “the ability to read and the possession of magical powers often merged in the popular imagination” (Burnett “The translating activity” 1038), but actually the scholars fitted this popular image to a certain extent, since in the first encounters with the transmission of Arabic science “we find the exact sciences inextricably mixed up with astrology and magic and their transmission hedged with language redolent of a mystery religion” (Burnett “The translating activity” 1038). I propose that this secrecy would not disappear until Alfonso X’s pre-Humanism which sought to divulgate and transmit that knowledge within a renewed system of knowledge and *Paideia*, paradoxically, also presided by Hermes himself, who adapted to the new situation. But

⁷⁷ For information about the translation process see, for instance Haskins (*Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*), Burnett (“The translating activity in medieval Spain,” “Some Comments on the Translating of Works from Arabic into Latin in the Mid-Twelfth century,” and many other publications), d’Alverny (“Translations and Translators”), Daniel (*The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*), Lindberg (“The Transmission of Greek and Arabic learning to the West”), Menocal (*The Arabic role in Medieval Literary History*), and Vernet (*La cultural hispanoárabe en Oriente y Occidente*).

now let's see some examples prior to Alfonso X, when the mystery and confidentiality of knowledge was pervasive.

Hugo de Santalla in Tarazona, a Node in the 12th Century Network of Hermetic Scholars

Hugo de Santalla, was a prominent translator and scholar who worked in the region of Aragon during the 12th century. Although some of his works have been preserved, not much is known about him, except that his second name is probably a gentilic from Galicia.⁷⁸ He translated into Latin numerous Arabic books of *Hermetica* related to sciences such as alchemy, astrology, magic, and divination. In the rest of the chapters of this study I will emphasize how paratexts (i.e. dedications, prologues) are a fundamental source of information about early modern scholars, distinctly those interested in Hermes; regarding some medieval authors, sometimes the paratexts are the only evidence we have about their life and activities, as it happens with Hugo de Santalla himself.

Therefore, from the only addressee of his works, we know that Hugo de Santalla worked for Michael, bishop of Tarazona from 1119 (when the Aragonese king Alfonso the Battler conquered the city) until 1151. As Haskins has studied, Michael established a center of studies in Tarazona to which different scholars were attracted (*Studies in Mediaeval science* 68). For the purposes of my work, what really matters is that the bishop Michal collaborated with Muslim nobility and scholars, since Hugo de Santalla and his translations benefitted from this collaboration. Close to Tarazona there is another town now called Rueda de Jalón, there lived the last of the Banū Hūd, the learned Arab dynasty who had ruled the *tā'ifa* of Saragossa from 1038 until 1110. In 1110 the Banū Hūd had been expelled from Saragossa by the Almoravids,⁷⁹ however, Alfonso the Battler defeated the Almoravids, conquered the city in 1118, and allowed the Banū Hūd—with whom he had an excellent relationship—to establish in Rueda de Jalón. There, Sayf

⁷⁸ In Galicia there are many towns with this name, which derives from a contraction of Sancta Eulalia or Santa Olalla (in Galician language).

⁷⁹ The Almoravids were an imperial Berber dynasty from North Africa who came to Spain called by some *tā'ifa* princes threatened by the Christian kings of Castile and Aragon. However, the powerful Almoravids eventually conquered many *tā'ifa* kingdoms and became a powerful leverage to the Christian power.

al-Dawla, the last of the Banū Hūd, was neighbor of Michael, bishop of Tarazona (only 55km away)⁸⁰ with whom he also held a cultural exchange.

Sayf al-Dawla brought to Rueda de Jalón part of the wondrous library his family gathered in Saragossa and, as a clear example of the cultural exchange I am examining, he offered Michael some books which Hugo de Santalla would translate for him. Sayf al-Dawla and Michael's friendship is attested by the confidentiality and secrecy with which some of those books were preserved. In the preface of one of his books, Hugo de Santalla mentions Sayf al-Dawla's library as *armarium rotense* (from *rota*/ Rueda). This preface is in a commentary of the tables of al-Khwārizmī. This same work was translated into Hebrew by the important Jewish writer and scholar Ibn Ezra, who lived in Tudela, close both to Tarazona and Rueda de Jalón (and all of them belonged to Michael's bishopric). As Haskins points out, Ibn Ezra and Santalla's translations of al-Khwārizmī have certain parallelisms (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 74). This fact suggests the involvement of Jewish scholars in a network around this node of Tarazona. In a posterior phase of my work I want to explore further the involvement of Ibn Ezra and other Jewish scholars in this network, since Ezra mentions Hermes or Idris in numerous occasions in his works, and even reproduces one of the few medieval fragments from the *Hermetica* in his writings.

Therefore, as he himself tells us, Hugo de Santalla found the original Arabic of al-Khwārizmī in the library of Rueda de Jalón (*in Rotensi armario*) "among the more secret inwards of the library" (*inter secretiora bibliotece penetralia*); as Santalla tells his Patron Michael, there the book of al-Khwārizmī "deserved to find your eagerness of philosophizing" (*quod... tua insaciabilis filosofandi aviditas meruit repperiri*).⁸¹ As Burnett points out, Santalla's words suggests "a part of the library specially designated for the non-Muslim sciences and magic" and he "certainly wishes to foster the impression that he is passing on secret knowledge which must not be divulged to other than worthy individuals" (Burnett "The translating activity" 1042). This keenness of secrecy is also found in other prefaces of Hugo de Santalla, for instance in that of the *Centiloquium* by the Pseudo-Ptolemy (a book of astrological aphorisms). There, Hugo advises his master "not to commit the secrets of such a great wisdom to somebody unworthy or to allow anyone to share in the secrets who rejoices in the number of his books rather than being pleased

⁸⁰ Until 1140, when he was forced to relinquish Rueda de Jalón in exchange for some lands near Toledo (Burnett "The translating activity" 1041).

⁸¹ I translate the original Latin reproduced in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 73)

with the knowledge of them” (*ne tante sapientie archana cuilibet indigno tractanda commictas et ne quemlibet participem adhibeas qui potius gaudet librorum numero quam eorum delectetur artificio*).⁸²

Before entering into Hugo’s connection with Hermes, I want to mention that there is also a stimulating bond between Hugo de Santalla and Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*, specifically the section *On the Magicians* (*De magi* VIII.ix), which I mentioned before, and where Hermes has a prominent role as related to all kinds of divination. Hugo de Santalla mentions, as Burnett highlights, that he is trying to find amongst the Arabs the four species of divination mentioned (and incidentally condemned) by Isidore of Seville: divination by earth, water, air, and fire, respectively (Burnett “The translating activity” 1042). This is another evidence of Isidore’s long-lasting influence in the Iberian Peninsula, and how his taxonomies, including those related to Hermes conditioned the work of scholars of the three religions for centuries.

Santalla thought that all this astonishing and secret knowledge which was being discovered pertained not only to his patron Michael, but also to a secret society of scholars in which I see a metaphorical allusion to that network of learned men interested in Hermetic sciences who were operating, for instance, around Tarazona with the patronage of Michael and his contact with erudite men from the three religions. Burnett points to this “secret society of an intellectual elite” (“The translating activity” 1043), which Santalla fully states in the preface of a book of geomancy (divination through the earth) not translated but authored by him.⁸³ In this book we read:

Hence all created beings, whether rational or irrational or inanimate, show the same obedience to God, and, although in their lives they have descended to the rank of mortal beings, they venerate him as a result of unity alone. Holding all things in the form of images before they come into being, He pours a kind of intuitive and intellectual motion of them into the secret place (*arcanum*) of men’s hearts. Eventually such a state of creation comes into being that God is able to associate by a kind of bond the foremost and most venerate teachers.... So that all discord having been put aside, the rational or “positive justice” can join them together through an equable bond.⁸⁴

Burnett finds here “a picture of a special bond between men who have been privileged to receive God’s gift or intuitive knowledge,” and this bond would produce “a state of peace in human society

⁸² In Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 70)

⁸³ Haskins says that Hugo is the author of this elaborate treatise on geomancy “based upon the work of an unknown Tripolitan (Alatrabulucus) and sufficient to give him a certain reputation among vernacular writers as an authority of this art, which he seems to have introduced into Latin Europe” (Haskins *Studies in Mediaeval Science* 78).

⁸⁴ Original Latin in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 78) translation by Burnett (“The translating activity” 1043).

(...) parallel to the bonds which govern and preserve the universe” (Burnett “The translating activity” 1043). I suggest that Santalla is actually referring to a network of learned men or ‘philosophers,’ blessed by God regardless of their religion, like his bishop Michael, Sayf al-Dawla (the last of the Banū Hūd dynasty), the learned Jew ibn Ezra, or himself; men later described in his text as *sapientes ad philosophandum pronos* “wise men inclined to philosophizing,” and *universos philosophie professores* (all the professor of philosophy).⁸⁵ This network of learned men would join and share knowledge in nodes like the one around Tarazona in Aragon. This knowledge would be secret because among the sages of Antiquity there are reports of as many worthy as unworthy men in the practice of the philosophers (*apud sapientium quamplurimus dignos et indignos in usu fuisse philosophorum antiquitas refert*). Therefore, in this way Santalla offers to his worthy contemporary philosophers a minimum part from the wealth of the ancient (wise) men (*ex priscorum opulentia huiusmodi munusculum adporto*).⁸⁶ But, who were those wise men of antiquity whose knowledge Hugo de Santalla is sharing with his network of wise men? In a prominent place Hermes Trimegistus, to whom Santalla refers in most of his works. For instance, Hermes appears related to all kinds of divination, and so Santalla affirms in the prologue of his treatise of spatulamancy (divination through the shoulder blades of sheep) that on this art, Hermes was read (or chosen) among the Greeks (*apud Grecos Hermes fuisse legitur*).⁸⁷

However, the most relevant hint to Hermes’s importance in Santalla’s work, and hence in his network, is in his most personal and important work, entitled *Hermetis Trimegesti Liber de secretis naturae et occultis rerum causis ab Apollonio translatus*, *The Book of Hermes Trimegistus on the Secrets of Nature and the Occult Causes of Things Translated from Apollonius*, also called, the *Secret of Creation* by the Pseudo-Apollonius, which is supposed to be an account by Hermes Trimegistus of the creation of the world. Effectively the book begins as “the book of Apollonius on the principal causes of things and first of the celestial bodies and stars and planets and also of minerals and animals, and finally of men.”⁸⁸ Burnett highlights how throughout this work there is an emphasis “on the idea of an underlying unity in nature and of bonds connecting every level of creation. For all things derive from one substance and one seed” (Burnett “The translating activity” 1043). This kind of belief is exemplified by a small text contained in this book of Hugo de Santalla,

⁸⁵ Original Latin in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 78), my translation here.

⁸⁶ Again, original Latin in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 78), my translation here.

⁸⁷ Original Latin in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 79), my translation here.

⁸⁸ Original Latin in Haskins (*Studies in Mediaeval Science* 79), my translation here.

the *Emerald Tablet*, or *Tabula Smaragdina*, an enigmatic piece of the *Hermetica*, and so written by Hermes himself, who would reveal the secrets of the *materia prima* and its transmutations. This translation by Hugo de Santalla was the first made into Latin of this book which would have a long-lasting popularity in the secret art of the Alchemists, from the medieval ones to Isaac Newton himself, who made his own translation of the *Emerald Tablet*, following the footsteps of Hugo de Santalla in the 12th century.⁸⁹ A history of Iberian Hermetic alchemy is not the purpose of my work now, I just want to focus on the erudite networks formed around Tarazona in this epoch.

Kahane & Pietrangeli, have studied possible influences of this network of erudite and translators from the zone of Tarazona in the neighboring south of France and even Germany; they affirm that Wolfram von Eschenbach (1170-c.1220), the author of *Parzival*, was informed of the Hermetic sciences which appear in the book by his informant Kyot who was, according to them, a Navarrese jongleur and geomancer, William of Tudela (d. 1214), the author of the first part of the *Chanson de la Croisade albigeoise* (1210-1212). This would explain both the impact of Hermetic lore and of 12th century Spain on Wolfram's work (Kahane & Pietrangeli "Hermetism in the Alfonsine" 443).⁹⁰ Among these influences the most remarkable one is geomancy, an art that William of Tudela affirms to know in the prologue of the *Croisade albigeoise*,⁹¹ as we have seen, the first and most important translation of a book on geomancy was by Hugo de Santalla.

Important Jewish scholars such as Ibn Ezra (1086-1164) and Judah Halevi (d. 1141) worked in Tudela. Other illustrious translators who worked in this area were Hermann of Carinthia (d. after 1144) and Robert of Ketton. As Burnett attests, Robert was canon in the city of Tudela,⁹² another hint of possible contacts is that Hermann knew several of the same sources as Hugo de Santalla, and "perhaps also had access to the library of the Banū Hūd" (Burnett "The translating activity" 1044). In his main original work, a cosmogony called *De essentiis (On the Essences)*, Hermann cites the *Emerald Tablet* from the *Secret of Creation* and mentions several other

⁸⁹ This translation by Isaac Newton can be found among his alchemical papers in King's College Library, Cambridge University. See Newman (*The Chymistry of Isaac Newton*).

⁹⁰ For instance Trevizent, the name of Parzival's mystagogue, would derive from Treble escient (Threefold wisdom) and Latin *triplex scientia* (as used by Hugo de Santalla), from the Arabic epithet for Hermes Muṭallaṭ bil-ḥikma (Thrice-Sage) (Kahane & Pietrangeli "Hermetism in the Alfonsine" 444).

⁹¹ See in Eugène Martin-Chabot (*La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*).

⁹² In Burnett ("The translating activity" 1044)

Hermetic works⁹³ (also appearing, for instance, in the *Picatrix*).⁹⁴ A similar concern that we have seen before about the secrecy of his activity can be found in the preface to *On the Essences*, addressed to his friend Robert of Ketton. In this preface, Hermann makes a significant contrast between the “secrets” (*secreta*) and the “public schools.” Hermann notes that he and Robert have been working together night and day on the “intimate treasures of the Arabs” (*intimi Arabum thesauri*) in the “inner sanctuaries of Minerva” (*adyta Minerve*), and Hermann is now considering “whether it is appropriate to make the fruits of their research public” (Burnett “The translating activity” 1044). Hermann is afraid of being as guilty as Numenius, who divulged the Eleusinian mysteries and consequently “saw the Eleusinian goddesses in a dream dressed as prostitutes available for use to all and sundry” however, in Hermann’s case, the Goddess Minerva reassures him—also in a dream—that “her attributes are not diminished by being made freely available and should be given out liberally.”⁹⁵ Later in this work I will show how early modern Spanish scholars continued to write books entitled or dedicated to Hermes and Minerva (as Patón and El Brocense, respectively). It is difficult to know the extent of that liberality with knowledge which Hermann intends, but actually, both Robert and Hermann were very well connected with the most important European Church authorities. Thus, Robert promises Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, who was in charge of promoting the reform of Cluny in Spain, “a celestial gift which embraces within itself the whole of science,” and Hermann sent one of his translations (that of Ptolemy’s *Planisphere*) to Thierry of Chartres, “the foremost educator in France of the second quarter of the 12th century.”⁹⁶ A similar work to Hermann’s *De essentiis* is the *Cosmographia* by Bernardus Silvestris (d. after 1159) which also refers to the Latin *Asclepius* and other books of Hermes. Both treatises, the *Cosmographia* and *De essentiis* were written under the influence of Thierry of Chartres, and Bernardus also dedicated his book to him (Heiduk “Revealing Wisdom’s Underwear” 136). In the preface of these books Hermann recounts how Thierry was engaged in compiling an annotated “library” of texts on the seven liberal arts, for which he needed Arab

⁹³ Hermann quotes the *Asclepius* to illustrate that demons “were perfectly capable of emotions and took particular pleasure in gifts of honour offered by humans: games, sacrifices and most of all musical performances emulating the celestial harmonies” (Hermann of Carinthia *De essentiis* 348).

⁹⁴ See Burnett (“Hermann of Carinthia and the *Kitāb al-Iṣṭamāʿīs*”).

⁹⁵ See Burnett (*Hermann of Carinthia, De Essentiis* 70-73). Hermann felt much indebted to his honored teacher Thierry of Chartres, to whom he refers in this preface of his translation of Ptolemy’s *Planispheres* as *diligentissime preceptor Theodorice* (‘most beloved teacher Thierry’) and *Platonis animam celitus iterum mortalibus accommodatam* (‘who accommodates Plato’s soul from heaven among mortals again’), (Hermann of Carinthia, *De essentiis* 348).

⁹⁶ See Burnett (“The translating activity” 1044).

translations.⁹⁷ A complete task of the same kind would be undertaken by Alfonso the Wise in Toledo, preceded by the School of Translators which worked there. In the next section I will briefly address this school of Toledo, and then the figure of Alfonso the Wise. These projects were organized hierarchically up-down, and so I consider Network theory less fruitful for their analysis, unlike the network of translators around the node of Tarazona-Tudela-Rueda del Jalón which I have just examined.

This node functioned as part of a system bigger than the individual kingdoms—actually, during this period parts of this region changed owner from Aragon to Castile—, its members even came from beyond the Iberian Peninsula, or pertained to different religious confessions, that is why the patronage of Michael, bishop of Tarazona, is less determinant than the one of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’ II in Cordoba, or Alfonso X in Castile, being Michael another member of the network rather than its head. I have reconstructed this network through paratexts: dedicatories, prefaces, or small texts included in bigger works (like *The Emerald Table*). This will be also the way with which I will examine early modern networks. I also consider this node as a possible first example and guiding principle of interconfessional Iberian circles of learned men, which Wasserstrom described years ago and now I analyzed helped by Network theory. I agree with Wasserstrom (Jewish-Muslim Relations 73) when he says that “the figure of Hermes stood for a transconfessional wisdom, a universal revelation, which doctrine further endorsed Muslim study of Jewish works,” and also that he provided “an elite interconfessionalism in which terminology and mythical constructs are shared across religious boundaries.” I think that this Iberian Jewish-Muslim cultural relationship, which Wasserton successfully justifies can be extended not only to the Spanish Jews abroad and then in the Diaspora, and Andalusian philosophers and mystics who died in the Near East (Ibn Sab‘īn, Ibn ‘Arabī),⁹⁸ but also to the Christian cultural elites, especially after the translation movement.

Therefore, I consider that the cultural and political conditions created by the fall of the Caliphate of Cordova and the emergence of the *ṭā’ifa* kingdoms triggered the best possible conditions for these interconfessional circles and networks. Therefore, the hermetic ideas allowed

⁹⁷ See Burnett (“The translating activity” 1044).

⁹⁸ This author affirms that through figures like Maimonides and Ibn ‘Arabī “The epochal greatness of the Spanish emigrants, in fact, may be sensed as a matter of thresholds: they operated between East and West, between ancient and modern, between philosophy and mysticism, and between Muslim and Jew. This export of *convivencia*, with its veritable connoisseurship of thresholds (*Schellenkunde*), unmistakably reshaped the Mediterranean intellectual world” (Wasserstrom 1999 78)

an intellectual *convivencia*⁹⁹ (*coexistence*) at least among the intellectual Muslim, Jewish and Christian cultures. In truth, I think that hermetic ideas also favored a better consideration of the intellectual creations from other religious communities, usually the target of polemical writings. In the future, I would also like to explore what Wasserstrom defines (and still works) as “the still little-studied intercultural context for Spanish philosophy”, which included, for instance “a certain shared curriculum” which included works such as the *Theology of Aristotle* and the *Liber de Causis* (“Jewish-Muslim Relations” 73), although many things have been written since Wasserstrom affirmed this, there is still much to be done. I consider interesting that while in Castile the king Alfonso the Wise embraced the figure of Hermes and divulged his ‘secrets,’ in Jewish and Muslim circles, as Wasserstrom observed, Hermes became part of Mystical currents (Kabbalah and Sufism) and “esoterism flourished among elites who believed that they alone actualized the theory of philosophy and perfected the practice of mysticism” (“Jewish-Muslim Relations” 73). In this sense one of the most important hermetic mystic and philosophers from al-Andalus was Ibn Sab‘īn (1217-1270). Cornell (1997 53) remarks that the lost treatise of Ibn Sab‘īn *Sharḥ kitāb Idrīs* (*commentary of the Book of Idrīs*) was a commentary on a scripture attributed to the Jewish prophet Enoch or Hermes Trimegistus; moreover the most important of Sab‘īn’s books, the *Budd al-‘ārif* (*The prerequisites of the gnostic*), begins in this way:

I petitioned God to propagate the wisdom which Hermes Trimegistus (*al-harāmisa*) revealed in the earliest times, the realities that prophetic guidance has made beneficial, the happiness that is sought by every person of guidance, the light by which every Fully-Actualized Seeker wishes to be illuminated, the Knowledge that will no longer be broadcasted or disseminated from (Hermes) in future ages and the secret (*sirr*) from which and through which and for the sake of which the prophets were sent (in Cornell *The Way of the Axial Intellect* 54).

The Sufi makes clear that the source of his doctrines is Hermes Trimegistus, not some Shaykh or Muḥammad. The function of the prophet is not to originate doctrine but to reaffirm a primordial wisdom that transcends all the revealed religions. Sab‘īn puts the origin of this wisdom long before the advent of his own. I see in these lines a common factor present in the texts by Hugo de Santalla and Hermann of Carinthia that I examined before, including the calling upon some privileged ‘enlightened’ by God without considering their religion, and the fact that they are able to distil wisdom from the legacy of the wise men of the past, starting from Hermes himself. Actually,

Cornell (1997 61-63) also demonstrates the relationship of some Sab‘īn’s doctrines with the Hermetic writings and books attributed to Hermes which were translated into Arabic.

Although I will stop with Alfonso X for my set of examples about Hermes’s admirers and keepers, I think that a close examination of Ibn Sab‘īn’s network in al-Andalus and then in North Africa, as well as interconfessional contacts, would be an extension of the task I have initiated here. However, for now I want to focus on the cultural node of Toledo, where Church authorities and then the King committed to the translation task, pulled Hermes out of his veil of secrecy, and then developed a vernacular and ‘multicultural’ pre-Humanism which took advantage of all the previous interconfessional contacts like the ones I have just described.

The Medieval Humanism of Alfonso the Wise and Hermes Trimegistus

When the activity of this network of translators around the node of Tarazona-Tudela-Rueda del Jalón started to vanish, an even more comprehensive and ‘official’ program of translators was undertaken and planned in Toledo. Toledo had been conquered from the Muslims in 1085, and this conquest had an enormous symbolic value for Christians, since Toledo had been the capital of the Visigothic kingdom until the Arab conquest. Very soon, the authorities decided to take advantage of the cultural richness of the city, in which many Jews and Muslims lived. This was the case with the successive archbishops such as Raymond de Sauvetât or Raimundo de Toledo (d. 1152), a monk of Cluny who allegedly launched the school of translators. Another driving force of this current was the philosopher and translator Dominicus Gundisalvi or Domingo Gundisalvo (c. 1115-c.1190). Gundisalvi translated important Arab works and wrote five important treatises which accommodate in the Latin tradition Jewish and Arab philosophical achievements like the ones of Avicenna, al-Fārābī, or Ibn Gabirol.

Gundisalvi also symbolizes a fundamental change with respect to the erudite networks of translators, since he took a first step in a direction that Alfonso the Wise would follow: abandoning the secrecy and exclusiveness of the wisdom transmitted by the Arabs. As Jolivet points out, Gundisalvi seems to react “to a secret intellectual elite” and considers that “it is no longer possible to be a sage (*sapiens*); one can only aspire to be proficient in certain sciences, or at least to know something about a few of them” (Jolivet “The Arabic inheritance” 135-136). To facilitate this task, Gundisalvi describes each one of the sciences in his *De scientiis*, drawing largely on the translation of al-Fārābī’s *Classification of the Sciences* made by the also important translator Gerard of

Cremona, who was working in Toledo at the same time. This Arab model of scientific knowledge will be a constant during medieval pre-Humanism which I will describe below. In posterior chapters, I will compare this model to the ones of posterior stages of Humanism, including the role which Hermes played in each one of them.¹⁰⁰

Gerald of Cremona¹⁰¹ came to Toledo in search of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the 2nd century book of Astronomy, in the same way that Daniel of Morley came from Paris looking for Arab wisdom, disappointed with the current state of culture in Europe. Thus, this new generation of translators joined the 'official' program of Castilian authorities—which included Arabs, Mozarabs (Christians who had lived under Muslim power), and many courtly Jews—and not an elitist network of scholars as it had happened before. The 'international connections' of scholars like Gerald of Cremona and Daniel of Morley partly explain why these translations were made into Latin. As it is well known, in this first stage of the School of Translators of Toledo usually a Jew helped to make a translation into Castilian and then a translation into Latin was made from the Castilian version.

An important change happened with the arrival of Alfonso X (1252-1284), since the last stage of the process was often suppressed, and many of the most important translations were made only into Spanish. With this transformation, the king not only gave prestige to the Castilian language, but also contributed to a project of political centralization, which intended to integrate all members of his kingdom regardless of their religion, with the language that all of them spoke. This centralization was accompanied by a cultural project, described for instance by Márquez Villanueva (*El concepto cultural alfonsí*). This project, as Dangler recently pointed out, did not seek "to diminish or eliminate Islamicate power" but to integrate Muslim culture in a common project, in this way

The king's centralizing goals also represented a novel, large-scale political and cultural project, carried out in collaboration with the largest and most erudite group of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim intellectuals of his time in all of western Europe. Alfonso X's idea of *Espanna* was not limited to Christianate realms, but also included the peninsula's Islamicate kingdom (Dangler *Edging Towards Iberia* 95-96).

¹⁰⁰ Especially 'The Humanist' defined by Baltasar de Céspedes in 1600, which incorporates a completely different classification of sciences.

¹⁰¹ Described as the deacon "Girardus" in a document of the Cathedral of Toledo of 11 March 1162, and as "Girardus called master" (Girardus dictus magister) in two later documents of the Cathedral (March 1174 and March 1176). All three documents are also signed by Dominicus (Burnett "The translating activity" 1045).

In this way, Alfonso started the process to transform the sometimes permeable frontiers between kingdoms that we have seen before “into an eventual national boundary” (Dangler *Edging Towards Iberia* 95-96). Some studies compare the similitude of Alfonso the Wise’s political and cultural project with the one of his rival Almohad rulers,¹⁰² who had taken over the political power in al-Andalus. In this sense, Fierro sustains that the Almohad project of sapience which was to ultimately achieve “a radical political transformation,” served as the framework for Alfonso X’s political and cultural goals.¹⁰³ Dangler argues that, although al-Andalus no longer held the same political power as before, Andalusí cultural models continued to be the standards for Christian rulers like Alfonso X (*Edging Towards Iberia* 111). Marquez Villanueva raised an important question: what can we think about a Christian king who founded universities with a western model and at the same time another to study Arabic and Arab sciences (closer to a madrasa)? (*El concepto cultural alfonsí* 18). In my work I want to determine to what extent Alfonso’s devotion for Hermes Trimegistus and Hermetic sciences favored the interconfessional model represented by this pre-Humanism, which successfully knew how to integrate non-Christian culture in the Christian court of the wise king. For the definition and parameters of pre-Humanism I am following the recent study of Salvador Martínez (*El humanismo medieval y Alfonso X el sabio*), which I will relate with Hermes and the pagan culture he represented.¹⁰⁴

Although this pre-Humanism originated earlier, probably due to the first steps in the medieval translations I described before, the vernacular humanism manifested itself in a clear and definite way in the court of Alfonso X. As Martínez recalls, Menéndez Pidal was one of the first to identify this Humanism and called it “vulgar or romance.”¹⁰⁵ ‘Vernacular’ points to the *medium*, or linguistic vehicle used by the Castilian Humanism of 13th century (from the Latin *vernaculus*: indigenous, national, and autochthonous), identified with romance, or vulgar language, that is, the language spoken by the people, in opposition to the Latin used by the cultural elites (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 17). In this sense, from his hierarchical position Alfonso ‘imposed’ Castilian as a culture language in a vertical way, and distanced his activities from the Christian members of

¹⁰² The Almohad Caliphate was another political power which came from North Africa, like the Almoravids which I mentioned before. The Almohads defeated the weakened Almoravids and ruled al-Andalus from approximately one century (c. 1147-1269).

¹⁰³ See Fierro (“Alfonso X ‘The Wise’: The Last Almohad Caliph” 194).

¹⁰⁴ As Martínez points out, the existence of a medieval Humanism, sometimes disputed, has been successfully defended by authors like Southern and Minnis. See Minnis, Scott, and Wallace (*Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism* 1-15).

¹⁰⁵ Menéndez Pidal was talking about the peculiarities of the *General Estoria* (“De Alfonso a los dos Juanes” 68).

elitist networks which operated in a horizontal way and only used Latin. In this sense, vernacular Humanism is also different from Florentine Humanism, which only used Latin as well.

However, as ‘vernacular’ Martínez also understands a secular and laic pedagogical purpose, in opposition to the pervasive religious principles in any ‘official’ project in previous times (*El humanismo medieval* 15). Of course, there were still references to God, the divine providence and Christian dogmas, but there was an inclination towards the secularization of culture.¹⁰⁶ Actually, when we talk about “medieval Humanism,” either Latin or vernacular, we imply certain characteristics, which Martínez dates back to Antiquity, specifically, to the *Attic nights* of the Latin grammarian and erudite Aulus Gellius (125-165CE). According to Gellius, those who used Latin in its proper way did not give to the word *humanitas* only the sense that is usually understood, that is, what the Greeks called *philanthropy*, a friendly and benevolent attitude to all men without discrimination; actually, those ‘good’ Latin users also gave to *humanitas* the strength of other Greek word, *paideia*, which is what we understand as “instruction and erudition in the fine arts.” Those eager to possess those arts would be the ‘most human’ (*humanissimi*), because that eagerness has been conceded only to humans, among all the animals.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the two meanings of the word *humanitas* (*philantropia*, love to humans, and *paideia*, knowledge and learning of the liberal arts) are two distinctive notes of the human being and his ‘humanity’ (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 18). So, it is more human he who cultivates the liberal arts or, as Alfonso X said later, “los saberes.”¹⁰⁸ When we talk about Humanism, the second meaning, *paideia*, usually prevails which later, in 15th century Florence meant the recovery of Classical Greek and Latin literature, by cultivating the *humaniore litterae* o *studia humanitatis*. In the third chapter I will define this *studia humanitatis* and their differences with the medieval models of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. Now I just want to point out that Italian Humanism focused on the

¹⁰⁶ As Martínez points out, the implications of the diffusion of Aristotle’s *libri naturales* were extraordinary, especially in relation to the achievement of happiness in this world, and not in the uncertain afterlife (*El humanismo medieval* 15).

¹⁰⁷ *Qui verba latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, ‘humanitatem’ non id esse voluerunt quod vulgus existimat quodque a Graecis philanthropia dicitur et significat dexteritatem quondam benevolentiamque erga omnes homines promiscuam: sed ‘humanitatem’ appellauerunt id propemodum quod Graeci paideia uocant, nos ‘eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes’ dicimus: quas qui sinceriter percipiunt adpetuntque, hi sunt uel maxime ‘humanissimi’. Huius enim scientiae cura et disciplina ex uniuersis animantibus uni homini data est idcirque ‘humanitas’ apellata est.* (*Atticae Noctes XIII*, 17 ed. J.C. Rolfe Loeb Classical Library 456).

¹⁰⁸ “[C]a pues el entendimiento e la palabra estranna [separa] al omne de las otras animalias, quanto más apuesta la ha e mejor, tanto es más omne (Partida II, IX, 30).

trivium, especially grammar and rhetoric over dialectics,¹⁰⁹ whereas Alfonso gave preference to the *quadrivium*. I suggest that, for Alfonso, Hermes represented the trivium, the quadrivium and the ‘extensions’ to the *quadrivium* (physics, magic, and astrology), whereas in early modern humanism Hermes usually circumscribed only to the *trivium*.

Florentine humanists accused the medieval learned men to be concerned only with theology, Canon law, and logic; as we are seeing, this is inexact. More recently the laic positivism of 19th century—Michelet, Burckhardt, Voigt, etc.—made the same accusations of a God-centered and anti-scientific spirit to the Middle Ages, while the Renaissance, according to them, would have developed a laic and scientific purpose. However, as Martínez reminds us, Florentine Humanism was neither laic nor scientific, although, of course, some humanists studied the human nature and the world (*El humanismo medieval* 21).

The truth is that a “scientific Humanism” appeared much earlier, specifically in both the literary and scientific Humanism of the school of Chartres which strongly influenced *The Renaissance of the Twelfth century* defined by Haskins. Rather than theologians, Wetherbee defined some members of this school (Bernard and Thierry of Chartres, or William of Conches), as “cosmologists,” who were “united by their interest in the study of the natural universe as an avenue to philosophical and religious understanding” (“Philosophy, Cosmology, and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance” 21). Members of this school had a strong influence of Neoplatonic and Hermetic philosophy, since the *Asclepius* was among their foundational texts (Wetherbee 25), and also the first part of Plato’s *Timaeus* commented by Calcidius. Probably because of this substrate, these authors were able to assimilate the new Hermetic knowledge which started to arrive to them from translators working in Spain, with whom, as I explained before, they were in close contact. Therefore, this Twelfth Century Humanism developed a scientific spirit which would be inherited by the Humanism of Alfonso X. Despite these evidence, the idea of a medieval obscurantism enemy of both science and the Latin and Greek literature is still alive in relevant critics.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ In posterior chapters I will explain these phenomena, and also how some representatives of Late Humanism recovered dialectics.

¹¹⁰ Martínez (*El humanismo medieval* 46) singles out this hostility towards the idea of a medieval Humanism in Italian scholars like Toffanin (*Storia dell’Umanesimo*)

However, as Martínez points out, Academia, especially outside Spain, has been reluctant to talk about such kind of Humanism in Alfonso X and the Iberian Peninsula in general (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 22). In that vein, Gómez Moreno affirms that critics usually have to explain Humanism through a line that goes from Charlemagne, to the pre-Renaissance of the 12th century, and then the Italian Humanism (*Gómez Moreno España y la Italia de los humanistas* 294). For this reason, eximious critics like Curtius have preferred to talk about the “cultural lag” of Spain,¹¹¹ ignoring contributions from the translator circles in both Aragon and Castile. Even Haskins diminished original contributions when he said that “Christian Spain was merely a transmitter to the North” (*The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* 11). Other authors like Deyermond insist that Spain powerfully influenced the Renaissance of the 12th century through the translation of Greek texts with Arab commentaries, but also that the new intellectual life of Toledo’s school of translators was not only about exportation (Deyermond “El Auto de los Reyes Magos y el Renacimiento del siglo XII”).¹¹² According to Martínez, the disinterest of Academia of exploring the medieval Humanism in the Iberian Peninsula can be explained through two factors: it was inclusive for the three cultures, and it was vernacular. For this reason, it has created a double barrier, cultural and linguistic, especially for those scholars who work in the Latin Europe of the XI-XIV centuries. (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 22). In this part of my work I will explore this medieval Humanism through the figure of Hermes Trimegistus and in connection not only with Jewish and Muslim thought, but also with the classical and pagan traditions they shared with Christianity.

Among the themes of medieval Humanism in the 13th century pointed out by Martínez, I want to highlight: first, its revaluation, in moment of crisis, of the seven liberal arts,¹¹³ and also in the study of natural science, as a result of the diffusion of Aristotle’s books of physics.¹¹⁴ This attention to natural science is a big difference when compared to the classicist Humanism of the

¹¹¹ See Curtius (*Literatura europea y Edad Media Latina II* 553 and 753-456).

¹¹² As stated by Martínez, the Renaissance of the 12th century, would not have been possible without the translated works, and it starts with the translations from Arab authors and it closes with the codification of knowledge in Castilian by Alfonso X (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 29).

¹¹³ According, for instance, to Francisco Rico: Alfonso is a stronghold where the classical Humanism survives in a moment of attacks from logic and metaphysics. Rico justifies this assertion with the many ancient ‘auctores’ included in the General Estoria (*Alfonso el Sabio y la “General Estoria”. Tres lecciones*).

¹¹⁴ Other themes are: the Separation of philosophy from theology as a consequence of the revival of Aristotelian rationalism, Roman law, and the interest for history as a discipline depending on moral philosophy (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 27-28).

15th century. The interest to explain the things “segunt natura” (according to nature) put Alfonso in the side of philosophers—specially Stoics—and not of theologians (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 22). Below, I will explain how Alfonso makes Hermes Trimegistus the main representative and authority of the *trivium*, the *quadrivium* and the study of physics (understood as an extension of the *quadrivium*). In this sense, Southern has singled out other features of medieval Humanism, among them: the idea of the dignity of human nature, the dignity of nature itself, and the universe as an intelligible reality—including the *microcosmos* and the *macrocosmos*, derived from the *Hermetica*—which the human mind can unlock (Southern *Medieval Humanism* 29-60).

Thus, I want to stress that, without forgetting the *trivium*, Alfonso’ Humanism privileged the arts of the *quadrivium* and their extension, and that is a direct inheritance from the Arab model. For Alfonso, a *studium generale* needs masters of the *trivium* and Law; however, the disciplines of the *quadrivium* are those which make man wise, therefore, *trivium* is the propaedeutic for more advanced knowledge (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 108). As Márquez Villanueva points out, the clerical model of trivium-law-theology was not enough for Alfonso (*El concepto cultural alfonsí* 133). For Daniel of Morley, one of the visitor translators in Toledo, the *quadrivium* was the quintessence of the curriculum among the Arabs, that is the reason why he hurried to Toledo, where it can be found better than in any other place.¹¹⁵ It is significant that, through Arabic sources, European learned men reconstructed the Classical model of the liberal arts, including the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*.¹¹⁶

Alfonso did not only look for the liberal arts in the Arabs from the translation of their books, but also created schools in which Arab sciences, focused on the *quadrivium*, were taught

¹¹⁵ *Sed quoniam doctrina Arabum, quae in quadrivio fere tota existit, maxime his diebus apud Toletum celebrator, illuc, ut sapientiores mundi philosophos audirem, festinanter properavi* (Preface of *Liber de Naturis inferiorum et superiorum*).

¹¹⁶ As Martínez resumes (*El humanismo medieval* 261), probably the direct source for many medieval writers was the Carta LXXXVII of Seneca to his son Lucilius, where the philosopher presents the ‘liberal arts’ and the ‘liberal studies’ as the goal for the men who want to form their spirit, and he explains to his son that they are “liberales” (free) because they are different from the “Mechanical arts” they are worthy of being studied by a free man. The Roman philosopher Boethius (480-524) called the last four *quadrivium* “four ways,” although the name *trivium* for the first three not appear until the 9th century. The most relevant description of the Liberal Arts during the Middle Ages is the one included in Isidore’s *Etymologies*, which I referred to before.

in Arabic—like the famous *studium* in Seville, for which he brought Arab specialists from abroad.¹¹⁷ Some schools, such as the Ricotí in Murcia, taught to Arabs, Jews, and Christians.

Hermes as the Model of Courtier Inspired in the *Adab*

It cannot come as a surprise that there existed in the Humanism of Alfonso X a model of courtier or learned man directly influenced by Arab models; specifically, Martínez relates it to the Arab *adab* (*El humanismo medieval* 176).¹¹⁸ I suggest that in the same way that Hermes's wisdom conformed in different stages of Humanism to the priorities and classification of sciences and arts, he also embodied the prototypical model of wise man according to the main currents of thought of each period. Hence, in Alfonso's medieval humanism Hermes adopted the model of the Arab *adab*, whereas, for instance, in Late Humanism, Hermes embodied the Neostoic sage.

Alfonso got familiar with the concept of Muslim courtesy through the mirror of princes *El Libro de los doze sabios*, which his father, Fernando III, ordered to be translated and composed for his sons. Afterward, Alfonso completed the book, and in this part added by Alfonso stand out the *adab* topics, which emphasize an extremely well-mannered and wise courtier. The *adab* is also relevant in the translation of the Oriental story book *Calila e Dimna*, which Alfonso ordered when he was still a prince. As Martínez points out, the *adab* is also pervasive in the 'wisdom' or aphoristic books translated throughout this period which present ancient wise men of antiquity as models,¹¹⁹ in a posterior phase of my work I will study how Hermes and the Hermetic materials are adapted to those books.

There are specific passages in Alfonso where we can find this *adab* model of courtier, Martínez points to *The Seven Parts (Las Siete Partidas*, a legal code), part II, which forms an authentic 'mirror of princes' or program of education for the nobility or courtiers.¹²⁰ A fundamental

¹¹⁷ There is a preserved decree ('privilegio rodado') in the Cathedral of Seville, by which the *studium* of Seville is created (28 dic 1254) "otorgo hay y studio, et escuelas generales de Latino e de Arauigo." On August 25 1254 Alfonso asked the archbishop of Seville some mosques for the dwelling of physicians who came from abroad, to have them closer (probably of the royal palace), and so they could teach to whom we have commanded, since usually the madrasa was next to the mosque ("para morada de los físicos que vinieron de allende, a para tenerlos de más cerca (se supone que del palacio real) e que en ellas fagan la su enseñanza a los que les avemos mandado" in Márquez Villanueva *El concepto cultural alfonsí* 18).

¹¹⁸ On the *Adab* among the Muslims see also Grunenbaun (*Medieval Islam* 250-263).

¹¹⁹ Maybe the height of this 'adab influenced' literature can be found in the long section of the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* called "Castigos del rey de Mentón," which includes fragments of the *Flores de Filosofía*, *Bocados de Oro*, and *Libro de los exemplos* (Wagner "The sources of *El caballero Zifar*").

¹²⁰ Whom Alfonso defines as those educated in the court: "Et lo que (...) usaren de las palabras buenas et apuestas, llamarlos han buenos et apuestos et enseñados; et otrosí llamarlos han cortesés, porque las bondades et los otros buenos

part of the Arab *adab* which inspires Alfonso is the philosophical and literary knowledge which Alfonso called “las buenas letras” o “los buenos saberes,” but among Muslims there were also history, law, arithmetic, and all the sciences of the *quadrivium* (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 108). Let’s see how Alfonso not only presents Hermes according to this model, but also as the maximum authority in the *trivium*, the *quadrivium*, and all derived sciences.

The most famous passage of Alfonso on *Hermes Trimegistus* is in the *General Estoria* Part II (f24v.-f28v.). There are several studies about the Arab sources of this narration on “The Three Hermes,” and specifically on its relationship to the famous Arab astronomer Abū Ma‘shar and his *The Thousands*.¹²¹ To analyze this bibliography from my own perspective would demand a more comprehensive study on Hermes in Medieval Iberia that I hope to undertake in the future. In the meantime, I just want to focus on the model of Hermes presented by Alfonso, based upon the *adab* and Hermes’s mastery of the liberal arts. Alfonso explains that there were three Hermes and all of them were wise, but he is going to focus on the third one, also called Mercurius, the son of Jupiter:

And wiser than the other two Hermes, because he was completely a master on the three knowledges of the *trivium*, which are: Grammar, Dialectics, and Rhetoric, as we have told you in this History before. And for this reason they called him Trimegistus, that is, master of the three knowledges, more than any of the other wise men of that time, and they also called him god of the *trivium* and those who wanted to learn something on these arts, or in any of the arts entrusted themselves to Mercurius su fijo del Rey Juppiter.¹²² (*General Estoria II* f. 24v.)

Therefore, Hermes Trimegistus, or Mercurius, received his name because he was the greatest master not only of the *trivium*, but also of the rest of the arts. Alfonso specifies that in many other parts of his work, for instance when he affirms that:

The *trivium* is the reasoning and the *quadrivium* the knowledge of things. And this Mercurius was so wise in all the *trivium*, that we find that to those three sciences that we call *trivium*, the wise men called them mercurial ministries, which means servants of Mercury (...) Reason and wisdom joined in one, and reason is the *trivium*, and wisdom the *quadrivium*. And it is said that from this union was born a work that can never be unmade. And reason always needs wisdom, and wisdom reason, that is, the *trivium* needs the

enseñamientos, a que llaman cortesía, siempre los fallaron et los precieron en las cortes. Et por ende fue en España siempre acostumbrado de los hombres honrados enviar a sus fijos a criar a las cortes de los reyes porque aprendisen a ser cortesés” (*Partidas II* tit.IX, 27).

¹²¹ See, for instance Burnett (“The legend of the three Hermes”) and Fraker (*The Scope of History* 190-222)

¹²² [E]t mas sabio que los otros dos Hermes Ca fue complida mientras maestro de los tres saberes del triuio que son. La gramatica. la Dialectica E la Rectoria. assi cuemo uos lo auemos departido en esta estoria ante desto. Et dixieron le por ende este nombre Trimagisto. fascas maestro de tres saberes. mas complida mientras que todos los otros sabios daquela sazón. Et llamaron le otrossi dios del triujo. & los que en alguna destas tres artes o en todas quieren aprender algo a mercurio se acomendauan (*General Estoria II* f. 24v.).

quadrivium and the *quadrivium* the *trivium*. And it seems that it is necessary for the wise men in order to look and be reasonable, to be wise (*General Estoria II* f40v.-f41r.).¹²³

Therefore, Alfonso presents Mercurius as the model of wise man, who embodied the trivium but is able to harmonize it with the quadrivium. Martínez highlights how in this passage Alfonso affirms that all knowledge must be intimately fastened for men to achieve the true wisdom (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 288). This also justifies that Alfonso calls Mercurius “the father of all philosophers,”¹²⁴ a significant statement since Alfonso understood that “philosophy is the knowledge that encompasses all the other knowledges.”¹²⁵

In the first part of the *General Estoria*, we find an allegorical interpretation of Mercurius’ flute in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* which also points to his relationship with the liberal arts:

And those seven uneven reeds, joined with wax, which composed the flute with which he sang, they were actually the seven liberal arts. With them Mercurius, understood as the well-used reason, defeated Argos, that is, the world, and killed him; and it means then that the good reason killed the bad and profane customs (GE, I, pp. 165b-166a).¹²⁶

In this way Mercurius, wielding the seven liberal arts, killed the bad manners, which seems to be a significant deed of Hermes as champion of a courtier representative of the *adab*. Following the Arab model and the recently translated Aristotelian science, Alfonso put the *quadrivium* behind the *trivium* in importance, since the four sciences of the *trivium*: “are all of understanding and demonstrating made by experience, and so must be first in the order.”¹²⁷

Alfonsine Magic. Hermes and the Sciences beyond the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*

¹²³ “Que el triuio es el razonamiento & el quadruuio el saber de las cosas. Et en tod el triuio fue tan sabio este Mercurio; que fallamos que a aquellas tres sciencias que uos dezimos del triuio; que las llamaron los sabios ministros Mercuriales. que quieren seer tanto cuemo seruientes de Mercurio (...) (...) Que se ayuntaron la razon & la sapiençia en uno. Et es la razon el triuio. Et la sapiençia el quadruuio. Et deste ayuntamiento diz que salio obra que se non puede desfazer nin perder nunca /2/ Et que a siempre mester la razon a la sapiençia. & la sapiencia a la razon; fiasco el triuio al quadruuio. & el quadruuio al triuio. Et parece ca muy mester es. que el sabio pora parescer & ser razonado; mester a otrosi de ser sabio” (*General Estoria II* f40v.-f41r.).

¹²⁴ “fue padre de todos los philosophos” (*General Estoria II* f26v.).

¹²⁵ “La philosophia que es el saber que encierra todos los otros saberes” (GE II f217r.).

¹²⁶ “E aquellas siete cannaveras deseguales, ayuntadas con cera, de quel dizie que era compuesto aquel caramillo o instrumento con quel cantaua, aquellas siete artes liberales eran con que Mercurio, por qui se entendiase otrosi apuesta razón e el bien razonado, uenció a Argo, fiasco al mundo, yl mató; e es esto que la buena razón mató en Yo las costumbres seglares e malas” (GE, I, pp. 165b-166a).

¹²⁷ “E las quatro son todas de entendimiento e de demostramiento fecho por prueua, one deuien ir primeras en la orden” (*General Estoria I* f194r.).

As Rico affirms, “in Alfonso’s times, the liberal arts were not sufficient” (“Alfonso el Sabio y la ‘General Estoria’” 143). Therefore, Alfonso adds to the seven liberal arts other sciences such as physics and metaphysics.¹²⁸ About physics (*física*) sometimes understood as “natural knowledge of medicine”, he had already talked in the *Setenario*, but in the *General Estoria* he extends the concept to the knowledge of all nature, claiming that physics is a knowledge that deals with:

The natures, to know all things which have bodies, and the skies and the stars and the other things that are up there in the skies, and to understand their nature and how they are made, being born and dying; and one must know the nature of the elements and how every one of them works in these things (*General Estoria I* f196v.).¹²⁹

According to this quotation, the object of physics includes all knowledges related to the study of the cosmos in the wider sense of the word, from the stars to the atoms. In other passages, Alfonso includes physics among Hermes’s knowledge: “As Mercurius, who is also one of the seven planets, whom they called God of the three knowledges of the trivium and physics.”¹³⁰ Physics includes both medicine (Alfonso also talks about physicians “físicos”) and magic, science in which Alfonso X was very much interested; there are also passages, as Martínez points out (*El humanismo medieval* 288), in which it seems that Alfonso thought that both sciences were part of astronomy: “because [the wise men and wise women of magic] talk about this [topic] that magic is a part of the art of astronomy...”¹³¹ And Alfonso provides a definition of both magician and magic:

It is a magician he who knows the magical art, and magical art is the knowledge with which, those who know it, perform through the movement of the celestial bodies on the terrestrial things, and all those things which are in the circle of the moon (...) in such a way as Hermes and Balenuz tell us (*General Estoria II* f60v.-61r.).¹³²

¹²⁸ According to Martínez, the knowledge of things leads to the knowledge of God, which is their cause. That knowledge implies the study of metaphysics (“quales sson en sí”), physics, and mechanics (“e cómo obran”) where physics includes all knowledge on nature including astrology, which Alfonso considers ‘divine’ because it will open the knowledge of past and future (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 292).

¹²⁹ [L]as naturas, pora connoscer todas las cosas que [h]an cuerpos, assí como los cielos et las estrellas e las otras cosas que son delos cielos a ayuso, et entender sus naturas de cómo se fazen, nasciendo e muriendo; e se deue connoscer la natura delos elementos e de cómo obra cada uno dellos en estas cosas (*General Estoria*, I, p. 196b).

¹³⁰ “Como Mercurio que es otrosi una de las siete planetas. quel llamaron dios de los tres saberes del triuio. & de física” (*General Estoria II* f62r.).

¹³¹ Ca [los sabios e las sabias de la mágica] departen assí sobrello que la mágica una manera e una parte es del arte del estronomia (GE, II, 340b), in Martínez (*El humanismo medieval* 288).

¹³² [E]s mago el qui sabe ell arte magica. Et la sciencia magica; es aquel saber con que los quel saben; obran por los mouimientos de los cuerpos celestiales sobre las cosas terrenales & sobre todas aquellas que son de dentro del cerco de la luna (...) asi cuemo cuentan Hermes & Balenuz (*General Estoria II* f60v.-61r.).

As we can observe, Alfonso relates magic with astrology, a science about which Hermes wrote, in the same sense as those sciences appear among the many magical traditions mentioned in the *Picatrix* also under the name of Hermes. Actually, as I said before in this chapter, the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, which incorporated all currents of Arab Hermeticism, was one of the first books which Alfonso ordered to be translated into Spanish (1256) as if it were an absolute priority. As we saw, for Maslama al-Qurṭubī, the 10th century author of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, magic, astrology, and alchemy, the Hermetic arts, were the ‘goal of the wise men,’ that is, the culmination of a life dedicated to wisdom. We can wonder to what extent Alfonso shared this idea. Some of his passages point in that direction, for instance, when he tells the story of the transmission of knowledge in the *General Estoria* in a way that reminds us of the *philosophia perennis*:

And Cam made the philosophers know the parts of the sciences of the stars (...) and according to this, it seems that Cam made the art which is called notorious; but according to which the knowledgeable ones (‘sabidores’) say, whoever perform well this art, could be a master in the liberal knowledges and the others in less than three years (*General Estoria* I f79v.).¹³³

Martínez wonders who were those “knowledgeable men” and if this was the real goal of Alfonso the Wise, i.e. to look for the way of acquiring the sciences and the liberal arts through the ‘notorious art’ (magic) and astrology (*El humanismo medieval* 292). Therefore, magic plays a fundamental role in both the transmission and the hierarchy of the sciences. This story of the transmission of knowledge moves even closer to the *philosophia perennis* theories when Alfonso affirms that “Cam changed his name, and they called him Zoroastres, which means master or sage of the stars.”¹³⁴

Thus, magic was a fundamental component in Alfonso’s plan, in which the translation of the *Picatrix* was a fundamental step. In addition, I argue that the *Picatrix* itself was an especially suitable work for the medieval Humanism of the 13th century. This was the century of the *Summas* or encyclopedic works, which gathered knowledge in all kinds of disciplines, among them the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas, and the four compiled by Alfonso X: a legal one, *The Seven Parts* (*Las Siete Partidas*); two histories, *The History of Spain* (*Estoria de España*) and the *General*

¹³³ “E fizo Cam a los philosophos saber las partes por la scientia de las estrellas (...) E segund esto, semeia que Cam fizo el arte que llaman notoria; pero segund dizen los sabidores ende que qui bien la obrasse e en ella acertasse, que en todos los saberes liberales e los otros en menos de tres annos podrie ser buen maestro” (*General Estoria* I f79v.).

¹³⁴ “E mudós Cam el nombre, e dizien le Zoroastres, que quier dezir tanto como mahestro o sabio de las estrellas” (*General Estoria* I f79v.).

History (General Estoria); a scientific work, *Los Libros del saber de astronomía*; and finally a poetic one, *Las Cantigas de Santa María*; with the particularity that all of them were written in a Romance language (Martínez *El humanismo medieval* 14).

I consider the *Picatrix* a truly summa of magic originally written in four parts, which gathered together all currents of magic and Arab Hermetism, therefore, it perfectly fitted to the goals of the period and Alfonso himself. In fact, the translator activity of Alfonso had started in 1243, when he was still a prince and requested the translation of the *Lapidario* from an Arabic original.

Many authors have pointed to coincidences between the *Lapidario* and the *Picatrix*,¹³⁵ which includes a small lapidary itself. The *Lapidario*, attributed in the prologue to Abolays, unknown Muslim sage of Chaldean origin, although some think is Abbul Abbas, naturalist of al-Andalus dead in 1237 (Alvar *Traducciones y traductores* 135). However, the only authority mentioned in the entire book is Hermes, when the *Lapidario* reads: “And according to which, Hermes, who was a great philosopher, said the virtues of the stones themselves change consistency with the changes of the planets among themselves and with the figures of the Sky.”¹³⁶ The prologue of the book affirms that whoever wants to benefit from the *Lapidario* needs three things: to know astronomy, to recognize the form and the colors of the stones, and finally to know physics “because much of it remains enclosed in the virtues of the stones.”¹³⁷ We can appreciate this connection between astronomy and astrology, understood as the influx of the celestial bodies in the terrestrial things, which is the main principle of Alfonso and Hermetic magic. Moreover, although I cannot delve into it now, there are also connections between the magical and astrological books of Alfonso (including the *Picatrix* and the *Lapidario*), the strictly astronomical ones, and the Hermetic tradition.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ See, for instance Pingree (“The diffusion of Arabic magical” and “*Picatrix* and the Talismans”).

¹³⁶ “Y según dijo Hermes, que fue muy gran filósofo, las virtudes de las piedras mismas se cambian según el cambio que han los planetas unas con otras, y con las figuras del cielo.” See *Lapidario* (“De la piedra que llaman paridera”).

¹³⁷ “[Q]ue yace mucho de ella encerrada en la virtud de las piedras” (*Lapidario* Prólogo).

¹³⁸ This connection is present, for instance in the Book of the Crosses (*Libro de las Cruces*), based on Visigothic astrology updated by al-Andalus scientists and translated by Alfonso, which I mentioned before. In the *Libro de las Cruces* we find, for instance that “Aristotle says that the bodies below, which are the terrestrial ones, are where for instance are kept and governed by the bodies above, which are the celestial ones” (“Aristótil que dize que los cuerpos de yuso (abajo), que son los terrenales, se mantienen et se gobiernan por los movimientos de los cuerpos de suso (arriba), que son los celestiales, in *Libro de las cruces* 1).

So, for instance, Kahane & Pietrangeli have studied connections of those works with Alfonso's *Book of the fixed stars* (*Libro de las estrellas fixas*), and they have also found interesting parallelisms with passages in the *Corpus Hermeticum*.¹³⁹ Inside this 'multicultural' humanist project of Alfonso, it is not strange that the translator of the *Book of the Fixed Stars*, the *Lapidary*, and the *Picatrix* was Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen, one of the most important Jewish collaborators of the king.¹⁴⁰

However, the *Picatrix* and the *Lapidary* were not the only *Summas* of magical and Hermetic arts compiled by Alfonso, because he composed several others up until the end of his life; for instance, between 1276-1279 he composed *The Book of the Forms and the Images* (*Libro de las formas et de las imágenes*), of which we only preserve the index and the prologue. It is composed of eleven different texts, ten of them are about the properties of the stones in relation to the astral bodies, or according to the signs that the stones have engraved transforming them into talismans, whereas the third book is about the influx of the stars, planets and constellations on men born under their sign (Alvar *Traducciones y traductores* 138). In the prologues we find Hermes and other authors related to the Hermetic tradition as authors of the Books.¹⁴¹

In accordance with his multicultural Humanism, Alfonso did not limit himself to translating texts from the Arab Hermetic tradition, but also translated books from the Jewish one, significantly, the *Liber Razielis*,¹⁴² which, as the *Picatrix*, would remain popular through the early modern period and in Kabbalistic circles.¹⁴³ In its Latin version, the *Liber Razielis* is a compendium of seven texts which go back to the Hermetic tradition, with an appendix and including nine other books, the seven are: The *Semaphoras* and its *Glosas*, by Zadok the Jew of Fez; the *Verba in operibus Razielis*, by Abraham of Alexandria; The *Flowers*, by Mercurius of

¹³⁹ See Kahane & Pietrangeli ("Hermetism in the Alfonsine tradition").

¹⁴⁰ He was born probably around 1205 in Toledo, where his father was a rabbi, he received the title of physician in 1231. He worked both as physician and translator. His translation of the *Lapidario* (where Hermes is mentioned as the authority) was completed between 1243 and 1250; the *Picatrix* in 1257; the first version of the Book of the Fixed Stars in 1256; the second and definitive ones in 1276; see Kahane & Pietrangeli ("Hermetism in the Alfonsine" 456). On Yehudá ben Moshé ha-Kohén see also Hilty ("El libro concluido en los iudizios de las estrellas" 46-50).

¹⁴¹ Every book of the *Libro de las formas et de las imágenes* is from a different author (some of them difficult to identify): Abolays, Timtim (Tumtum), Pitágoras, Yluz, Yluz and Belienus (Belenus o Apolonio de Tiana), Plinius and Belienus, Utarit (Hermes), Ragiél (Aly Aben Rigel), Yacoth, and Aly; only the last treatise is anonymous (Alvar *Traducciones y traductores* 138).

¹⁴² Probably translated by Juan d'Aspa (Iohannes clericus), according to himself in the Prologue (D'Agostino *Astromagia*, cit. p. 41).

¹⁴³ A Jew made in the XV century a Hebrew version which experienced a great diffusion (Gentile-Gilly *Marsilio Ficino* 236-237).

Babylon; the *Capitulum generale sapientium Aegypti pro operibus magicae*; the *Tabulae et Karacteres et Nomina angelorum grandium*; the *Liber super perfectione operis Razielis*, by the Greek philosopher Toz (that is Thoth, Hermes); and the *Liber ymaginum sapientium antiquorum*, also by Hermes of Tritemio (Alvar *Traducciones y traductores* 147; Gentile-Gilly 236-237).

The *Picatrix*, *The Book of the Forms and the Images*, the *Liber Razielis*, and other works—as for instance some of Abū Ma‘shar as the *Magna introductio in Astrologia*,¹⁴⁴ or the *Thousands*, where the legends of Hermes appear—were reutilized at the end of the 1270s in the Alfonsine court to compose a treatise of *Astromagic (Astromagia)*, or “zodiacal and planetary magic,”¹⁴⁵ from which six books are preserved: Pseudo-Pythagoras, *Book of the paranatellonta*, *Book of the Decans*, *Book of the Moon*; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Book of the Images of the Twelve Signs*; *Book of Mars and Book of Mercury (Pseudo-Pitágoras, Libro de los paranatellonta; Libro de los decanos; Libro de la Luna; Pseudo-Aristóteles, Libro de las imágenes de los doce signos; Libro de Marte y Libro de Mercurio)* (Alvar *Traducciones y traductores* 148). Therefore, Alfonso was compiling and translating the book of Hermetic sciences, allegedly written by Hermes himself, to the very end of his life. But the big question is: for whom where Alfonso’s efforts in magic, astrology, and the other hermetic arts?

Unveiling Hermes

Regarding Alfonso’s relation with ‘occult’ sciences, I want to delve into something that I pointed out before. After some moves in this direction, Alfonso finished the secrecy which surrounded the translation of Arab works during the first stages of the translation process in the Iberian Peninsula undertaken by erudite networks of Scholars from the Hispanic kingdoms and the rest of Europe. In the moment that the horizontal organization of the translation networks was substituted by a vertical and hierarchized one, the Castilian rulers, especially Alfonso, decided that Hermetic sciences and others were worthy of being shared with all the subjects of the kingdom. Finally, this purpose became one of the main principles of Alfonso’s cultural project.

¹⁴⁴ Translated into Latin by Johannes Avendehut (1133) and Hermannus Dálmata (1140) both serving D. Raimundo, the bishop of Toledo.

¹⁴⁵ Biblioteca Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 1283 (¿de la cámara regia?) published by A. D’Agostino (*Astromagia*). This treatise has been sometimes confused with the *Picatrix*, but they are different works.

In many prologues and other parts of his works, Alfonso specifies how he wants to bring to light works that had been hidden or secret until then. For instance, the *Lapidario* which I have just discussed, mentions that Alfonso:

obtained [the *Lapidary*] from a Jew who had it hidden and did not want him or any other to take profit from it. And since Alfonso had this book he made it to be read by another Jew of his own, who was his physician, and they called him Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen (the minor), who was very learned in the art of astronomy, and knew and understood Arab and Latin. And since from this Jew of his he understood the great good and profit which the book had, he commanded him to translate the book into Castilian language, in order for men to understand the book better and to take profit from it (*Lapidary Prologue*).¹⁴⁶

There are many prominent things in this prologue, now I just want to highlight how a Christian king ordered a Jewish servant to translate a book of Arab science, who was destined to be known for all humanity. As we can observe, in Alfonso's court were gathered together all these circumstances of cultural wealth, mastery on languages, and will of divulgation, which the king made part of an ambitious project, which involved the diffusion of Hermetic knowledge as it had never occurred until then. By divulging this non-Christian knowledge, Alfonso is following the example of other wise kings such as Solomon. As it is stated in the *Libro de las Cruces*, Alfonso:

Who saw so many and such varied books of the wise men, read that there are two things in the world that, while hidden, do not profit anything, and one is the occult meaning which is not shown, and the other is the treasure hidden in the earth, and like Solomon he searched and explained the knowledges (*Book of the Crosses Prologue*).¹⁴⁷

As we saw before, the erudite translators in Tarazona requested worthy men, who deserved to read the books they translated and their secrets. However, Alfonso just affirms that occult wisdom is not worthy at all, and so it should be known by all men, starting from his own subjects.

In this same sense, we observe that Alfonso's Humanism had an inclusive meaning of culture, which included all kind of sources, in contrast with the posterior stages of Humanism which progressively limited knowledge to the Greek and Roman legacy. In contrast, Alfonso

¹⁴⁶ "Alfonso (...) óvol en Toledo de un judío quel tenié ascondido que se non querié aprovechar d'él, nin que a otro toviesses pro. Et desde que este libro tovo en su poder fizo lo leer a otro su judío que era su físico et dizién le Yhuda Mosca el Menor, que era mucho entendudo en la arte de astronomía et sabíe et entendíe bien el arábigo et el latín. Et desde que por este judío su físico ovo entendido el bien et la gran d pro que en él jazía, mandó gelo trasladar de arábigo en lenguaje castellano por que los omnes lo entendiessen mejor et se sopiessen d'él más aprovechar" (*Lapidario Esc*, h.I. 15, ed. Diman-Winget).

¹⁴⁷ Onde este nuestro señor sobredicho, qui tantos et diuersos dichos de sabios uiera, leyendo que dos cosas son en el mundo que mientre son escondidas non prestan nada, et es la una seso encerrado que non se amostra, et la otra tesoro escondido en tierra , él semeiando a Salomón en buscar et espaladinar los saberes (libro de las Cruces Prólogo).

affirms in the prologue of the *General Estoria* part VI that: “I, Alfonso, by God’s grace, commanded this book to be made after I gathered all ancient books, and all Chronicles, and all Histories from Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic which were already lost and forgotten.”¹⁴⁸ The famous medieval Spanish writer don Juan Manuel detailed how his uncle Alfonso the Wise extended his eagerness of knowledge to Jewish wisdom: “And he commanded all the Law of the Jews to be translated, and their Talmud and even another science that they have very hidden and called Kabbalah.”¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

Alfonso the Wise’s medieval Humanism marks the apogee of Hermes Trimegistus and his wisdom in the Iberian Peninsula. We have observed how Alfonso searched, translated, and diffused the wisdom hidden in the books attributed to Hermes, but also how he developed his own works through compilations or elaborations of previous books. In this way, Hermes played his role as cultural mediator in the same way as he had done before in the ancient Near East, and his influence included the new Arab culture which had developed since then, and had created a rich Hermetic tradition. However, Alfonso’s relation with Hermes supposed a big change from the moment Hermes ‘arrived’ to the Peninsula to the moment he had to ‘negotiate’ his pagan and non-Christian culture with the Christian authorities who were already ruling in Hispania.

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the first strong traces of Hermetic sciences (astrology, talismanic magic) are in the heresy of Priscillian. The Church prosecuted the practices of Priscillianists centuries after his death, but at the same time some learned clerics felt a deep fascination for Hermes and his sciences. This fascination is embodied by Isidore of Seville, who in his *Etymologies* made a classification of magic which included Hermes as one of its main representatives, described Hermes’s attributes for the High Middle Ages, and mentioned for the first time main concepts of Hermetism as the *microcosm*. Isidore extended his influence after the Arab conquest of Spain in 711AD; however, the Arabs developed their own Hermetic tradition and imported it into Spain. In this sense, I suggest that Hermes ‘came’ twice to the Iberian

¹⁴⁸ “Yo don Alfonso, por la gracia de Dios... ffiz fazer esse libro después que oue ayuntados todos los antiguos libros et todas las crónicas et todas las estorias del latín et del hebraico et del aráuigo que eran ya perdidas et caydas ya en oluido” (*General Estoria* part VI Prologue).

¹⁴⁹ “Otrosí fizo traladar toda [la] ley de los judíos et aun el su Talmund et otra sçiençia que an los judíos muy escondida a que llaman Cábala” (don Juan Manuel, Ms. 6.376 BNE fols 194r.).

Peninsula during the Middle Ages. First, just at the end of Late Antiquity with the Hellenistic Oriental and gnostic cults who arrived in Hispania through the interconnected Mediterranean Sea, and second, with the cultural development of al-Andalus and the imported Baghdadi culture.

In the 9th century, the rulers of al-Andalus imitated the height of Baghdad's splendor, and even imported many of the books of the 'Sciences of the Ancients' (or non-Islamic) which had been translated from Greek and Syriac in Baghdad during the 8th- 9th centuries. I suggest that with this 'books of the ancients' Hermes himself came once more. Hermetic sciences developed in al-Andalus during the 9th century in the circle of Astrologers patronized by al-Ḥakam I (796-822) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (822-852). Since we do not have enough information about those astrologers, and they were closely related to the rulers of al-Andalus, I cannot scrutinize them as a network. Hermetic sciences continued developing in al-Andalus until the time of Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī in the 10th century, who wrote the important *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (later *Picatrix*), which, as I mentioned before, incorporated every single one of the Hermetic Arab traditions developed in the previous centuries.

Al-Andalus rulers had been 'open' to Hermetic knowledge, however, during the 10th century the circumstances changed and 'Abd al-Raḥmān II started to prosecute heterodox thinkers which apparently included al-Qurṭubī himself and other famous thinkers like Ibn Masarra. This unfavorable environment led learned men to emphasize again the secrecy which had pertained to Hermetic tradition from the beginning, as it can be detected in several passages of al-Qurṭubī's works.

I suggest that this secrecy extended after the fall of Cordoba's Caliphate at the beginning of the 11th century, and during the first *tā'ifa* kingdoms when, as I examined, a network of scholars of different religions working in the frontier between the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile created a node of learning around the bishopric of Tarazona. My research points to a shared interest in Hermes among all these scholars, and thus a cultural mediation of Hermes between them and also with the ancient Hermetic wisdom.

When the translation activity was taken over by archbishops of Toledo and then king Alfonso the Wise the secrecy about Hermetic knowledge of the previous circles progressively waned. Alfonso's cultural humanistic project emphasized the diffusion and access of culture, including the Hermetic one, to all his subjects, which included Christians, Muslims, and Jews, as in the previous networks of translators in Tarazona. However, Arab culture was prevalent,

including the Hermetic Arab culture inherited from al-Andalus. Thus, in the Christian court of Alfonso, Hermes transformed himself to fit the Arab *adab* model of courtier and learned man adopted by Alfonso. In the Arab model the *quadrivium* was placed before the *trivium*, and, due to the development of Arab science, the *quadrivium* was ‘extended’ to include other sciences such as physics and magic. In this first stage of Humanism in the Iberian Peninsula, Hermes embodied the seven Liberal Arts, physics, magic, and many other sciences, as it is expressed in several fragments of the *General Estoria* which I examined before.

The accommodation of the pagan Hermes in Alfonso’s Humanism was not difficult since this Humanism was not only multicultural but also vernacular in its double sense of romance and secular. Therefore, Christianity did not interfere in Alfonso’s eagerness for science and knowledge and his humanist project, and Hermes was embraced with all his tradition and attributes, including the technical and occultist parts.

In the rest of the dissertation I am going to show how much circumstances changed during the early modern period, and specifically how Hermes adapted to the Italian and especially Late Humanism. In the Middle Ages Hermes found defenders and keepers of his ancient wisdom, and I have pointed to several of them from the three Abrahamic religions, however, in the early modern period his role changed to that of mediator only between Christian and pagan culture, and he had to leave behind his ‘occult’ sciences. Therefore, Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, the main advocate of Hermes in early modern Spain, on whom I focus the rest of my research, presents a portrait of Hermes very different from the one of his medieval defenders; however, I argue that Patón, Alfonso the Wise, Hugo de Santalla, Isidore, Ibn Ezra, or Maslama al-Qurtubī shared a common interest in pagan wisdom represented by Hermes, and many of them took risks to occult their true beliefs just to defend Hermes.

In addition to continuing exerting his function, Hermes was identified with the main philosophical currents of the period: if in the Middle Ages Hermes became an Arab *adab* courtier, in the 17th century he would be a ‘real’ Christian ‘avant la-lettre’ and a Neostoic sage. As we will see, Hermes’ Jewish and Arab heritage declined, but he assumed new functions, including the mediation between his ‘new fellow pagans’ in America and the Spanish Christian conquerors. Let’s see how all these events happened.

CHAPTER II

Jiménez Patón, his Network, and the Spanish Early Modern Republic of Letters.

Introduction

Just as he had done during the Middle Ages, in early modern Spain Hermes continued to exert his mediating function between different cultural and religious traditions. Nonetheless, his role would develop according to the changing circumstances of the new period. A series of events in the history of Spain changed the religious and cultural make-up of the Iberian Peninsula. The first two took place the same year of 1492: the conquest of Granada, last Islamic kingdom in Spain, and the expulsion of the Jews which followed it. The third one was another expulsion, that of the Moriscos, or converted Muslims, early in the seventeenth-century.

The reign of the Catholic Kings, Isabella (1451-1504) and Fernando (1452-1516) is traditionally considered as the beginning of the early modern period in Spain.¹⁵⁰ They politically unified the Spanish monarchy with their marriage in 1469, and their later expulsion of the Jews similarly sought to unify their territory religiously as well. This goal resurfaced more than a century later in the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609-1613. However, both expulsions resulted in a series of social and economic problems that would preoccupy the minds of Spanish political and religious authorities for decades to come.

Despite the expulsion of Jews and Moriscos from Spain, a small part of their past cultural prestige remained; thus, medieval authorities like Maimonides, Avicenna (Ibn Gabirol), Avicenna, or Averroes still appeared in a number of learned books. There were even some attempts to restore the cultural appreciation of Jews and Muslims with forgeries; for instance, with the *Lead Books of Sacromonte* at the end of the sixteenth century. In those efforts, Hermes was invoked frequently. Notwithstanding these remains, the feeling of a united intellectual community among representatives of different religions, which we saw in the Middle Ages, disappeared. Moreover,

¹⁵⁰ And the beginning of the modern state of Spain as well, with the unification of the medieval kingdoms of Castile (Isabel) and Aragon (Fernando).

a powerful and sadly popular institution was created in 1478 to protect the religious orthodoxy at all levels: the Spanish Inquisition. Therefore, when the Protestant Reformation had its first sympathizers in Spain, the Inquisition also rooted those sprouts out and secured Spanish Catholicism. As it is well known, although its harshness oscillated depending on the period and the identity of the General Inquisitor (the chief of the institution), this organization was always particularly unyielding to converted Jews and Muslims.

Since the end of the Middle Ages, the decline of cultural influence from Semitic cultures in Spain was partly compensated by the impact of Humanism and Renaissance culture from Italy. The Renaissance successfully spread out to Spain by the end of 15th century and changed the focus in art, literature, and science.¹⁵¹ Humanism boosted the recovery of Greek and Latin texts, and introduced a new perspective in many disciplines. This first occurred in grammar and rhetoric,¹⁵² but then in other fields as well. For instance, the humanists offered to philosophy new editions, translations and commentaries, including books from representatives of the most important ancient schools. Inspired by new translations—specifically those of Marsilio Ficino—Neoplatonism spread all over Europe among literates. However, Aristotelian scholasticism still dominated in the academic world and was then equally renewed and extolled. Ultimately, by looking back again to the past for alternative philosophical and ethical answers to the sorrows of Europe, including its religious wars, Humanism turned to Neostoicism. Throughout these phases, as it had occurred during the Middle Ages, the figure of Hermes found keepers and defenders of his ancient wisdom in the works of religious and secular influential writers—from Luis Vives to Fray Luis de Granada or Lope de Vega—and at each stage he was adapted to the leading current of thought.

As we have seen in the Introduction and the previous chapter, the syncretic figure of Hermes Trimegistus had been a cultural mediator between the Ancient Near Eastern cultures (Egypt, Babylonia, Persia) and Greece, which conquered them during the time of Alexander the Great. These lands later became part of the Roman Empire. Both Greece and Rome turned out to be greatly captivated by arcane Egyptian wisdom, a fascination that also affected the first

¹⁵¹ Kristeller (1979 106) defines Renaissance as “the period of Western European history between 1300 or 1350 and 1600.”

¹⁵² Kristeller (1979 110) points out that the development of grammatical and rhetorical studies is closely linked “with the most pervasive intellectual movement of the Renaissance, Humanism.” Francisco Rico demonstrated how this idea is applicable to Spain in his relevant book about Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), the influential author of both a Spanish and a Latin grammar (*Nebrija against the Barbarians: the canon of disastrous grammarians in the polemics of Humanism/ Nebrija frente a los bárbaros: el canon de gramáticos nefastos en las polémicas del humanismo*, 1978).

Christians. Thus, long before Christianity became the official religion of Rome, philosophical *Hermetica* was more quoted by Christians than by pagans.¹⁵³ During the Middle Ages, the promise of Ancient Wisdom and Occult sciences boosted the translation movement from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin and Spanish because Hermetic knowledge had been translated long before into Semitic languages. Now, during the Renaissance and Humanism, the fascination with ancient Wisdom was again prominent and the *prisca theologia* and *philosophia perennnis*, which explained its chain of transmission, became a widespread concept. The figure of Hermes adjusted to humanists' eclecticism and then to the renewed fascination which Egypt exerted on them. I will show how once again Hermes served as a cultural mediator, only this time my analysis focuses on his function negotiating between the sole surviving religion in Spain and the pagan world, represented by the updated versions of the Ancient schools of Philosophy adapted from other European countries in Spanish soil. Some Spanish learned men understood this potential of Hermes, and so they gave him a prominent place in their Network. From a single nod in one of these Networks, I will project the new functions Hermes acquired; ultimately, through this figure, we will also have an opportunity to glance at Spanish Golden Age literature and culture from a unique perspective.

An Unexpected Advocate of Hermes Trimegistus in the Spanish Baroque

In order to cover all these different phases and intellectual trends I have just mentioned, but again with an eye to micro-History, I am going to focus on a lesser known but increasingly studied figure of Spanish Golden Age literature: Bartolomé Jiménez Patón (1569-1640). Since the cultural, political and religious circumstances had changed substantially, Patón was a very different advocate of Hermes than the medieval figures I introduced in the first chapter. Jiménez Patón is an extraordinarily thought-provoking figure because he brings together virtually all intellectual trends of early modern Spain, including the most polemical ones. Although a representative of late Humanism (Humanism after 1600), Patón also incorporates many features of early Humanism.

As a grammarian, rhetorician, and philologist, he contributed to the development of those disciplines which, at the gates of the scientific revolution, were still conceived as the fundament

¹⁵³ Hermes was a keystone in the arguments used by some Church fathers to introduce some pagan concepts and figures into their faith.

of all knowledge. Patón's vast culture and education familiarized him with classical, biblical, medieval, and humanistic authorities, about whom he wrote commentaries and scholarly editions. He also had an impressive knowledge of his contemporary Spanish Golden Age literature. In fact, his most known work, the *Spanish Eloquence in Art* (*Elocuencia española en arte*, 1604) contributed to the recognition of the value of Spanish writers and made them equal to the Latin classics. Despite his many occupations, huge production and copious readings, most of his life he was a respected and selfless teacher, with a didactic concern that can be appreciated in all his works, including what he wrote about Hermes Trimegistus. Concerned with his society's problems, at the end of his life he wrote treaties about customs and morals under a deeply religious point of view; not surprisingly, there is a more unsettling feature in Patón's biography which I will return to later: he worked for the Spanish Inquisition.

Due in part to the fact that the clear majority of his preserved production is philological, humanistic or theoretical, including works in Latin, Patón's legacy had been understudied until very recently. Already in 1965 Quilis and Rozas (xviii, xxv) drew attention to this injustice to an author with such a relevant and wide-ranging number of works. Since then, interest in Jiménez Patón has grown steadily, with an increasing number of articles, books and scholarly editions dedicated to him. Furthermore, in the last years some specialists have delved into archives and private libraries (including that of Patón's descendants) and have exhumed several once considered lost works, and even some unknown ones. These efforts open a window to further research and allow us to understand much better Patón's personality and cultural inheritance, including Hermes Trimegistus' sway in his literary work

Although Jiménez Patón was never in the forefront of Spanish scholarship, he is considered as one of the most learned men of his time. In addition, a well-established network of friends, readers and influences connected Patón with the most important writers, erudite men, and even celebrities of seventeenth century Spain. For example, he enjoyed the friendship of key writers of Spanish letters –Lope de Vega, Quevedo, Cascales– and was an acquaintance of many other important ones. In 1965 Quilis and Rozas used “isolation” as one of the primary terms to define Patón's work.¹⁵⁴ These critics made the most relevant study and edition of a work by Patón of their time, however, both because of recent discoveries about Patón and modern approaches to literary

¹⁵⁴ The other two were religiosity and patriotism (Quilis and Rozas, 1965, lxxvii).

studies we can no longer see Patón as an ‘isolated’ author. Rather, I would define Patón as a social writer, one who built strong and weak ties throughout his life and work, which helped him undertake his humanistic and pedagogical goals. In the same way that many other thinkers had done during the early modern period, Patón created and looked after his network through academic studies, occasional travels, letters, participation in academies, and specifically through his writings in the paratexts of books.

To understand Patón’s network I will consider some recent developments of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which I will introduce in detail later. Enough to say now that, following Felski, I understand Network as an assembly of actors or agents “that share information and coordinate action” (Felski 749). In the context of early modern Spain, I see groups of scholars and writers with academic, institutional, and friendship bonds who collaborate together to share and produce knowledge and creative works. Thus, with the means provided by his network, Patón disseminated his treatises, literary works and ideas, including his critical insight about Hermes Trimegistus. Only recently ANT has turned to literary studies, and even more recently to early modern writers. All these network studies focus on specific media as paratexts and letters, just I will do. Moreover, since Patón particularly addressed Hermes in the paratexts of his books, I sustain that Patón integrated him into his own network in such a way that, from a new privileged position, Hermes could continue to act as a cultural mediator between different religious traditions. ANT can help us clarify Hermes’s position in this network. According to ANT, the networks are formed by both human and non-human actors,¹⁵⁵ in which we can include material elements, technology, institutions, and even ancient or imaginary figures (as recent approaches of ANT in Literature propose).¹⁵⁶ Thus we can understand Hermes in two ways: either as a non-human actor in Patón’s network, or as a hybrid between a human and a non-human entity—since Hermes never existed, he would not be technically a human; however, most learned men in early modern Europe considered that he did exist, that is why I also think of him as a hybrid. In either case, as part of early modern networks, Hermes exerted a role of mediator (and not a mere intermediary), that is,

¹⁵⁵ ANT assumes that all entities in a network can and should be described in the same terms. This is called the principle of *generalized symmetry* by Latour (*Reassembling the Social* 40-54).

¹⁵⁶ See Greteman (84-85).

an entity which really makes a difference in a network and so should be the object of study (Latour *Reassembling the Social* 40-54).¹⁵⁷

The figure of Jiménez Patón is not only attractive because of the man himself but also because of the light his diversified production brings to understudied aspects of Spanish early modern culture, among them, the role of Mercurius Trimegistus, who gave his name to Patón's most important work. But before addressing the different threads of thought used by Jiménez Patón we have to understand his reasons, intellectual background, and the importance of the books he wrote projected through his network, all of which makes up this chapter and the next. Then, in the two following chapters I will show how Hermes's sphere of influence stretches to all genres of works, and specifically, how he found his place in two important currents of thought of early modern Spain: Neo-Scholasticism (based upon Aristotle) and Neostoicism (as Justus Lipsius developed it). In a posterior phase of my research, I will explore Neoplatonism (represented by Marsilio Ficino and the *philosophia perennnis* doctrines). Although I will mention the footprints of Neoplatonism, Ficino, and the *philosophia perennis* on Patón and early modern Spain throughout this work, I have preferred to leave until later a monographic study on them—and so the present study will not exceed reasonable dimensions. However, I will show how Hermes's place in each one of these doctrines was epitomized by Patón's treatise. I will analyze this work as referential of its contemporary culture and it will allow me to situate Spanish early modern scholars in a wider struggle over the status and survival of all non-Christian culture in Europe.

The Lover of Wisdom

Jiménez Patón wrote *Commentaries of erudition* (*Comentarios de erudición*, c.1630) when he was sixty years old. Five of the twenty books of this huge project, considered lost for four centuries, have been recently found as a manuscript mostly handwritten by Patón himself.¹⁵⁸ The author structured this work with the classical model of a character's travel. Thus, on the *Commentaries of erudition* we find Laminio Sileno, who travels through different cities of Spain. Laminio describes and tells the history of the cities he visits, and then he discusses many different and erudite topics, usually at the request of other characters he meets. Undoubtedly, Laminio is an

¹⁵⁷ The distinction between intermediaries and mediators is essential to ANT. Intermediaries are entities which make no difference and so can be ignored, on the contrary, the mediators “multiply the difference” (Latour 2005: 81&ss).

¹⁵⁸ See *Comentarios de erudición* (“*Libro decimosexto*”).

alter ego of Patón,¹⁵⁹ and thus he projects the image he had of himself: an aged man of great knowledge. Laminio's purpose in the book is the following

Having fallen in love with Wisdom, he abandoned his home. He was informed that, although Wisdom had many houses in Spain, the land she inhabits, the foremost one, where she has her court and rules over the entire Christendom, is in Salamanca. Many other men traveled around the world to see the servants of Wisdom, who are the sciences of the humanities; in the same way, Laminio wanted to visit the same lady within his motherland and kingdom, where she was adorned with more and better maids (*Comentarios de erudición* 34).¹⁶⁰

This is the most explicit declaration of love for wisdom Patón wrote. This confessed passion which runs throughout his work, together with a deep Catholic faith, and his self-identification with the humanistic movement, explain the steps he took in his life. As it's clear from this quote, Patón always had an optimistic view of the development of science in Spain—a progress at odds with traditional appreciations about Spain's scientific backwardness, which would have started just at that time.¹⁶¹ Thus, looking back at his own life, Patón was certain that he did not need to travel abroad to find the wisdom he loved, because she was already dwelling in Spain. Patón's frame of mind contrasts with the traditional eagerness to travel abroad described since Antiquity in the lives of wise men: for instance, Plato or Pythagoras went to Egypt, the land of Hermes, to learn the secrets of the Ancient wisdom. Similar stories could be found in many early modern Spanish books.¹⁶² However, according to Laminio, Wisdom's servants, the humanities, had found shelter

¹⁵⁹ Laminio, as Patón knew, was the ancient name given by Roman historians to the pre-roman tribe which inhabited his region in La Mancha (see Bosh & others *Comentarios de erudición* 33).

¹⁶⁰ “De la sabiduría enamorado salió de su casa, y porque estaba informado que aunque en muchas partes de España tiene casas donde habita, la principal donde tiene su corte hoy en toda la cristiandad es en Salamanca. Quiso- como otros que son sus siervos que son las ciencias de humanidad dieron la vuelta al mundo, él dentro de su reino y patria- visitar la misma señora adornada de más y mejores criadas” (*Comentarios de erudición* 34).

¹⁶¹ On the failure of the science revolution in Spain, and recent scholarship opposing that idea, see Cañizares-Esguerra (“Iberian Science in the Renaissance: Ignored How Much Longer?”) and Eamon (“«Nuestros males no son constitucionales sino circunstanciales»: The Black Legend and the History of Early Modern Spanish Science.”).

¹⁶² For instance, clearly at the beginning of the *History of Ethiopia's things* (*Historia de las cosas de Etiopía*, 1588, flr.): “From this natural inclination results a longing in many of the ancient philosophers, fathers of the sciences that we have today. Since they acknowledged from Greece the advantage that Egyptian philosophers had over them in the course and movements of the skies and their bigger expertise on the virtues of plants, animals and other creatures, they were not afraid of endangering themselves and so they went out of their lands through seas and unknown countries in pursuit of those learned men whose fame was known all over the world, and once they were under their discipline, they would be able to be at the peak of sciences which they so much longed for” (“Esta natural inclinación resulta un ánimo en muchos de los antiguos filósofos padres de las ciencias que hoy en día alcanzamos, que como entendiesen estando en Grecia la ventaja de los filósofos de Egipto les hacían en el conocimiento del curso y movimiento de los cielos, con más grande experiencia que tenían de la virtud de los animales y plantas y de las más cosas criadas, no temieron ponerse a todos los peligros que se les podían ofrescer, y así salían de sus propias tierras discurriendo por

in Spain along with the Greek, Roman, Biblical, medieval, and renaissance traditions which nurtured them. Those humanities were actually blossoming in Spain during the second part of sixteenth century, when Patón was born. I suggest that a teacher of humanities in his little town (a teacher as Patón would become years later), awakened that love for wisdom and encouraged the young Patón to abandon his birthplace and to pursue a life of study.

Before reaching Salamanca (or ‘the court of Wisdom’), Patón would have other important stops on his way, and even episodic returns to his region. But finally, he was able to study with the Academic elites of the ancient Spanish university. Then he returned to the region of his birth where, as a humble but respected master, he kept, cultivated, and spread that knowledge he had acquired. Throughout this work, Patón will allow us to appreciate the intellectual and academic milieu of early modern Spain. It also will help us understand how, at some point of his life, Patón realized that Hermes Trimegistus epitomized the wisdom he sought for such a long time. Furthermore, Patón found the evidence that Hermes had also established himself in Spain where, according to him, he had been born in a distant and mythical past. In this chapter, I will trace Jiménez Patón’s biography, his educational travels, and the way he forged his network; finally, I will provide significant examples of how Patón’s network operated. Along these lines I will make explicit why Patón’s network can open a window to understudied facets of early modern Spanish, European, and even American culture, and the significant role Hermes played in it.

Early Steps in the Path of Wisdom

Patón was born in a little village of La Mancha called Almedina, a name which betrays its Arabic origins (*al-madīnah*, ‘the city’). However, the Muslim memory of the place, along with its medieval prosperity,¹⁶³ had vanished centuries earlier. Patón’s family, probably not very rich, could at least afford sending him to study in a different town. We know that he was no longer in Almedina by 1585,¹⁶⁴ when he was sixteen years old. According to his own words, he went to Madrid to study with the Jesuits. Madrid was the youngest capital of Europe after King Philip II

mares y provincias extrañas en busca de aquellos doctos varones cuya fama se divulgaba por el mundo, para que puestos embajo de su disciplina trabajasen en venir al altura y cumbre de las sciencias, que siempre tanto se desearon.”)

¹⁶³ Almedina was the most important walkway between the actual provinces of Castilla-La Mancha and Andalucía through the mountains of Sierra Morena, just before the path of Despeñaperros was open following the important Christian victory of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212)

¹⁶⁴ See Bosh & others

declared the city as capital of his monarchy only 24 years before (in 1561). Spain was then ‘the empire where the sun never set’, and its dominions extended from the far Pacific to the Americas, including numerous possessions in Europe. Consequently, people from all places and social classes converged in Madrid, which quickly turned into a splendid and wealthy city. We can only conjecture the mixture of awe and pride which the thriving capital enthused over a boy from a little village, who only had known the world through books. Patón could admire the cultural splendor of Madrid from a privileged ‘watchtower,’ the also newly founded Jesuit school.

As soon as the Jesuits knew about Philip II’s intentions, they requested the foundation of a school in Madrid. The prominence of the Jesuits increased during the council of Trent (1545-1563) which was taking place just during that period. With a site in the new capital, they would intensify the influential role they acquired by fighting Protestantism since their foundation in 1534. Jesuit thinkers also helped solve the contradictions in the Catholic doctrine which Humanists, and particularly Erasmus, evinced with his methods and new ideas. But the young Patón would experience the most direct impact of the Jesuits in Catholic societies: their innovative methods of education. Although it was not an original goal for the Company of Jesus, soon they were running a network of schools in important cities (Venice, Naples, Rome, Paris, Leuven) and became largely associated with instructive work. Notwithstanding the Jesuits’ objectives for Madrid, they could not establish an entire educational system there, because the powerful universities of Alcalá and Salamanca prevented the foundation of a new Jesuit university to avoid competition. However, Jesuits did found a high school in 1566 which would later be known as the Imperial school.¹⁶⁵

Patón arrived in Madrid in 1585, just a year before the Jesuits put through their first provisional *ratio studiorum* (educational program).¹⁶⁶ With a foundation in Neo-scholasticism and Aristotle, the *ratio* incorporated humanistic subjects for a Christian purpose; with this resolution, the basic education (*studia inferiora*) which Patón would receive had to be founded on Latin, Greek, grammar, syntax, humanities, and rhetoric.¹⁶⁷ The *Ratio* had a major impact on later humanist education during the baroque period because many of their most important

¹⁶⁵ See Díaz (*Historia del Colegio Imperial de Madrid*)

¹⁶⁶ This first *ratio* was designed by an international team of academics appointed by the general of the order, Claudio Aquaviva, in the *Collegio Romano*, then it was sent to Jesuit provinces for consideration and test, although it would not be definitely approved until 1599.

¹⁶⁷ The definitive *ratio studiorum* of 1599 established three years of Grammar, three of humanities and three of Philosophy.

representatives studied with this system, both in Spain and in other Catholic countries.¹⁶⁸ As we will see, most Neostoic thinkers studied in Jesuit schools (and many Jesuit intellectuals alluded to Hermes Trimegistus in their works). Following the Jesuit model, Patón would try to reconcile Latin and Greek humanities with Catholicism throughout his life. Not surprisingly, at the highest point of his career, Patón made a Christian out of he who embodied that pagan legacy: Hermes Trimegistus.

As Madroñal (*Humanismo y Filología* 98) points out, Patón took into account the pedagogical system of the Jesuits all his life, particularly the work of the Jesuit Juan Luis de la Cerda. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, this priest wrote a revised edition of the until then preceptory Latin Grammar of Nebrija (*Tratado sobre gramática latina* de 1471).¹⁶⁹ According to the *Approbation* he wrote for Patón's *Orthography* (1611), de la Cerda was his friend and master.¹⁷⁰ Throughout his entire lifetime, Patón was very proud of having studied with the Jesuits—Patón's *Heraclitus* (1615) is dedicated to the teachers of the Jesuit school, whom he calls 'his parents and masters' and there he expresses his satisfaction for having been able to make the best of what he learned with them. Probably in the Jesuit college of Madrid, Patón met Lope de Vega who, as we will see, would be his long-lasting friend especially through exchange of letters. Later on, Patón and Lope became part of a solely Spanish *Republic of Letters* formed by important scholars and writers. Among Patón's colleagues in this Republic I will especially feature Lope de Vega and Quevedo.

In Spain, Scholars of the generation before Patón pertained to what has been called the European *Republic of Letters*,¹⁷¹ with this term, Scholars such as Grafton signified that "some of the most remarkable intellectual achievements of Europeans in the early modern period sprang from and depended on the work of intellectual communities" (*Bring out your Dead* vii). Early

¹⁶⁸ In the same way as Patón, Lope de Vega, Quevedo, Tirso de Molina or Calderón de la Barca studied in the Imperial School of Madrid, most important seventeenth century figures in France, starting with Descartes, studied in the Collège de La Flèche or the Collège de Clermont in Paris.

¹⁶⁹ De la Cerda's version was official until the 20th century.

¹⁷⁰ As a thorough master, de la Cerda pointed out several mistakes in it (*Epítome de la ortografía Latina y castellana* ed. Quilis and Rozas, 1965: 12)

¹⁷¹ As he affirms, Grafton's work derives from historians like Paul Hazard, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Eugenio Garin, Frances Yates, Erwing Panofsky, and Arnaldo Momigliano who "drew new maps of what had been called, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *Republic of Letters*. They showed, in a variety of ways, that the humanists were never the Luftmenschen that they seemed in the nineteenth century, but deeply rooted participants in the beliefs and institutions of the larger societies they lived in" (*Bring out your Dead* 11).

modern scholars renewed the traditionally monastic customs and usages of academic life and created “new forms of intellectual sociability and new academic institutions” (*Bring out your Dead 13*). In this process, scholars “came to speak a republican language of their own” since they represented themselves “as citizens of a formal, international community, the *Republic of Letters*” (*Bring out your Dead 13*).¹⁷² El Brocense, Patón’s master, clearly pertained to this *Republic of Letters*, since he exchanged letters with Lipsius (for Grafton, one of the most eximious representatives of the *Republic*), and adopted thoughts from European scholars regardless of faith (for instance, the controversial Petrus Ramus). However, I suggest that Patón pertained to a different, more restrictive *Republic of Letters* of Spain, since he only corresponded with Spanish and Catholic scholars. This difference between Spanish scholars of the 16th and 17th century had a clear influence of the council of Trent and the isolationist politics of Philip II under the stimulus of the Inquisition.¹⁷³

Therefore, as many other representatives of a Spanish *Republic of Letters*, Patón started to build his network of friends or *alba amicorum* through his first travels for academic pursuits, which he continued for many years. As Mauelshagen has studied, during those travels “acquaintances were sealed mostly with professors, co-scholars and other important persons present at different centers of learning” so as to build up a network of trans-regional relationships (10)—which Patón limited to regions in the Iberian Peninsula. Those acquaintances continuously appear in Patón’s books, where ancient classmates or teachers wrote paratexts and eulogies for him (González de Santa Cruz, Ballesteros, etc.). As Greteman points out, the shared experience of time during educational periods established valuable connections for early modern writers (83). In the words of Grafton (6), just as other early modern scholars “made deposits in a bank of social and cultural capital that would serve them throughout their lives,” Patón gained from the connections he established, and maintained them in person or through the written word for many years

When Patón had finished school with the Jesuits he went to the University of Baeza (Andalucía) in 1583, very close to his hometown. Most probably, he also wanted to study with Luis de Quesada y Carvajal, whom he later considered his master. In 1588 Patón entered the

¹⁷² Thus, through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “even as religious polemic and warfare shook the world around them, they tried to set standards of intellectual interaction, to regulate one another’s ways of pursuing learning, and to sustain an ideal of learned conversation that transcended the narrow loyalties of nation and church” (*Bring out your Dead 13*).

¹⁷³ See Parker (*Felipe II* 423-448)

Faculty of Arts and studied with him.¹⁷⁴ Baeza held then one of the three Universities of Andalucía and was among the eighteen minor universities of Spain.¹⁷⁵ For a rigorous Catholic like Patón, Baeza was actually a controversial university. A number of its teachers were ‘new Christians’ (converted Jews), and so the Inquisition always had an eye on that institution. Even the university’s organizer, san Juan de Ávila (1500-1599), had suffered a trial on suspicion of heresy (probably just for Erasmism). In the University of Baeza there had been even ‘a source of infection’ of *alumbrados* or *agapetas*, one of the few Spanish heresies, which Patón criticizes in his *Virtuous Discreet* (*Virtuoso Discreto* 46-47), showing the firsthand knowledge he had about them. The *alumbrados* practiced a form of mysticism known as *dejamiento* (‘abandoning’), in which they abandoned the body to join with God. However, since they justified neglecting Christian duties and degenerated in erotic practices,¹⁷⁶ the *alumbrados* were prosecuted by the Inquisition.¹⁷⁷ Patón specifically censures their mental preaching (inspired by Erasmus), which they valued over the ‘oral’ preaching and external displays of devotion, as protestants did (Bosh and Garau *Comentarios de erudición* 46-47). As we will see, although an admirer and defender of Hermes Trimegistus, Patón never referred to the mystical side of Hermetic writings. I suggest that those experiences earlier in his life shaped this subsequent omission.

Patón always preserved a link with Baeza, where he published several of his works. Patón’s *Instrumento Necesario* (a book on dialectics) includes an *Apology* from doctor Joan Acuña del Adarve, Professor of Theology in the University of de Baeza. In it, Joan Acuña praises Patón and his capacity to deal with lofty matters and calls him ‘classmate.’¹⁷⁸ In addition to that, as we will see, the acceptance of Patón’s *Mercurius Trimegistus* by the University of Baeza as textbook after 1621 was a great recognition for him as a scholar and treatise writer.

Finally, Patón obtained a Bachelor in Arts from Baeza in 1592, which allowed him to start teaching Grammar and Rhetoric in Villanueva de los Infantes. His contract there was short (one or two years), because archival materials show him teaching in other places soon.¹⁷⁹ Besides his first teaching experiences, Patón pursued his intention of becoming a priest. Already in 1588, he had

¹⁷⁴ Faculties of Arts at that time had chairs of Grammar, Rhetoric, *Súmulas* (Logic), Dialectics and Natural and Moral Philosophy. Thus, those were the studies Patón followed there.

¹⁷⁵ Only Santiago, Alcalá and Valladolid were ‘major’ universities.

¹⁷⁶ Since this is a standard accusation against deviant practices in Christianity and Islam, it must be taken cautiously.

¹⁷⁷ As Bosh and Garau point out, confessors asked sexual favors to women through the practice known as ‘solicitudación’ (46)

¹⁷⁸ See Madroñal 2009.

¹⁷⁹ See Bosh & others (2010: 13)

fulfilled the first requirement and was ordered “de corona” (of crown)—there were different stages to become a priest, in this one the novice received the tonsure or ‘crown.’ Then, in 1593, being already a teacher in small towns, he received minor orders (‘órdenes menores’) in Madrid,¹⁸⁰ where he was again attending classes in the Jesuit school (probably in short visits). Perhaps it was then that he met Juan Luis de la Cerda (1558-1643), the most important ‘updater’ of the canonical Latin Grammar by Nebrija.

Patón had a long appointment in the village of Alcaraz from 1595 to 1600. While he was there, in 1596 he tried to be ordained of epistle (‘de epístola’), which was another intermediate step on his way to receiving major orders and becoming a presbyter. That would have been the real beginning of his ecclesiastic career. However, when the authorities made the mandatory background check, important Alcaraz personalities opposed Patón by criticizing his morals and way of living. That disapproval was related to his links with theatre companies and actors, to whom he wrote several plays today lost—although their titles, not very pious, have been preserved).¹⁸¹ He would never be a priest, although his attitude towards religion and ecclesiastical institutions would be flawless from then on. But he did not stop his learning. In one report about him from 1597, in which he still signs as bachelor of arts, he declares himself a student of Theology, most possibly at the University of Salamanca. Finally, Patón reached the ‘court of Wisdom,’ as he would refer to the city in his *Commentaries of erudition*.

An Exemplary Master in the Court of Wisdom

The University of Salamanca was one of the main centers of knowledge in Europe. In the Middle Ages, Salamanca had held the second *Studium Generale* (the seed of historical universities) of Spain, established in 1218.¹⁸² Slightly later, it was the first European institution with the title of ‘university,’ bestowed in 1252 by King Alfonso X. In the sixteenth century, the institution enjoyed again a moment of intellectual splendor. The University overcame the criticism of humanists like Nebrija and Vives, who at the end of fifteenth century criticized the medieval ‘barbarism’ of

¹⁸⁰ Receiving one or all four minor orders was the next step in the ecclesiastical career.

¹⁸¹ The plays were called: *The Pilgrim, The Broken Wedding, The Little Rogue Princess, and the Disillusioned Lovers* (*El peregrino, El casamiento deshecho, La tugancilla princesa y Los amantes desengañosos*, in Quilis and Rozas 1962: 37)

¹⁸² After the one in Palencia from 1212.

grammarians, logicians and philosophers in the Universities of Salamanca and especially Alcalá.¹⁸³ Salamanca internalized the critiques, assimilated part of the new humanistic concepts, and kept a balance both between the three big philosophical tendencies from the Late Middle Ages (Nominalism, Thomism, and Scotus), and between the most powerful religious orders (Dominicans, Jesuits, Augustinians, and Franciscans). These circumstances shaped Spanish theological Humanism, which was represented by the Neo-scholastic movement and the so-called School of Salamanca. The principal figures of the school, theologians, and jurists such as Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Martín de Azpilcueta (or Azpilicueta), Tomás de Mercado, and Francisco Suárez, were all scholars of natural law and of morality, who undertook the reconciliation of the teachings of Thomas Aquinas with the new political-economic order.¹⁸⁴ As it is evident in his writings, Patón studied in this intellectual environment during the last years of his formal education. Thus, it cannot come as a surprise, as we will see in chapter four, that Patón handled both theories and thinkers of the Salamanca school when he was advocating in favor of Hermes Trimegistus. Many of those theologians who received the ancient, medieval and Humanistic traditions, referred to Trimegistus in their works.

In Salamanca, Patón took classes from the important professor Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, called “El Brocense” before he died in 1600. Patón boasts about that in his *Perfect Preacher*, where he said, “The master Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas explained to us very difficult topics of the divine letters with his genius’ penetrating sharpness.”¹⁸⁵ As I will show later, El Brocense was the deepest influence in Patón with his approach to grammar, rhetoric, logic and many other subjects. So, I am going to pause for a moment to briefly discuss El Brocense’s achievements, since they had a deep resonance in Patón’s legacy. Distinctly, El Brocense contested the ‘official’ doctrine from Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), who had been his most illustrious predecessor in Salamanca. Nebrija had followed the doctrines of his famous master in

¹⁸³ See Abellán (v2. 550) and Rico (1978). Nebrija reclaimed the Italian humanist tradition in which he had been educated against medieval and scholastic schools in works as *Artis Rhetorica* and *De liberis educandi*. In the same way, Vives attacked in his *In pseudodialecticos* the Spanish theologians who had studied in France calling them sophists, bad grammarians and worst philosophers.

¹⁸⁴ The Academic world increasingly recognizes the economic, political, and philosophical advances of this school, and also the important matters for the politics and society of their time that they undertook in their writings (international law, right of conquest, sovereignty, money, value, price, and so on)

¹⁸⁵ “El maestro Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas nos explicó dificultosísimos lugares de las divinas letras con la penetrante agudeza de su ingenio” (See Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 53)

Italy, the humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), and so he just tried to cleanse the Latin language from medieval barbarisms, while seeking grammatical perfection and purity in the words. In rhetoric, Nebrija simply related to Cicero and Quintilian. Quite the opposite, El Brocense had many referents and approached more polemical doctrines such as the ones of Erasmus and particularly Petrus Ramus (1515-1572), a polemical French protestant Rhetorician and Logician. Ramus opposed the ‘worship’ of Aristotle, Quintilian and Cicero by the medieval scholastics, and looked for a more experimental grammar. Following this model, El Brocense disregarded normative grammar based upon merely the *usus scribendi* of the ancients, and considered *ratio* (reason) the cornerstone of his system.¹⁸⁶

El Brocense also insisted upon the necessity of reading all the classical writers, and not only a few models—because of that, on one occasion his prosecutors forced him to lecture only on Cicero and Quintilian. However, as many other intellectuals of his time, although he disliked Aristotle’s logic and rhetoric, he admired Cicero’s.¹⁸⁷ El Brocense criticized scholasticism, sometimes with an Erasmian influence (always suspicious for the authorities). Due to his novelties in grammar, logic, and rhetoric, El Brocense suffered two inquisitorial processes,¹⁸⁸ in which he was accused, among other things, of undermining the Catholic academic institutions and their scholastic constructions.¹⁸⁹ Probably because of this, although Patón followed him and sometimes even plagiarized fragments from his work,¹⁹⁰ he was much more cautious in order to ensure the dissemination of his own works. Both El Brocense and Patón have been classified as anti-scholastic thinkers (Garau 2014 362), especially because of their criticism against Aristotelian logic; nevertheless, as I will subsequently show, the Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic way of reasoning is prominent in Patón’s advocacy of Hermes Trimegistus and many other works. In fact, Patón’s doctrinal stances are much more eclectic and pragmatic; as a teacher, his priority was to be understood by his students, so Patón was able to reconcile El Brocense’s innovative and ground-

¹⁸⁶ In such a way, he looked for rational patterns in Grammar and even intuited a Universal Grammar similar to the one that Noam Chomsky would develop in the twentieth century.

¹⁸⁷ For instance, in his *Topica Ciceronis exemplis et definitionibus illustrata* (Amberes, 1582)

¹⁸⁸ See in the bibliography *Inquisitorial proceses against Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas (Procesos inquisitoriales contra Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas,*

¹⁸⁹ See Gómez Canseco (*El humanismo después de 1600* 111-112)

¹⁹⁰ See Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 2009).

breaking stances with, for instance, his own admiration for Nebrija and more traditional approaches.¹⁹¹

I also suggest that Patón's admiration for Mercurius was nourished by his master. El Brocense referred to Mercurius in his commentary to the *Emblems* by Andrea Alciati.¹⁹² Since there are many coincidences, it is possible that Patón took from El Brocense some features of Mercurius' portrait when he wrote the Prologue of his *Mercurius Trimegistus*. I will come to this later, but now I just want to underline that when El Brocense commentes Emblem VIII (in which Mercurius appeared), he insists in pointing to Mercurius as father of Eloquence (*Eloquentiae namque parens est*), and reminds that, according to Diodorus, the Egyptian Hermes taught the interpretation of the letters to the Greeks.¹⁹³ Again, in Emblem XCVIII, dedicated to Hermes as well, el Brocense talks about him as wise in all arts and sciences, and later mentions specifically passages on Hermes from Lactantius (*Div. inst.* 3) and Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 2,4 and 7). As we will see, these passages would be used by Patón as well.¹⁹⁴

Finally, as I will explain later, I have found in El Brocense a direct inspiration for Patón to call his most important book *Mercurius Trimegistus*.¹⁹⁵ El Brocense would become famous all over Europe for a book called *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae* (1587), a Latin grammar commentary. In the prologue of this book, El Brocense explains in Latin that he was about to call it *Mercurii bilinguis*, but finally he decided for the goddess Minerva (due to reasons I will clarify next chapter).¹⁹⁶ Patón knew El Brocense's *Minerva* by heart (arguably, including the Prologue), and took it as a reference for his own grammars. When Patón was preparing a book of rhetoric, he thought that the god whom El Brocense had discarded was then the most suitable for his own title. In his master, Patón could find the definitive incentive to make Mercurius a pivotal part of his network.

¹⁹¹ As we will see in chapter four, El Brocense was one of the main figures of Neostoicism in Spain, and Patón's own Neostoic stances probably derived from his master.

¹⁹² *Commentaria in Andr. Alciati Emblemata*. I found them included in the Volume III of his *Opera omnia* (Genevae Tournes, 1766)

¹⁹³ *Opera omnia* (Vol. 3: 33).

¹⁹⁴ *Opera omnia* (Vol. 3: 201-202). Also in a significant way, in *Emblem VII* El Brocense comments Plutarch's *Isis & Osiride Commentarius*, a book with Hermetic influences (I have to look for this in Moreschini's *Hermes Christianus*). As El Brocense reminds, Isis says there with a Hermetic flavor: *Ego sum omne quod fuit, est, erit: meum peplum mortalis revelavit nemo* (I am everything which was, is and will be; no man will reveal my mantle to the mortals) (*Opera omnia*. Vol. 3, 30). El Brocense also quotes Diodorus: *Ego Isis sum Aegypti Regina, a Mercuriu erudita* (I am Isis, queen of Egypt, instructed by Mercurius). (*Opera omnia*. Vol. 3: 30)

¹⁹⁵ As I will explain later, I disagree in this with Susan Byrne (2015)

¹⁹⁶ See El Brocense (*Minerva* 266)

This appreciation for El Brocense was shared by other members of Patón's network. Accordingly, I want to emphasize the way in which Lope de Vega mentions El Brocense in Silva III of his *Laurel of Apolo* (1630): "To Francisco Sánchez, the eminent rhetorician/ Mercurius of the sciences,/ syntax of their many differences."¹⁹⁷ Thirty years after his death, Patón remembered el Brocense for his excellence in rhetoric, his scientific prestige and his rationalism (Sánchez Salor 2007 198), and the best equal he found was Mercurius. In addition, we will see in chapter five how Quevedo praised El Brocense as an authentic Stoic philosopher of his time, and his predecessor in the dissemination of this movement in Spain.

Thus, in Salamanca Patón not only found the 'court of Wisdom,' but also Mercurius himself, partly embodied in the figure and the work of El Brocense. As the wise men of Antiquity, El Brocense would retain his prestige decades and even centuries after his death.¹⁹⁸ According to Patón's testimony, el Brocense was the kind of teacher every student hopes to measure up to; consequently, he would try to follow the steps of his Master in his future endeavors.

Patón also established in Salamanca important ties for his future network, all of them connected with El Brocense. Thus, he got to know the famous humanist Baltasar de Céspedes (d.1615), El Brocense's son-in-law,¹⁹⁹ whom he quotes several times in his works.²⁰⁰ In the next chapter I will talk about the influence of Céspedes' *The Humanist*, and Patón's own identification with the idealistic figure which Céspedes describes in his book. Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1621) includes an approval (pr. f.2r.) by the important figure Pedro de Valencia (1555-1620), royal chronicler of king Philip III of Spain. Both Valencia and Patón studied in Salamanca under El Brocense, and according to the highly favorable opinions of this *Aprobación*, they were friends.²⁰¹ Just as Patón, Pedro Valencia is also considered a representative of Late Humanism (see

¹⁹⁷ "Y a Francisco Sánchez el retórico eminente/ Mercurio de las ciencias, /sintaxis de sus muchas diferencias (...)
(*Laurel de Apolo*, Silva III, f30v)."

¹⁹⁸ Actually, the most important editions of El Brocense's works are still those from the eighteenth century and are not from Spain (for instance, his *Opera omnia* published in 1765-66 in Geneva).

¹⁹⁹ Baltasar de Céspedes replaced El Brocense in his Latin and Greek chair in 1601

²⁰⁰ Particularly, Patón quotes Céspedes' *Discourse of the Human Letters*, called the humanist (*Discurso de las letras humanas llamado El humanista*), which appears many times in Patón's *Elocuencia española en arte*. See Marín (28)

²⁰¹ However, in the short Approval Pedro de Valencia has enough space to disagree with Patón regarding the (equivocal) doctrine he sustains regarding the origin of the Spanish Language, I will come to this point later.

Gómez Canseco 1993).²⁰² Finally, Patón must have known the linguist and grammarian Gonzalo Correas (1571-1631), follower of El Brocense, who had many of Patón's books in his library.²⁰³

Jiménez Patón graduated as a master from the University of Salamanca in 1602. He indicated this in his *Mercurius Trimegistus: et si Magisterii lauro Salmanticae fui decoratus (and if I was honored with the distinction of the Magisterium of Salamanca)*.²⁰⁴ He did not complete the highest grade of doctor in Theology, and an inferiority complex due to that can be perceived in many of his works including the *Answer*, which also explains some of its features.²⁰⁵ Probably he was forced to interrupt his studies due to his magisterial duties and economic needs. Opportunely, the acquisition of a Master's degree conferred upon a scholar the right to lecture at European universities (*ius ubique docendi*), and as Mauelshagen points out "this meant that the academic profession could be pursued in other university towns, thereby providing an impetus to travel" (10). Actually, although Patón finished his studies in 1602, in 1600 he had accepted his final appointment again in Villanueva de los Infantes, and so he just came back there. Although he received a very low pay and was offered better opportunities,²⁰⁶ Patón would never abandon Villanueva except for short academic stays or trips.

The Beloved and Pious Teacher

Settling for such a humble job was an especially noteworthy and consequential move in Patón's life because, once he had abandoned his dreams of becoming a priest, he reoriented his life, married in 1610, and then had several children. Although he was barred from becoming a priest and started a family, Patón was a deeply religious man all his life, and this can be seen, as Garau points out (2012 614), even in his grammatical and philological works, in which his beliefs were also typically embedded. Regarding his religious zeal, we know that the Inquisition of Villanueva de los Infantes appointed Patón as its Apostolic Notary. Afterwards he carried out the same job in the city of Murcia (Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 15). Also, to supplement his

²⁰² As Montero (2014 8) points out, the first administrative procedure for a book in the Golden Age was the approval, which served as a prior censorship; the Royal Council appointed to this task authoritative opinions and frequently important writers, as it happens in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* with Pedro Valencia.

²⁰³ Quilis and Rozas (1963), have focused on the mutual influences of both philologists (Patón and Correas). Bustos Tovar pointed at the inspiration Correas had from El Brocense (1998: 45)

²⁰⁴ In *Mercurius Trimegistus* (f207r.-207v).

²⁰⁵ Patón's enemies reminded him constantly of his incomplete studies of Theology.

²⁰⁶ As Toledo, Jaén, Baeza, Almagro, etc. (Quilis & Rozas XL)

income, he worked in 1618 as *Correo Mayor de la Villa y del Campo de Montiel* (ultimate authority for the mail service in his region). Considering Villamediana's noble family had the rental of all post-offices in the kingdom, and Patón dedicated his *Mercurius Trimegistus* to a member of this family, some critics have speculated that Patón was a private teacher for the young Count of Villamediana, who would become a famous poet (Maestre 170).

Despite his myriad duties, Patón's workload capacity astonished all who knew him. In the dedicatory to Patón's *Heraclitus*, his friend Fernando de Ballesteros affirms that Patón taught five daily lectures, and dedicated the rest of his time to reading and writing. His dedication to work explains the affection his students demonstrated for him all his life, which appears in the prologues of his books. Sometimes Patón's works were published thanks to the effort of his disciples. In 1618, he achieved the chair of Eloquence in Villanueva, probably in recognition of his role as head of all the grammarians and teachers of his region. This acknowledgement of Patón's labor extended to modern critics, who also regard Patón as founder of a school of Grammarians in the first half of the 17th century, which extended throughout La Mancha, an important region in the center of Spain.²⁰⁷ Despite a number of problems, both personal (the death of his son that I will address later), and professional (like the break with his publisher which interrupted Patón's productivity), with those new appointments and responsibilities Patón could lead a relatively more comfortable life until the end of his days in 1640 by doing what he liked most.

Laminio, Patón's character from *Commentaries of Erudition* traveled throughout Spain in search of his beloved wisdom, visiting important cities and centers of knowledge until he found her in her court of Salamanca. Having followed the same path, Patón went back closer to his little village to become himself a guide of such wisdom. The love Patón demonstrated for wisdom and her representative, *Mercurius*, can only be equated with the affection he felt for his students and the labor that he and other teachers were doing in small places far away from the big courts of Wisdom. In 1622, a year after the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, Patón sent a letter to Pedro Fernández Navarrete in which he fervently defended the schools of humanities in small villages, justifying them through the many worthwhile students they produced.²⁰⁸ After forty years teaching, Patón also wrote a book of aphoristic advice for his students that he would never see published, *The*

²⁰⁷ See Quilis & Rozas (1965) and Sánchez Salor (2007: 204).

²⁰⁸ See Bosch & others (2010: 20).

*discreet virtuous (El virtuoso discreto, 1622).*²⁰⁹ This book aims to educate young Christian humanists in virtue, because for Patón spreading knowledge was an authentic divine mission. In this book, knowledge and Catholic doctrine are intertwined, and thus teachers have a responsibility in the religious instruction of the youth (also a predominant idea for the Jesuits). Patón often addresses his students in the second person, revealing the humanity of the old master and giving the book a personal tone. It is remarkable, as Garau and Bosch point out, how Patón utilizes the expression ‘friend student;’ for instance, in this quotation:

Friend student, if you want to be virtuous and discreet, pursue obedience, execute your teacher’s commandments, do not abandon his advices, because God is talking through him. In order to obey and respect this name, it is enough to consider that it is one among those that he [Jesus] most valued, because he said: ‘You call me Teacher and you say well’ (in Garau and Bosch *El virtuoso discreto* 17-18).²¹⁰

Patón’s quote from *John* 13:13, gives biblical authority to his own role, and admonishes his students towards the correct attitude in the process of learning. As it is evident, at the end of his life the truths of faith prevailed over Patón’s eagerness for knowledge. In this respect Patón also invoked Paul’s authority in *Corinthians* 3:18-20: “that is why the apostle admonished men not to know more than necessary, nor more than what it is enough for salvation, because to surpass this is to boast, and is arrogance and vanity, and they can lose prudence, wisdom and discretion.”²¹¹ Finally, for Patón the limits of his love of wisdom ended just where his love for God started. And this was the sign of most Spanish baroque intellectuals of whom Patón is an important representative.

Patón’s Network and the Spanish Seventeenth-Century Republic of Letters.

There was a specific moment in Patón’s life that demonstrated how far the networks he had built reached. Despite his deep religiosity Patón needed to draw upon powerful friends, surprisingly, for a confrontation with the Church. In 1627 Patón’s son, Félix, only thirteen years

²⁰⁹ This book has been recovered recently in manuscript form from Patón’s descendants and edited by Garau & Bosch (2014).

²¹⁰ “Estudiante amigo, si quieres acertar a ser virtuoso y discreto sigue la obediencia, ejecuta los mandamientos de tu maestro, no desampares sus consejos que Dios te habla en él: que para que obedezcas y respetes este nombre, basta considerar que es uno de los que más se preció pues dijo: ‘maestro me llamáis y decís bien.’” (*El virtuoso discreto* 22).

²¹¹ “Por esto el Apóstol aconsejaba que no quieran los hombres saber más de lo que conviene, ni más de aquello que basta para la salvación porque, en escediendo desto, es jatanca, presunción y vanidad y pierde el nombre y ser de prudencia, sabiduría y discreción” (*El virtuoso discreto* 22).

old, professed in the Carmelite order against the will of his father. Patón litigated with the religious order to see his son and take him back for a long time, but the order put as many obstacles as possible to prevent this. Finally, Patón managed to obtain a mandate from Pope Urban VIII. It would be impossible to understand that a humble teacher from a remote village in Spain could reach the Pope himself if it were not for Patón's network of powerful friends. Possibly, in this case Patón received the help of Lope de Vega.²¹² Obligated to such an extent, the friars allowed the young novice to state his will. But the outcome must have been a terrible blow for Patón: his son asked him to leave him alone, because his religious calling was sincere.²¹³

I use this example to support my claim that Patón enjoyed a particularly effective and extended social network. To have a network is typical for writers of this period,²¹⁴ however, I want to emphasize that Patón's one was particularly operative and worthwhile, since it included some of the most important writers of the period and also powerful figures who were close to the highest civil and religious governing bodies: the Pope and the King. Patón's network also demonstrates that distant, 'weak' ties, under certain circumstances could be revealed as extraordinarily influential.²¹⁵ Probably Lope de Vega and Patón only had a frequent and personal contact twenty years ago, but they sustained a weak tie through letters and paratexts of books. However, when Patón needed the help of his friend, he assured him access to the Pope himself.

For this purpose, I have turned to Actor-Network Theory (ANT).²¹⁶ As Felski points out, while ANT has been influential in diverse fields, "its uptake in literary studies is only just at the beginning" (749). ANT can be especially useful for a writer like Patón, whose network, as we will realize throughout this work, is absolutely essential to understand his work. Looking for new ways of thinking about connectivity can also help us understand early modern Spain and to map its

²¹² Lope de Vega is the most likely candidate because his own network stretched to Urban VIII. The Pope recompensed Lope with the habit of the order of saint John of Jerusalem in 1627 for his poem *The Tragic Crown* (*La corona trágica*) published that same year and dedicated to the queen Mary of Scotland. Later Lope also received the honorific doctorate in Theology from the Collegium Sapientiae at Rome (Cayuela 382).

²¹³ Patón's sorrow would be even bigger when his son died five years later; see Bosch & others (2010: 20)

²¹⁴ Networks were completely ordinary and absolutely necessary to secure and maintain employment, enjoy access to different manuscript lessons and new findings, and publicize one's work to students and publishers.

²¹⁵ As Granovetters sustains in "The Strength of Weak Ties."

²¹⁶ ANT has been developed by science and technology studies (STS) scholars Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, the sociologist John Law, and others. It can be technically described as a "material-semiotic" method, which is in fact the term John Law prefers (Block 2013). This means that ANT maps relations that are simultaneously material (between things) and semiotic (between concepts), thus it assumes that many relations are both material and semiotic.

republic of letters, in which Patón was an essential actor.²¹⁷ Moreover, I suggest that Patón had a fundamental role in adding Mercurius as an actor²¹⁸ to his network.²¹⁹ In point of fact, ANT brings into the same field of action human and non-human actors, and so it is an exceptional tool in my study of the intertwined accounts of Patón and Hermes. For Serres, who has studied the role of the non-human in networks, the world is criss-crossed and held together by ‘messages,’ Serres aims to understand these processes precisely through the mythical character of Hermes – the not always reliable messenger of the gods.²²⁰ Hermes transmits messages but sometimes they do not arrive in the same form or with the same contents as when they were sent, and “the relationships they are meant to mediate do not always turn out as intended.”²²¹ Moreover, these ‘messages’ are not simply linguistic or semiotic; they are also material. As they move, messages can be transformed between, on the one hand, matters, energies, bodies, objects and, on the other hand, ideas, significations, culture, subjects; thus, the final outcome of the process is that “the singular messenger Hermes needs to become a multiple.”²²² This would explain the fact that we find a very different Hermes in Patón and his network than in the medieval ones that I have examined in the first chapter, and also that the message he transmitted changed, although the information he conveyed had the same origin in Antiquity.

By engaging ANT, I develop not only a better grasp of Patón’s relevance, but I also do so in a way that counteracts the persistent view of him as an autonomous, even isolated, author. Rather than isolated, Patón was, like other early modern writers, a ‘social author,’ who shared printed and manuscript copies of his work and depended on friends in the book trade to help print and distribute

²¹⁷ In this light, my work aligns with initiatives such as Mapping the Republic of Letters (<http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/>). It is my ambition in a posterior stage of my work to make explicit Patón’s network and the role Hermes had in it through a process of Data visualization, as the ones this initiative is pursuing.

²¹⁸ According to Blok, the ANT actor is always an *actant*, “a semiotic entity to which action capacities are ascribed or delegated during the course of collective affairs.” So, “the French state, a stone, IBM, Popeye, whales, or any other *figuration*, at once semiotic and material” can be actors, if they interfere with the distributed action of situations and events. In this sense, although Hermes Trimegistus was the figuration of an ancient philosopher who died centuries earlier, he can be considered an “actor” in Medieval and Early Modern Spain, where he deeply interfered. ANT relies on the *relations* established among entities. According to ANT “any actant attains its identity from the relations it enters into and within which it is set” (Blok 2013). It means that, as I am affirming from the beginning, the identity of Hermes changed in the new Spanish networks in which he entered.

²¹⁹ As network I understand, following Felsky Network “an assembly of actors that share information and coordinate action (749), and also “any association or assemblage of heterogeneous human and nonhuman elements” (Blok 2013)

²²⁰ See Serres (*Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*)

²²¹ See Michael (Actor-Network Theory 19)

²²² See Michael (Actor-Network Theory 20)

them. Patón exemplifies that “writing during the seventeenth century was produced socially” (Greteman 80). However, awareness of Patón’s network demands paying attention to the whole of his activities, among them “a letter sent, a book published, printed or sold, a dedication or name in the rich paratextual material that accompanied so many early modern works” (Greteman 80).

In this section I map out that network and the function that Patón’s commitment with Hermes had in it. My final goal is to prove that when Patón advocated for Hermes in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*, he did so not in a not minor and forgotten work, but in one through that could reach some of the most relevant actors of the Spanish intellectual milieu in Patón’s network. Patón integrated Hermes in that same network with explicit tools considered by ANT (among them, the prologue, the dedicatory and a letter included in a book). ANT takes into consideration specifically the countless mediations that bind together human and nonhuman actors (Felski 751), and also how some members of a network can be hybrid, that is both human and non-human. Thus, Hermes, an ancient intellectual entity who probably never existed, a non-human, was considered as a real philosopher by most scholars which made him ‘partly’ human. I consider Hermes as bound to Patón’s extended network in seventeenth century Spain. From there, we can reconstruct how Hermes would continue exerting his agency as cultural mediator²²³ from the letters, books and paratexts written by Patón’s friends, such as Lope de Vega or Quevedo.²²⁴ Greteman reminds us how early modern authors like Ficino, regularly described books and their ancient authors as active participants in their network, in such a way that they were “still taking part in a contemporaneous moment even centuries after their death” (Greteman 86).²²⁵ In a similar way, Patón and his network brought *Mercurius* to seventeenth century Spain, proving that a non-human or hybrid actor could be a relevant member. Once Hermes was connected to Patón’s extended network formed by many erudite scholars and writers, he assumed new meanings and capacity of agency, in such a way that

²²³ As I explained before “mediator” is also a fundamental concept in ANT, which distinguishes it from the simple, almost irrelevant, intermediary. The mediator is an entity which really makes a difference in a network and so should be the object of study (Latour 2005: 78 & ss).

²²⁴ As we will see, a clear example of this can be found in Lope de Vega’s reference to Hermes Trimegistus in the approbation that he wrote for the *Primera parte del teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad* (1620), or in the epistles included in *La Filomena* (1621) “To a man of these kingdoms” (“a un señor de estos reinos”). Quevedo quoted Trimegistus in in letter CXXVII to Don Antonio de Mendoza (see Ciocchini 403)

²²⁵ Greteman uses as example Ficino’s letter to Piero Leone, in which the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus is treated as another member of their epistolary network: “Just as much as you have been longing to see Proclus, I have been wanting to send him to you. For when people have the same will, it is not surprising that it is just the same in every respect. Then why did I not send him earlier? His hour had not yet come; but now his hour has come to leave from here” (Letter to Piero Leone)

Hermes could continue connecting contemporary authors with the ancient pagan past and was able to ‘co-create’ with them.²²⁶

Consequently, through letters, books, and paratexts, Hermes was included in the Spanish *Republic of Letters*, and the knowledge exchange that took place in this ‘intellectual geography.’²²⁷ This Spanish republic of letters of the seventeenth century which fostered Hermes was obviously more restricted than the more extended European one which developed from the beginning of the Renaissance (through Petrarch, Valla, Ficino, Erasmus or Lipsius).²²⁸ In a similar way that Laminio, Patón’s character, decided that wisdom could be perfectly found and developed only in Spain, Patón also restricted his correspondence and *alba amicorum* to the Iberian Peninsula. As in the European Republic of Letters, in the Spanish one there were certain meeting places, frequently targeted by scholars: “universities and libraries, famous printing houses, and last but not least, the new academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Mauelshagen 2). In this respect, Patón not only spent the first part of his life in diverse universities and academic institutions, but also made many short travels to connect with academies and erudite circles with which he kept long-lasting contact through letters and the paratexts of his books. Thanks to that, as Quilis and Rozas affirmed (1965: XL), Patón was well known in the cultural media of seventeenth century Spain, he held correspondence with both important writers and philologists, and his works appeared in the libraries of the most important erudite men of the moment, such as Gonzalo Correas (1571-1631). When his students reached maturity, they also became part of his network, as it is demonstrated, for instance, through the dedications and paratexts included in Patón’s edition of Martial texts in 1628, which prove that the book was prepared and paid by his disciples.

I am going to address several important personalities of the Spanish Republic of Letters included in Patón’s network because *Mercurius Trimegistus*, was not only included but also part of it, as it is demonstrated through the texts I will examine. These writers and their relationship with Patón also reveal why what Patón wrote about Hermes was so relevant. First and foremost, I

²²⁶ As Felski points out ANT has an emphasis on connection as co-creation rather than on limit or constraint. For ANT “mediation does not subtract from the object but adds to the object” (Felski 750).

²²⁷ The term intellectual geographies is used by the Cultures of Knowledge project of the University of Oxford to describe the knowledge exchange in the Republic of Letters (Heuvel 96).

²²⁸ Mauelshagen defines the early modern ‘republic of letters’ as “a fictitious community-without a territory, without clear-cut geographical or social borders- with ideals and moral rules instead of a legal system, with idols instead of a government.” In a similar way it is described by Grafton (2009: 6 & ss.)

address the writer **Lope de Vega** (1562-1635), who had his own network, probably the largest in Spanish Golden Age Literature.²²⁹ I have already mentioned that he and Patón possibly met at the Jesuit school in Madrid. Later (around 1604), both writers participated in the academies of Fuensalida and the Count of Mora in Toledo. Undoubtedly, Patón traveled to Toledo, specifically to sustain and maintain new contacts because the intellectual life had been temporarily transferred there from Madrid.²³⁰ Patón published his *Spanish Eloquence in Art (Elocuencia española en Arte)* in Toledo in 1604. This book would be posteriorly revised and included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1621).²³¹ Through the *Spanish Eloquence* Patón reinforced his relationship with the famous writer, because in this treatise of rhetoric Lope was treated as an authentic ‘living classic,’ and it is important to note the number of examples from Lope’s writings that Patón introduces to illustrate rhetorical devices.²³² By doing so, Lope increased what he and most writers in the Republic of Letters most eagerly looked for, the *fama* or social reputation. Patón also cherished Lope’s friendship, and so he included two letters from him in two of his books.²³³ On his behalf, Lope praised Patón in his *The Conquered Jerusalem (La Jerusalén conquistada 1609)*, and included a long and famous eulogy in his *Laurel de Apolo* (1630).²³⁴ In this way, Lope integrated Patón in his own canon of important writers of this time, which is also a good reflection of his network. All this information led Quilis and Rozas to affirm that there existed a long-lasting and regular correspondence between the two friends, from which only the two letters published in

²²⁹ The first one who pointed to the friendship between Lope and Patón was Entrambasaguas (1932: 705-706). This critic reproduced all praises dedicated to Patón from Lope when he was dealing with Patón’s participation in the *Expostulatio spongiae*, a work written by Lope’s circle of friends in 1618 to defend him against the Spongia, a book where he was criticized a year before. See Parrado and Tubau’s scholarly edition of the *Expostulatio spongiae* (2015).

²³⁰ Madroñal (“Cervantes y Lope” 300&ss.) has studied Patón’s relation with Lope de Vega’s important circle of friends in Toledo in 1604. In 1604 Lope became a citizen of Toledo, at least until 1610. There he was acknowledged as a Toledan poet by the writers around him and the local authorities, who transformed him into an ‘organic intellectual.’ Thus, Lope was commissioned to organize the literary contest of 1604 to honor future king Phillip IV’s birth (Madroñal, 2009: 300).

²³¹ In this revision, Patón included examples from the ambitious epic poem that Lope had published in between: *The Conquered Jerusalem (La Jerusalén conquistada 1609)*.

²³² This abundance was first highlighted by Romera Navarro in 1935 (290-191), then explained in an article by Quilis & Rozas (1962), and more recently developed by Madroñal (2009a).

²³³ The first one was published in *The Perfect Preacher (El perfecto predicador 1612)*; Lope addressed to Patón’s friend Fernando de Ballesteros this letter in 1607, and in it Lope affirms that he has read the book and praises and recommends it. This makes Quilis and Rozas affirm that Patón sent Lope a manuscript of the book in order for Lope to read and publicize it, in which it could be a common practice between the two friends (1962: 37). The second letter was written in 1627, and in it Lope declares himself disciple of Patón; Patón published it twelve years later in his *Discourse of the Perfumes, Tufts and Bald Spots (Discurso de los Tufos, Copetes y Calvas, 1639)*, when Lope was already dead.

²³⁴ Reproduced by Quilis & Rozas (1962 40)

Patón's books have been preserved. Thus, as Greteman says, the study of the Republic of Letters "depends upon the quirks of survival" (80). As we will see, Lope included numerous allusions to Hermes in his books, letters, and paratexts, and he talked about the ancient Egyptian in similar terms than Patón did; regrettably, it is impossible to know how much both writers dealt with Hermes and many other topics in that abundant correspondence. What we can affirm is that Hermes traveled in that network, but not in other contemporary ones.

Curiously enough, Trimegistus appears in the letters, books, and paratexts of seventeenth Spanish writers who were in Patón's network, but not in the works of other writers who were not in it and whom, more specifically, we can even consider his enemies. Among those writers is the most important novelist, and the most relevant poet of the period, respectively: Cervantes (1547-1616) and Góngora (1561-1627). Both were enemies of Lope de Vega. This fact has made many critics affirm that Patón 'acquired' that enmity through Lope's friendship (and in the case of Góngora, also through Quevedo).²³⁵ Patón was in Toledo next to Lope when he fell out with Cervantes, probably in 1604, just when Cervantes' *Quixote*²³⁶ was about to be published. Regarding Góngora, Patón was, according to Lope, the inventor of the famous term 'culteranismo,' coined to attack Góngora's style still used by literature specialists today.²³⁷ Neither in Cervantes nor in Góngora, including their most important works, could I find any reference to Hermes Trimegistus; although, as we will see, he appears in many other writers of the period (and most of them included in Patón's network or in his quoted authorities).

The other essential writer of the period who professed Patón's friendship was Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645), although there are less material traces of it. Villanueva, Patón's workplace, was very close to Quevedo's famous property in La Torre de Juan Abad, where he went many

²³⁵ Patón and Cervantes necessarily had to know each other. Madroñal points to many possible mutual attacks between Cervantes and Patón in their respective works and he also notes that Cervantes does not mention Patón in *El viaje del Parnaso* (1614), nor does Patón quote Cervantes and his works in his *Spanish Eloquence (Elocuencia española en arte)*, 1604, or this *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1621), where both authors mention numerous other writers of the period (2009a, 2012).

²³⁶ See Madroñal ("Entre Cervantes y Lope: Toledo, hacia 1604")

²³⁷ According to Lope de Vega's *Letter to Francisco de Herrera Maldonado*, Patón allegedly coined the famous Spanish literary term *culteranismo* (composed of 'cult' plus Lutheranism), devised to attack the new difficult and erudite style of the poet Luis de Góngora, mortal enemy of Patón's friends, Lope and Quevedo (Quilis and Rozas 1962, 35-54): "Allí nos acusó de barbarismo/ gente ciega, vulgar y que profana/ lo que llamó Patón culteranismo," en *La Circe con otras rimas y prosas 175r*. Although Patón ignored Cervantes in his *Spanish Eloquence*, he did include a few examples from Góngora's *letrillas* and minor poems (Quilis and Rozas 1962, 35-54). Afterwards, when Patón revised *Spanish Eloquence* to be included in his *Mercurius Trimegistus* he included seven examples from *The Solitudes (Las Soledades)*, Góngora's most important poem, which had appeared in between. Apparently, Patón did not like Góngora's difficult and 'dark' style, but he did like the use he made of rhetorical devices and artifices of style.

times (almost as often as he was banished from the court in Madrid). Both Quilis and Rozas (1965: XLV) and Astrana Marín (1960: 864), consider that both writers often saw each other when Quevedo traveled there; actually, the polemical and ailing Quevedo requested that the authorities allowed him to go to Villanueva several times, because Patón's workplace had a physician and an apothecary while La Torre de Juan Abad did not.²³⁸ There are a number of noticeable examples of how they operated in the same network. For instance, one of the most important poems of both Quevedo and Spanish Literature appeared for the first time in a book by Patón from 1639²³⁹: *The Satiric and Censor Epistle against the present customs of the Castilians*, which Quevedo addressed to the all-powerful *valido* (prime minister) of Spain, the Count-Duke of Olivares. Both Quevedo and Patón shared rigorous opinions about morals and religion, but in that occasion the former crossed the line by blaming such a big figure.²⁴⁰ Despite the evidences of this friendship, Patón only included a few examples from Quevedo in his *Spanish Eloquence* of 1604 and then in his *Mercurius Trimegistus* of 1621, when Quevedo was an even more known writer.²⁴¹ As we will see, Quevedo's influence in Patón could extend to many aspects, including the Neostoic philosophy on which I will expand further. In addition to that, Quevedo mentioned Hermes Trimegistus several times in his works, distinctly in a letter to Don Antonio de Mendoza (which I will reproduce later), and in several passages of his books.

The third important figure in Patón's network is the erudite and humanist **Francisco Cascales** (1563-1642). García Soriano affirms that Patón was many times in Murcia (where he had an appointment for the Inquisition), and thus he got to know him there. Cascales' most important work is *Philological Letters (Cartas filológicas 1626)*.²⁴² It consists of a collection of letters which Cascales addressed to the friends he had in his own network and were compiled to form a book. In those letters, he discusses a variety of topics in a personal way, which renders his work similar to Montaigne's *Essais*. Nothing better than Cascales' *Philological Letters* to prove how early modern scholars "made the letter into an expression of their scholarly identity" as Maelshagen points out (2). In this book, Letter number X is addressed to Patón, with whom

²³⁸ In fact, Quevedo referred many times to Villanueva and the friend he had there in his letters (Quilis and Rozas XLV). It is difficult to imagine that the erudite writer would talk with anyone else than Patón and his disciples.

²³⁹ *Discourse of the Stenches, Tufts and Bald Spots (Discurso de los Tufos, Calvas y Copetes, 1639)*.

²⁴⁰ Probably this letter contributed to the arrest and imprisonment of Quevedo that same year of 1639.

²⁴¹ In 1621 Quevedo was undergoing a dangerous moment due to his relationship with the fallen and condemned duke of Osuna, which nearly cost him his life. Maybe for this reason Patón did not make it so prominent in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*.

²⁴² See García Soriano's scholarly edition of *The Philological Letters* (1940, t. II, p.211)

Cascales jokes, and tries to cheer up from the ailments of age and his moodiness. Despite being the product of the culture of the Republic of Letters, this letter goes beyond the formulaic, and reveals a truly sympathetic treatment. It begins: “I do not want God to send me health, but I desire it for you, and very good. Come on, sir, be encouraged, and resist the aches and pains.”²⁴³ In order to motivate Patón, Cascales sent him a number of humorous Latin epigrams written by himself in Martial’s style, which he also included in the book. At the very end of the *Discourse of the Stenches, Tufts and Bald Spots (Discurso de los Tufos, Calvas y Copetes*, 1639), just before Lope de Vega’s letters I addressed before, there is a eulogy of Cascales addressed to Patón in which he compares him with great European luminaries such as Scaliger or Lipsius.²⁴⁴ As Quevedo and Lope, Cascales also addressed Mercurius Trimegistus in his writings, for instance, in the *Philological Letters*.²⁴⁵

Other than Lope de Vega, Quevedo and Cascales, I want to mention some other figures of the period in Patón’s network who will appear later in this work. Thus, we can also count Sebastián de Covarrubias y Orozco (1539-1613), who wrote the first important dictionary: the *Treasure of Castilian or Spanish language (Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, 1611). Patón quotes Covarrubias many times and dedicated to him his *Institutions of Spanish Grammar (Instituciones de gramática española*, 1614), strongly praising the importance of the dictionary. Although Covarrubias does not introduce many grammar entries, when he does so he seems to have Patón’s *Spanish Eloquence* in front of him, because he defines them in the same way, and sometimes with similar words and examples (Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 62). Of course, Covarrubias also includes an entry for Hermes Trimegistus in his dictionary, and in the same terms as Patón.²⁴⁶

Patón was also a close friend of the eccentric writer Pedro Ordóñez de Ceballos (born circa 1556). As a soldier, sailor, and adventurer, Ceballos completed and wrote about a famous journey around the world. Certainly, he had an opposite personality to Patón. However, Patón admired and

²⁴³ “No me dé Dios salud, sino se la deseo v.m muy entera. Ea señor, ánimo más y haga mala cara a los achaques.” *Cartas filológicas*, vol. II, p. 211.

²⁴⁴ Both Lope’s and Cascales’ writings are at the end of the volume without pagination.

²⁴⁵ Cascales addresses Trimegistus as inventor of letters in the letter to Diego de Rueda (Decade I, letter II, 1634 f. 5v.) and again in the letter to Diego Magastre, referring to the magical and divine properties of the number three, present in Trimegistus’ name (f24r.)

²⁴⁶ “Mercurio Trismegisto, id est, ter maximus, gran rey, gran filósofo, gran sacerdote” (*Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, f546v.).

believed all his friend's quests, including the most incredible ones.²⁴⁷ They wrote together the *History of the Ancient and Continuous Nobility of the City of Jaen* (*Historia de la antigua y continuada nobleza de la ciudad de Jaén*, 1628),²⁴⁸ and Ordóñez dedicated to Patón one of his travel books.²⁴⁹ As Quilis and Rozas point out, judging by Ordóñez's *Eulogy* in one of Patón's books, there existed a constant correspondence between both friends (xlvi).²⁵⁰

Among other significant writers related to Patón was the poet Juan de Tassis y Peralta, Count of Villamediana (1582-1622). Some critics think that he was a disciple of Patón (Quilis and Rozas, 1965: xlv), who dedicated to him the *Mercurius Trimegistus*. As we will see, Patón compared Villamediana with the legendary Egyptian in the paratexts of the book. Furthermore, Patón's friends Alonso de Salas Barbadillo (1580-1635) and José de Valdivieso (1565-1638) published two laudatory sonnets in the *Spanish Eloquence* (1604) which were included again in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1604). An extensive list of historical figures related to Patón through the paratexts of his books appears in Quilis and Rozas (xlvi-xlviii). In brief, explaining Patón's network means understanding a significant portion of Spanish Golden Age literary life.

In the last part of this chapter, I want to address specific examples of how Patón's network functioned, by what means its members help each other in the production of books, and the new significances the outcome of this processes acquired. I will also demonstrate how this kind of study can open a window to interrelated components of early modern culture in Spain, Europe, and even America.

Rigorous Catholics vs. Hermetic Utopians. Patón's Censorship of Thomas More's Translation.

In the same way that others included paratexts in his books, Patón wrote approvals and other texts for the books of his friends and acquaintances. In addition, as a member of the Inquisition, he came to hold the serious power of book censor. This dimension of Patón's activities

²⁴⁷ See Zugasti (2003: 104). Patón felt astonished in awe when he read some of Ordóñez adventures; for instance, having professed as a priest, Ordóñez received a proposal of marriage by the beautiful and wealthy queen of Cochinchina (Vietnam). Ordóñez rejected the proposal and converted her to Christianity. Of course, all of this according to Ceballos himself (Patón, *History of Jaén* f213v-214r.)

²⁴⁸ According to Bosh & others, Ordóñez sent a draft to Patón, who completed it and gave it shape (20)

²⁴⁹ *Treatise of the true recountings on the kingdoms of China, Cochinchina and Champa* (*Tratado de las relaciones verdaderas de los reinos de la China, Cochinchina y Champáa*, 1628).

²⁵⁰ In *Decent colocation of the holy cross* (*Decente colocación de la Santa Cruz*, 1635) Ordóñez wrote: "through the familiar communication that we have" ("mediante la comunicación familiar que los dos tenemos").

has not been properly studied. In many situations, but especially in the case of Patón, the writing of approvals, including those under request of religious authorities, became authentic literary criticism and contributed to enhance the significance of the books censored. In other cases, the approvals can shed light on the censor himself and his contradictions or more shaded motivations, including the benefit he bestowed to the members of his own network. This line of research becomes even more enriching when we deal with approvals of translations of books from other European countries. When this happens, an approval can reveal aspects about different nations' shared culture, scholarly relations, and the higher or lower profile of specific works in new contexts. Fortunately, in Patón I find examples which provide all these features.

For example, in 1631 Patón wrote a warm and incisive approval for the translation of his friend Fernando de Ballesteros (1576- 1657),²⁵¹ mayor of Villamediana and captain of the army, made from the *Comedia Eufrosina* (originally by the Portuguese Jorge Ferreira de Vasconcellos, 1555).²⁵² Next to Patón's approval, there is also an eight-page encomiastic letter "to whoever reads the comedy" by Quevedo. This teamwork reveals not only how the writers in this network of friends supported each other in the production of their literary endeavors, but also how through approvals and letters, they contributed to the meaning of the work itself.

Patón also approved the Spanish translation of an even more relevant work, both for renaissance and universal letters: Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). This description of an ideal society quickly became a classic of the Renaissance, which matched the popularity of the Ancient writers who inspired Thomas More's endeavors. From the very moment of its publication until now, readers and specialists have tried to unfold the meaning of this surprising book. By focusing on the paratexts of this translation, I will bring to light thought-provoking aspects of Patón's activities and intellectual background essential to my research; additionally, I will also explain a revealing sample of Patón's at times contradictory loyalties: on the one hand, to the Catholic faith, and on the other, to both his network and humanistic culture represented by Hermes.

²⁵¹ Ballesteros was also friend of Quevedo (there exist some preserved letters from their correspondence) and Lope de Vega, who praised him in his *Laurel de Apolo*.

²⁵² Vasconcellos' *Comedia Eufrosina* is a masterpiece of Portuguese letters, which adapts the Spanish canonical play *La Celestina* (1499), and added to it Erasmian and humanistic nuances.

In 1637, Patón wrote both an apologetic letter and a censorship²⁵³ for the translation of Thomas More's *Utopia* by Jerónimo de Medinilla y Porres, an important nobleman and governor of the Campo de Montiel, the region²⁵⁴ where Patón was born and later worked. This translation was made at the request of Quevedo, as he himself states in both a personal recommendation included in the book (fXr.-XIV.), and a letter to Sancho de Sandoval.²⁵⁵ Quevedo affirms that, since he saw that Medinilla carried with himself a copy *Utopia* as a reference book wherever his duties led him, he suggested his friend to render a translation of it into Spanish.²⁵⁶ These literary requests among friends were not uncommon, especially in this network.²⁵⁷ Patón's tie with Medinilla was in fact deeper, as a result of the relationship they formed when Medinilla was a child. Patón reveals this in his apologetic letter.²⁵⁸ After reflecting on the art of transforming one language into another, Patón praises Medinilla's translation from More's Latin, and reveals that he was his disciple. This seems a self-congratulatory detail: Medinilla's Latin skills had to be excellent because Patón was his master.²⁵⁹ But what is even more noteworthy is the approval Patón made of the book, a fact Patón's specialists have so far overlooked. It reveals important information about Patón's position in the Inquisition and why, in this case, he carried out an especially delicate issue:

Master Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, Notary of the Holy Office, with special commission by the inquisitors located in the Apostolic Tribunal of Murcia for the expurgation of the books, I certify, to whoever sees this one, that this text, *Utopia*, which Thomas More wrote and Jerónimo Antonio de Medinilla translated (...) not only it is not forbidden, but if at any time it had something to be expurgated in other editions, in this one it does not have anything, because I saw and considered it many times, not only by using the expurgation of the newer *Expurgatory Catalogue*, but also the censorship of the old ones. Because of this and the new censorships that the new edition has, it can and must be printed without either scruple or suspicion of bad doctrine, on the contrary, his reading inspires a pious and Christian curiosity (...) (*Utopía* XXIV.-XXIIr.).²⁶⁰

²⁵³ Usually the Spanish early modern books had a civil and a religious approval; this second one was a consent by someone commissioned by the church, in order to verify that it did not contain anything inappropriate. This is the nature of Patón's censorship.

²⁵⁴ In Spanish *comarca*.

²⁵⁵ A letter to Sancho de Sandoval (See Mercedes Sánchez, 2009: 53)

²⁵⁶ Quevedo's "Notice, Judgment and Recommendation of the *Utopia* and of Thomas More" ("Noticia, Juicio y Recomendación de la *Utopía*, y de Tomás Moro"), in Medinilla's *Utopia* (fXv.-fXIV.)

²⁵⁷ Actually, in 1633 Patón had written his *Preliminary declaration of Psalm 118 (Declaración preámbula del Salmo 118)* under request of Medinilla himself (see Bosh & others, 2010: 22).

²⁵⁸ In Medinilla's *Utopia* (fXr.-fXr.)

²⁵⁹ This is further evidence that Patón has the sons of the nobility among his students, as I pointed out before. When they grew up, many of those students became valuable members of Patón's network.

²⁶⁰ "El Maestro Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, Notario del Santo Oficio, y con especial comisión de los señores inquisidores que residen en el Tribunal Apostólico de Murcia para la expurgación de los libros, certifico y hago fe, a los que el presente vieren, que el texto de la *Utopía*, que compuso Tomás Moro inglés, y tradujo don Jerónimo Antonio de Medinilla y Porres en Castellano (caballero del hábito de Santiago, gobernador que fue en esta villa y sus partidos,

According to this excerpt, Patón has among his duties the expurgation, and definitive approval of books which the Inquisition submitted to him. Patón even admits the familiarity and skills he had with the ‘expurgatory catalogues.’²⁶¹ What makes this specific situation stand out is how, at least in this case, he could use his powerful position for good, to help his network of friends be published. While his position as censor bestowed Patón a huge power among Spanish writers, this specific approval demonstrates how that power was not risk free: *Utopia* had, in fact, been a more suspicious book for religious authorities than Patón implies.

More’s *Utopia* was, and is still, a fascinating and controversial book, both because of its content and its author. The book was published in 1516 and has two parts or books. The first one—which was not translated by Medinilla—starts precisely with the written correspondence More had with some of his friends in the European Republic of Letters.²⁶² Then More introduces the traveler Raphael Hythlodæus, with whom he discusses the ills of European and English society. Raphael turns out to be a philosophical sailor, who thinks kings must be philosophers. To prove his ideas are viable, and to provide contrast to the European societies, in the second book Raphael describes the island of Utopia, where he has just spent five years. Some of Utopia’s customs proved to be both fascinating and scandalous for More’s readers, particularly the most Catholic ones: no private property, euthanasia, priests’ marriage, divorce by mutual consent based upon the incompatibility of character, and so on. However, as Lopez Estrada demonstrates in his monographic study (1982), Thomas More (1478-1535) was popular among both humanists and zealous Catholics in Spain. This two-sided renown can be easily explained. On the one hand, More was acknowledged as saint and martyr, killed by the ‘evil and heretical’ king Henry VIII both

Caballerizo del rey señor nuestro, y su corregidor en la ciudad y provincia de Córdoba, señor de las villas de Bocos, Rozas y Remolino) no solo no está prohibido, pero si en algún tiempo tuvo alguna margen que expurgar en otras impresiones, en la presente no la tiene, porque la he visto y considerado una y muchas veces, no solo por la expurgación del más moderno catálogo expurgatorio, más aun por la censura de los Antiguos. Y por ello, y por las nuevas censuras que dicha traducción tiene, puede y debe imprimirse sin escrúpulo ni sospecha de mala doctrina, antes su lección es de curiosidad cristiana y piadosa, y por ser así en testimonio desta verdad lo firmé y signé en Villanueva de los Infantes, en veintisiete de septiembre de mil seiscientos y treinta y siete años. En testimonio de verdad. Vera fides.” (*Utopia* XXIV.-XXIIr.).

²⁶¹ Patón refers to each one of the *index expurgatorius* “a list of books once separately published and now included in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* that gives titles of works forbidden by church authority to Roman Catholics pending revision or deletion of some sections” (Merriam-Webster online).

²⁶² Peter Gilles, town clerk of Antwerp, and Hieronymus van Busleyden, counselor to Charles V.

because of his constant faith and the defense he made of the Spanish queen Catherine of Aragon.²⁶³ On the other hand, More was the most important figure of early humanism in England, an undisputed contemporary authority, and a member of several early modern European networks of men of letters. Importantly, these networks included the Spaniard Luis Vives (1493-1540), essential in the discussions about the development of humanism in Spain, and with whom More had a close relationship.²⁶⁴ As many other humanists in Spain and Europe, Vives believed More's *Utopia* must be read along with Platón's *Republic* and *Laws*, as two examples of idealistic theories of government.

More's mutual relationship with Spain extended to the discovery and conquest of the New World. He was fascinated by the first accounts of America's inhabitants (e.g. Columbus's *Diary* and *Letters*, and Pedro Martir de Angleria's *Orbe novo*), and he took them as inspiration for his utopic republic, which he situates precisely in the new continent. Later, many Spanish clerks and learned men brought *Utopia* to America, trying to understand the peoples they would find there (López Estrada, 59). Finally, the new books written on America's peoples were themselves influenced by *Utopia*.²⁶⁵ This association of *Utopia* with America has proved to be long-lasting. The Dominican-Argentinian intellectual Henríquez Ureña wrote *The utopia of America* in 1925. This book was one of the last illustrious instances of a utopic América, an ideal which drove Ureña's life and works in the same way as it has prompted many other men's endeavors in the New World. According to Henríquez Ureña "when the mirage of the classical spirit projects over Europe with the Renaissance, it is natural that utopia resurfaces."²⁶⁶ Since the Old and the New World collided during the Renaissance, it is understandable that both Spanish and European scholars made the association between the newly discovered America and the utopic idealism with old roots.

²⁶³ Thus, More was included in the most important Spanish hagiographical book of the Golden Age the *Flos Sanctorum* by Alonso de Villegas (1533-1603).

²⁶⁴ More praised Vives in a famous letter to Erasmus, they met several times, and Vives even visited the famous residence of More in Chelsea, and authentic "English Platonic Academy" (López Estrada, 1982: 18-19). Both humanists made a commentary about *Civitas Dei* of saint Augustine, and as we will see, both mentioned Mercurius Trimegistus in it.

²⁶⁵ Menéndez Pelayo (1948: 75-76) pointed to this influence in many important books, distinctly the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (*Comentarios reales de los Incas*, 1609), by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616). To what extent Garcilaso offers a too idealistic and utopic view of the pre-Hispanic Empire, is still a matter of controversy among Americanists.

²⁶⁶ "Cuando el espejismo del espíritu clásico se proyecta sobre Europa, con el Renacimiento, es natural que resurja la utopía" (Rodríguez Hureña, 2007: 426).

Not only Spain's politics in America, but also in Europe, enhanced Thomas More's notoriety among Spanish writers. Since More was executed for opposing the marriage of Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn, he was particularly valued during the war of king Philip II against the protestant English queen Elizabeth I, outcome of that marriage.²⁶⁷ In short, Thomas More's popularity in Spain was widespread; however, he was particularly esteemed by three outstanding members of Patón's network I introduced before: his master El Brocense and his friends Lope de Vega and Quevedo.

El Brocense²⁶⁸ revered More and, as many other Spanish humanists, considered him, an authority in eloquence, wit, and word games.²⁶⁹ There is, for instance, a specific reference to *Utopia* in El Brocense's *Enchiridion* (1600).²⁷⁰ Lope de Vega in his *Rimas* (1605) dedicated an epitaph to Thomas More, whom he presented as a "wall" for the Catholic Orthodoxy in a particularly elaborated poem.²⁷¹ Finally Quevedo, who had such a determining agency in Medinilla's translation, was also among More's admirers.²⁷² Thus, it is not surprising that precisely this circle of friends produced the first translation of *Utopia* into Spanish.

Although Latin editions of *Utopia* had circulated in Spain during more than a century, Medinilla made the utopians speak Spanish for the first time. While Latin was the learned and educational language, any translation from a Latin work into a vulgar language guaranteed the work a much broader dissemination and the scope of its controversial details (a fact the Inquisition was well aware of). It is also clear from Patón's words that other attempts to publish *Utopia* were prevented. Even though Patón examined the book many times (arguably, looking for "expurgation victims"), it was published not only with many of the striking costumes of the utopians I described before unaltered, but also with the even more contentious chapter nine, which Patón intentionally

²⁶⁷ The Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526-1611), praised him in his *Ecclesiastic History of England's Schism* (*Historia Eclesiástica del Cisma de Inglaterra*, 1588) and the epic poet Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597) wrote an entire book called *Thomas More* (*Tomás Moro*, 1592), presenting him as a hero-martyr.

²⁶⁸ There is a specific work by López Estrada about El Brocense and Thomas More (1967).

²⁶⁹ In this particular way, El Brocense used More's epigrams 9 and 11 in his *Commentary to Alciato's Emblems* (*Commentaria in Andr. Alciati Emblemata*, in Vol. III of his *Opera Omnia*, 1765: 299; see López Estrada, 1982: 45)

²⁷⁰ As we will see, it is one of the most important books to understand the Neostoic movement in Spain.

²⁷¹ As if trying to emulate More's style in some of his works, Lope uses an *Antanaclassis*, playing with the meaning of the word Moro in Spanish (Moore), thus, he also creates an Oximoron: More was a "saint moore," Lope also employs the paronomasia More/Muro ("wall" in Spanish): Aquí yace un Moro santo/ en la vida y en la muerte;/ de la Iglesia muro fuerte,/ mártir por honrarla tanto./ Fue Tomás, y más seguro/ fue Bautista que Tomás,/ pues fue, sin volver atrás,/ mártir, muerto, moro y muro" (*Rimas*, 1965, f111).

²⁷² As López Estrada points out (1982: 84-94), Quevedo had *Utopia* in his library, and two years before Medinilla's translation he had actually translated a long fragment of More's book for his *Letter to Luis XIII* (*Carta a Luis XIII*, 1635)

overlooked. Chapter nine was so troublesome that Medinilla himself included in the book, before his translation, a long advisory note about it. The topic of the chapter, which Medinilla puts forth at the very beginning, gives an unequivocal clue about its thorny aspects:

In the chapter about the religion of the Utopians, the pious martyr Thomas More addresses the variety they allowed in that Republic, and while the expurgatory catalogues do not limit anything in this chapter, as informs master Jiménez Patón's testimony, to whom the Holy Tribunal justly has commissioned to clean works which need correction, still it seems necessary to prevent the chance which can be taken by the atheist politician, against the glorious martyr's attempt (*Utopia* fVIIv.).²⁷³

By invoking Patón's inquisitorial authority, Medinilla emphasizes that the book does not have any issue; however, he acknowledges the advantage which atheists and idolaters can take in case they misinterpret the book. According to Medinilla, even if More refers to a variety of cults, he was in fact referring specifically to the diversity allowed by the Catholic Church in its own domain. In his *Notice* printed with the translation as well, Quevedo also states that no offense to the Catholic Church must be found in the liberties of Utopia.²⁷⁴ Yet, if we go to Medinilla's translation of chapter nine, the part which Patón could arguably have examined more carefully, and Quevedo been more suspicious about, it is really difficult to acquiesce to their lenient readings:

Some worship the Sun, some the Moon, others some of the wandering stars; some revere as supreme God any man who had been eminent in virtue and most of them, and the wisest ones, do not revere any of those things, but they judge that there exists an occult, eternal, immense, and inexplicable divinity, above all human capacity, which is dispersed throughout the world with virtue, not with bigness. To him they call father; of him, they acknowledge the origin, the increasing, the changes and the ends of all things. Although the others worship diverse things, all of them agree in this: that there exists a supreme God, who created everything and preserves it with his providence (*Utopia*: f41r.-f41v.).²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Nota al capítulo nono y último desta obra hecha por el traductor (VIr.-VIIIv.). It says "El piadoso mártir Tomás Moro discurre en el capítulo de la religión de los utopianos acerca de la variedad que permitían en la República, y aunque los expurgatorios no limitan algo deste capítulo, como lo advierte el testimonio del maestro Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, a quien justamente el santo Tribunal ha cometido limpiar obras que necesitan de corrección, todavía ha parecido prevenir la ocasión que puede tomar el ateísta y político, contra lo que el glorioso mártir procuró" (*Utopia* VIIv.).

²⁷⁴ In Medinilla's *Utopia* fXIr.

²⁷⁵ "Unos adoran al Sol, otros la Luna, otros a alguna de las estrellas errantes; algunos veneran por sumo Dios qualque hombre que haya sido egregio en virtud y la mayor parte y más sabia no reverencia alguna de aquestas cosas, antes juzga que hay una oculta, eterna, inmensa, e inexplicable divinidad, sobre toda capacidad humana, la cual con la virtud no con grandeza, se estienda por este mundo; y a este Dios llaman padre; deste reconocen el origen, el aumento, y la mudanza y el fin de todas las cosas, y a él solo rinden divinos honores; los otros todos bien que adoran cosas diversas, concurren en este parecer, que hay un sumo Dios, el cual es criador de todo, y con su providencia le conserva (*Utopia* f41r.-f41v.)."

It is hard to imagine a tidier tutorial in tolerance and kindness towards the beliefs of others than *Utopia*'s chapter nine, but there are many nuances in it. Frances Yates, the most relevant specialist in Hermeticism of the twentieth century, drew attention to this same passage.²⁷⁶ She suggests that “there is Hermetic influence in this description of the religion practiced by the wisest of the Utopians” (Yates *Giordano Bruno* 186). It has an explanation. More was part of a humanistic circle, along with other humanists such as John Colet (1467-1519). This circle was the first one to adapt Catholic theology and philosophy to Neoplatonism and the *prisca theologia* in England, and its members received the hermetic influences of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. This link is not a surprise since, as López Estrada highlights, More was among the men who strove the most to join Jesus Christ with the sages of Antiquity (1982:9). Furthermore, More translated the biography written by Giovanni Francesco Pico on his uncle. This biography, as Yates quotes, includes references to Pico's interests, which More translates as the “secrete misteryes of the hebrewes, caldyes and arabies” and “ye olde obscure philosophye of Pythagoras, Trismegistus, and Orpheus” (Yates *Giordano Bruno* 186). More's translation was published in 1510 (six years before his *Utopia*); it was the first time in which Trimegistus and the other *prisci theologi* were named in English. *Utopia* would be echoed in other ‘utopic’ works with even more evident Hermetic influences, from *The city of Sun (La Città del Sole, 1602)*, by Tomasso Campanella, to the *New Atlantis* (1624), by Francis Bacon. Thus, the intellectual construction of an ideal and hermetic society extended and even increased its influence at the beginning of seventeenth century.

Not surprisingly, the religion of the utopians is oddly similar to the one transmitted through Trimegistus and described by Ficino and Pico. Yates highlighted that both the religion of the utopians and the *Prisca Theologia* were prepared to receive Christianity (1964:186). As Medinilla translated from More, when the narrator of the *Utopia* tried to convert the inhabitants of the island “miraculously they accepted it, either through divine inspiration or because it seemed to them that this way is truly similar to their doctrine. And this was really effective because they understood that Christ liked their way of living” (*Utopia*, f41v.).²⁷⁷ This broadmindedness really moves the utopians toward Christian Hermeticism,²⁷⁸ and it is close both to the *Prisca Theologia* and

²⁷⁶ Yates is using the English translation of the humanist Ralph Robinson (1520–1577), which in fact does not differ from Medinilla's Spanish one (which I am translating into English).

²⁷⁷ “Milagrosamente se inclinaron, o por divina inspiración, y por parecerles verdaderamente que este camino es muy semejante a su doctrina. Y esto pudo mucho, porque habían comprendido que su manera de vivir agradaba a Cristo” (*Utopia* f41v.)

²⁷⁸ A description of this movement, which had its peak at the end of sixteenth century, will appear next chapter.

philosophia perennnis theories. The habitants of the imaginary island also reinforce the premises in favor of the salvation of the pagans that I will discuss in chapter four.

But there is a counterbalance to this leniency in religious grounds. In an astounding move, Thomas More narrates what happened when a new converted Christian expressed his new beliefs with disproportionate zeal:

But someone newly baptized, although I admonished him to be quiet, started ardently to preach the Christian religion, and he condemned any other doctrine, calling impious those who worshipped any other deity than the Holy Trinity, and that they were worthy of the eternal fire. They arrested him, not as breaker of religion, but because he had disturbed the people and caused turmoil, and his old fellows alleged that anyone could have whatever religion they liked (*Utopia* f42r.).²⁷⁹

It is easy to identify the ‘enthusiastic’ arrested new Christian with the intolerance associated with either Counter-Reformation Spain or the rigorous Calvinists which would come after More. But in fact, as Yates emphasizes, in *Utopia* the Catholic martyr More enunciates “the principles of religious toleration *before* the disasters of the sixteenth century had begun” (Yates, 1964: 186). This lesson of tolerance would have ramifications in the New World. We saw that More took the inhabitants of the New World as a model for his utopians, and later both missionaries and conquistadores read the book as a guide for those unknown societies. As we will see in chapter four, the most ardent defender of Native Americans, Bartolomé de las Casas, sustained that those populations were in fact practitioners of the *Prisca Theologia* which Hermes and others had transmitted. This argument sought to undermine the politics of conquest and forced conversions which Spain carried out. Although Las Casas’ claims did not prevail, the Spanish crown gave him power to organize some of the new territories. Las Casas wrote his utopic—and thus never completely implemented—guidelines in the *Memorial* (1518).²⁸⁰ Hernández Arias and other authors have seen a same renaissance and idealistic inspiration in More’ *Utopia* and Las Casas’ *Memorial*.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ “Pero uno nuevamente bautizado, aunque yo le amonestaba que se callase, comenzó ardentemente a predicar la Fe cristiana, y condenando toda otra doctrina, llamando impíos a aquellos que adoraban otra deidad que la Santísima Trinidad, y ser dignos del fuego eterno. Este fue preso, no ya como violador de la religión, mas como aquel que había alborotado el pueblo y causado tumulto, alegando sus antiguos institutos que cada uno podía tener la creencia que más le agradase” (*Utopia*: f42r.).

²⁸⁰ *Memorial de remedios para las indias* also known as *Los quince remedios para la reformación de las Indias*.

²⁸¹ See Hernández Arias (2012).

Despite *Utopia's* timeless lessons of tolerance, and the possible dangers of the book for religious orthodoxy, Patón considered in his approval that “it can and must be printed without either scruple or suspicion of bad doctrine, on the contrary, his reading inspires a pious and Christian curiosity.” This statement is especially arresting if we consider that Patón was a qualified employee of the institution which represented, more than anything else, religious intolerance in the early modern period. In fact, Patón not only worked for the Holy Office, but also defended it and the shameful policies of cleanliness of blood for converted Jews in a book published two years later. However, Patón saw an edifying Christian reading in these Utopians, including their religious tolerance. This apparently enormous contradiction is more understandable if, as Yates suggests, the Utopians were *prisci theologi* “who carried on some of their earlier wisdom into Christianity.” According to Yates, before the disasters that would come later, Thomas More had offered “the palliative to which the late sixteenth century turned,” that is, religious Hermetism (Yates *Giordano Bruno* 186). As it had happened during the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance Hermes’s doctrines inspired leniency towards other religious manifestations, even in those who were not always able to keep up with the high ideals they had shown once: for instance, More and Patón.

Certainly, it seems that some incongruities we find in Patón can also be found in Thomas More. We know that Patón was a reader of Thomas More because he quotes him, and the English martyr is included among the authorities he uses in his *Heraclitus* (1615). Maybe when the old school teacher reread *Utopia* in Spanish for his censorship, he saw in the English Martyr a kindred spirit, including not only the humanistic and Hermetic affinities, but also the paradoxes. Fernando Savater points out the contradictions between More the utopist and More the politician, who even became chancellor of England. Savater wonders: “how a recommender of religious tolerance in the *Utopia* could be such a zealous Catholic, who in his epitaph defined himself as ‘scourge of heretics,?’” (Savater 22).²⁸² As I prove in this work, it was also possible for Patón to express these contradictions: the keen defender of pagan culture could be completely intolerant with protestants and converted Jews.

Patón, always cautious, never expressed directly alternative ways of understanding Christian dogma; instead, he tried to bring pagans into Christianity. However, as we will see later,

²⁸² However, Savater also notices that a close reading reveals that, although *Utopia* is something really revolutionary, in fact it does not admit neither revolution nor dissidence in itself. According to Savater, it is a mistake to read *Utopia* as a program or manifest, since it really is a literary exercise of moral denunciation (22). as I am showing throughout this chapter, moral denunciation is precisely where Patón was more comfortable at the end of his life.

when he came to Hermes-related subjects, he was clearly more tolerant. For his part, Thomas More was never as permissive as he had been in *Utopia*. Thus, after reading the book many times, and using carefully the expurgatory manuals of the Spanish Inquisition, Patón allowed the book to be printed, although probably another censor would have acted differently. According to Patón's words in his approval, earlier inquisitorial censors had banned the translation of *Utopia* for the previous one hundred years

With the censorship of *Utopia*, Patón was clearly countenancing More and his work (including the Hermetic influences), but he also acted in favor of his own network. His master el Brocense considered More an authority, as did Lope de Vega. Even Quevedo, usually regarded as the most intolerant of Spanish canonical writers, recommended the translation and publication of More's *Utopia* to his friend Medinilla, who was in turn a former disciple of Patón. We are in fact talking about the intellectual and political elite of Spain. According to the account that Patón included in his censorship, Medinilla was actually a very important noble, who even had an appointment close to the king.²⁸³ As notary of the Inquisition and thus representing the ecclesiastical power, Patón was in a position to allow his former disciple and friend to publish. We cannot know in which circumstances the Holy Office commissioned Patón the censorship of Medinilla's book, or if he pressed to be the man in charge of it. However, Patón could probably assume that if he did not defend *Utopia*'s translation, no one else would. Paradoxically, by doing so he also could be again on the side of the non-human member of his network: *Mercurius Trimegistus*. Once the book was approved, the 'hermetic' lesson of tolerance by the inhabitants of *Utopia* could spread through seventeenth and even eighteenth and nineteenth century Spain. Medinilla's translation was published several times and had new, inspiring interpretations during the Spanish enlightenment. Over the centuries to come, *Utopia* would be again printed with Patón's censorship and encomiastic letter included (which still guaranteed the Church's approval for the most controversial parts).²⁸⁴

²⁸³ His titles were: knight of the military order of Saint James (the most significant aristocratic distinction in Spain) Governor of Villanueva (where Patón worked), Equerry of the king of Spain, Corregidor (chief magistrate) in the city and province of Córdoba and lord in the towns of Bocos, Rozas and Remolino ("Caballero del hábito de Santiago, Governador que fue en esta villa y sus partidos, Caballerizo del rey señor nuestro y su corregidor en la ciudad y provincia de Córdoba, señor de las villas de Bocos, Rozas y Remolino" in *Utopia*, XXIv.).

²⁸⁴ For instance, in the printing houses of Pantaleon Aznar (1790) and Mateo Repullés (1805)

As I have shown in this chapter, writers' ties with friends and colleagues had an essential role when discussing the publication and diffusion of books during the early modern period. Nonetheless, the letters and paratexts included in the books were an essential way to create and sustain those ties. For this reason, before addressing the overview of Patón's production, I am going to introduce a specific book which exemplifies through its paratexts how the network and its actors worked not only for the publication, but also to add meanings and relevance to the books itself. In so doing, we are going to understand better many of the actors of Patón's network whom I have just introduced as they appear in a specific work. Moreover, the work also offers a graphic description of how Patón collaborated with his network of friends in both the acquisition and the production of knowledge. In this work, the *Heraclitus*, Hermes Trimegistus also appears in a significant way never addressed by critics before. Actually, Patón's *Heraclitus* is not an original work but an 'improved an enhanced version' of a previous book, of which Patón wanted to offer his own adaptation.

Alonso de Barros' *Moral Proverbs* and Patón' *Heraclitus*

In 1615 Paton decided to publish a version of the successful work *Moral Proverbs* (*Proverbios morales*) by the humanist Alonso de Barros (1552-1604), but 'harmonized' (*concordados*) by Patón himself. This book of aphorisms by Alonso de Barros had been published first in 1598 and soon became very popular, with translations in Italian, Portuguese and French. Due to Barros' closeness to powerful figures in the court—it is dedicated to García de Loaysa, Archbishop of Toledo and Cardinal Primate of Spain—the book had even reached king Felipe II himself, who praised it just before his death (1599). Since Barros' original work had been published at the very end of the 16th century and Patón published his version at the beginning of the 17th, Patón's reappraisal of Barros offers a stimulating viewpoint of Humanism in Spain at the edge of both centuries.

To distinguish his book from the original of Alonso de Barros, Patón's edition includes an alternative title, which in the forefront has capital letters bigger than the rest. The complete title is *Moral Proverbs HERACLITUS by Alonso de Barros, harmonized by the Master Bartolomé Jiménez Patón*.²⁸⁵ I think that the new title was partly inspired by Lope de Vega, who wrote a poem dedicated to Barros included in the original book. Lope's last stanza of that poem reads: "It is in

²⁸⁵ *Proverbios Morales HERACLITO de Alonso de Barros, Concordados por el Maestro Bartolomé Jiménez Patón*.

naked truth/ Courtesan Heraclitus/ And Christian Democritus/ Which laughs and cries its age.”²⁸⁶ Lope referred to the classical topic of ‘Heraclitus crying/ Democritus laughing’ associated with the classical depiction of both philosophers,²⁸⁷ which he used many times.²⁸⁸ Certainly, Patón liked this reference to these two Christianized pagan philosophers by his friend Lope. The other important writer of the period and friends with Patón, Francisco de Quevedo, also used this motif, and even wrote a book called *Christian Heraclitus* in 1613—in my fifth chapter I will insist on the Christianization of the classics proper of both Late Humanism and its Neostoic influences. I suggest that the title of Quevedo (*Christian Heraclitus*) could have also been inspired by these same verses of Lope. Thus, if for Lope Democritus was the Christian one, Quevedo pursued instead to emphasize the Christian elements of his counterpart, Heraclitus. Since Quevedo’s *Heraclitus Christian* is from 1613, and Patón’s *Heraclitus* from 1615, I suggest that Patón picked his title taken into consideration both Lope’s poem in the original book of Barros, as well as Quevedo’s recent book also dedicated to Heraclitus.²⁸⁹

This community of motives in Lope, Quevedo, and Patón is also significant of the knowledge they shared through their network. However, I also think that the new title of *Heraclitus* by Patón, was inspired by the proverbial style of the philosopher, who wrote short and precise aphorisms preserved in ancient sources. Both the original aphorisms of Barros and the Latin ones which Patón used to ‘harmonize’ them were as short and sharp as Heraclitus’ ones. To understand what ‘harmonize’ meant, and how Patón ‘harmonized’ Barros’s proverbs we have the testimony of another friend of the group, Fernando de Ballesteros,²⁹⁰ who praises Patón at the beginning of

²⁸⁶ “Es en desnuda verdad/ Heráclito Cortesano/y Demócrito cristiano, / que llora y ríe su edad” (*Heráclito* flr.). I am using Lisbon’s edition of this book from 1617.

²⁸⁷ This topic was rescued for the Renaissance by Marsilio Ficino and popularized, for instance, by the *Emblems* by Alciatus (1531) and an entire *Essay* of Montaigne. To understand this motif, nothing better than to observe the paintings of Democritus and Heraclitus in the Prado Museum by José de Ribera (1591-1652), a contemporary of Patón. More recently, Savater explains the development of this topic in his *Diccionario Filosófico* (13-16).

²⁸⁸ For instance, Lope de Vega wrote in a poem to Juan de Piña: “Heraclitus cries with sad verses/ Democritus undeceives with laugh” (“Heráclito con versos tristes llora/Demócrito con risa desengaña”); in Lope de Vega (*Colección de las obras sueltas, assi en prosa, como en verso, Volumen 4* 1776 453).

²⁸⁹ Quevedo would publish in 1613 a book of poems entitled, precisely, *Christian Heraclitus* (*Heráclito Cristiano*). Although Gallego Zarzosa (2009: 252-253) and Fisher (2007: 74-76) point to other possible sources for Quevedo’s title, I think that the most probable inspiration are these verses by Lope de Vega in Barros’s book from 1598. The verses are previous in time to any other source they mention and it was published in Madrid, in a very popular book, just when Quevedo was there—in fact, neither Gallego nor Fisher mention these verses of Lope when they address Quevedo’s title.

²⁹⁰ Whom I have already introduced.

his *Heraclitus* with a famous eulogy, in which he added several significant anecdotes about his friend and related to the process of the book's creation.

According to Ballesteros, there was a meeting among friends in which they read together Barros' original *Moral Proverbs*. Inspired by those proverbs, Patón quickly cited analogous proverbs in Latin from all kinds of Christian, Pagan or contemporary authors. Since Patón's memory and ability aroused his friends' admiration, they encouraged him to formally complete the work.²⁹¹ Following the advice of his friends, Patón was able to find 1100 correspondent Latin proverbs, one for each one that Barros wrote, which Patón selected from hundreds of authorities. There is a list of those authorities at the end of the book, and that list is a substantial selection of the most relevant references for a late humanist writer like Patón; of course, among those authorities is Hermes Trimegistus himself. Throughout the book, it is also clear Patón's purpose for adapting pagan thoughts for moral and Christian purposes—I will come back to this purpose later.

From Patón's contemporaries to modern critics, all readers of his book have revered Patón's erudition and inventiveness. Patón's *Heraclitus* and its 'paratexts' also tell us much about the intellectual and academic networks which Patón had built in the first stage of his life. Actually, these paratexts allow us to summarize Patón's life and his academic and personal network. It is dedicated to the Rector and fathers of the Imperial school of the Jesuits in Madrid, to whom he expresses an affection which goes beyond the formulaic in this kind of paratexts. In this dedication Patón addresses "his fathers and masters," from whom he took "as much as he knows about erudition and virtue" and he dedicates them charming and grateful words. With a Platonic flavor, he starts: "Neither distance nor time will erase on me that filial and first love which was begotten in my youth. These two things would rather engender new desires with the natural tendency to come back to the origin, from whom I received my being."²⁹² To address his debt and dependence of the education he received with the Jesuits, Patón uses several mythological metaphors (Antaeus, Pandora), he quotes Latin poets (Martial, Horace), and also paraphrases the famous Spanish poem *Coplas to his father's death*, by Jorge Manrique (d.1479), whom he also quoted many times in his works (distinctly, in the *Spanish Eloquence*, one of the tree parts included in the *Mercurius*

²⁹¹ In Patón's *Heráclito* (fA2v.-A3r.)

²⁹² "No han de poder la distancia ni el tiempo borrar en mi aquel filial y primer amor, que se crió en mi juventud. Antes estas dos cosas engendran nuevos deseos con natural propensión de volver al origen, de quien recibí el ser" (*Heráclito* fAr.)

Trimegistus). In a similar way as the famous beginning of Manrique's Poem, Patón feels for the Jesuits of the Imperial College in Madrid "as the waters, which longing for its center, the aim of their calm and rest, lead their course (although from distant places) to the sea from which they departed."²⁹³

Following the connection I am establishing between the years of formation of Patón, the creation of his network, and the paratexts of the *Heraclitus*, I also want to draw attention to the fact that it was first published in Baeza (1615). As we saw in the previous chapter, Patón continued his studies in Baeza after leaving the Jesuits, and had an important association with the printer Pedro de la Cuesta, who published several of his books (like this one). After completing his BA in Baeza, Patón taught several years in Alcaraz, and thus *Moral Proverbs* also has a eulogy from whom was probably his superior or senior colleague there: Fernando González de Santa Cruz, chair of Eloquence in Alcaraz. The book also includes many other eulogies from minor figures, among them, the ones from two members of a noble and ruling family who had important offices around Villanueva. Both have the same name: Fernando de Ballesteros, uncle and nephew.²⁹⁴ I already refer to the younger as a friend and participant in Patón's literary network, both of whom shared a membership in the Inquisition.²⁹⁵ The uncle was a member of the church (priest, vicar, and pastoral visitor for the archbishop of Toledo), and a writer as well.²⁹⁶ In his eulogy, Ballesteros uncle elaborates an erudite and humanistic dissertation about the aphoristic art, and of course highly praises Patón. The vicar ends by quoting one of the Latin epigrams dedicated to Patón by the treatise writer, Cascales, which as we saw he included in his *Philological letters*.²⁹⁷ On their behalf, Ballesteros nephew invokes the authority of Lope de Vega, a common friend, by adding the eulogy which Lope included for Patón in his *Conquered Jerusalem (Jerusalén Conquistada, 1609)*.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ "[C]omo las aguas, que apeteciendo su centro, fin de su quietud y descanso, dirigen su curso (aunque de lugares muy distantes) al mar de quien salieron." (*Proverbios morales* fAr.).

²⁹⁴ As Quilis and Rozas (1965: XLVII) point out, they should not be confused (as Nicolas Antonio did in the eighteenth century)

²⁹⁵ Ballesteros was a 'familiar' of the Inquisition. The 'familiares' were secular members or affiliated of the institution who served as a 'spy network' in their respective scope of influence. Since the familiares could accuse in secret, they were particularly feared in the inquisitorial trials.

²⁹⁶ He wrote a popular *Life of saint Charles Borromeo (Vida de San Carlos Borromeo, 1642)*

²⁹⁷ The epigram number 3, among the many ones Cascales dedicated to Patón.

²⁹⁸ As I said before, Lope de Vega had also written an encomiastic letter in verse for the original edition of Alonso de Barros' *Moral Proverbs* (the one without Patón's 'contribution'). This letter was not included in the first editions of the book "harmonized" by Patón. Notwithstanding that, Lope's verses appeared in the posterior editions of the successful book in Lisbon (1617) and Barcelona (1619).

In his original eulogy, Lope played with the pun Patón/Platón, many times repeated in dedications and paratexts from his friends. However, just before Lope de Vega's quotation, Fernando de Ballesteros reproduces another one even more interesting for the purpose of my research, especially for the sage Trimegistus, with whom Patón is finally compared. It is difficult to affirm whether Ballesteros himself wrote it or took it from other member of their circle of friends.²⁹⁹ This epigram initially compares Patón with seven famous wise men of Antiquity and the Middle Ages; I suggest that this number reminds both the Seven Sages of Greece and the seven liberal arts.³⁰⁰ In the last two verses, the epigram specifies that the collection of erudite and wise virtues from those seven sages, turns Paton into a new, and superior Trimegistus: “[A]nd Jiménez Patón is septimegistrus/ of so many wise men faithful addition.”³⁰¹ Therefore, Patón is compared with Mercurius Trimegistus six years before he published a book with that name. If Ballesteros took the quotation from somewhere else, this reference would be even previous. Patón is not only identified with Trimegistus, but also placed above him, from three to seven times great. Since it is precisely Ballesteros, one of the closest friends of Patón's Network, who is using this analogy in a key moment of his eulogy, it is clear that Trimegistus was a shared topic for the circle of friends—this same circle in which they were reading the original book of Barros that Patón would harmonize in his *Heraclitus*. As we saw, Ballesteros starts his eulogy by describing both the shared readings and the round-table discussions in which the friends conversed about Barros' *Moral Proverbs*, then he introduces the poem with Trimegistus' analogy in its decisive point. I consider this an evidence of the major role that the Egyptian had for them as a condensed symbol of wise men. As I will explain later, in his *Mercurius Trimegistus* Patón will expand on this image of Trimegistus as model sage of his time.

²⁹⁹ I did not find this epigram in any other book. Ballesteros introduces the verses in this way “it is fair [that this book] has an author about whom can be said, without flattering magnification, what this epigram said about his) picture (of Patón” (“es justo tenga autor de quien se puede decir sin lisonjero encarecimiento lo que a su retrato dijo esta epigrama,” *Heraclitus* fA3v.). Since Ballesteros refers to “what this epigram said,” in past tense, I tend to believe that he took it from someone else, although he does not point to its author.

³⁰⁰ The seven sages are Plato, Fabio Pictor (c. 274BCE, the first Roman historian), Cicero, Sanctes Pagnino (1470-1536, the first important translator of the Bible after Jerome), Ambrosio de Calepio (1435-1511, author of a famous Latin dictionary), Homer, and Aelius Donatus (IV century, Roman grammarian and rhetorician, tutor of Jerome). These are the first six verses of the epigram: “En el original deste trasunto/ se ve de siete ilustres el retrato./ La ciencia de Platón, de Fabio el punto;/ de Cicerón la lengua y el ornato./ Está Pagnino al de Calepio junto;/ de Homero el verso;/ glosas de Donato” (*Heráclito* fA3v.).

³⁰¹ “Y es Jiménez Patón Septimegistro/ de tantos hombres sabios fiel registro” (*Heráclito* fA3v.).

In addition to that, in Patón's *Heraclitus*, Trimegistus himself appears among the list of authorities used by Patón to harmonize the original book of Barros; what is more, Patón harmonizes the very last proverb of Barros with a quotation attributed to Hermes Trimegistus: *Finis hominis mente viuere, mentis vita Deus; Mercurius Trimegistus (Heraclitus f78r.)*.³⁰²

As it can be appreciated, Patón's *Heraclitus* is a clear example of how his network of friends collaborated in both the production of the book—by encouraging Patón to write it—and the addition of meaning to its contents—through paratexts. Thus, close men of letters helped Patón in his *Heraclitus* to reflect on the paremiology art, or prized the book and Patón's worthiness to write it. The network functioned both directly and indirectly, some of the network's members wrote specific paratexts for the *Heraclitus*—Ballesteros, González de Santa Cruz, García de Andrada—whereas others were 'invoked' by adding poems, quotations or references from them to those paratexts; among them: Lope de Vega, Cascales or Mercurius Trimegistus (as the 'non-human' or hybrid human-non-human member of the network).

The last feature which makes the *Heraclitus* significant to understand Patón's work is the very nature of 'harmonizing proverbs' art,' which is deeply embedded in the peculiarities of the humanist movement in both Europe and Spain. As a matter of fact, the deeper influence for valuing and dignifying proverbs, came from Erasmus himself, who in his *Adagiorum Collectanea* or *Adagia* (1500) created a monumental collection of 'harmonized' Greek and Latin proverbs, a work which he continued up until the end of his life. As Gallego Barnés explains, this practice was later adapted when Latin equivalents of vulgar language proverbs were sought, in both France³⁰³ and Spain, where there existed a medieval tradition of looking for Spanish equivalents for classical proverbs in universities (Gallego Barnés 258). However, the most successful Spanish representative of this activity was the humanist Juan Lorenzo Palmireno (1524-1579) with his *Adagiorum centuriae quinque* (1560), amplified by his son, who called them *Adagia Hispanica* (1591). The pedagogical, rhetorical, and religious dimensions of Palmireno's

³⁰² I did not find this quotation neither in the Latin *Asclepius* nor in Ficino's *Pimander*. Oddly enough, it appears in a book of the protestant Philippe de Mornay *De veritate religionis Christianae*; the next quotation in Mornay's book is similar to another one used by Quevedo, which I discuss in my fifth chapter: *homo in corpore sepultus est, corpus sepulchrum portatile (De veritate religionis Christianae 303)*. Did Patón and Quevedo share this book of a protestant in secret, did they take quotations from it?

³⁰³ With examples as Mathurin Cordier (1541) or Gabriel Meurier (1568) in France and Fernando Arce de Benavente (1533), Mosén Pero Vallés (1549), Juan Ruiz de Bustamante (1551).

Humanism had a deep influence in Patón, which have been highlighted by Garau (*El virtuoso discreto* 359 & ss.).

Patón's ability to harmonize Barros' *Moral Proverbs* by providing similar ones of a large repertoire of authorities also demonstrates two valuable features of Patón as a late humanist. On the one hand, he was able to find the correspondent proverbs in a variety of authors from different disciplines through his erudition. By itself, erudition individualizes the late humanists, who slowly approached the encyclopedic man of the enlightenment. On the other hand, although the authors quoted come from a variety of disciplines, Patón demonstrates his expertise by finding among them remnants of a moral philosophy, the humanist topic of Barros' original book. As I will show in the next chapter, moral philosophy had been one of the three new disciplines introduced by the humanists of the Renaissance in the medieval study programs. I will also elaborate on Patón's dimension as a humanist as it is evidenced in his works, and how Patón's publishing projects are related to Mercurius Trimegistus and the book he dedicated to him.

Conclusion

Patón built a powerful network of friends throughout his life. They helped him publish his own books and to acquire public positions; then, from those same places, he was able to help the production of important friends. This evidence demonstrates, as Mauelshagen points out, that 'friendship' could be described as a category of networking in pre-modern and early modern scholarly culture, that is, "as a 'technique' of establishing a certain social relationship, purposefully practiced in a functionalized manner within the republic of letters" (29). His network connected the modest Latin and Rhetoric teacher through weak ties with some of the most important writers in Spain, and even with the most powerful figures of the ecclesiastical and civil power: the Pope and the king of Spain. The power of those ties clearly demonstrates how ANT can help us map Patón's network and explain the connections and influence displayed by the members of the Republic of Letters in Spain.

Thus, throughout his life, Patón was capable of working out his own circle of friends and thus he spread his most cherished and significant works, distinctly, the *Mercurius Trimegistus*. He was also able to favor the productions of the members of his network; however, in an even more significant way, in the last part of his life Patón was capable of stopping or interrupting other networks. As a censor, he undoubtedly prevented the publication of many other books. Of course,

works doomed by the Inquisition also included paratexts and courtesy letters, with which the less fortunate writers had the hope to extend their own network.

Patón never became a priest, as it was his initial intention. However, as a censor he was able to look for the religious orthodoxy from a privileged position; he also could send books to the heaven of popularity or the hell of oblivion. Patón wrote *Utopia's* censorship three years before his death. This example shows in hindsight that, regarding Patón's personal and professional network of literary acquaintances, friendship superseded religious enterprise and, ultimately, he abstained from potentially damning criticism in his censorship in the name of furthering humanistic scholarship and the ideals represented by Hermes. I also insist that in the different humanisms, as a cultural mediator Hermes influenced the networks of erudite men and writers, who collaborated together in order to enhance their intellectual goals and to publish their works. As we saw, in one of the paratexts of the *Heraclito*, which includes a quotation of Trimegistus himself, Paton was called by his friends 'septrimegistro,' in this way Patón himself becomes a 'hybrid' (in ANT terminology) between the non-human Mercurius and the humble teacher of La Mancha. Therefore, in the *Heraclito*, Patón, Hermes, his friends, and the myriad of authors quoted from the vast humanistic culture of Patón collaborated to produce meanings and promote Patón's work. If Hermes was a hybrid member of the network, by making Patón a hybrid, his friends placed him at the height of the ancient Egyptian who represented both the pagan culture and the humanistic endeavors of Patón. In the next chapter I will explain Patón's production under this humanistic project, and the role his *Mercurius Trimegistus* played in it.

CHAPTER III

***Studia humanitatis* and the *Mercurius Trimegistus*: Patón's Works as the Endeavors of a Late Humanist**

Introduction

In this chapter I am going to present Patón's works—including the one more relevant to my study, the *Mercurius Trimegistus*—as the outcome of a humanistic education and personal commitment to it. I will also examine the relevance of Hermes Trimegistus within the last stage of the humanist movement epitomized by Patón, whose most important works were written after 1600. As Gómez Canseco points out,³⁰⁴ literary studies in Spain traditionally considered the death of El Brocense (d. 1600), Patón's master, as the end of humanism in Spain, however, the work of Patón, Pedro de Valencia, or Baltasar de Céspedes, whom I will introduce below, demonstrates that humanism in Spain lasted longer and was more complex than has been traditionally considered. My study of the relevance of Hermes Trimegistus in Spanish humanism adds nuances to the intricate relationship between Christian and non-Christian culture in the movement.

As I explain throughout this work, late humanism in the baroque period had distinctive characteristics with respect to the previous Italianate humanism of the Renaissance and to the first vernacular and multicultural pre-humanism represented by Alfonso the Wise which I presented in the first chapter. One of the goals of my work is rendering the changes Hermes Trimegistus experienced in the Iberian Peninsula throughout these three phases of humanism, and how he adapted to the circumstances of each period and became a cultural mediator between different contemporary traditions or between contemporary and ancient cultures. I also want to remind now that, in order not to broaden the scope of this work too widely, I am going to focus especially on the pre- and late Humanism, where Hermes found numerous advocates.

With these general purposes in mind, in this chapter I am going to examine Patón's literary and philological production as a humanist in order to contextualize and better understand his

³⁰⁴ See Canseco (*El humanismo después de 1600* 1)

Mercurius Trimegistus, which I will address at the end as the pinnacle of his career. Once the comprehensive range of Patón's production has been scrutinized, it will be possible to better understand not only the hazardous title of the book, *Mercurius Trimegistus*, but also the eulogies of Hermes included in its paratexts.³⁰⁵ Those paratexts will allow me to connect Hermes's tradition with the rest of Patón's book, his network, and the humanist project in early modern Spain.

Patón's Works as a Humanist's Endeavors

I want to highlight Patón's portrayal as a humanist who lived just when this concept was about to disappear, how his works illustrate the undertakes of this movement and why a Christianized Hermes Trimegistus symbolized so well both Patón's works and activities and the ones of his humanistic network. Humanism originated and developed in the limited area of rhetorical and philological studies around 1350 (Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 123). Three centuries after those beginnings, as a representative of late Humanism,³⁰⁶ Jiménez Patón was still consecrated to those studies.³⁰⁷ Rico defines Humanism as the movement which "aimed to restore the educational ideal of Antiquity, gearing towards, as the old *paideia*, giving men a certain kind of general culture, through the *studia humanitatis*" (Rico "Temas y problemas del Renacimiento" 10). However, the most important humanists were aware of the two dimensions of Humanism that I explained in the first chapter: *paideia* and *philantropy*; for instance, Poliziano said: *Humanitatem cum dico, non magis 'philantropian' quam etiam 'paideian' intellego (Epistle III to Lucio Fosforo)*.³⁰⁸

The *paideia* dimension of Humanism prevailed in Patón. As many other humanists before him, Patón devoted his life to the teaching of typically humanistic disciplines (i.e. rhetoric and Latin), to writing, and to pursuing philological research. Thus, renaissance Humanism turned around the new humanist *studia humanitatis* which substituted the ancient arts of the *trivium* and

³⁰⁵ Paratexts are the added elements which form a frame for the main text of a published book, such as cover, title, front matter, dedication, opening information, foreword, prologue, colophon, footnotes, and many other materials not crafted by the author.

³⁰⁶ I understand late humanism as that which went on after the traditional limit of Humanism established by Kristeller and others in 1600.

³⁰⁷ Madroñal defines Patón's legacy precisely with these studies in the title of his work: *Humanism and Philology in the Golden Age. About the work of Bartolomé Jiménez Patón. /Humanismo y filología en el Siglo de Oro. En torno a la obra de Bartolomé Jiménez Patón*

³⁰⁸ In Comellas (65)

the *quadrivium*—or, in many cases, coexisted with the study programs in European universities, which still followed the medieval patterns.

While critics often disagree on which ones exactly were the *studia humanitatis*, the most common opinion is that initially humanists included history, poetics, and moral philosophy, but excluded all the arts of the *quadrivium*, and frequently despised the dialectic part on the *trivium*, especially logics. Dialectics and logic were closely connected to the scholastic world that, theoretically, the humanist wanted to avoid; however, as Kristeller pointed out (*Renaissance Thought* 123), in reality it was not that clear, and we can find an example of that in Patón who, as we will see, dedicated studies to dialectics. Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522) is considered the first important Italianate humanist of Spain because he brought the concept of *studia humanitatis* to the Iberian Peninsula after studying in Italy, where he knew the works of Lorenzo Valla (1406-1457), Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494) and many other important figures.³⁰⁹

Therefore, there was a significant evolution from the medieval Humanism, symbolized by Alfonso the Wise, to the late Humanism of Patón and as I am showing, Mercurius Trimegistus ‘adapted’ to the new times. Medieval Humanism studied both the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, but was mostly focused on the *quadrivium* due to Arab influence, while the *trivium* was an introductory stage. As we saw in the first chapter, first in the Arab and then in the Christian world, the *quadrivium* fell short to the scientific developments in the Middle Ages in physics and, as an extension of them, in magic, alchemy, and astrology. All those arts were (more or less openly) included in the curriculum. As I showed, Alfonso the Wise made Hermes Trimegistus a master not only in the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, but also in physics. Thereupon, Alfonso promoted Hermes’s merits as creator of magic, alchemy, and astrology by translating many works of these subjects, which showed Mercurius in that fashion—significantly, the *Picatrix*. Oddly enough, since Patón was a humanist, he not only praised Trimegistus as the father of rhetoric—the queen of the *trivium* arts, according to the humanists—but also to some extent acknowledged his mastery in the natural sciences; however, Patón ignored Trimegistus’ dimension as father of the occult arts. As I will show later, I have found in Patón remnants of occult beliefs traditionally associated with

³⁰⁹ See Kohut (“El humanismo castellano del siglo XV” 639 & ss.). An important precedent of Nebrija is Alfonso de la Torre (1410-1461), who offers his perspective of the liberal arts in his *Visión delectable* (BAE 36 339). To understand the beginning of Italian humanism in Spain see Gómez Moreno (*España y la Italia de los humanistas*).

Trimegistus' arts. However, as soon as he mentions something of the kind, Patón always tries to turn away from it as soon as possible.

Although, for the most part, the first humanists abandoned the study of the *quadrivium*, or left it to the old universities, later on an assumption prevailed that the humanist, as a teacher of Grammar, Rhetoric, or Latin, should be able to interpret and explain the works of the classical authors he was dealing with, including all the sciences they made reference to; to some extent, Patón participated in this ideal as a consummated philologist and erudite. Through his scholarly editions of classical authors, Patón demonstrated that he was able not only to teach Latin through the study of Roman poets, but also to delve into the deepest meanings and contents of their works.

Equally important, Patón also reflected the contradictions of Humanism during the Counter-Reformation: he was also a rigorous Catholic, an enemy of converted Jews and a notary of the Spanish Inquisition. Admittedly, this was a shift not unique to Patón. In brief, moral philosophy, which humanists always claimed as part of their domain,³¹⁰ tended to drift into rigorous positions after the Reformation.³¹¹ This evolution can also be found in Jiménez Patón, whose general portrayal was not an exception for baroque humanists and thinkers of 17th century Spain. In his early years, Patón was an enthusiastic student of humanities, a poet and even a playwright and man of theater; later on, he became a wise and erudite theorist and treatise writer. At the end of his life, he turned into a stern moralist and critic of ethics and bad habits of his time

As an enemy of converted Jews and critic of Judaism and Islam, Patón also put himself far away from the Humanism of Alfonso the Wise, whose work was underpinned by the contributions of the other Abrahamic religions. Building on this, I can also affirm that out of the two meanings of "Humanism" present in Alfonso the Wise – one related to the Greek *paideia* and the other to *philantropia* –, Patón only embraced the first one, since he clearly did not have a general philanthropic feeling towards some of his fellow human beings, and a restrictive interpretation of the tolerance that some humanists associated with the study of rhetoric.³¹²

³¹⁰ As Kristeller affirms, humanists "often dealt with moral questions in their speeches and letters, and composed numerous treatises and dialogues in which they discussed questions of moral philosophy as well as of politics, religion and education" (1979: 252)

³¹¹ Even the Neostoic attempt to create secular morals derived from religious parameters (as I will show in chapter 4).

³¹² See Remer (*Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration*). According to Remer "Although the humanist defense of religious toleration was developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the intellectual roots of humanist toleration date back to the ancient tradition of classical rhetoric" (13). Evidently, Patón took distance with respect to those traditions.

It is noteworthy that Patón, with all his complexities and contradictions, was the most enthusiastic advocate of the pagan Hermes in the Spanish Baroque. Nevertheless, Patón's works, teachings, and endeavors aligned with the intellectual interests of his time. Thereupon, by making sense of Hermes in Patón's rich production, we can also offer an answer about the role Hermes had in the culture of 17th century Spain. This model of humanist to which Patón conforms had contemporary formulations, and I am going to compare and contrast Patón with the most relevant one of all.

Baltasar de Céspedes' *The Humanist*

The responsibilities of a humanist had been specified for Patón's time in a book written in Salamanca by his acquaintance, Baltasar de Céspedes: *Discourse of Human Letters, Called the Humanist* (*Discurso de las letras humanas, llamado el humanista* 1600)—from now on in this work, *The Humanist*. 'Letras humanas' is in Spanish the equivalent of the *litterae humaniores* mentioned for instance by Erasmus,³¹³ and the *studia humanitatis* of all humanists.

In 1583, Céspedes (d.1615) was introduced to the faculty of the University of Salamanca by the important poet, professor, and treatise writer, Fray Luis de León. There, Céspedes assumed some administrative duties and became a disciple of El Brocense (also Patón's renowned teacher). Later on, Céspedes married El Brocense's daughter. Finally, after some attempts in other institutions of Spain, back in Salamanca he achieved the chair of grammar in 1596 (around the time Patón was in Salamanca), and the one of Greek in 1609 (which had been previously in possession of his father-in-law).³¹⁴ Céspedes' most important work, *The Humanist*, defined the ideal humanist for the seventeenth century in the same way that *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) by Castiglione (1478-1529) had expressed it for the sixteenth century. As Comellas points out (237), no other work of Spanish Humanism offers an overview of the *studia humanitatis* in a moment of maturity of the movement with such critical approach and reasonable schematism. For this reason, I am going to use *The Humanist* by Céspedes as a way to understand Patón's intellectual endeavors. In this manner, it will be easier to locate the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as Patón's most important work and the center of his production as a humanist.

³¹³ As Walker points out, Erasmus's championship of *litterae humaniores* is well known as an essential aid to education and as a source of moral lessons (*The Ancient Theology* 125).

³¹⁴ Comellas (*El humanista* 15). The most complete biography of Baltasar de Céspedes is still the one by G. Andrés (*El maestro Baltasar de Céspedes, humanista salmantino, y su "Discurso de las letras humanas"*).

Patón knew Céspedes' *The Humanist* perfectly for he quotes it many times in his *Spanish Eloquence*, the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and other works. Consequently, Patón knew what his friend in Salamanca intended to propose. Patón also understood how he could fit his own professional trajectory in the detailed program for a humanist that Céspedes was proposing. *The Humanist* explains what a humanist was, what he should do, and how to acquire the necessary knowledge to become one. As Céspedes describes at the beginning of his treatise, in his time it was not completely clear which were exactly the 'human letters,' and how to define a humanist; thus, he is trying to redress the situation (*The Humanist* 1-4). For this purpose, Céspedes describes the humanities or human letters, which he divides into two parts: the first pertaining to the language and the second "to the things themselves;" each of them has three subdivisions. For a better grasp, here is an outline of Céspedes' *The Humanist*.

Regarding "the language," Céspedes distinguishes:

- 1) *Understanding of Language* ('Inteligencia del lenguaje'): which is obtained through the study of ancient Greek and Latin authors, and also of medals and inscriptions (for which the study of ancient scripts is necessary).
- 2) *Reason (or judgement) of Language* ('Razón del lenguaje'): which is learned through observation and from the ancient grammarians.
- 3) *Use of the language* ('Uso del lenguaje'): to use it by talking or writing, in prose or verse. All of it depends on the imitation of ancient authors, whose *use* the humanist wants to reach.³¹⁵

Regarding "the things themselves," Céspedes distinguishes:

- 1) *Knowledge of things*
 - a) Knowledge related to History and simple narration of facts
 - b) Knowledge related to the contemplation and speculation about things, which includes a variety of disciplines:
 - a. Disciplines that the humanist can know with limitations: Theology (the queen), Natural Philosophy, Mathematics (including Astronomy), and Law

³¹⁵ In Céspedes (*The Humanist* 5-6).

- b. Disciplines that he must know well: Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic and Dialectics, and Chronology (for History)
- 2) *Action of things (acción de las cosas)*:
- a) Things the humanist must know how to do, although maybe he cannot do them:
 - a. Poetry: a good poet has to be a humanist
 - b. Orations (discourses): the orator has to be a humanist as well. However, this activity needs practice and use, and not everybody has enough time to devote to it
 - b) Things the humanist is obligated to do:
 - a. Commentaries about ancient poets, historians, playwrights, orators, etc.
 - b. Translations.
 - c. Philological amendments of ancient texts.
 - d. Lessons of many kinds, speeches, and dialogues.
- 3) *Instrument of both knowledge and action of things*: This is what Céspedes calls Logic or Dialectics, with which the humanist will be able to understand and judge anything written by other men and to do something new by himself.³¹⁶

Thus, I am going to compare the model of humanist described by Céspedes with the humanist represented by Patón throughout his works. In this manner, it will be possible to examine what shape the *studia humanitatis* or ‘human letters’ adopted in Patón as a late humanist, and what similarities and differences he had with the ideal which his friend Céspedes was proposing. In addition, since Patón died in 1630 (thirty years after the publication of *The Humanist*), I will also address what changes Patón and the model of humanist he embodied experienced, and how the role of Hermes evolved in his works according to those changes.

As we can observe, Céspedes divides the different kinds of knowledge in two big sections: *language* and *things* (in Spanish *lengua* and *cosas*). This is a classical division which goes back to the patristic and Augustine, who distinguished the things from the signs.³¹⁷ Thus, following ancient formulations, the first humanists distinguish between *res* and *verbum* as the two ingredients of a comprehensive education. For Céspedes, the first steps of learning were the sciences of language

³¹⁶ In Céspedes (*The Humanist* 6-7).

³¹⁷ As Comellas reminds (*El humanista* 165), Augustine says in *De doctrina christiana* that *Omnis doctrina vel rerum est vel signorum*.

(*understanding, reason, and use*), a humanist reinterpretation of the classical *trivium*. Patón thought in the same direction, he was a professional teacher of those sciences of language, and his most important works were treatises of grammar and rhetoric. In early modern Spain, any school program started with Latin, Patón's main subject of study for great part of his life. Since the human letters related to *language* are the most important in Patón's production and closely related to the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, I will come back to the sciences of language later, just before addressing his most important book. Thus, I will start with the human letters related to *the things themselves* in Patón's works—always following Céspedes' classification.

Patón and his “Knowledge of Things”

The first classification of human letters related to the things themselves are those pertaining to the *knowledge of things*. In this section, Céspedes includes the things a humanist must know in varying degrees of exigency—from those of which he only needs a general knowledge to those he must know perfectly. Let's see how Patón satisfies these requirements. I have already insisted on Patón's erudition in all kinds of disciplines. With his erudition, Patón not only demonstrates that he knew more than enough about everything he should, but that he also was able to write books about it. The knowledge of things, according to Céspedes is divided between histories and narrations, on the one hand, and contemplative and speculative things, on the other.

Histories and narrations are divided into true History and fables (including stories and Mythology). As Comellas highlights (167), History, one of the *studia humanitatis*, had a decisive influence on Humanism, and actually, most important humanists were also historians—this refreshed interest was boosted by the new translations of classical historians which influenced not only treatises but also all kinds of literary genres, from poetry to theatre. In all his books, Patón demonstrates an astonishing knowledge of History— from the commentaries of Roman poets to the use of clothes or wigs throughout history. He also wrote a history book: *The History of Jaen* (Jaén, 1628), in collaboration with the adventurer Pedro Ordóñez de Ceballos, whom we saw in the previous chapter.

Other than history, the humanist also must know fables and the stories of Mythology, of which Patón also displays an incredible knowledge—including, of course, the mythological side of Mercurius in the *Answer*. Patón also used the three ways of interpreting fables that Céspedes specified, and explicitly applied them to Hermes: interpretation through moral philosophy, natural

philosophy, and the euhemerism (although Céspedes does not use that word), that is, to think that in the ancient stories there is a basis of truth.³¹⁸

Besides History and narrations, both essential parts of the humanist's baggage, the humanist also needs *knowledge about contemplative and speculative things*, which are divided in two kinds: those that the humanist *can know with limitations* and those that he *must know well*. Theology is among the first of those sciences, i.e. those which the humanist is required to know if only in a rudimentary way. From medieval times, theology had been considered the sovereign of all sciences. However, humanists wanted to separate from the medieval educational model—although not completely, as Kristeller has defended—and they acknowledged that the complexities of theology are not accessible to everybody, not to mention the catastrophic effects (from the point of view of Catholic humanists) of theology's outreach during the Reformation. That is why perfunctory knowledge of theology is enough, and even advisable, for some humanists. For this reason, as Comellas points out (238), even though Céspedes includes theology in his treatise, he does not consider it an essential science for the humanist, but something about which he only needs superficial knowledge—in this way, Céspedes follows a trend inaugurated by Erasmus and brought into Spain by the important humanist, Luis Vives, Erasmus's disciple (Comellas 38).

Céspedes divides theology between positive and scholastic theology. Positive theology refers to knowledge of the *Bible*, including its parts, interpretations, geography, chronology, and the History included in it. With a really modern approach, Céspedes separates the letter and the spirit of the *Bible*, which must be left to 'the holy explainers of the Bible.' For its part, Scholastic Theology finds the theological truths through several ways: dispute (*disputatio*), philosophy, natural principles, the Truth of the Holy Scriptures, the definitions of the holy councils, and the opinions of the sacred doctors of the Church."³¹⁹ As he specifies, in this division Céspedes is following the famous theologian, Melchor Cano (1509-1560).

Despite Patón's lack of a theologian title, he shows his knowledge of both positive (*Biblical*) and scholastic theology when he defends *Hermes Trimegistus* in the *Answer*, as I will show next chapter. Furthermore, despite the fact that Humanism from the second half of 16th century discouraged theological studies and even Hebrew (Comellas 38), in this regard Patón went beyond the basic requirements for a humanist and demonstrated his command of theology many

³¹⁸ Céspedes (*The Humanist* 77).

³¹⁹ Céspedes (*The Humanist* 83).

other times. For instance, in the unpublished book seventeen of his *Commentaries of erudition*, Patón puts in the mouth of a fictional Theology professor of Salamanca a brief explanation about the *Book of Lamentations* (which Patón calls *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, following the classical attribution to this prophet).³²⁰ Thereupon, Patón includes a translation of *Lamentations*, but also comments on the original Hebrew. The first part of this work is by his friend Pedro Ambrosio de Onderiz, and the second part by Patón himself, who pursued the completion of the work, undertaken years before.³²¹ Since Patón did not know Hebrew, he is actually translating the Latin *Vulgate* and the commentary of Martín del Río.³²² He also would publish another Biblical translation and commentary in his *Preliminary declaration of Psalm 118 (Declaración preámbula del Salmo 118, Granada 1633)*, this time as an independent work.³²³

After Theology, the foremost of all sciences, Céspedes includes the rest of the speculative disciplines. According to him, the humanist also needed a partial knowledge about Math (Geometry, Arithmetic), Astronomy, Music, Medicine, Civil and Canonical Law. Like other humanists, Patón proves in his treatises a perfunctory knowledge of all these disciplines, mostly taken from classical authors. In short, Patón demonstrates, as Grafton has pointed out, that in the early modern period “every learned person became a classicist at school”, but also that “the whole system of formal education was geared to produce generalists” (Grafton “A Sketch Map” 2). Thanks to both his schooling and readings, Patón was ready to write about any possible topic.

I also want to highlight that, among these speculative sciences which the humanist must only know to some extent, are all the disciplines of the *quadrivium* and the sciences derived from them, i.e. the four related to math (Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Music) and then the natural sciences and medicine. As I showed in the first chapter, those were precisely the most important sciences for the medieval Humanism of Alfonso the Wise, which focused on the *quadrivium* as an inheritance of the Arab *adab*. For Alfonso the Wise, Hermes Trimegistus was the master of both the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, however, since the *quadrivium* was not so important anymore for the model of sage of his time, Patón would only need to emphasize

³²⁰ Both Patón’s introduction and translation have been explained in an article by Bosh (*Pedro Ambrosio de Onderiz* 2011).

³²¹ See Bosch (*Pedro Ambrosio de Onderiz* 236-237).

³²² In his *Commentarius litteralis in Threnos, id est, Lamentationes Ieremiae prophetae, Lugduni*, 1607 (Bosh 2011: 236).

³²³ The Catholic prohibition of translating the Biblical text did not affect the poetry books.

Hermes's relation to the *trivium*—although by also reinforcing Hermes's mastery in all kinds of sciences, including the natural ones.

Céspedes starts with natural philosophy, with which he refers to the study of nature and the physical universe. Bizarrely, the book in which Patón demonstrates a deeper knowledge of natural sciences is the *Discourse of the locust* (*Discurso de la langosta*, 1619). In this work Patón uses both his erudition and sharp talent for observation as a man of the countryside. In this way, Patón gathers knowledge of natural phenomena from both the ancients and his own observations to help his fellow countrymen combat a plague that ravaged the fields of Castile. In addition, as I showed before, Fernando de Ballesteros attested Patón's mastery in both moral and natural philosophy in the Eulogy he wrote for Patón's *Heraclitus* in 1614 (fA3v.).

Then, in the *knowledge of speculative things*, Céspedes lists the things that a humanist *must know well*, among them, Cosmography, Geography, and Chronology, all of them necessary for History (the first of the humanist's scientific knowledges cited by Céspedes). Patón would use classical and modern authorities in those disciplines, especially Chronology, to justify Hermes's existence in a specific time in History. The other things the humanist must know well are those also included in the reason (or judgement) of language, which integrated the ancient *trivium*: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics; these are precisely the sciences in which Patón was an indisputable specialist, and I will delve into them below.

The Action of Things: Patón's Activities as a Humanist

After showing those things that the humanists must know, Céspedes tackles those that he should do, that is, *the action of things*. Regarding these activities, in this section I will show how Patón stood out not only in *the things the humanist is obligated to do*, but also in the ones that he just *must know how to do*—since Patón actually did them as well.

Early in his life Patón fulfilled the main 'requirement' of *the things the humanist is obligated to do* according to Céspedes, since he published the edition, translation and commentary of a classical author: Horace. Thus, through his erudite commentaries and notes to Horace's verses, Patón was able to demonstrate not only the capability and eminence he had acquired in the knowledge of things but also his proficiency in the philological skills of a humanist by the

amendment, textual criticism and even translation of texts.³²⁴ As Comellas points out, commentaries were the best and more abundant expression of the humanistic spirit, defined by lauded models such as those of Poliziano, and more numerous than any other kind of publication by the humanists. Commentaries of this kind demanded a great amount of erudition because, as Grafton illustrates, Renaissance scholars are “building around their texts a vast wedding cake of interpretation with ancient, medieval and modern ingredients richly mingled” (“Renaissance Readers” 627)—that was precisely the kind of erudition which Patón held. Later in his life, Patón would publish other editions and commentaries of Roman writers such as Tibullus and Propertius, some of them included in a long work which he explicitly entitled *Commentaries of erudition* (*Comentarios de erudición*).

But Patón also devoted himself to the activities that a humanist only *must know how to do*, and so he demonstrated that he could perfectly conduct them: poetry and orations (discourses). Accordingly, as a humanist Patón both knew how to write poetry and wrote it early in his life as well. When Céspedes published *The Humanist* in 1600, Patón had already composed poetry and theatre (in verse)—maybe imitating his friend Lope de Vega. Scholars have found a license from 1597 for Patón to publish two long religious epic poems (a popular genre in the late 16th century): *Victories of the Sacred Tree* (*Victorias del árbol sacro*) and *Bouquet of Divine Flowers* (*Ramillete de Flores divinas*), and four plays (Marín 15). In a praise from 1615,³²⁵ his friend Fernando Ballesteros affirms that when Patón was twenty years old, he had already composed these and many other literary works. From these first years, only a few of his verses quoted by Patón himself or other authors have survived, and no play. Hence, Patón’s dedication to Poetry was short lived, but he demonstrated his skills in it.

Regarding the other activity that the humanist only *must know how to do*, oratory, Patón extensively demonstrated his knowledge in the matter. For Céspedes and Patón, oratory was the skill or eloquence in public speaking, and orator the one who practiced it. Patón wrote treatises in all important disciplines of language which an orator had to master, distinctly rhetoric. The most important of these publications was the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, which he entitled with the name of the most important figure in the history of rhetoric, Trimegistus himself (who created it). Since

³²⁴ The commentaries on Horace were included by Patón in his projected *Commentaries on Erudition*, which remain unpolished until the recent discovery of volume 4^o, and the edition of book 16th included in it, which contains precisely this translation and commentary of Horace.

³²⁵ Included in Patón’s *Heraclitus*.

oratory and the rhetorical part of the humanist's activities are closely related to the goals of my work, I will dedicate the next section to delve into the meaning of rhetoric for the ideal orator as defined by Humanism and its relationship with Hermes Trimegistus, the inventor of rhetoric according to Patón

Patón's Rhetoric and the Model of Orator for Humanism

Patón was interested in the practical use of language both for secular and religious contexts, since the orator, broadly speaking, was the quintessence of a humanist. The orator would be the one able to put into effect all disciplines of language studied by the humanists from the early stages of their schooling. Admittedly, a high esteem for the practical usage of language and its teaching nurtured the renaissance and the baroque models of Humanism. And both of those models had Cicero, particularly in his *De officiis* and *De oratore*, as a reference. Patón also believed that the ancient model of orator was the maximum ideal for the man of letters. It explains that one of the most encomiastic praises of Hermes Trimegistus, the patron of rhetoric, came from Patón. Hermes Trimegistus turned out to be, according to Patón, both a magnificent orator himself and a guide for all other orators that would come later in history.

The humanists proposed, "after the model of Cicero, to combine eloquence and wisdom" (Kristeller *Humanist thought* 252). Cicero was not merely an orator and a trained rhetorician, but also a student of Greek philosophy. For this reason, he combined rhetoric with philosophy, and considered rhetoric a part of a broader scheme of education and learning. Cicero's later rhetorical writings, especially *De oratore*, *Brutus*, and *Orator*, are not exclusively textbooks for students of rhetoric,³²⁶ but rather "cultural programs that present the orator as a broadly educated person, and rhetoric and oratory as the center of the liberal studies that include literature and that are at least allied with philosophy." As Cicero introduces him in the *Orator*, the perfect orator is an ideal present in our mind. Kristeller thinks that Cicero introduced this model in his time from the Stoic sage defined before by Panaetius (185-110 BCE).³²⁷ This ideal of orator was adjusted by the humanists and their pedagogical goals of developing a new man. As Rico has studied, Nebrija (1441-1552) brought into Spain this model in which a pedagogical formula offered an access to

³²⁶ As his first treatises *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium* had been.

³²⁷ See Kristeller (*Humanist Thought* 252).

all knowledges through Rhetoric (*Nebrija frente a los bárbaros* 99). In this sense, as Comellas affirms (55), Nebrija's *De liberis educandis* is a clear precedent for Céspedes' *The Humanist*.

This ideal of the perfect orator which Cicero took from the Stoics, and the humanists adopted, is precisely the model Patón and Céspedes are using. However, as Céspedes points out, not all humanists had the necessary time to dedicate to such a demanding activity as oratory, understood as skill or eloquence in public speaking—probably because the opportunities for public speaking and oratory for 16th century humanists were different than in ancient Rome. Early in the Renaissance, some Italian statesmen promoted the study of rhetoric and *studia humanitatis*, because the *artes arengandi* (of haranguing), were useful in the political configuration of their states, as Gómez Moreno notes, and we owe to those men the resurrection of the classical *oratio* (*España y la Italia de los humanistas* 168); however, in the early modern states the political setting changed, and the recovered rhetorical skills, like the *ars dictandi* or *dictaminis*, were reoriented, for instance, to writing letters—as Kristeller has studied in his scrutiny of the roots of humanist rhetoric in the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance (*Renaissance thought* 12). Later on, the composition of *orationes* continued to be studied in humanist schools and universities, but often took the form of just scholarly exercises (Gómez Moreno *España y la Italia de los humanistas* 168).

Aware of this situation, Céspedes affirms in *The Humanist* that “Oratory is a business that requires exercise and use, and since not everybody can devote oneself to them, nor all humanists are orators” (*The Humanist* 96). Céspedes is manifesting the tendency from the first Humanism that I pointed out above. Although humanists praised the classical ideal of orator, since orators had not actually much to do in the political and legal system of early modern Europe—as opposed to those of ancient Rome—humanists actually did not always know how to fit practical rhetoric in the *studia humanitatis*, and conceived it as an instrumental art, or technical discipline more focused on texts. (Comellas 204).

Notwithstanding that the first humanists tried to develop a secular oratory and to distance themselves from the Church—although only to some extent³²⁸—, their debt with the ecclesiastical

³²⁸ Kristeller has defended that the humanists' debt with scholasticism is bigger than was acknowledged by 19th century scholars (“Humanism and Scholasticism” 350).

sermon was remarkable from the beginning (*España y la Italia de los humanistas* 169).³²⁹ Three centuries later, the Spanish late humanists such as Patón did not have those prejudices anymore, and even embraced a rigorous Christian Humanism. That is why Patón finds in the preacher an example of the ideal orator who, what is more, in contrast to the lay humanists, is continually exercising oratorical skills.

Therefore, it cannot come as a surprise that in his *Perfect Preacher* (1612), Patón is continually quoting *De Oratore* and other books by Cicero as examples for a Catholic priest. Besides that, as a pious man Patón also compares the ancient concept of orator with his contemporary concept of preacher; thus, he quotes Cicero when the Roman said, “No one has to be considered in the list and catalogue of orators who is not a scientific in all arts,” and also “All the philosophers’ science, the dialectic’s wit, the poets’ words, must be found in the perfect orator (...).”³³⁰ Patón’s chapter five of the *Perfect Preacher*, “About the Natural Properties which the perfect preacher must have,” is directly adapting Cicero’s *De oratore* and other books of his.³³¹

While developing this concept of perfect orator and preacher, Patón introduces the figure of Mercurius who, according to him, was for the Greek gods as angels and preachers would later be for Christians:

They also regarded Mercury as the God of Eloquence and Oratory, Atlas’ grandson, to whom they gave the job of messenger of the Gods. The office of the Christian Mercury, that is, the preacher, is to be the messenger of the true God. According to Augustine in *On Revelations* when he says ‘Angel means messenger,’ any bishop or priest who preaches the way of the eternal life is an angel, which means messenger.³³²

Therefore, Mercurius is a point of reference for both bishops and priests. Since the orator was an ideal for Patón, it is not strange that he would later adopt Mercurius, Roman god of Rhetoric, as his ‘patron’ in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1621), and would entitle his most ambitious work with

³²⁹ As Gomez Moreno highlights, a significant example of this debt is Petrarch’s discourse on the occasion of his coronation with laurels in 1341 (*España y la Italia de los humanistas* 169). Gómez Moreno also provides several examples in medieval and early modern Spanish literature (169-170).

³³⁰ “Ninguno ha de ser contado en la matrícula y catálogo de los oradores que no sea científico en todas las artes”; “Toda la ciencia de los filósofos se ha de hallar en el perfeto orador, la agudeza de los dialécticos, las palabras casi de los poetas y es necesario que haya visto mucho, leído mucho, oído mucho y trabajado mucho;” in Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 208).

³³¹ See Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 219-223).

³³² “Tuvieron también por dios de la Elocuencia y Oratoria a Mercurio, nieto de Atlante, al cual daban oficio de mensajero de los dioses. Considerado, pues, el oficio de el cristiano Mercurio, que es el predicador, mensajero es de Dios verdadero, según san Agustín, *Sobre el Apocalipsis*. «Ángel—dice—quiere decir mensajero.» cualquiera obispo o sacerdote (que) habla y predica de Dios, enseñando el camino de la vida eterna es ángel, que quiere decir mensajero.” (*Perfect Preacher*, in Madroñal *Humanismo y Filología* 214).

his name. As we will see, in the *Prologue* of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, Patón plays with the ambivalence of the Roman god Mercurius and Mercurius Trimegistus. This ambiguity had been in fact popularized by Cicero in the well know passage of *De natura deorum* 3.56 that I will comment later in this work. Cicero talked about the five Mercuriuses, the last one being he who was called Theuth in Egypt.

Once Christianized—a task that Patón would complete in the *Answer* and that I will address later—Mercurius could be related to the ideal of a Christian orator or preacher, Patón’s maximum goal for the Christian humanist. Patón’s own enterprises and what he wanted for both his students and relatives were directed to this model.³³³ Students should not limit themselves to learning rhetoric, but acquiring the ensemble of knowledges which would allow them to become orators. As Patón says in his *Spanish Eloquence*: “Rhetorician is he who only adorns the sentence with tropes, embellishes with figures, and composes with numbers, he who with aptitude and decorum presents the sentence which he has made; [but] orator is the one accomplished and learned in any science.”³³⁴ This assertion does not mean that rhetoric had to be dismissed—on the contrary, rhetoric, along with grammar, are the base of everything else that should be learned later in a program of education. Patón could also have taken this wide-ranging ideal of the orator from the Jesuits, since their own founder, Saint Ignatius, affirmed in his *Constituciones jesuitas* (the rule of the *Company of Jesus* from 1554) that the teaching of letters should not stop in the purely philological, but to comprehend all fields of knowledge.³³⁵

With his entire production, Patón tried to offer everything a student should need to become an orator or preacher—whether he became a priest or not—as he defined the ideal in his *Perfect Preacher*: Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectics, morals, social critique, and erudite works about all kinds of knowledge. Since the orator was an ideal, no wonder that Patón’s first relevant book, in which he exercised all his creativity and originality, was a book of rhetoric, the necessary outset for any orator. Indeed, Patón’s most popular book, then and now, is precisely his book of rhetoric in Spanish: *Spanish Eloquence in Art (Eloquencia española en arte)*. Patón published the *Spanish Eloquence* in 1604 and later rewrote it—by removing and adding many examples of rhetorical

³³³ As Garau has studied in Patón’s recently discovered work ‘El virtuoso discreto’ (2014).

³³⁴ “Retórico es aquel que sólo adorna la oración con tropos, hermosea con figuras y compone con números, y con aptitud y decoro representa la oración que ha hecho. Orador es aquel que es universal y docto en cualquiera ciencia” (in Madroñal *Humanismo y Filología* 96).

³³⁵ See Comellas (53).

devices—and included it as the last part of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* in 1621. Therefore, this *Spanish Eloquence* put Patón in his way towards an even more ambitious work, the *Mercurius Trimegistus*—in which Patón manifests his aspirations by placing Hermes in the center of his production.

How to be a Good Orator in Spanish. Patón's *Spanish Eloquence in Art* (*Elocuencia española en arte*)

As Marín points out, *Spanish Eloquence* proves that Patón's pedagogical humanistic ideal and the dedication to his academic duties can explain not only the teaching impulse in many of his works, but also their style and structure (22). Aside from offering a manual of rhetoric, Patón also demonstrates his prowess in the discipline, both in the style and the careful structure of the book. Moreover, the pedagogical goals of the book are enhanced by writing it in Spanish and not Latin, as was customary in the epoch. Patón, a Latin teacher, demonstrates that it is valuable to be eloquent in Spanish as it is in Latin, and that eloquence is a science that can be learned and mastered. Moreover, Patón inherited from El Brocense the assumption that it was harmful to force students to speak Latin the entire day, and to teach them only in that language—mostly because it led to a corruption of their Latin. This notion prepared the way for Patón's Rhetoric in Spanish (*Spanish Eloquence*). Paradoxically, this emphasis in the vernacular language distances both El Brocense and Patón from the early Italian humanists and their 'elitist' emphasis on Latin, and moves them closer to the vernacular Humanism of Alfonso the Wise, who both prophesied pedagogical purposes and decided to put aside Latin for Spanish as a language of culture. As Comellas notes (227) there was a gradual trend in Céspedes' times towards translating into Spanish more scientific works than ever before, and to bring relevance to the vernacular languages again. By writing his *Spanish Eloquence* in vernacular Patón joined this tendency, and also ensured his popularity in academic studies since then.

Although Patón took many notions from El Brocense, including the use of vernacular languages, he did not follow him in more revolutionary undertakes. For instance, El Brocense proposed to overthrow the classical authorities on rhetoric; rather than that, in the *Spanish Eloquence* and other books Patón mentions and quotes classical Rhetoricians and treatise writers with respect. As a late humanist, Patón was practical and eclectic, and presented a useful and clear synthesis. As many other humanists before him, Patón's maximum aspiration was not innovation

but to adapt useful thoughts from the past for changing times.³³⁶ However, by adapting ancient materials to a new epoch Patón developed original qualities and used them for the topics he was dealing with. Patón's innovation in *Spanish Eloquence* makes him an important scholar in the baroque period and a real authority for the last Humanism. Patón's inventiveness would continue in the *Mercurius Trimegistus*.

Regarding Patón's originality in his *Spanish Eloquence*, the most important of his innovations was the use of examples from contemporary writers for his figures of speech, and not from Latin writers, as had been expected until then; by doing so, Patón became "the great rhetoric theorist of Spanish baroque poets" (Vilanova 663) and offered a unique anthology of Spanish Literature from its beginning until Patón's time, in such a way that reinvigorated Rhetoric from its old conceptions (Marín 38). Actually, he probably wrote the best manual of rhetoric of the seventeenth century (Vilanova 661), and the best textbook of this subject up until then (Quilis and Rozas 1965: LI). Among his merits, Patón was the first one to notice, explain or apply new terms for certain grammatical phenomena.³³⁷ Therefore he can be considered the founder of rhetoric in Spain (Osorio Romero 22-23). As I mentioned in chapter two, the first Spanish dictionary, the *Treasure of Castilian or Spanish language (Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española, 1611)* by Sebastián de Covarrubias, has Patón as a reference in the Grammar entries (Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 62); in addition, Covarrubias also includes an entry for Hermes Trimegistus that I will comment later.

Patón's importance was even bigger the following century in the *Diccionario de autoridades, (Dictionary of Authorities, 1726-1739)*, published by the Spanish Royal Academy (Real Academia Española or RAE). One of RAE's main purposes was precisely to create a normative Spanish dictionary, and so it created the *Dictionary of Authorities*, which gives the name of Jiménez Patón as the best source of the time in almost every entry of Grammar and Rhetoric. In this way, we can observe how Patón became an indisputable authority in both oratory and the sciences of language, with equal importance for Humanism.

³³⁶ As Rico Verdú explains, Humanism's ideal is synthesis, not originality (222).

³³⁷ Among them, epicene gender, number, case, superlative, participle, the Spanish 'a' with Direct Objects of person, etc. (see Marín 47).

The disciplines of *language* in the rest of Patón's Production

Of course, Patón's constant dedication to the disciplines of the orator—a subdivision of the *action* in the part of *the things themselves*, according to Céspedes—also relates him with the second big part of the human letters or sciences of the humanist, that is, the part of *the language*. As we can observe, the sciences of *the things themselves* and the sciences of *the language*—*res* and *verbum*—can be closely related. Following Céspedes' terminology, Patón's most extensive production could be considered as part of the *reason* (or *judgement*) of *language*, which he developed through his studies in the *understanding of the language* (acquired from classical authors) and tried to apply in the *use of language* that he addressed to orators and preachers.

Hence, the *Spanish Eloquence* is the most famous and acknowledged of Patón's books dedicated to the *reason* of language, but he wrote many others. By 1604, when he published the *Spanish Eloquence* he had already published the *Apollo*, a lost work, probably about rhetoric too, and the *Artis Rhetoricae* (c.1602), inspired by the rhetoric part of El Brocense's *Organum Dialecticum et Rhetoricum* (1579).³³⁸ He also published a Latin Grammar, *Grammatical Institutions* (*Instituciones gramáticas*, Baeza, 1613) and then two treatises together: the *Institutions of Spanish Grammar* (*Institutiones de la Gramática Española*, Baeza, 1614) and the *Epitome of Latin and Spanish Orthography* (*Epítome de la ortografía latina y castellana*, Baeza, 1614)—these two works attest El Brocense's influence. In 1621 Patón gathered together the most important of these works and published them to teach the three important Rhetorics for learned men (or humanists) of his time—Latin, Spanish, and Sacred— and published them under the name of *Mercurius Trimegistus*, whom Patón considered not only de ideal orator, but also the patron of all sciences of language. Therefore, *the Mercurius Trimegistus* contained the second edition of Patón's *Artis Rhetoricae* (now as a Latin eloquence or rhetoric), the *Spanish Eloquence* (*Elocuencia española*), and the *Institutions of Spanish Grammar* (*Institutiones de la Gramática Española*, Baeza, 1614), to which he added a *Sacred eloquence*— we do not know if there existed a first edition of this book, as it happens with the others. In this way, to the three important Rhetorics he added a book of grammar, since grammar should be the first thing taught to any

³³⁸ Patón published again this work in 1614 *Artis rhetoricae compendium brevis, ac copiosius quam adhuc* (since the one from 1602 is lost, this is the only one preserved).

student, which for Humanism was subordinate to rhetoric.³³⁹ As Madroñal highlights, for Patón, eloquence differs from grammar in that the latter seeks to make the sentence congruent, without solecisms, whereas eloquence, after applying grammar, composes, polishes, and embellishes the sentence with the ornaments or rhetorical devices (Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 2009). Therefore, grammar and rhetoric are closely connected, and actually the second depends on the first, that is why Patón included a grammar book in his book of rhetoric destined to students.

I will come back to the *Mercurius Trimegistus* at the end of this chapter, since the rest of my work is going to be connected to this treatise. Now I want to point out that in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* Patón included both grammar and rhetoric, two of the traditional sciences of the medieval *trivium*, and still of primary importance in Humanism; as we saw before, in Céspedes's *The Humanist*, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectics, are among the disciplines that the humanist must know. But, what happens in Patón's production concerning dialectics, the third of the *trivium's* arts? As it turns out, Patón consecrated a treatise to this discipline alone, because he considered it the access key to any other science or art. In an identical way, for Céspedes in *The Humanist* dialectics is the instrument of both knowledge and action of things, which gives the humanist a system and criteria to know what he should know and do.

Céspedes's Instrument of both Knowledge and Action of Things as Patón's Necessary Instrument to Acquire all Ciencias and Arts

As I explained before, Céspedes divides the part of the human letters related to the things themselves in three parts: *knowledge of things*, *action of things*, and finally *instrument of both knowledge and action of things*, this instrument is logic or dialectics. According to Céspedes, with logic or dialectics the humanist would be able: “to understand and judge any work written by other, and to write any work himself” (*The Humanist* 7). Since the humanist Patón attended to all human letters, he could not miss a work on such a necessary art. Certainly, Patón wrote a book of logic or dialectics, and called it precisely the *Necessary Instrument to Acquire all Sciences and Arts and to Understand the Authors (Instrumento necesario para adquirir todas ciencias y artes y entender los autores c. 1604)*. This work, never published, was lost during four centuries, but has been

³³⁹ As Padley points out “the immediate aim of the early Humanist grammarian was undoubtedly the establishment of norms of correct grammar for rhetorical ends, as is amply demonstrated by the common definition of grammar as an ‘ars recte loquendi’” (Padley *Grammatical theory* 16).

recently discovered and partly published by Madroñal.³⁴⁰ The book has a strong influence from El Brocense, whom Patón practically plagiarizes and translates from Latin into Spanish in several parts.³⁴¹ Maybe because of this reason, Patón never published this work.

In the title of the book Patón seems to have taken into consideration *The Humanist* of his friend Céspedes, who literally says: “I call the *instrument* of those two things (i.e. the knowledge and action of things) the admirable use of Logic or Dialectics, with which the humanist will be able to understand and judge any work written by another man and to do anything by himself.”³⁴² Accordingly, Patón’s *Necessary Instrument* is a dialectics or logic book, intended, as a propaedeutical manual, to prepare the students with the necessary skills to undertake the study of all things. Patón’s title could perfectly be an inspiration from Céspedes’ *The Humanist*, since this treatise had been published by his friend only four years before (1600). Therefore, both Céspedes and Patón, did not deem dialectics as part of the study of language. In fact, Patón was following the same ‘revolutionary’ division of disciplines that his master El Brocense followed. Traditional Rhetoric was divided in four parts: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio* and *actio*. El Brocense and Patón considered that only *elocutio* and *actio* were part of Rhetoric, whereas *inventio* and *dispositio* pertained to dialectics.³⁴³ That is why Patón’s *Spanish Eloquence* (and the other two eloquences included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, the Latin and the sacred ones) only deals with *elocutio* and *actio* (there is a small but significant part in the three treatises on *actio*). Since *elocutio* was the most important part of rhetoric, it is not strange that Patón preferred to call it *eloquence* (*elocuencia*).

Actually, the fact of assimilating *inventio* and *dispositio* to logic and dialectics was not exempt of controversy. El Brocense had taken it from the French protestant humanist, logician, and educational reformer Petrus Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée 1515-1572) who reinterpreted and simplified the ancient *trivium* by modifying the concepts of logic-dialectics and rhetoric. Since rhetoric only retained *elocutio* and *actio*, and left *inventio* and *dispositio* to logic, logic became a magnificent discipline which guaranteed access to any possible knowledge. In his book of

³⁴⁰ In Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 313-348).

³⁴¹ Although Patón always boasted of quoting all his sources, in his *Instrumento necesario* he translated big sections of El Brocense’s *De nonnullis Porphyrii aliorumque in dialéctica erroribus* (1588) and the part dedicated to dialectics from the *Organum Dialecticum et Rhetoricum* (Salamanca, 1579).

³⁴² “El instrumento de estas dos cosas llamo el admirable uso de la Lógica o Dialéctica, con el cual podrá el humanista entender y juzgar cualquiera obra escrita por otro y hacer él cualquiera de nuevo” (El humanista 7).

³⁴³ As Madroñal points out, for Patón the goal of dialectics is to make discourses of reason; whereas the goal of rhetoric is to adorn the sentence (*Humanismo y filología* 96).

dialectics, Patón mirrors both this innovative tendency of El Brocense and the renewed Thomistic logic driven by the council of Trent, which defined logic as the science of reason.³⁴⁴

Consequently, in Patón's view dialectics was closer to the other sciences than to the study of language, and this allows me to advance an important theme that I will expand on later: the dichotomy between ancient wisdom, represented by Hermes Trimegistus, and the scientific revolution which preconized a 'new' knowledge. Contrary to what it may seem, the last humanists of the Spanish Golden Age were associated both to the cultivation of traditional disciplines and to the early development of a modern scientific thought, based upon an empiric approach to reality.³⁴⁵ A fundamental part of this was the critical approach to received knowledge, for which El Brocense had to pay dearly, precisely because, as Gómez Canseco has studied (*El humanismo después de 1600* 110) the empirical principle prevailed in him. Patón was never as revolutionary as his master, nor did he criticize the authorities, but he wanted to do his bit in the sciences, which he understood in a broad sense. This 'modern' approach to knowledge and science is clear in Patón's prologue "To the reader" (*Al lector*) of his *Necessary Instrument*, which he starts with a truly patriotic zest (another characteristic feature of late humanists to which I will come back later):

I have considered with special attention for a long time the happiness in which we find the *things* of our Spain, principally the monarchy of the sciences, and I always finish this figuration by asking God not an increase, but a durable preservation of the state that they have nowadays.³⁴⁶

Which were those sciences flowering in Spain Patón refers to? This is a much broader concept of science than the one that prevailed after the Enlightenment, and closer both to the original meaning of *scientia* in Latin (knowledge) and the *studia humanitatis* or human letters about which Céspedes talks in *The Humanist*. All these sciences mentioned by Patón could be included in Céspedes' category of *knowledge of things* that the humanist must have and which we saw before. First, of course, Patón mentions Grammar (Latin, Greek and Spanish), Math (including, Arithmetic, Music,

³⁴⁴ As Abellán points out, at the end of 16th century the influx of the Council of Trent is already visible, and a new Thomistic predominance starts, in which logic is reestablished as the science of reason. This trend announces the great treatises of the 17th century. Logic, as a completely developed science (*scientia rationalis*) begins to take shape against the logic of the humanists as *ars disserendi* or *scientia inventionibus et iudicii*, and the logic of the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century as *scientia sermocinalis* (Abellán *Historia crítica del pensamiento español* V2 551-552).

³⁴⁵ See Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 357).

³⁴⁶ "Mucho tiempo con particular atención he considerado la felicidad en que están las cosas de nuestra España, principalmente la monarquía de las ciencias, y concluyo esta imaginación siempre con pedirle a Dios no mayor aumento, sino conservación durable del estado que al presente tienen." (*Instrumento necesario*, in Madroñal *Humanismo y Filología* 318)

Geometry and Astronomy), Natural Philosophy, Morals, Medicine, History, Laws and Canons, positive and scholastic Theology, the so called “predicable books,”³⁴⁷ poetry and letter writing.³⁴⁸ But Patón finds a gap among all these sciences blossoming in the “land of plenty” which was Spain at that time

I only find a faculty that they have forgotten, and I cannot understand how, although they covered all sciences, they forgot the way of knowing them: the organ or instrument, which is dialectics, the one that all choruses in schools confess with one voice that it is necessary in order to acquire the rest of the sciences with perfection; [dialectics is the science] that, without knowing it, in case one should write about the other faculties, they would not be well written; [dialectics is the science] that should be taught after Grammar, although the order has been perverted and disrupted, and now they first teach Rhetoric, which is against ancient customs and the good order of teaching.³⁴⁹

Therefore, with his *Necessary instrument*, written about 1603, Patón had already prepared to the academic world of his time a book of logic-dialectics, written the year before *Spanish Eloquence*, his first important book of rhetoric. As I mentioned earlier, Patón is against teaching rhetoric just after grammar and before dialectics; he thinks that the correct order should be grammar, dialectics, and then rhetoric, in which order he follows El Brocense. According to Patón, after having learned the first rudiments of language (grammar), dialectics would guarantee access to the other sciences, including rhetoric.

This optimistic view of the sciences in seventeenth century Spain can only be compared to the description of Ancient Egypt ruled by Hermes Trimegistus that we will find in the *Answer*. According to Patón, in Trimegistus’ times “that gypsy province [Egypt] began to blossom in all good arts, disciplines and sciences.”³⁵⁰ Later in the *Answer*, Patón clarifies why Hermes was the most important figure in Egypt: because although before and after him “there were wise men in Egypt, nonetheless he is regarded as the main master, since he perfected the Ancient Wisdom with

³⁴⁷ Which can refer both to religious speeches and to the book of Logic like Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, which Boetius translated into Latin and where he included the *predicables* as its object of study.

³⁴⁸ See *Instrumento necesario* list in Madroñal (*Humanismo y Filología* 318-319).

³⁴⁹ “Sola de una facultad hallo que se hayan olvidado y no sé cómo habiendo tocado en todo se dejasen el modo de saberlas: el órgano e instrumento, que es la Dialéctica, la que el torrente de las escuelas todas confiesa a una voz ser necesaria para adquirir las demás con perfección y la que, a no saberla, lo que de esotras facultades escribieran, no escribieran bien; la que después de la Gramática había de ser enseñada, aunque el orden se haya pervertido y trastocado enseñando primero la Retórica, lo cual es contra el uso antiguo y buen orden de enseñar” (in Madroñal *Humanismo y Filología* 319-320).

³⁵⁰ “[E]n su tiempo comenzó aquella provincia gitana (por tener el tan gran maestro) a florecer en las buenas artes, disciplinas y ciencias” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

all the books he wrote. This is why he was confirmed as the only master and ruler of those schools, and owner of all sciences.”³⁵¹ In this description of Trimegistus’ endeavors we can appreciate a clear understanding of what the commitment of the humanists was: to take the wisdom of the Ancients and to perfect it. This respectful renovation could be done, as we saw in Céspedes’ classification, through the common activities of the humanists—among them, the production of refined editions of ancient works, translations, and accretions of science’s knowledges in a more thorough way. All these activities of the humanist would be guided by the necessary instrument of logic or dialectics, indispensable to classify and rationalize so many heterogeneous materials. In this sense, Patón and other humanists were doing in Spain what Trimegistus had done in Egypt before, and that is why the Egyptian still worked as model of a sage. It cannot come as a surprise that the conflict between the ‘lost sciences of the ancients’ and the new empirical approach of the forthcoming scientific revolution is present even in Patón’s *Necessary Instrument*, which embodied a clearly out-fashioned and medievalist science, dialectics. This imminent class is obvious in the words which a theologian friend wrote at the beginning of the book for Patón.

At the very beginning of the *Necessary Instrument* we find an *Apology* for Patón by Joan Acuña del Adarve, professor of Theology at the University of Baeza, where Patón had studied. Joan Acuña starts acknowledging that God infused all sciences in Adam, and he transmitted them to his descendants.³⁵² This is the start line of most accounts of the *philosophia perennis*, including its initial renaissance formulation by Agostino Steuco (1497–1548), who coined the term in 1540.³⁵³ Patón would say in the *Answer*: “I have always been certain that all sciences and information of them derived from our father Adam, to whom God revealed the knowledge of all things and their natural sciences, as it’s recorded in *Genesis*.”³⁵⁴ However, in a typical humanistic way of thinking, Acuña advises not to believe only in the authorities, but also in the book of nature, trying to understand by ourselves whatever we have received. Because

the natural philosopher who thinks a proposition is true just because Aristotle said it, without looking for other reason, has no inventiveness, because truth is not in the mouth of

³⁵¹ “[D]espués de Trimegisto hubo sabios en Egipto, eso no obstante se tiene por maestro principal porque la sabiduría antigua la perficiono, con los muchos libros que escribió. Por esto quedó graduado por el único maestro y regente de aquellas escuelas, y por dueño de todas las ciencias” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 604).

³⁵² “Adán fue con su ser enseñado porque le fueron infusas todas las ciencias y él las comunicó a sus descendientes.” *Instrumento necesario*, in Madroñal *Humanismo y Filología* 315).

³⁵³ In his *De perenni philosophia*. See Schmitt “Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz.”

³⁵⁴ “Yo siempre he tenido por muy cierto que de nuestro primer padre Adán (a quien Dios reveló el conocimiento de todas las cosas, y ciencia natural dellas como consta del Génesis) se derivaron las ciencias y noticia dellas” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 601).

who says it, but in whatever we deal with it, which affirms itself by shouting its existence, nature, and end.³⁵⁵

Acuña does not mean that we should not listen to the masters and read the books of the ancients, because we would need an extremely long life to know all truths through our own experience. Thus, books and wise men supply those things that time does not give to us; therefore, if we are able to both experience a number of things and to read and listen many truths experienced by others, our human understanding will be able to achieve an enormous number of things.³⁵⁶ That science of dialectics which Patón is providing, according to Acuña, can give us the necessary discernment to distinguish between what we can believe, and what we should experience by ourselves, because experience is ultimately the most important. And this opinion came from Acuña, a doctor in Theology, the so called most important science in the period—both in the *Necessary Instrument* and in the *Answer* Patón praises the ancient theologian and ‘scientific’ Hermes Trimegistus. Another important thing Acuña does in his *Apology* at the beginning of Patón’s *Necessary Instrument* is defend him against those who questioned his capacity of dealing with such important things as dialectics. Those critics, according to Acuña, simply do not know Patón’s ‘perpetuity’ in working, reading, and speculating, and they also ignore that the first theologians—that is, the *prisci theologi*—did not go to school.³⁵⁷ One of the most important ‘first theologians,’ of the same kind of those to whom Acuña is comparing Patón is Hermes Trimegistus himself. As a matter of fact, Patón would delve into theological matters in some works like the commentaries to the *Lamentations* and *Psalms 118*, and also in the *Answer* that he dedicated to Hermes in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*. As we will see, the *Answer* was written to confront a hostile theologian. Therefore, Patón embodies the changes of Humanism.

Theology as the most important sacred science was conceived in early Humanism as opposed to the human sciences with a pagan origin. In addition, scholastic theology had absorbed

³⁵⁵ “Así el filósofo natural que piensa ser una proposición verdadera porque la dijo Aristóteles, sin buscar otra razón, no tiene ingenio porque la verdad no está en la boca del que lo dice, sino en la cosa de que se trata enseñando a voces su ser, naturaleza y fin” (in Madroñal 2009a 316).

³⁵⁶ “Siendo el maestro tal y los libros tales, suplen la falta de la larga vida que era necesaria para conocer todas las verdades por experiencia, más así con pocas que se experimentan y muchas que se oyen y leen por otros experimentadas viene el entendimiento humano con conocimiento de muchas cosas que de otra suerte fuera imposible” (in Madroñal 2009a 316).

³⁵⁷ “Esto he dicho para deshacer dos objeciones con que algunos contradicen la doctrina de nuestro autor: una es que parece atrevimiento hombre que no acabó oír los cursos de Teología quiera sacar a luz estos y otros trabajos de los mayores estudios que los suyos. Esto dicen porque no han advertido su perpetuidad en trabajar leyendo y especulando, y debiendo saber que los primeros teólogos fueron aventajados sin estar en escuelas.” (In Madroñal 2009a 316-317)

Aristotelian logic and dialectics to its own purposes. This adaptation of Aristotelian dialectics into theology provoked two things: on the one hand, rigorous ecclesiastical authorities prohibited to apply Aristotelian and pagan philosophy in theology—most visibly in the Paris prohibition of 1366; on the other hand, some of the first humanists rejected logic on the grounds of its association with theology. In Patón’s time things had greatly changed, just as he exemplifies. Although he considers logic and dialectics an essential science for the humanist, as a Pious scholar, he still struggles with the evident pagan sources of the *studia humanitatis*, including those of dialectics. Next, I will address this dichotomy.

Human Letters as Pagan Sciences

For Patón and Acuña, it is necessary to translate and actualize all sciences, including dialectics, to a Christian society. This accommodation could be a complicated undertaking because all those sciences had been transmitted through the pagans. Thus, in his *Answer* Patón reminds that, although all sciences have their origin in Adam, both Moses and the Greeks learned them in Hermes Trimegistus’ Egypt; in the same way, Daniel and his friends were also taught the sciences of the Chaldeans: “so they could convince them, both in the things of Grammar, Rhetoric and Dialectics, and in the other human sciences; considering that they so much blossomed among the pagans, they called them letters of humanities.”³⁵⁸ As we can observe, among those human sciences Patón individualizes the sciences of the *trivium* that would be included in the *studia humanitatis*, identified with the *human letters* of Céspedes’s *The Humanist*. Patón clearly affirms that the letters of humanities are called like that because of their pagan origin. As Patón acknowledges, those human letters, even though they had their remote origin in Adam, came to us from the pagans—with Hermes Trimegistus as an essential link in the transmission chain. He follows a humanist trend “which understood humanities of human letters as profane opposition to the sacred sciences.”³⁵⁹ The first Italian humanists tried to release the human letters from the slavery they professed to theology since Augustine times.³⁶⁰ However, as I am showing in this work, Patón clearly reinforced that ‘slavery’ in many of his books. Probably this disposition owed much to the years he studied with the Jesuits.

³⁵⁸ “Para convencellos con ellas así en las cosas de la gramática, dialetica y Retórica, como en otras ciencias humanas, porque por haber florecido estas tanto entre gentiles las llamas letras de humanidad” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 605).

³⁵⁹ See Comellas (*El humanista* 75).

³⁶⁰ See Comellas (*El humanista* 75).

As I explained before, the Jesuits were the main drivers of the pedagogical reforms in Spain, an impulse that Patón received in the Imperial College of Madrid. In the Jesuit's *Ratio studiorum* there is a zeal for harmonizing medieval theism and renaissance Humanism in a Christian formula of education, and this synthesis made the letters not servants, but slaves of theology (Yndurain *Humanismo y Renacimiento* 1994), an ideal in which Patón participated.

For instance, in the *Answer* Patón affirms that sciences or *studia humanitatis*, having been tamed, “know how to be servants of the divine science and lady of all arts and sciences, holy theology.”³⁶¹ To ensure the subordination of pagan culture to Christian principles is what appealed the mind of a pious Christian as Patón, who, as a late humanist, still devoted his life to preserving Pagan culture. For instance, in the prologue of his unpublished *Cátedra de erudición* (1628),³⁶² when he translates and comments the poet Martial, Patón even tries to assimilate the pagan banquets and the Christian eucharist, as an attempt to approach both worlds.

However, Patón's semblance of openness with respect to the non-Christian culture strongly shrunk in the last years of his life. He wrote most of his specifically ‘humanistic’ works (according to Céspedes' classification) before 1621, when he published his *Mercurius Trimegistus*. After that year, a number of circumstances that I mentioned in the previous chapter—personal disgraces and the break with his publisher, Pedro de la Cuesta, in 1628—made it more difficult for him to publish, and in fact many works were only printed many years later or remained in manuscript form until recently.

Patón's Moralistic Last Works and the Waning of Non-Christian Culture in Late Humanism

In his last years, Patón devoted his energies and talents to moral treatises, and this turn supposed in fact a certain distance between Patón and the ‘ideal’ activities of a humanist according to Céspedes. As I mentioned before, moral philosophy had been a fundamental discipline for the humanists, who interpreted ancient authors in this way. Moral philosophy pertained to the humanists' domain from the beginning of the movement, and their first model was Aristotle; subsequently, they looked for other models, such as the Stoics (Kristeller *Humanist Thought* 128).

³⁶¹ “Mas aunque lo son saben domesticadas ser siervas de la divina ciencia reina y señora de todas las artes y ciencias la sagrada Teología” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 605).

³⁶² See *Comentarios de erudición* (20).

As we will see, Patón accused the influence of both humanistic moral philosophy and the Stoics, but in the same way that it happened with many other late humanists, the moral philosopher became a moralist.

Notwithstanding this tendency, Céspedes' *The Humanist*, written in 1600, is far away from any moralistic ambition, as Comellas points out, because it was written in a period when profane wisdom set itself apart from the religious (Comellas *El humanista* 72). On the one hand, Céspedes would represent the final stage of a process developed in the second part of 16th century, in which Erasmus's project of a moral renewal of Europe through evangelic Humanism had lost strength; on the other hand, the power of the Counter-Reformation and its new Catholic moral project had not yet pervaded many learned men in Spain, who were even able to resist it—as it happened in the University of Salamanca, where El Brocense and his son-in-law, Céspedes, opposed it. As Comellas highlights, the impositions and cuts of the Counter-Reformation to the humanist project led Céspedes to continuously separate the moral and the intellectual fields (Comellas *El humanista* 72). For this reason, Céspedes did not even mention moral philosophy as a necessary activity or knowledge for the humanist. But the circumstances were very different for Patón.

Although I have shown that Patón's activities and aims as a humanist were in tune with the project developed by his friend Céspedes in his treatise, the moralistic flavor of his last works moved Patón away from Céspedes and closer to another late humanist of the period. This turn not only took Patón further away from the non-Christian culture represented by Hermes Trimegistus, but also increased his annoyance with the Semitic heritage of Spain. At this point, late Humanism definitely departed from the multicultural Humanism of Alfonso the Wise. Furthermore, the moralistic flavor of Patón's last works prevented Hermes from continuing to act as a cultural mediator between Christian and non-Christian culture, and so he disappeared from Patón's last works.

Some critics have seen in Patón's shift the burden of responsibility derived from his appointment in the Spanish Inquisition.³⁶³ That would explain why he turned to works focused on social criticism, religious concerns, and moral reform. Thus, in the last decade of his life he published: the *Decent colocation of the holy cross* (*Decente colocación de la Santa Cruz*, Cuenca, 1635), giving advice about how to use in the most respectful way the Christian Symbol; *Discourse of Perfumes, Tufts and Bald Spots* (*Discurso de los Tufos, Copetes y Calvas*, Baeza: Juan de la

³⁶³ Marín (25); Bosch & others (*Comentarios de erudición* 21).

Cuesta, 1639), where he criticizes contemporary fashions about perfume, beards and wigs;³⁶⁴ and the *Reform of Garments (Reforma de Trajes*, Baeza, 1638), which includes a small treatise about the good use of tobacco. These last works pursue the correction of behavioral abuses regarding personal and body care and behavior.

I see in these last works a final victory in Patón's heart of the religious man over the humanist. However, Patón continued to write about all sorts of topics, as many as Céspedes compiled in *The Humanist*. In this final victory we can appreciate a sign of what had finally prevailed in late Humanism under the Counter Reformation.

However, even in his most moralistic works, his humanist side continued to exist. Whatever the topic was, including morals, Patón dealt with it with secular and Christian erudition, performing meticulous exercises in style and rhetoric. Following clear lines of reasoning, in those treatises Patón agrees, refutes, corroborates, extends, or deepens, always following the testimonies he analyzes, but he also shows his religious beliefs and his huge respect for the authorities.³⁶⁵ Paradoxically, as we will see, Patón used the same skills both to defend Hermes Trimegistus in 1621, and to foster moral reforms and precepts in the next decade—many times by using the same authorities. These last moralistic works, which we cannot consider minor anymore—as some scholars of Golden Age literature have done—also found an echo among both his readers and friends and colleagues. Thus, for instance, Lope de Vega himself wrote an approbatory letter for Patón's *Discourse of Perfumes, Tufts and Bald Spots*.³⁶⁶ More significantly, in this same book, one of the most famous poems of both Quevedo and Spanish Literature was published for the first time: *The Satiric and Censor Epistle against the present customs of the Castilians (Epístola Satírica y Censoria contra las costumbres presentes de los castellanos escrita al Conde-Duque de Olivares)* which Quevedo boldly addressed to the all-powerful *valido* (prime minister) of Spain, the Count-Duke of Olivares. Both Quevedo and Patón shared rigorous opinions about morals and religion, but the former crossed the line by blaming such a big figure. Published in Patón's book, this letter probable contributed to the arrest and imprisonment of Quevedo that same year in 1639.

³⁶⁴ Following the intolerant spirit of his last works, by criticizing an excessive care in their hair, Patón is also attacking those men who not only imitated women in the coquetry of hair and appearance, but also in the very way of speaking and pronouncing words.

³⁶⁵ That is, for instance, what Patón does in his *Decent colocation of the holy cross* according to Maya (637).

³⁶⁶ Lope wrote his *Carta aprobatoria a Jiménez Patón* in 1627 (the date which appears in the book), but the work was not published until 1639.

Patón also shared with Quevedo the doctrine he displayed in his most ominous work *Discourse on favor of the Holy and Laudable Statute of the Cleanliness (Discurso en favor del Santo y Loable Estatuto de la Limpieza, 1638)*. In this discourse Patón made a passionate defense of both the Inquisition and the privileges of ‘Old Christians,’ the term used to designate those whose blood was considered to be pure—as oppose to those whose blood was ‘contaminated’ with Jewish, Moorish or heretic ancestors. These laws were designed to prevent converted Jews from having access to public employments and sinecures. Actually, as Maestre indicated, Patón himself was accused of having a Jewish lineage in his workplace of Villanueva and had to demonstrate his “purity” (170).³⁶⁷ There were many detractors of these laws in Spain, who withstood them;³⁶⁸ however, Patón objected those fairer men, and defended the discriminatory regulations by using his mastery of rhetoric—although probably he was also trying to cast aside any doubt about his own ancestors. Patón traced what he calls the *ethopoeia of the convert (etopeya del converso)*. In doing so, Patón tries to demonstrate the moral turpitude and vices which the converted had by definition³⁶⁹ As I will show, this is exactly the opposite of what he did in the *Answer*, where he sought to prove Hermes’s moral virtues and lack of vices. Important writers of the Spanish Golden Age inside Jiménez Patón’s network supported the same ideas. The same important figures who accompanied Patón by praising Trimegistus, joined him in this defense of the ominous statutes. Lope de Vega published around 1633 his *Feelings against the affronts against Christ our Lord by the Hebrew nation*,³⁷⁰ Quevedo published his *Execration of the Jews* in 1633,³⁷¹ and the same year the famous preacher Fray Hortensio Paravicino declaimed in front of the king his anti-Judaic *Jesus Christ Deraigned (Jesucristo desagraviado)*.

³⁶⁷ Maestre also indicated that a compelling argument in Patón’s favor was being a relative of the famous archbishop of Valencia saint Tomás of Villanueva (170).

³⁶⁸ Garau (2012 600) cites important figures of 16th and 17th century Spain such as Juan de Mariana or fray Luis de León; Byrne (2004), has studied the influence of Hermes Trimegistus in fray Luis’ works.

³⁶⁹ Garau (2012 600 & s) has studied the socio-historical context of the cleanliness of blood polemics, which arose with the “liberalizing politic” of the new govern of the king Philip IV of Spain and his *valido* (prime minister) el Conde-Duque de Olivares in a pragmática (law) of 1623. This pragmática tried to relieve the dispositions against the conversos.

³⁷⁰ *Sentimientos a los agravios de Cristo nuestro Bien por la nación hebrea*, this book, as Garau (2012 601) explains, first circulated as a handwritten work, and then was published; it was written in light of the events of the “Cristo de la Paciencia.” After being accused of various profanation acts, several Jews were burned alive in autos de fe which took place in Madrid on July 4, in front of the king and all his court.

³⁷¹ This work had the same motivation as the one of Lope. Quevedo also included attacks against the converted Jews in famous works such as *La hora de todos y la Fortuna con seso* (Garau 2012 601).

These hard anti-Semitic feelings among cultural elites demonstrates the evolution of Humanism between medieval and early modern Spain which I want to emphasize. Paradoxically, as soon as Mercurius and other pagans were Christianized, the spirit of tolerance which characterized—although not always—the cultural elites during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance began to fade. Since the real worth of those pagans in late Humanism was to have been potential Christians, the portion of their wisdom which was transmitted through wise men of other religions lost importance. Patón is not the only case of occasional pro-pagan but always anti-Judaic erudite. A precedent of Patón's treatise was *Defense of the Statute of Cleanliness (Defensa del estatuto de limpieza, 1608)*,³⁷² by Baltasar Porreño. Porreño published in 1621 his *Oracles of the twelve Sibyls*.³⁷³ In this book, published the same year of Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus*, Porreño intended to Christianize the pagan wise women by using very similar arguments as those used by Patón.³⁷⁴

The tolerance for their Christianized pagans that Patón and Porreño defended was exclusively to that part of their legacy which might be considered Christian. Of course, for Patón this excluded a fundamental part of the pagan legacy closely related to Hermes Trimegistus from the Middle Ages and the Florentine Humanism: occult sciences such as alchemy, astrology, and magic. These arts had been cultivated by such important figures of Italian Humanism as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Although Patón made a spirited defense of Hermes Trimegistus he circumvented his most esoteric part—something that had not always been the case in early modern Spain. However, as I affirmed in the Introduction, my purpose in this part of my work is to show how Patón presents Hermes Trimegistus, although ignoring the polemical parts of the sage's sciences, since what Patón says and refrains from saying contribute to the portraits of both Hermes in the 17th century and Patón as a late humanist of that period. However, it is possible to reconstruct in Patón's works some small glimpses of hermetic sciences which fascinated early humanists like Ficino, such as a reminiscence of occult properties in letters and objects, and even influences from the stars. To complete both the portrait of Patón and the meaning of Hermes

³⁷² The complete title of this book is *Defensa del estatuto de limpieza que fundó en la Santa Iglesia de Toledo el Cardenal y Arzobispo don Juan Manuel Silíceo*, 1608.

³⁷³ *Oracles of the twelve Sibyls prophetesses of Christ our lord among the gentiles (Oraculos de las doce Sibilas, profetisas de Christo nuestro señor entre los gentiles)*.

³⁷⁴ Porreño, Paravicino, and Patón were part of Lope de Vega's circle of friends, and all defended him against the attack of an academic with their collaborations in the *Expostulatio Spongiae* (1618).

Trimegistus in his production, I am going to analyze those references, which also shed light on the status of his sciences in early modern Spain.

Occult Knowledge and the Boundaries of Wisdom according to Patón

As we saw before, in the Middle Ages the natural sciences were considered an extension of the *quadrivium*, and among them were what today we call ‘occult sciences’ (alchemy, magic, and astrology) often considered as the culmination of the learning process—as we saw in the Arab *Picatrix* translated by Alfonso the Wise. As seen earlier, in *The Humanist*, Céspedes attaches secondary importance to the natural sciences, and almost completely avoids the occult sciences except to criticize alchemy. Céspedes mentions that sometimes the mythological fables were interpreted as allegories for alchemical meanings, something he completely rejects because alchemy, a “deceitful art,” is used by some people

with which they promise the transformation of a metal into another, impoverishing many men who exercise this art with the promise of such big wealth, [but] they spend their time and their properties in vain and arduous experiments, until the heap of deceits disappoints them when it is too late (*The Humanist* 76).³⁷⁵

Apparently, as Comellas points out (198), Céspedes’ skepticism towards supernatural phenomena extended to the other occult sciences, which seems to be a tendency of Humanism in the second half of the 16th century, which followed Erasmus’s stands³⁷⁶ and announced the scientific revolution. By contrast, Patón expressed his certainty in a hidden power beyond reality, although in a limited number of times. This scarcity of references seems to be, rather than a scientific spirit, a very cautious attitude from him—especially considering that Patón was arguably the most explicit advocate of the pagan Hermes Trimegistus in Spanish letters. As we will see, in the *Answer* he never mentions Hermes’s magical powers. This constant avoidance extended to other polemical

³⁷⁵ “Con que prometen la transmutación de un metal en otro mejor, empobreciendo a muchos, que con codicia de tan gran riqueza, como se promete en esta arte, la ejercitan, gastando su tiempo y sus haciendas en vanas y trabajosas experiencias, hasta que la muchedumbre de engaños que padecen, los viene tarde a desengañar” (*El humanista* 76).

³⁷⁶ As Walker points out, Erasmus actually quotes the favorable passages of Augustine on Hermes and the Sibyls, and regards pagan civilization as a providential preparation for the general acceptance of Christianity “by subordinating everything to the Gospels in his *Paraclesis* (1519);” in this book, Erasmus refers to the *Oracula Chaldaica* and the *Hermetica* and to the use of the Ancient Theology in general: “but if anything is brought from the Chaldeans or Egyptians, merely because of this, we intensely desire to know it” (Walker *The Ancient Theology* 125). However, in spite of his great devotion to ancient literature, Erasmus does not in fact use this tradition. Although Walker warns that it is difficult to generalize with Erasmus, he also provides a reason why Erasmus rejects the ancient tradition: “it is probably not only his evangelism, but also his dislike and mistrust of the metaphysical side of religion; and it was this aspect of Christianity that was foreshadowed by the Ancient Theologians” (Walker *The Ancient Theology* 126).

elements of non-Christian culture and even to supernatural elements of the Christian tradition, which, however, sometimes he also referred to.

Although Patón strongly despised the Jews, at the end of his life he also attributed a special power to the Hebrew language they used—the language in which, regardless of any anti-Semitic prejudice, the *Old Testament* was written. By doing so, he followed many early and late humanists, starting with Pico della Mirandola (whom Patón quotes several times, for instance in the *Answer*). However, we cannot affirm that Patón reckoned the power of a Christian Kabbalah (as Pico, Reuchlin, Kircher and many other thinkers of the period). Patón refers to the mysterious power of Hebrew through the mouth of a character who appears in his *Commentaries of erudition*, the theologian in Salamanca whom Patón’s alter ego meets in his travel to the “court of Wisdom.” This theologian comments the *First Lamentation of Jeremiah* (a translation of which, by Onderiz and himself, Patón provides).³⁷⁷

It is remarkable that he (Jeremiah) wrote these painful verses starting each one, or each distich, in one of the letters of the Hebrew ABC. Those letters, since they are mysterious and they have very grave readings when they are put together in order, remained in their entirety in such a way, and in this fashion they are pronounced when preaching or singing. The same happens with some *Psalms* and chapters of the Holy Writings.³⁷⁸

Therefore, the mysterious powers of the Hebrew letters persisted in the translations of the *Bible* into other languages such as Latin or Spanish (only the poetry parts of the Bible could be translated to some extent). Patón also means that four of the five chapters of the *Lamentations*, including the first one, are written as acrostics, in which the first letter of each stanza corresponds to one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. In both the Talmudic and Kabbalistic Jewish traditions there were speculations about an esoteric meaning of that disposition in the *Lamentations*. This is in fact an important book in Judaism because it is recited on the fast day of Tisha B’Av (“Ninth of Av”), mourning the destruction of both the first and the second Temples of Jerusalem.³⁷⁹ This book was also called in Spanish *Trenos* (*Threnodies*, its name in the Greek *Septuagint*), and so was called by Quevedo, who also wrote a translation and a bigger commentary of this biblical book.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Which, as I said before, appears in his never published *Commentaries of erudition* (book seventeenth).

³⁷⁸ “Es de notar que escribió estos versos dolorosos comenzando cada uno, o cada dístico, en una de las letras del A B C hebreo, las cuales letras, porque son misteriosas y tienen sentencias mui graves puestas juntas por su orden, se quedaron así enteras y, al reçar o cantar, se pronuncian. Lo mismo sucede en algunos Salmos y otros capítulos del sagrado volumen” (Bosch *Pedro Antonio de Onderiz* 234)

³⁷⁹ The book is also traditionally recited among Christians in the *Paschal Triduum* (the three days before the Easter Sunday).

³⁸⁰ According to Quevedo, he made the translation directly from Hebrew.

The other important friend of Patón, Lope de Vega, quotes continuously the *Lamentations* in his poem *Conquered Jerusalem (La Jerusalén conquistada, 1609)*, and translates in sextets the first twelve letters of the Hebrew alphabet in his *Shepherds of Bethlehem (Los pastores de Belén, 1612)*.³⁸¹ Bosch thinks that with his own translation of the *Lamentations* Patón pursued to associate his name with his illustrious friends (*Pedro Antonio de Onderiz 23*). As we saw before, these three friends demonstrated anti-Judaic and pro-cleanliness of blood attitudes in other works; however, they also expressed a reverent belief in the power of Hebrew letters.

In another one of his books, *Preliminary declaration of Psalm 118 (Declaración preámbula del Salmo 118, 1633)*, Patón stated a similar thought about the Hebrew alphabet—and this time with his own voice, not through an interpose and fictional theologian.³⁸² Patón says:

But the Hebrew letters have this special thing, that each of them means an entire speech (and some people even say that they have two or three meanings), and for this reason in the *Psalms* or *Trenos* (Threnodies) which remain completed in the translation, it is very true that they have a mysterious meaning, which operates with this same matter, as we have mentioned in the ABC of the *Lamentation of Jeremiah* in our *Commentaries of Erudition*, to which I forward those eager to know this.³⁸³

As we can observe, after suggesting his knowledge about some mysterious meanings and effects of the Hebrew letters Patón avoids the issue and refers to another one of his other works in which, as I showed before, he was not much more explicit at all.

In his last published work (*Discourse of Perfumes, Tufts and Bald Spots, 1639*) he has a far more explicit reference to what seems to be a fundamental Hermetic and astrological principle: “according to the doctrine that I wrote in my *Commentaries*, (...) the body signs denote celestial influences.”³⁸⁴ This influence of the stars in the body remounts to Late Antiquity and, as I showed in the first chapter, it appears in Spain related no less than to the heresiarch Priscillian, whose thought was very different from the Catholic Patón. Regrettably, the *Commentaries of Erudition*

³⁸¹ In this last work, Lope also refers twice to Hermes Trimegistus, a contemporary of Moses and theologian.

³⁸² Just after referring to the acrostic in the Sibyl chant which I will mention in the next chapter.

³⁸³ «[...] Pero las letras hebreas tienen esto especial, que cada una de ellas significa lo que una dicción entera (y aún algunos dicen que tienen algunas dos y más significados) y por esta causa en los *Salmos* o *Trenos* que se quedaron enteros en la versión, es certísimo que tienen significación misteriosa y que obra a propósito de aquella misma materia, como lo tenemos probado en el A B C de las *Lamentaciones de Jeremías* en nuestros *Comentarios de erudición*, a los cuales remitimos al deseoso de saber esto» (f. 7). (in Bosch *Pedro Antonio de Onderiz 236*).

³⁸⁴ “Supuesta la doctrina que yo tengo escrita en mis *Comentarios*, que las señales corporales denotan las influencias celestes” (*Discurso de los Tufos, Copetes y Calvas*, f9).

to which Patón is referring have only been partially recovered, and we do not know the part corresponding to star influences.

In any case, even if Patón ever believed in the practical side of Hermetism (astrology, alchemy and magic), he was always very prudent in any polemical matter, not in vain did he know the Inquisition's *modus operandi* from inside and outside. Therefore, he confessed in *The Virtuous Discreet*: "Although I proceed in everything with great care (...)." ³⁸⁵ Whether Patón believed in magic or not, in this same book he advises his students to avoid "the arts which contradict faith, as divinations, chiromancies, sorceries and spells, and to avoid those others which are more diabolic than human, because they deal with those things which God reserved to himself."³⁸⁶ Which are those things, related to sorcery, which God put aside for himself? In the advice to his students which follows, Patón finds a clue in the apostle: "Saint Paul advises us not to know more than it matters and so, regarding the secrets he saw, he says that it is not allowed to tell them to men."³⁸⁷ Although in their edition of this text, Garau & Bosch (*El virtuoso discreto* 214) suggest that Patón is echoing *Romans* 12:3 and *1 Corinthians* 12:4; I would rather think that he is actually referring to *2 Corinthians* 12:1-6, the controversial passage where Paul talks about a mystical experience:

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat (*2 Corinthians* 12:2-4).

Patón is directly relating magic and sorceries, forbidden arts, with the debated existence of 'hidden wisdom' in Christianity that, as we will see, was also connected with Hermetism. Undoubtedly, Patón believes in that illicit knowledge, but he also specifies that it is better for men not to know about it. Stroumsa did a thorough research about the existence of esoteric teachings in the earliest strata of Christianity which is reflected in Jesus' words in the synoptic Gospels; there "Jesus himself indeed, seems to have taught his disciples some doctrines that he would not disclose to broader audiences" (Stroumsa *Hidden Wisdom* xiv). For instance, in *Mat* 13:10-11: "Then the

³⁸⁵ "Yo, aunque en todo voy con muy gran cuidado" (*El virtuoso discreto*, f29v.).

³⁸⁶ "Hanse de huir las artes que contradicen a la virtud como son las adivinaciones, quiromancias, hechicerías y encantamientos, y otras que más son diabólicas que humanas porque tratan de lo que Dios reservó para sí solo." (*El virtuoso discreto*, f. 67v.).

³⁸⁷ "San Pablo avisa que no sepamos más de lo que importa, y así los secretos que vio dice que no es lícito decirlos a los hombres" (f. 67v.).

disciples came and asked him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given’ (NRSV).³⁸⁸

These passages related to ‘hidden’ secrets which Jesus reserved for his apostles are contradictory with the general notion of the Christian revelation. Paul himself took the Greek word μυστήριον (mystery), strongly associated with the initiation to a secret doctrine in the Greek mystery cults, and transformed it into a truth longtime hidden, but now disclosed by God to the entire humanity. For instance, in:

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith (*Romans* 16.25-26 NRSVA).

Rather than to Greek influences, Stroumsa attributes those secret doctrines to the earliest Jewish-Christians, who would have been influenced by Second Temple Judaism texts and sects.³⁸⁹ In particular, the mystical experience of Paul has been related to early Jewish esoteric mystical currents—*Hekhalot* and *Merkavah*, the forerunners of Kabbalah. In turn, all these doctrines are related to the ancient books of Enoch and a plausible Enochian sect.³⁹⁰ As we will see, in his *Answer* Patón will refer specifically to Enoch within the Ancient Theology chain of transmission in which Hermes has a preeminent place. Therefore, Patón acknowledges the existence of secrets related to magic with a divine origin but of dangerous nature in his *Discreet Virtuous*, which could mean that he believed in the reality of a ‘practical’ side of Hermetism as well, also related to the heavenly revelation. However, Patón considered more prudent to avoid these polemical issues in the book he dedicated to Hermes.

In any case, Patón could have known that “before the end of the second century, the esoteric traditions were played down, blurred and denied by the Church Fathers, until they eventually disappeared” (Stroumsa, 2005: 6). In fact, the ‘secret’ teachings were associated with the gnostic and other heresies, which Piñero included among the ‘defeated Christendoms’ (2012)—those cults which far away from Christian orthodoxy, continued offering expensive and long initiations to

³⁸⁸ There are analogous passages in *Mark* 4:10-12 and *Luke* 8:9-10.

³⁸⁹ as the Apocalyptic ones or the Essenes, and are “further reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in particular in their insistence on ‘secrets’ (*sod, raz*)” (Stroumsa 2005 xiv).

³⁹⁰ See Boccaccini (*Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*).

those who sought access to secret teachings.³⁹¹ No matter how curious Patón was of those ‘celestial influences’ or ‘heavenly secrets,’ he also would have known that those were close to the hazardous grounds of the heresies he so much hated. In fact, in other advises of the *Discreet Virtuous* which I will introduce shortly I see a hint of Patón’s inspiration for his criteria in these matters: Augustine. As Stroumsa indicates, regarding the dangers of esoteric doctrines Augustine admonished Christians that:

These dangers do not lie in the misinterpretation of truth itself by those who are not fit to hear it, but in their willingness to listen to false doctrines, to various false pretensions to truth, hiding under its noble name. In the early stages of its intellectual and spiritual development, the mind is unable to recognize truth from falsehood. Sometimes, however, the individual is not disciplined enough to follow the path leading from faith to understanding, but wishes to take shortcuts to a full knowledge of truth (Stroumsa *Hidden Wisdom* xv).

Augustine calls the impulse to know in such a hasty and undisciplined way *curiositas* (curiosity). Patón also discouraged an excess of curiosity in Christians. At the end of *The Discreet Virtuous* Patón translates a small treatise from Plutarch, *The Vicious Curiosity*.³⁹² In his own *amplificatio*s and commentaries of this treatise, Patón tries to conciliate pagan authorities and the Church fathers regarding the main point of Plutarch’s treatise, which is to avoid inconvenient knowledges.

Patón also warns his students precisely about curiosity just after referring to Paul’s banned secrets. But there exists, an even bigger danger, and Patón is also suggesting it: “We should not be *curious* in knowing the opinions contrary to our religion just in case the subtle enemy, who is the Devil, tempts us through queries which could torment and condemn us” (*The Discreet Virtuous* f67v.).³⁹³ Earlier in this same book, Patón also affirms that the Devil inspired pagan cults and idolatry as a way to imitate the Christianity which he envied:

The Devil has such great appetite for being worshipped, usurping for himself the honors and divine veneration that the creatures owe to their creator that, in addition to the envy he has of men, he wants to wreak havoc on them through all the ways he finds, just to offload part of the anger he has against God’s law, as if it were possible for him to reach that ambitious thought of being equal to God, who casted him away from heaven. Since this is

³⁹¹ The universal and open message of Christianity would have been a fundamental clue of his success both against other Near Eastern cults and the pagan mysteries (Piñero *Los cristianismos derrotados* 6-12). However, some Christian related and gnostic cults continued offering initiations and secret wisdom. According to Stroumsa, Jewish-Christians were probably the proximate channel “for the passage of esoteric traditions to the *Gospel of Thomas*, as well as to some other Gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi” (Stroumsa 2005 xv).

³⁹² This is one of the *Moralia* (sometimes translated as *Customs and Mores*) by Plutarch.

³⁹³ “No hay para qué ser curiosos en conocer las opiniones contrarias a nuestra religión porque el enemigo sutil, que es el diablo, no nos tiene por escrúpulo que nos atormente y condene” (*El virtuoso discreto* f67v.).

not possible nor will he be among the good and just men, he wants to pretend among impious, pagans, idolaters, and sinners, making them give him divine worship (...). He conjectured that men must have religion, which compelled them to give the due honor and legitimate worship to the true God, and so he established among gentiles and other unfaithful pagans certain religions in their vain superstition (*The Discreet Virtuoso*, f43v.-44v).³⁹⁴

As we can observe, in this paragraph Patón identifies pagan religions as a subtle guile of the devil to supply humans with something their nature impels them to, and simultaneously to usurp for himself God's role. This identification of paganism with the devil is surprising in someone like Patón, who risked his career by defending the pagan god Mercurius identified with Hermes Trimegistus. As Garau & Bosh point out (*El virtuoso discreto* 34), Patón conceives Christian life as a *militia* against the malign. A powerful enemy who has supernatural powers. In that respect, he is also specifically following Paul:

Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the tricks of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (*Ephesians* 6:11-12).

Thus, Patón knew from Paul's words that the devil has cosmic powers (κοσμοκράτορας) in the heavenly places (ἐπουρανίως). Therefore, although Patón considers, as we have seen, that celestial influences can affect the body signs,³⁹⁵ these influences carry a big danger, because the devil has power in those cosmic places. Actually, according to Patón, Satan's schemes extend to all kinds of magical practices:

Thus he (the devil) does this through the pretended faith in his superstitions and trickeries, trying to get credit from spells, sorceries, charms, magical divinations, sortileges and other deceptions, making them believe in dreams, illusions, false revelations and other similar things, baptizing them with the name of good faith (*The Virtuoso Discreet* f43r.).³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ “Tiene el demonio tan grande apetito de ser adorado, usurpando para sí la honra y culto divino que las criaturas deben a su Criador que, además de la envidia que tiene a los hombres, quiere hacer riza y estrago en ellos por todos los caminos que halla por ejecutar algo de la ira que tiene contra la ley de Dios, como si le fuera posible llegar a efecto aquel ambicioso pensamiento que le precipitó del cielo, que tuvo de hacerse semejante a Dios. Ya que esto no ha sido ni lo es posible, quiere parecerlo si no entre los buenos y justos, al menos entre los impíos, paganos, idólatras y pecadores, haciendo con ellos que le den el culto divino, (...) Conjeturó que los hombres habían de tener religión, que le obligase a dar a Dios verdadero la honra debida y divino y legítimo culto, y así ordenó entre los gentiles y otros infieles paganos ciertas religiones en su vana superstición” (*El virtuoso discreto*, f.43v.-44v).

³⁹⁵ In *Discurso de los Tufos, Copetes y Calvas* (9).

³⁹⁶ “Esto hace mediante la fe fingida en las supersticiones y engaños suyos, procurando el crédito de los hechizos agüeros y encantamentos m(á)gicas adivinanzas, sortilegios y otros embaimientos, haciendo que crean en sueños, ilusiones, revelaciones falsas y otras cosas semejantes bauti (z) ándolas con nombre de buena fe (*El virtuoso discreto*, f43r.).

This belief could make Patón hide any consideration towards the ‘practical side’ of *Hermetica* which, as we have seen in the First chapter, Hermes’s admirers in the Middle Ages such as Alfonso the Wise, Ibn Ezra or Ibn Saba‘in regarded as the more appealing. As I will develop later in this work, this also moves Patón away from that side of Renaissance Hermeticism which conceived a ‘positive’ or ‘natural’ magic, derived from astral influences, as opposed to ‘diabolical’ magic, just as Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, or Lazzarelli felt legitimized as Christians to practice that magic. Patón is in fact closer to a religious or Christian Hermetism which, as Dagens highlighted, had its Golden Age at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century (consequently, coinciding with the decisive point of Spanish Golden Age literature).³⁹⁷ A Religious Hermetism without magic was largely developed in France, where the Neoplatonic movement imported from Italy “was used with some caution, and the dangers of the *prisca theologia* as encouraging magic and heresy were recognized” (Yates *Giordano Bruno* 170). In this sense, even if Lefèvre d’Etaples (1455-1536) imported Hermetism into France, at the same time he warned against the magic of the *Asclepius*. This variety of Hermetism was enhanced at the end of the sixteenth century by figures such as Hannibal Rosseli, an Italian Capuchin, who published in Cracow (1585-1590) a commentary of the Pymander *Hermetis Mercuri Trismegistus* in which he used the translation of Foix de Candale (1502-1594). As I will show, I found a quotation of Rosseli in Patón’s *Answer*. Nonetheless, and as I said in the Introduction, the complete history of Hermetism in Spain is still to be done.

Rather than in Ficino and his school, this Christian Hermetism without magic found its support in the Church fathers who referred to Hermes Trimegistus with praise. That is exactly what Patón is doing in the *Answer*, as we will see in the rest of this work. However, Dagens (8) has highlighted that this Christian Hermetism reached Catholics and some Protestants as well in Northern Europe (Poland, Dutch land); actually, this trend even favored irenic³⁹⁸ tendencies in those times of religious wars and polemics. This spirit created “an atmosphere of Christian tolerance through mutual return to the Hermetic religion of the world, understood in a Christian sense (Yates *Giordano Bruno* 170). This tolerance, that I have found in the intellectual elites of medieval Spain, is more difficult to find in Counter Reformation Spain, and especially in Patón,

³⁹⁷ “La fin du XVIe siècle et le debut du XVIIe siècle ont été l’âge d’or de l’hermétisme religieux” in Dagens (6).

³⁹⁸ Irenicism in Christian theology refers to attempts to unify Christian apologetical systems by using reason as an essential attribute.

who fervently opposed Protestantism. As Walker points out (*The Ancient Theology* 3), since they were more concerned with finding similarities than differences, Renaissance syncretists and defenders of the Ancient Theology “tended to be tolerant and liberal in their outlook, both with regard to several Christian churches and to good pre-Christian or exotic pagans.” As we will observe in Patón’s *Answer*, he was completely open to the contributions to Christianity of ‘good’ pagans; however, Patón attacks heresies equally, without distinguishing among their different forms, and includes protestants in this group (*El virtuoso discreto* 36).

According to recent research, there was no major incidence of Lutheranism in Spain.³⁹⁹ Nonetheless, since Patón knew perfectly and followed the Council of Trent’s dispositions, a perpetual warning against heresy guided his footsteps.⁴⁰⁰ The Latin teacher even conceived his subject, other than the quintessential learned language, as the way to read the *Vulgate* and “particularly to understand this holy Council of Trent” (*Commentaries of erudition*: f.157).⁴⁰¹ Following the Council’s dispositions against the ‘Universal priesthood’ doctrine of Luther, laymen are conferred no authority for preaching. So, Patón strongly encouraged avoiding ‘those secular prudent men’ who tried to persuade both prelates and princes, that they “had the keys of wisdom and science with which they should be recognized in their luciferin arrogance, because they dare to explain the gospel and the Holy Writings, and give the meaning they want (...) with heretical explanations.”⁴⁰² Thus, the big question was: is it possible to find wisdom in the Catholic Church? And the answer for Patón seems to have been positive. Hence, he affirms that “the secular wise men and gentile philosophers, because their doctrines were somewhat profitable for morals” were less harmful than ‘those secular prudent men.’⁴⁰³ It is then perfectly possible to discern between dangerous and diabolic heretics and the ‘somewhat’ worthwhile philosophers, however, those

³⁹⁹ See, for instance, “El luteranismo en España” in Pérez (2002: 148-155).

⁴⁰⁰ And he was aware, as I already mentioned, of the *alumbrados* or *agapetas*, one of the few Spanish heresies, which Patón criticizes in his *Discreet Virtuous* (46-47).

⁴⁰¹ “Particularmente para entender este sagrado Concilio de Trento” (*Comentarios de erudición* f.157, in Garau & Bosch 31).

⁴⁰² “[P]rocurando persuadir con su artificioso proceder a que ellos tienen las llaves de la sabiduría y ciencia con que debieran ser conocidos en su luciferina presunción, pues se atreven a declarar el Evangelio y la Sagrada Escritura, dándole el sentido que ellos quieren” (*El virtuoso discreto*: f23v.).

⁴⁰³ “Menos dañosos fueron los sabios del siglo y filósofos gentiles, y sus dotrinas fueron algo provechosas para la moral” (*El virtuoso discreto*: f23v.).

doctrines of our Christian religion are “the ones that we have to pursue and execute, such as our holy mother Church teaches us.”⁴⁰⁴

We have observed that, on the one hand, Patón regards the authority of the Catholic Church as indisputable, including all its canons (from the most ancient to the recent ones), but on the other, that the humanist’s love of wisdom moved Patón closer to Mercurius and the pagan world he represented. For this reason, in all his works Patón is navigating between those two streams, although recognizing which had the primacy. As I mentioned before, following Augustine, Patón reminded the reader of the *Perfect Preacher* that, when quoting pagan authorities

The Holy Writings are the true wife who established a home, the rest of the human sciences and letters are her servants, so we will use them when they might serve to explain the main thought, because extracting thoughts from human letters is a well-known mistake, as Augustine said, in the same way that it would be to give a better place to the maid than to the lady.⁴⁰⁵

However, Patón thinks that “if we give the main place to the lady, there is nothing wrong if the maid shows up sometimes,” because the truth itself which the words of the pagans have is enough to nullify the vanity that Augustine attributed to the gentiles. Patón cites the saint of Hippo when he famously included Mercurius and the other two prophets of the *prisca theologia*, Orpheus and the Sibyls, with Aristotle and the rest of the ancient philosophers: “If the Sibyls, Orpheus, Mercurius Trimegistus, Aristotle and the remain ancient and gentile philosophers said some truths, many times they have strength enough to undo their vanity itself.”⁴⁰⁶ As we will see, in the *Answer* (published seven years after *The Perfect Preacher*) Patón would continue interpreting Augustinian doctrine about pagan philosophers, and would put Mercurius at the top.

In this section I have explained the little evidence we can find in Patón’s works about the ‘technical’ side of Hermetism, which had been of paramount importance in the Humanism of Alfonso de Wise and still in the earlier Italian Humanism of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. I

⁴⁰⁴ “Aunque las de nuestra religion cristiana hemos de seguir y ejecutar, como nos lo enseña nuestra madre la Iglesia” (*El virtuoso discreto*: f23v.).

⁴⁰⁵ “La Sagrada Escritura es la verdadera esposa que puso casa, las demás ciencias y letras humanas son criadas suyas, así las habremos de traer a propósito en lo que puedan server para la explicación del principal pensamiento, porque sacar los pensamientos de las letras humanas, dice san Agustín, es yerro conocido, como lo será darle mayor lugar a la criada que a su señora” (*Perfecto predicador*, in Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 236).

⁴⁰⁶ “Si las sibilas, Orfeo, Mercurio Trimagistro, Aristóteles y los demás filósofos antiguos y gentiles dijeron algunas verdades, muchas veces tienen fuerza para deshacer su vanidad misma” (*Perfecto predicador*, in Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 236).

have also explained the reasons why Patón avoided that side, and the tensions that surfaced from the struggle between his religious faith and the pagan wisdom he was preserving as a humanist. In the rest of this work I will continue referring to Patón's ambivalence towards Pagans in Christianity, often while justifying his own constant use of them. It suffices here to note that, according to Augustinian doctrine of *curiositas*, Patón recommended those who wanted to become a *perfect preacher*—as we saw, an ideal for the Christian humanist orator—to “avoid too many curiosities: poetical, philosophical, metaphysical, pagan histories, gentiles, unfaithful, and others of the same kind.”⁴⁰⁷ By using an ideal of moderation regarding pagan wisdom, Patón tried to differentiate between the ‘vice of curiosity’ (specially on polemical matters) and the legitimate eagerness to know and learn. Probably the porous boundaries between both meanings of the word were one of the main concerns of his life. Notwithstanding the constant caution he demonstrated all his life, when he published his most important book he committed himself to something he often wavered about: the pagan wisdom and *Mercurius Trimegistus*, who represented it and inspired the title of Patón's book. However, he did not accept the entire legacy of Hermes. In line with the Christian Hermetism which prevailed at the end of sixteenth century, the ‘practical’ side of Hermes was averted. As we have seen, Patón simultaneously acknowledged and avoided both those ‘secrets’ of the Hebrews and Jesus's teachings, probably the same concerns kept him away from the ‘occult’ side of Mercurius, whereas he plainly embraced the philosophical and humanistic one that he represented. Now that Patón's biography, intellectual profile, and works have been clarified, we can better understand the *Mercurius Trimegistus* and what it meant for both Patón, his humanist endeavors, and the culture of his time. After the previous explanation, we can better understand what part of ancient knowledge and what dimension of Hermes's legacy are present in the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and what strands the late humanist Patón preferred to avoid and why.

Publishing and Marketing *Mercurius Trimegistus*

In the year 1621 Patón published his *Mercurius Trimegistus, sive de triplici eloquentia sacra, Española, romana (Mercurius Trimegistus or on the Triple Eloquence, Roman, Spanish,*

⁴⁰⁷ “Huir de demasiadas curiosidades poéticas, filosóficas, metafísicas, historias paganas, gentílicas, infieles y otras cosas desde suerte” (Perfecto predicador, capítulo 12, in Madroñal, 2009: 163).

Sacred). As I pointed out before, in this book, Jiménez Patón gathers together three books of rhetoric which he had previously written and published: the *Eloquentia sacra* (*Sacred Eloquence*), a book devoted to the rhetoric necessary for preachers in their sermons; the *Eloquentia romana* (*Roman Eloquence*), a book of Latin rhetoric; and the *Elocuencia española en arte* (*Spanish Eloquence in Art*), the book of rhetoric in Spanish where he used Spanish authors as examples. For Jiménez Patón, the terms ‘rhetoric’ and ‘eloquence’ were synonyms. To these three works, he added a small grammar treatise entitled: *Instituciones de la gramática Española* (a Spanish grammar). This addition can be explained by the fact that grammar and rhetoric were closely connected in the pedagogical program of the humanist, and the *Mercurius Trimegistus* is both the heir of Patón’s humanistic enterprises and a practical manual conceived for students—his own and those of others. Indeed, the *Mercurius* became a mandatory rhetoric book in several Spanish secondary schools and universities, where it was very successful.

As Marin affirms, the *Mercurius Trimegistus* was likely the text with the greatest official acceptance in the secular academic world of its time (*Elocuencia española* 43). The *Mercurius* was only exceeded by *De Arte Rhetorica* (1568) by Cypriano de Soarez, but just among the Jesuits—whose importance in the educational system I explained before; however, Patón’s book overcame Cypriano’s in originality.⁴⁰⁸ We also know that the *Mercurius* was an authentic academic best-seller of the period for two reasons. The first one is the large number of copies preserved to this day.⁴⁰⁹ The second reason is that the *Mercurius* also includes formal testimonies signed by notaries (“testimonios firmados ante notario”), in which many university professors and school teachers not only in Patón’s region of La Mancha, but also in Andalucía, committed to using only the *Mercurius Trimegistus* in their classes.

The first one is the “Testimony of the schools and University of Baeza, the faculty meeting of which approved and received this book, in order for this book and no other to be read in the department of Rhetoric.”⁴¹⁰ This first and most important testimony is from February 8th, 1619. Since Baeza is in the province of Jaen, in Andalusia, it demonstrates Patón’s success beyond La

⁴⁰⁸ Actually, *De Arte Rhetorica* was a preparatory manual and a digest of the major rhetorical texts such as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De Oratore*, and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*.

⁴⁰⁹ In the National Library of Madrid alone I found nine copies, and three in the Royal Library. In contrast, for instance, the National Library only keeps one exemplar of the *princeps* of Don Quixote (there are only 27 exemplars in the entire world), published 15 years before the *Mercurius* in Madrid.

⁴¹⁰ “Testimonio de las escuelas y universidad de Baeza, cuyo claustro aprobó y recibió este libro, para que se lea y no otro desta facultad Retórica” (*Mercurius Trimegistus addendum* f1r.).

Mancha. The distinction of having written a manual for a University supposed a milestone in Patón's career. As we saw, Patón had studied his BA in Baeza, and thus he had the opportunity to establish ties with many of his teachers and the students there, who became part of his network. By using these influences, Patón sent the book to Baeza to be considered. According to the testimony of the Faculty, Patón's capacity as an alumnus was taken into account in the final decision:

Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, neighbor of Villanueva, who was student of this University, with the zeal to better himself and for his advancement and who acknowledges to have been educated in this College, as he always has done, has requested the University to admit for its students a book on Rhetoric which he has composed."⁴¹¹

The other testimonies are from other figures and places pertaining to the large area in which Patón had been working, including places where he had served for months or years. Among them were: from the *catedrático* (professor) of Ubeda (in Jaen, Andalucía) of August 3rd 1621, Alcaraz (in La Mancha) of May 22nd 1619, Ciudad Real (in La Mancha) of January 1621, Membrilla (in La Mancha) of June 6th 1619, Albacete (in La Mancha) of December 28th 1619, and from Villapalacios (in La Mancha) with no date. From these testimonies and commitments, we know that a large number of professors and students, at least those of the schools mentioned, used the *Mercurius Trimegistus* for their classes of Rhetoric for a long time. Indeed, as Menéndez Pelayo said, Patón became the oracle of all the preceptors of La Mancha and the kingdom of Jaen (*Historia de las ideas* 191).

These testimonies are randomly distributed in the different copies of the book, and attached to the main text of my study, the *Answer*. In this chapter I will finish my analysis of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as a whole in the context of Patón's activities as a late humanist. In the next chapter I will examine the specific context of the *Answer*, contained within the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as a paratext.

⁴¹¹ "Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, vecino de la villa de Villanueva de los Infantes, y estudiante que fue en esta universidad, con celo que tiene de su bien y aprovechamiento, y reconociendo (como siempre lo ha hecho) el haberse criado en esta escuela, ha pedido que esta Universidad admita para los estudiantes della un libro que ha compuesto de Retórica" (*Mercurius Trimegistus addendum* flr.).

Both the testimonies of the professors who would use the book and the *Answer* are part of a collection of forty unpaginated pages included as an addendum of the main text.⁴¹² As I found in my examination of the eight copies of the *Mercurius princeps* available for research in the Spanish National Library, all exemplars of the book have 386 paginated sheets and eight unpaginated—something common in early modern books—with both legal and literary preliminaries. Strangely enough, most of them (not all) also include this additional addendum of 20 unpaginated sheets, i.e. the 40 pages I have just mentioned. The oddness of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* was already observed by Menéndez Pelayo (1940 191) in his important *History of the Aesthetic Ideas in Spain* among the bibliographical information he gathers about Patón’s book.⁴¹³ Noticing that the book contains laudatory verses in the middle of the copy which he examined, and not at the beginning as usual, Menéndez Pelayo exclaimed ironically that this is “in order for everything to be extravagant in the typographical disposition of this book.” Indeed, there are extravagant things in the composition of the book, but the oddest was not observed either by Menéndez Pelayo or by any other literature scholar who has studied Patón’s works: those 40 pages (20 sheets) are distributed differently in diverse copies of the book, even though all books are from the same year, the same printing house, and practically identical in everything else.

Therefore, we have to wonder why both the testimonies and the *Answer* were bound in this strange way. To obtain a good explanation we must take notice of the dates in the different components of the book. As it can be appreciated from the dates of those professors’ testimonies, many of them are from 1619, that is, two years before the official publication of the book. How could those professors appreciate the book so much time before its publication? The explanation is at the beginning of the book, in the preliminary paratexts included in the eight sheets without pagination.⁴¹⁴ The first one (pr. f1r.), is the *Tasa* (rate) of the book, which established its price, signed by a scribe of the Royal Council (as usual) on August 21st, 1621. Then there is an *Errata sic Corrigenda* (corrected typos), and a list of Patón’s previous books (pr. f.1v.). Then comes the approval by ecclesiastical and civil authorities, which allowed the book to be printed and

⁴¹² Thus, in these forty unpaginated pages the first twenty-one pages are Patón’s *Answer* defending *Mercurius* (our focus in this chapter). The following nine pages contain the formal testimonies signed by notaries. In the next three pages, there is a laudatory poem dedicated to Patón. Finally, the *index* of the book is distributed in the last eight pages.

⁴¹³ “4.º, 8 hs. prels. + 286 folios + 20 sin foliar con varios apéndices e índice.” (Menéndez Pelayo *Historia de las ideas* 191).

⁴¹⁴ Those legal and literary *preliminaries* used to be without pagination, because they were the last part to be printed and included in the book (Montero 2014 5). I am going to number those sheets with a pr. (preliminaries) before.

published. The first one is the *Aprobación del ordinario* (Approval by the ordinary, i.e. religious censorship), a consent by someone commissioned by the church, in order to verify that it did not contain anything inappropriate. The approval of the ordinary in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* is dated October 8th, 1618, by an unknown Diego de Mesa.⁴¹⁵ After this comes the secular approval (pr. f.2r.) by the important figure Pedro de Valencia (1555-1620), royal chronicler of king Philip III of Spain, whom I referred to when I talked about Patón's network.⁴¹⁶ Finally, the book contains the *Royal privilege* (pr. f.2v.) which authorized the book to be printed and commercialized for a fixed period of time.⁴¹⁷ The privilege is signed September 7th 1619.

We can infer some relevant conclusions from these paratexts. Once the book had the approval of the authorities (in 1618) and the printing license (in 1619), but before it started to be officially sold to ordinary readers under a fixed price (in 1621), Patón started to operate his network and distributed for two years his work in high schools, colleges, and universities. We could consider those exemplars as free samples which followed a precise commercial strategy by Patón, who targeted those teachers and professors more positively disposed towards him. Since the book already had the approval and printing license, or was about to achieve them,⁴¹⁸ Patón ordered a number of samples to be printed for this purpose. Afterwards, when the book had reached the applause of a number of academic representatives, Patón probably had a rough estimate of the number of books he needed to print in order to meet the high demand that we can infer from the testimonies of the professors. Then he added *a posteriori* those 'extravagant' 20 sheets as an addendum, which included not only the high opinions about the book by a selection of the academic world but also some last minute additions, including the *Answer* related to the figure *Mercurius Trimegistus*.

⁴¹⁵ Who affirms to be a Jesuit from the college of Segura de la Sierra (La Mancha), commissioned by the *general visitador* (an ecclesiastical authority) of Villanueva de los Infantes, Antonio de Mexia, where Patón lived.

⁴¹⁶ As we saw before, both Valencia and Patón studied in Salamanca under El Brocense. As Montero points out (Introducción a *La Galatea* 8), the first administrative procedure for a book in the Golden Age was the approval, which served as a prior censorship; the Royal Council frequently appointed to this task scholars of authoritative opinion and important writers, as it happens in the *Mercurius* with Pedro Valencia.

⁴¹⁷ As usual it is signed by a career functionary in representation of the king.

⁴¹⁸ The approval of Pedro de Valencia is from August 1st 1619, and the Royal Privilege of printing from Sept. 7th 1619, however the testimony of the professors of Baeza is from Feb. 8th 1619, the one from Úbeda August 3rd 1619 and Membrilla's from June 6th 1619. All those professors read the book either before the approvals, the privilege or both. We can conjecture that Patón knew that the book was going to be approved, maybe through Pedro de Valencia himself, and he risked circulating the book without all legal requisites in order.

However, along with those testimonies, in the 20 unpaginated sheets we also find evidence that not all the opinions about the book were favorable. Someone did find something which could be “against the faith and Christian religion or the good customs” (the regular formula), something which neither Pedro de Valencia nor Diego de Mesa (the civil and ecclesiastical censors) had found before, or simply disregarded. Those new objections were a matter of concern so significant for Patón, that he decided to write 21 erudite and laborious pages to answer them, and he included this work as part of that addendum in most exemplars of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, but not in all of them. I will enter into these polemics and the causes of the *Answer* in the next chapter. Now I just want to remind the reader—before entering into the subject next chapter—that the *Answer*, as I call those 21 pages, is the most spirited defense of Hermes Trimegistus published in early modern Spain, and a veritable sample of the philosophical tendencies that mattered most for the period. As we have seen, many Spanish Latin and Rhetoric professors and students had the opportunity to read Patón’s small treatise about Hermes, since it was inserted in their principal manual of study. That considerable academic community had likewise the opportunity not only to study from a book called *Mercurius Trimegistus* but also to read some unorthodox remarks about this figure in that manual. In the next and last section of this chapter I will explain the reasons of that title which clarify why Patón ended up advocating in favor of the Egyptian pagan.

About the Title *Mercurius Trimegistus*

In this section, I am going to elucidate the reasons why Patón chose for his most important work the title *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and therefore linked the success of his treatise with the ancient wise man, whom he declares patron of his academic ventures. To determine those reasons, first I am going to examine Patón’s own words in the *prologue* of the book. Patón’s clarification of his motives in the prologue are highly important for my work. In this prologue we can also find many details which connect both Patón and *Mercurius* with the humanistic coordinates which I describe throughout this chapter.

The Latin prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* is headed by Patón’s name in the following language (the same way it appears in the forefront of the book): *Magister Bartholomaeus Ximenius Paton*. It also has a subtitle: *Eloquentiae studiosis*, i.e. “for those zealous (or studious) of rhetoric.” The prologue starts by praising eloquence as an art cultivated and revered by all nations. Patón affirms that although there were many ancient men who distinguished themselves

in the use of rhetoric (Amphion, Orpheus, etc.), there was among the ancients, one who was particularly praised by his eloquence, and that was Mercurius, the god of eloquence, whom Greek and Romans especially revered. As a humanist, Patón starts establishing Mercurius' genealogy: *But he who was set before all of them, and on account of the excellence of his eloquence was revered among all nations with one voice, and was held as god of eloquence, (he) was that Mercurius, who was sung by the poets as son of Jupiter and Maia, and grandson of Atlas.*⁴¹⁹ As he does so many times in his commentaries of Horace or Martial, Patón displays his knowledge of mythology—so important for Céspedes' paradigm of humanist, as we have seen.

As Patón reminds his audience, according to many ancient sources, distinctly the Homeric Hymn dedicated to him, Hermes was an Olympic god, the son of Jupiter and Maia—Maia was one of the Pleiades, the daughters of Atlas. Hereafter, Patón shows his humanistic knowledge on Mercurius' iconography as he appears, for instance, in the book of *Emblems* which became popular in the Renaissance.⁴²⁰

*He was reckoned as messenger of the gods, and he who was covered with a helmet, so as to show that only eloquence prevails over the thunderbolts of the envy of many enemies. And this also means esteem, which he brings to himself with eloquence among those who listen. He carried winged ankles, for his speech was fast, and on account of this [his] words are depicted as winged by Homer. He carries a branch, which declares his very excellent virtue in arts by all means (Mercurius Trimegistus preliminaries f6r.).*⁴²¹

Thus, keeping up with this humanistic way of making a commentary, Patón mentions Hermes's most famous literary depiction by Homer. Then, he connects the famous Mercurius' caduceus with his mastery in all Arts, especially Eloquence or Rhetoric. Patón echoes the attribution of Rhetoric to Hermes, which had been acknowledged since Antiquity. In Greece and Rome, the origin and inventors of all disciplines and arts were detailed in a specialized genre, the etiological books. These books were often times influenced by euhemerism, the doctrine according to which mythological accounts originated from real historical events or humans—we saw this doctrine in

⁴¹⁹ *Sed qui omnibus praepositus, et uno ore apud omnes nationes ob excellentiam Eloquentiae cultus, Deusque Eloquentiae habitus fuit ille Mercurius, quem Iovis, et Maiae filium, Atlantis nepotem poetae canunt (Mercurius prelim. f6r.).*

⁴²⁰ As the most famous one of Andrea Alciato (1515). In his commentary of Alciato's *Emblems*, Patón's master el Brocense explains Mercurius iconography; for instance, the caduceus (*Commentaria in Andr. Alciati Emblemata in Opera omnia Genevae Tournes 1766*).

⁴²¹ *Nuncius* [nuntius] hic Deorum putatur, qui tegitur galero, ut ostendatur adversus invidiae fulmina solam eloquentiam plurimum valere. Et etiam hoc significatur gratia, quam quis sibi apud auditores Eloquentia conciliat. Alata fert talaria; sermo enim velox, et ob id ab (20) Homero alata exprimuntur verba. Virgam defert, quae vim huius excelentissimae artis omni modo declarat (Mercurius prelim. f6r.).*

Céspedes' *The Humanist*. Thus, when the origin of something had been attributed to a god, euhemerism interpreted that god as a famous or important man. Of course, later on this doctrine enabled the integration of pagan myths and gods into Christian culture. For this reason, many late antiquity and medieval books attributed seamlessly to Mercurius the invention of Rhetoric in a Christian *milieu*.

The Renaissance reinvigorated the etiological books, and made them a distinctive genre in Humanism. In this period, the most famous book of etiology was *De inventoribus rerum* (*On Discovery*, 1499), by Polydore Vergil (1470-1555). This book was mentioned and parodied by Cervantes in the second part of *Don Quixote* (1615).⁴²² Book I, Chapter XIII of *De inventoribus rerum* is dedicated to Rhetoric, and Polydore says that “Its founder (of rhetoric), as Diodorus in book I and the poets suppose, was Mercury. In one of his *Odes*, Horace calls him: ‘Mercury, eloquent heir of Atlas,/ Who shaped with speech/ The wild ways of primitive people’” (Polydore Vergil *On Discovery* 113, translated by Copenhaver). The influence of these lines of Polydore can be seen in many Spanish authors; for instance, I see a clear one in the *Republics of the World* (*Repúblicas del mundo*, 1595), by Jerónimo Román, one of Patón’s favorite authors.⁴²³ More significant for my work, the attribution of Rhetoric to Mercurius is also endorsed when El Brocense, Patón’s master, comments Emblem VIII of Alciato (in which Mercurius appears): *Eloquentiae namque parens est* (for he is the father of Eloquence).⁴²⁴

I see clearly in El Brocense’s words about Mercurius his influence on Patón, who would expand on his master’s succinct account. El Brocense wrote: *there were many Mercuriuses, just as there were many Herculeuses; but the poets make one [of them] the chief of Rhetoric, [and] the*

⁴²² On chapter XXII, Cervantes introduces the hilarious character El primo (the cousin), with whom Cervantes mocks representatives of late humanism (most probably, including Patón himself). *El primo* defines himself as a humanist in a clear sign of the beginning of the movement’s decadence, just at the same time that Patón, one of the last humanists of Spain, is writing. El primo tells don Quixote and Sancho that “Another book I have which I call ‘The Supplement to Polydore Vergil,’ which treats of the invention of things, and is a work of great erudition and research, for I establish and elucidate elegantly some things of great importance which Polydore omitted to mention. He forgot to tell us who was the first man in the world that had a cold in his head, and who was the first to try salivation for the French disease, but I give it accurately set forth, and quote more than five-and-twenty authors in proof of it.” (translated by John Ormsby).

⁴²³ “Diodoro Sículo and the poets say that Rhetoric was discovered by Mercury, because he was the ambassador of the gods and he bore their messages” / “Diodoro Sículo y los Poetas dicen que fue hallada la retórica de Mercurio, porque fue embajador de los dioses, y llevaba sus mensajes” (*Segunda parte de las Repúblicas del mundo* 1595, f298r.). The *Republics of the world* was published, and strictly censored in 1575, this is the polished second edition of 1595.

⁴²⁴ In *Opera omnia* (Vol. III 33).

God of messengers, merchants, and burglars (El Brocense *Opera omnia Vol. III* 33).⁴²⁵ In Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* we observe the same implication of the poets in Mercurius' patronage over rhetoric and of course his appointment as God's messenger; in addition, it is distinctive in both El Brocense and Patón the statement that there were many Mercuriuses: *fuere multi Mercurii* (El Brocense), *Multi apud antiquos fuere Mercurii* (Patón).⁴²⁶ The most acknowledged classical account of those many mercuriuses is the one in *De natura Deorum* (3.56) when Cicero mentions five of them—in a book deeply influenced by the euhemerism doctrine I mentioned before. According to Cicero, the third of the Mercuriuses was the mythological son of Jupiter and Maia (*tertius Iove tertio natus et Maia*); however, the fifth Mercurius whom Cicero mentions is the focus of both Patón's and my own work:

*The fifth, who is worshipped by the people of Pheneus, who is said to have killed Argus and on account of this to have fled in exile to Egypt and to have given the Egyptians their laws and letters. They call this one Theuth, and the first month of the year is called with the same name among them (De natura deorum 3.56).*⁴²⁷

In the same passage from his commentary to Emblem VIII of Alciato which I quoted above, El Brocense mentions the killing of Argos by Mercurius,⁴²⁸ and that he taught the letters to the Greeks.⁴²⁹ However, probably because El Brocense was not interested to add it in the specific commentary of those emblems, he does not include the last detail from Cicero, that is, that Hermes was called Theuth in Egypt.

Actually, this specific passage of Cicero is one of the most important ones in classical authors to verify the syncretic association of the Greek Hermes and the Roman Mercurius with the Egyptian Theuth. The outcome of that fusion was Hermes Trimegistus, and so he is referred in some passages by the Church Fathers that El Brocense effectively mentions.⁴³⁰ However, in the

⁴²⁵ *Fuerunt multi Mercurii, sicuti multi Hercules: sed poetae unum faciunt eloquentiae praesidem, Deorum nuntium, mercatorum et furum Deum (Opera omnia Vol. III 33).*

⁴²⁶ *Fuere* is a poetical and literary variation of *fuere*, the perfect 3rd person plural. Thus, Patón and El Brocense used practically the same sentence.

⁴²⁷ *quintus, quem colunt Pheneatae, qui Argum dicitur interemisse ob eamque causam in Aegyptum profugisse atque Aegyptiis leges et litteras tradidisse: hunc Aegyptii Theuth appellant eodemque nomine anni primus mensis apud eos vocatur (De natura deorum 3.56).*

⁴²⁸ "Since Mercurius took the life of Argos because Jupiter was ordering it, was brought to trial by Juno" (*Mercurius (...) praecipiente Iove, vitam eripiens Argo Ius custodi, ductus est in iudicium ab Junone, Opera omnia Vol. III 33).*

⁴²⁹ "It was said that *Hermes*, in Greek, for this reason taught the Greeks the interpretation of the letters, as Diodorus narrates" (*Dictus est Hermes Graece propterea quod Graecos (ut refert Diodorus) verborum docuerit interpretationem, in Opera omnia Vol. III 33).*

⁴³⁰ In Emblem XCVIII, also dedicated to Hermes, el Brocense talks about him as wise in all arts and sciences, and later refers specifically to Lactantius (*Div. inst.* 3) and Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 2,4 and 7). In these passages the Church

Prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* Patón is interested in clarifying that, among all the Mercuriuses that existed, he is precisely interested in the one that inspired the title of his book.

Among the ancients, there were many Mercuriuses, but the things that were said about all of them were assigned to this one alone, and thus, he was considered the most erudite among the Egyptian priests and the wisest ruler of the school of that province, who on account of this was called Trimegistus, namely three times great. For that reason, I decided to publish this book, titled Triple Eloquence under his name (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).⁴³¹

Patón is also clearly stating that, however many Mercuriuses existed, the attributes of all of them can be condensed in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*. I mentioned in the Introduction the possible meanings of the epithet *Trimegistus*, most probably related to a characteristic rhetorical device from the Ancient Egyptian language. However, Patón decides to offer his preferred explanation from ancient sources. Accordingly, the wise *Mercurius*, considered the creator of eloquence, was a learned man, a priest and a ruler, and so they called him ‘three times great’ (the meaning of *trimegistus* in Greek).⁴³² Patón also confirms that since *Trimegistus*, the inventor of eloquence, was three times great, this is the main reason why he entitled with his name the treatise with three eloquences (sacred, Roman and Spanish).

Susan Byrne is one of the few scholars who have taken note of the paratext, which I call the *Answer*, included in Patón’s *Mercurius Trimegistus*. She included a brief consideration in her recent and necessary book about Marsilio Ficino in Spain. Despite Patón’s words, Byrne has an alternative theory about the title of the entire volume. In fact, this author is somewhat imprecise in writing that Patón

[R]epublishes, with a new title, a work that first appeared in 1604 as *Spanish Eloquence in Art*, in 1621, the new title is *Mercurius Trimegistus, sive the triplici eloquentia sacra, española, romana*, which echoes one of Ficino’s translations, *Mercurii Trismegisti Poemander, seu de potestate ac sapientia divina* and the Italian philosopher’s *De triplici*

fathers unequivocally refer to *Mercurius Trimegistus* (*Opera omnia Vol. III*: 201-202). As we will see, these passages would be used by Patón as well. Also in a significant way, in *Emblem VII* El Brocense comments Plutarch’s *Iside & Osiride Commentarius*, a book with Hermetic influences (I have to look for this in Moreschini’s *Hermes Christianus*). As El Brocense reminds, Isis says there, with a Hermetic flavor: *Ego sum omne quod fuit, est, erit: meum pepulum mortalis revelavit nemo* (I am everything which was, is, and will be; no man will reveal my mantle to the mortals) (*Opera omnia*. Vol. 3, 30). El Brocense also quotes Diodorus when he affirms that *Mercurius* was the professor of Isis: *Ego Isis sum Aegypti Regina, a Mercurio erudita* (I am Isis, queen of Egypt, instructed by *Mercurius*). (*Opera omnia*. Vol. 3: 30).

⁴³¹ *Multi apud antiquos fuere Mercurii; sed quae de omnibus dicuntur, huic uni tribuuntur, et sic etiam putatur hic ille esse apud Aegyptios sacerdos eruditissimus, et scholae illius provinciae regens sapientissimus, qui ob id Trimegistus, ter scilicet maximus dictus est. Ideo sub eius nomine hanc triplicem Eloquentiam edere in lucem decrevi* (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 20)

⁴³² Next chapter we will see how these characteristics approach *Trimegistus* to a Neostoic sage.

vita. In his introductory text to the volume, Jiménez Patón specifies that the “triple” of his own volume’s title is a reference to the “thrice great” Hermes Trismegistus (Byrne *Ficino in Spain* 136-137).

As it turns out, Patón was not merely republishing the *Spanish Eloquence*, but rather rewriting it and changing many of his examples of rhetoric; as can also be appreciated in the title, he added two more works: on Latin and sacred rhetoric. Patón decided the title of his book in this fashion not only because he was publishing three important works, but also because Mercurius was traditionally the God of Rhetoric, and this tradition named him as three times great (the only undisputable factor that Byrne mentions).

I also disagree with Byrne about the relationship between the title of Patón’s book and Ficino’s *Mercurii Trismegisti Poemander, seu de potestate ac sapientia divina*, his translation of the Greek Hermetic writings, and the Italian philosopher’s *De triplici vita. Mercurius Trimegistus* was also the name by which Hermes was known in the *Latin Asclepius* and all the medieval hermetic tradition; moreover, *sive* or *seu*, the conjunction that Patón and Ficino used respectively in their title, is a common word used to connect two alternative Latin titles for the same book. I also consider that *triplici* is just a word derived by the nickname Trimegistus, and Patón found it suitable to talk about Mercurius’ triple eloquence. There were in fact hundreds of books with this name in the Spanish Golden Age.⁴³³ It is difficult to believe that the *De Triplici Vita of Ficino*, also better known through the 16th century with the title *De Vita Libri Tres*, was what inspired Patón’s title (*de triplici eloquentia*). Had Patón known the real content of Ficino’s book, especially the practical and astrological magic of the third part—including a clear presence of the Medieval Spanish magical book *Picatrix*— he would have hesitated to use his own title as an homage to Ficino. As I pointed out before, Patón was against all forms of magic.⁴³⁴ This association of Ficino with magic could have been the reason why Patón diminished the importance of this author in his works.

As Byrne (2015 137) correctly says “Ficino is one among many authorities” of the book, however, I add that he is evidently a minor one for Patón. As we will see, Patón only quotes Ficino once, and he is not even using his translation of the *Hermetic Writings*, but rather his even more famous translation of Plato’s works, which included commentaries by Ficino himself.

⁴³³ As a simple consultation of the catalogue in the National Library of Spain reveals.

⁴³⁴ In fact, the quotation that Patón is using from Ficino is precisely to demonstrate that Hermes opposed magic. Relating Mercurius to magic would be detrimental to proving his salvation.

Notwithstanding the paramount importance of Ficino for both the European Humanism and the diffusion of Hermetic Writings, which Byrne does demonstrate for Spain, Patón seems to rely more on other sources, especially medieval ones. For all these reasons, I do not think that Patón took from Ficino, a distant source, the direct inspiration for the title of his *Mercurius Trimegistus*. Quite the opposite, I consider that the inspiration for the title of his book came from previous philological works and especially from a much closer figure, his master El Brocense.

El Brocense's most important and original work was *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae* (1587), a Latin grammar. The fame of this book and its deep reasonings on grammar extended not only to his Spanish contemporaries, but also to other European countries in the next two centuries, and even to twentieth century American figures of linguistics such as N. Chomsky and R. Lakoff.⁴³⁵ Jiménez Patón also conceived the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as the culmination of his career in humanistic and philological studies. However, Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* did not reach the influence of El Brocense's *Minerva*. I suggest that, looking for inspiration, Jiménez Patón turned to the masterpiece of El Brocense to achieve his own. By doing so, Patón was able to bring together the two big models who guided his endeavors: first, *Mercurius Trimegistus*, landmark of the classical (and pagan) humanist tradition which he defended all his life; second, El Brocense, his own professor. His wisdom, eloquence and philological skills made El Brocense an authentic living *Mercurius* not only for Patón, but also for other contemporary figures such as Lope de Vega or Justus Lipsius, who called him with that name, as I showed in the previous chapter. Let's see how Patón connected at the same time both his book and El Brocense's as well as the two Roman Gods, Minerva and Mercury. At the very end of *Minerva's* first chapter, El Brocense gives an explanation about the title and subtitle of his book, *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae*:

But Caesar Scaliger who, because I follow him in many things, sometimes despite how much I disagree with him, had already written about the causes of the Latin language, I thought that I should not throw away the title [that he already used]. And Augustinus

⁴³⁵ Chomsky wanted to demonstrate that his Transformational generative grammar was not actually new, but had historical precedents in the seventeenth century French Grammar theories developed in the Jansenist monastery of Port-Royal-des-Champs, by Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot, who closely followed René Descartes' *Regulae* (Chomsky 1966). However, R. Lakoff (1969; 1973) refuted his colleague and affirmed that what Chomsky called "Cartesian linguistics" should be actually called "Sanctius linguistics," because Port-Royal theories came from El Brocense (nickname of Francisco Sánchez, Sánchez is *sanctius* in Latin). El Brocense postulated the theory that there existed a logical-historical structure in Latin, which demanded the existence of some elements in the natural sentences by logical necessity (more precisely, *grammaticae ratio*).

Saturnius entitled Mercurius his very acute disquisitions about grammar, but because I esteem him less, I assign him a faithful counselor, Minerva (El Brocense *Minerva* 8).⁴³⁶

Thus, as he affirms, El Brocense borrowed the subtitle of his work (*Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae*) from *De Causis Linguae Latinae* (1540), by Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484 –1558), because el Brocense agreed with him on many points. However, El Brocense had to reject the title *Mercurius*, the most related to his philological goals, because that title had been used by a scholar whose grammar postulates he disliked, Augustinus Saturnius. El Brocense affirms that, therefore, he had to assign Saturnius' *Mercurius* "a faithful counselor," that is, his own *Minerva*, because from El Brocense's point of view he needed her. In other places of the *Minerva*, El Brocense's criticism against Saturnius is ruthless: "Augustinus Saturnius raged against Priscian in a completely foolish and shameless way, [i.e.] in the book III, ch.II of his sophistic *Mercurius*, which our *Minerva* will replace" (El Brocense *Minerva* 265-266).⁴³⁷ It is clear then that El Brocense wanted to substitute *Mercurius* for *Minerva*. Finally, in his book El Brocense cannot stand his rival's opinions anymore and explodes: "May the gods annihilate you, Saturnius, and these trifles of yours!" (El Brocense *Minerva* 265-266).⁴³⁸ But El Brocense also provides 'good reasons' to look down on Saturnius, and to offer his own book as a replacement: "Oh needy mind, what an intellect this of yours, which must talk about reason, but rather what a disgrace! These are the things (you reader, find) in this useless *Mercurius*, let's listen to *Minerva* now" (El Brocense *Minerva* 266).⁴³⁹

Simply put, El Brocense could not use *Mercurius* as a title of his book, however suitable it could be since he was the god of rhetoric and writing. Nevertheless, Patón, did not have such prejudices about the title of Saturnius' book, who probably was a forgotten figure in 1621, and whom Patón never quotes. Moreover, since the *Minerva* was a bedside book for Patón since his days in Salamanca, he was perfectly aware of all its contents, including El Brocense's disquisitions about how to entitle the book, or not to. Then and now, El Brocense's surprisingly furious words

⁴³⁶ *At de linguae latinae causis iam scripserat Caesar Scaliger, quem quia in multis sequor, nonnumquam tamquam tamen ab eo dissentiens, titulum non abiiciendum putavi. Et Augustinus Saturnius suas acutissimas dissertationes in grammatica Mercurium uocauit, quem quia minus aliquando probamus Mineruam illi fidum monitorem adhibemus* (El Brocense *Minerva* 8).

⁴³⁷ *Contra Priscianum stulte admodum & proterve debacchatur Augustinus Saturnius libro.3c.ii in suo sophistico Mercurio, quem nostra Minerua supplantabit* (El Brocense *Minerva* 265).

⁴³⁸ *Dii te eradicent Augustine, cum tuis istis cavillis* (El Brocense *Minerva* 265-266).

⁴³⁹ *O mentis inops, qui intellectus iste tuus, quae dicendi ratio, vel potius quae infania! Haec iste futilis Mercurius; nunca Minervam audiamus* (El Brocense *Minerva* 266).

against Augustinus Saturnius and his *Mercurius*, have had the opposite effect and have piqued the reader's curiosity. Actually, most modern studies about Saturnius start with El Brocense's attack on him.⁴⁴⁰

Yet, we do not know much about Saturnius other than the fact that his *Mercurius Maior* was published in 1546.⁴⁴¹ It is certain, nonetheless, that as Sánchez Salor points out (*De las "elegancias" a las causas* 138), El Brocense entitled his work *Minerva*, and not *Mercurius*, because of him. Moreover, the connections between the attributes of the goddess and the content of the book that El Brocense establishes are very similar to the ones that Saturnius had claimed for *Mercurius* –even in that El Brocense wanted to overcome him. Paradoxically, when Patón picked the god whom El Brocense had rejected, and wanted to praise him as El Brocense had done with *Minerva*, he did so in such a way that he actually came near to what Saturnius, his master's mortal enemy, had said about *Mercurius*.

Saturnius published his *Mercurius maior siue gramaticorum institutionum libri X* in Basilea (1546). He had published before a *Mercurius minor*, where he promised an extended version. In the prologue, he boasts of this accomplished promise, and then he points to the true essence of the ancient Mercury: *First of all, Mercurius promises this, which is the trench and wall of all Grammar: that he would not instruct anything except either strengthened with clear reason, or supported by extremely hard authority* (Saturnius *Mercurius* 44). Here we find the true reason of El Brocense's rivalry with Saturnius: both were representatives of the so called "rational Grammarians" of the sixteenth century, and both vindicated gods which revealed the truth and lifted the veil of ignorance (an expression that El Brocense copied from Saturnius' *Mercurius* for his *Minerva*).⁴⁴² They defended the rational analysis of grammar (whereas the first humanist, like Valla, limited themselves to describing the uses of grammar).⁴⁴³ Although El Brocense considered Saturnius his personal enemy, both represented the same reaction against the first humanists. Apparently, El Brocense just wanted to reaffirm his superiority over Saturnius. The first humanists attacked the speculative grammar of the scholastics in the Middle Ages, and defended a normative

⁴⁴⁰ For instance, Sánchez Salor (2002 *De las "elegancias" a las causas* 138).

⁴⁴¹ We just know that Augustinus Saturnius Lazaroneus had connections with the town of Brescia, that he probably died in 1533, and that a certain Johannes Taberius was his tutor in grammar (Luhrman 21).

⁴⁴² See Sánchez Salor (138-139), where he compares both prologues.

⁴⁴³ These postulates approach the rational grammar to the universal grammars of the twentieth century. As Sánchez Salor explains, although rational grammar analyses a specific language, it considers that in any language there are two levels: one of rational structure (common to all languages), and the other of syntactic realization. Thus, any language requires a series of logical constituents in its sentences (Sánchez Salor 352)

grammar based upon the observation of the classics;⁴⁴⁴ however, posterior humanists such as El Brocense, his models Scaliger (in *De causis* 1540) and Ramus (in *Grammatica* 1559), and even his enemy Saturnius (in *Mercurius* 1546), favored reason over use, and came back to the philosophical categories for the study of language, opening the way for modern linguistics. Patón, less revolutionary than his master, had a more practical conception of the study of language closer to Céspedes in *The Humanist*.⁴⁴⁵ However, in his appreciation of *Mercurius* he followed Saturnius.

For Saturnius, humanist grammarians had rambled by worshiping contemporary authorities, such as Valla, which led them astray from reason and truth. Instead, they should worship *Mercurius*, the paradigm of wisdom and eloquence, just as Patón would distinguish him years later.

*Truly, as long as some (humanists) decide that their god is Priscian, others Laurentius (Valla), others Servius, others Diomedes, and some of them another [grammarian], [and they put them] ahead Mercurius ([although]according to Egyptian authors, Mercurius exceeds everybody in both wisdom and eloquence), and they dedicate themselves excessively to those grammarians, as a consequence they are at an almost infinite distance from the desired truth (Saturnius Mercurius 44).*⁴⁴⁶

Therefore, according to Saturnius most humanist grammarians ‘were worshipping the wrong god,’ since the only god who should matter for them is *Mercurius*, the god of eloquence and wisdom, and the only one able to lead them to the (grammatical) truth. Saturnius is specifically referring to the *Mercurius* of the Egyptians, that is, Trimegistus. At the end of his book, Saturnius ratifies his decision, and he refers to *Mercurius* with words unequivocally related to the Hermetic Writings (and the Middle Platonism milieu): intellect, divine mind, etc.

*Whatever right or true in this [book], all of it must be attributed to the intellect and supernatural mind, received from where all wisdom [comes]. Therefore, it is called Mercurius in memory of the Egyptians, who, thinking that all things had been invented by Mercurius, whatever they write, they attributed it to that same Mercurius, that is, the divine mind (Saturnius, Mercurius, 626).*⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ See Comellas (*El humanista* 137).

⁴⁴⁵ As we have seen, in the language part of his curriculum for the ideal humanist Céspedes stated that the *understanding* of language—acquired through the reading of classics—should come first, then the *reason* (or *judgement*) of language, and finally and more importantly the *use* of it (*El humanista* 5-6).

⁴⁴⁶ *Verum dum alii Priscianum, nonnulli Laurentium, quidam Seruium, pars Diomedem, alii alium, praeter Mercurium, hoc est rectam rationem (siquidem authoribus Aegyptiis Mercurius omni praeest tum sapientiae, tum eloquio) sibi deos constituunt, eisque se nimis addicunt, tantum abest, ut optatam veritatem adsequantur, ut spacio tantum non infinito ab ea discedant (Saturnius, Mercurius..., 44).*

⁴⁴⁷ *In eo quicquid rectum ac uerum, id cunctum primo illi intellectui ultramundanaeque menti acceptum, unde omnis sapientia, referendum est. Ob id Mercurius Aegyptiorum suasu appellatus, qui omnia putantes a Mercurio esse adinuenta, quicquid scribebant, id omne Mercurio, hoc divinae menti inscriptum ibant (Saturnio, Mercurius, 626).*

I suggest that Patón chose Mercurius as the title of his book most probably inspired by the reference he read in El Brocense's *Minerva*, a book he knew perfectly. To justify his title, Patón emulates El Brocense rhetorically in the prologue he had written, just adapting the model to another god related to language wisdom whom El Brocense mentioned in his book. However, when El Brocense mentioned Mercurius as a god equivalent to his *Minerva* he actually had Saturnius in mind. Therefore, the final model of Patón for his title was his master's hated colleague. I cannot say whether Patón knew Saturnius' *Mercurius*, however, the lesser known grammarian was the first one pointing to the god of Eloquence.

In this process we can observe how Mercurius Trimegistus was present in the activities and even controversies of humanists long before Patón picked him as the title of his book. We can also observe how in the middle of the 16th century in some humanist circles Hermes was far away from his "magical" past, whereas his dimension as god of language and rhetoric prevailed. However, even without the occult sciences, Hermes was not an issue without contention. When Patón tried to publish his own masterpiece inspired by El Brocense's, it seems that he also inherited the controversies that pursued the *Minerva* and all the work of his master.

The real extent of those controversies has been discovered recently since for years specialists thought that the edition princeps of the *Minerva* was from 1587. However, there existed a first *Minerva* from 1562, which disappeared and remained unknown until 1963.⁴⁴⁸ El Brocense never mentioned that first edition, probably because there he mentioned the controversial Petrus Ramus.⁴⁴⁹ In the definitive 1587 edition of the *Minerva*, El Brocense suppressed both Ramus and references to Arab sources.⁴⁵⁰ These significant deletions point to the first Inquisitorial process of El Brocense in 1584, the new powers of the institution just after the Council of Trent, and the

⁴⁴⁸ In 1963 the discovery of a copy in the library of the University of Salamanca was announced (see Liaño 1971; and Breva-Claramonte 1975)

⁴⁴⁹ Ramus was an *auctor damnatus* by the Inquisition, killed by the Catholics in saint Bartholomew.

⁴⁵⁰ Other than Latin and Greek, El Brocense knew both Arabic and Hebrew, and he referred constantly to these languages in his *Etimologías españolas* ("El Brocense, lexicógrafo: el cuaderno Etimologías españolas" 129). In the first half of the sixteenth century, when El Brocense was a student, Arabic enjoyed renowned prestige in the University of Salamanca. Hernán Núñez "El Pinciano" (1475-1553), master and friend of El Brocense, offered courses in Arabic and Hebrew, which he had learned in Granada.

Morisco war.⁴⁵¹ Although more cautious than El Brocense, Patón could not avoid problems with his own book, but I will delve into the root of those problems next chapter.

Conclusion

Jiménez Patón did not make an ill-considered decision by naming his most important book *Mercurius Trimegistus*. As we have seen throughout this chapter, the title of the book is in line with the trajectory and works of Patón as a late humanist who, for most part of his life, conciliated the defense of the pagan legacy with his own deep religious beliefs and the boundaries imposed by the Church and its control over heterodoxy. However, the tensions product of this dichotomy surfaced when he publicized his most important book and called it *Mercurius Trimegistus*, the touchstone of the pagan legacy.

However, Patón's conflicts are also the ones of the entire late Humanism, because Patón lived, acted, and published according to the model of Humanism of his epoch, defined by Baltasar de Céspedes' treatise *The Humanist*, with which I have contrasted Patón in this chapter. However, the paradigm of Humanism would continue evolving, especially through the influence of Neostoicism, and its new sways over the consideration of the classics—I will come back to it in my fifth chapter. The mostly secular Humanism described by Céspedes would turn into a more Catholic and Pious one, in which the Christian moral would have a deep imprint. This is precisely what happened with Patón in the last years of his life, in which the moralistic flavor of his last works would aver Hermes Trimegistus and what he represented.

As we have seen in this chapter, at the beginning of late Humanism, Hermes continued exerting its function of cultural mediator between different cultural traditions, this time only between the Christian and pagan one, although this function became increasingly difficult. This last Humanism would be far away from the Humanism of Alfonso the Wise. In medieval Humanism, the *quadrivium* was the center of the cultural project while the *trivium* worked as introductory studies. As we saw, for Alfonso the wise Hermes was both the creator of the *trivium*, with a Greek and Latin origin, and the *quadrivium*, based upon the sciences which Alfonso translated from the Arabs. Actually, Hermes was for both the Arabs and Alfonso the principal

⁴⁵¹ The Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1568–71), was provoked by laws which repressed signs of Arab identity, like language, and resulted in new attacks against the vestiges of Arab culture in Spain. Clerico points to these facts as decisive in silencing El Brocense's Arab influences.

figure in the ‘extensions’ of the *quadrivium*: the natural sciences and the magical arts. In this sense, Hermes was a cultural mediator between the Christian court of Alfonso and both the pagan world (Greek and Roman) of the *trivium* and the ‘scientific’ (Arab) of the *quadrivium*.

As opposed to medieval Humanism, Italian and late Humanism emphasized the sciences of the trivium and the *studia humanitatis* which derived from them. As we saw, the old mathematic and scientific sciences of the quadrivium have little importance in Céspedes model in *The Humanist*, and he completely abhors the occult sciences as opposed to reason. This is a clue as to why many humanists were accused of being devoted to vain erudition, and stayed behind at the beginning of the Scientific revolution. In addition, I consider ironic that the Hermetic Sciences in the Iberian Peninsula were introduced by the most eximious heresiarch of Hispania, Priscillian, whom the Church executed; however, the most fervent defender of Hermes and the last one of Humanism, namely Patón, was a rigorous Catholic.

Patón, who fits to the model of humanist described by Céspedes and so developed his activities and publications throughout his life, also focused on the arts of language derived from the *trivium*; thus, the ‘quadrivium’ side of Hermes, mostly inherited from the Arabs during the Middle Ages, waned. Since the Arabs and Jews who participated in the cultural project of pre-Humanism, including their works and translations, were no longer necessary, Hermes did not act as a cultural mediator among the three Abrahamic religions, but only between the Christian world of the humanists and the ancient pagan world. In addition, the intolerance towards the Semitic peoples increased, at the same time that the secular spirit of both medieval Humanism and the branch of 16th Humanism represented by Céspedes dimmed.

Late humanists like Patón absorbed the principles of the Counter-Reformation and applied them to their works and activities. At least in the case of Patón and some of the members of his network, this contributed to the survival of only one of the two classical dimensions of Alfonso’s medieval Humanism and of the initial Italian Humanism: *paideia*, while the other dimension, philanthropy, waned. Not in vain, as the humanists knew, was *humanitas* the Latin word that Cicero used to translate the Greek *paideia*, and so it was the only part that must be kept to preserve the essence of the movement. As we saw, one of the ways Patón has to praise Hermes Trimegistus and to present him as an ideal sage for his time in the *Answer*, is to emphasize this ideal of *paideia* in him. Hermes Trimegistus was, according to Patón, not only a wise man and the creator of rhetoric but also able to teach his wisdom: “in addition, he taught the men who inhabited those

cities to worship the true God” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594),⁴⁵² “So much Catholic truths said, taught and wrote” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595),⁴⁵³ “and he taught many virtues with his words through examples of deeds” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).⁴⁵⁴ Therefore, Mercurius would have embraced the humanist ideal of knowledges and the skills to teach them. However, it seems evident that whichever wisdom Hermes taught, he did it in a pagan and pre-Christian world. That is why it is also remarkable that Patón emphasizes that in ancient Egypt Hermes not only taught the sciences or humanities but also “to worship the true God,” “Catholic truths,” and “virtue” since virtue and knowledge were the requirements for an ancient sage to be saved as a Christian, as we will see next chapter.

Patón’s humanist commitment with pagan knowledge represented by Hermes came into conflict with the Christian society Patón himself characterized. In the next Chapter I will continue expounding on the tensions which surfaced when Patón dedicated his principal book to Mercurius Trimegistus. I will also continue relating the pairing Patón-Hermes with the most important currents of thought and controversies of the period. In this chapter, I addressed Humanism and the problem of which were exactly the *studia humanitatis*, how they evolved, and the limits of pagan knowledge they could assimilate; in the next chapter, I will show how Patón and his *Mercurius Trimegistus* were also intermingled with another important current of thought, the Neo-Scholastic school of Salamanca, and how Patón used it to address a no less important point of contention between Christian and non-Christian culture: the problem of the salvation of the pagans in ancient, medieval, and early modern times.

⁴⁵² “[M]ás que enseñó a los hombres que poblaron aquellas ciudades lo adorasen al verdadero Dios (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

⁴⁵³ “[T]antas verdades tan católicas dijo, enseñó y escribió” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

⁴⁵⁴ “[Y] enseñó mucha virtud de palabra con ejemplos de obra” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).

CHAPTER IV

Ingressi salutis viam: Neo-scholastic Thought and the Christian Salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus

PART I. The Answer of Patón to Fray Esteban and the “Problem of Paganism.”

Introduction

In the previous chapter I have examined the reasons why Patón entitled his most ambitious work *Mercurius Trimegistus* and dedicated the entire book to this figure. Patón’s *Mercurius Trimegistus* is a book of rhetoric, and it is divided into three rhetorics: Roman, Spanish, and Sacred. As Patón explains in the prologue of the book, since Mercurius Trimegistus was considered the inventor of rhetoric and “three times great” (as a scholar, a priest, and a governor), he seemed to be the most suitable choice for a book about three branches of this discipline.⁴⁵⁵

In this chapter, I am going to examine how Patón’s apparently perfect decision regarding the title of the book brought no peace of mind at all to him. Actually, Patón foresaw the risk of affirming that the pagan Trimegistus had been the inventor of sacred rhetoric—that is, the rhetoric not only of priests’ sermons, but also the holy rhetoric which is found in the Bible. He justified this attribution by maintaining (also in the prologue) that Mercurius Trimegistus was actually saved as a Christian and went to heaven, something that would have happened to several worthy pagans born before Christ. As we will see, an important ecclesiastical authority reprimanded Patón about both the attribution of sacred rhetoric to Trimegistus and the affirmation that the Egyptian pagan had been saved.

⁴⁵⁵ Other reasons that could justify Patón’s decision and which I explained in the previous chapter were: first, an interest in the legendary Egyptian which Patón demonstrated through several references in his previous publications; second, a traceable presence of Trimegistus in the books and letters of his network of friends; and third, a veritable connection between Mercurius and Patón’s master in Salamanca, El Brocense.

However, Patón did not hold back the title of the book and the perilous affirmations he made in its prologue; on the contrary, he also asserted himself through a small treatise—the *Answer*—in which he upheld his statements and defended Mercurius Trimegistus as no other Spanish Golden Age writer did. Only two scholars have dedicated a few lines of attention to the *Answer*, and it has never been published again since the seventeenth century—probably because Patón uses a myriad of both known and obscure sources and quotes them in both Latin and Spanish.⁴⁵⁶ At the end of the 19th century, those contents were still considered suspicious by a highly-regarded representative of the Spanish academic world, who was also a fervent catholic. Menéndez Pelayo did not like Patón, and considered him a mere follower of his master, El Brocense, but “when he separates himself from such a great model, it is always to get something utterly wrong, without boundaries nor measure, for instance, (he gets wrong) with great erudition the salvation of Hermes Trimegistus, fabulous character of Egyptian Mythology” (Menéndez Pelayo 1940 191).⁴⁵⁷ So far, the only academic commentary about the *Answer* is that contemptuous comment about it by Menéndez Pelayo, and the one by Susan Byrne I mentioned before (Byrne *Ficino in Spain* 137). Although this is an important and necessary work, I disagree with Byrne concerning Patón and his alleged dependence on Ficino, but I will come back to this later. Let’s see first what was under suspicion of heterodoxy in Patón’s book, the criticism it generated, and how this conditioned the *Answer* of the Rhetoric and Latin teacher. Despite this lack of attention from the academic world, since Patón took this challenge so seriously, and his rhetorical skills and knowledge were respected within the learned community, I think that the small treatise he wrote about Mercurius Trimegistus is the best testimony of Mercurius’ true significance in Spanish early modern thought.

Indeed, Patón’s provocative assertions in the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* forced him to demonstrate in the *Answer* his expertise in the three main philosophical schools of his time: Neo-Scholasticism, Neostoicism, and Neoplatonism. Consequently, Patón’s *Answer* will allow me to prove not only how Trimegistus was embedded in these early modern philosophical traditions, but also that this figure was central to three significant controversies which reached far beyond the Academic world to determine the cultural, religious and political agenda of the Spanish

⁴⁵⁶ As I cited before, they were Menéndez Pelayo (1940 191), and more recently Susan Byrne (2015 137).

⁴⁵⁷ “Pero cuando se separa de tan gran modelo es siempre para desatinar sin término ni medida, disertando, verbigracia, con grande aparato sobre la salvación de Hermes Trimegisto, fabuloso personaje de la mitología egipcia” (Menéndez Pelayo 1940, 191).

Empire both in its European and Atlantic sides. These three controversies were: the salvation of pagans (ancient and modern), the possibility for pagan sages to be moral examples for Christians, and finally, the existence of a pagan Ancient Wisdom in conflict with the scientific revolution which had just begun.

In this chapter, after introducing the circumstances which led Patón to write the *Answer* and the nature of this work, I focus on the salvation of pagans, a delicate matter which Patón addressed through his capability in Neo-Scholastic thought. In the last chapter I will deal with the other doctrinal issues and philosophical schools that Patón discussed in his treatise. In this way, I argue that Mercurius Trimegistus continued exerting a function of cultural mediator between different religious and cultural traditions beyond the Middle Ages (this time, only between the pagan and Christian worlds), and I also determine the role of non-Christian culture—epitomized by Trimegistus—in the Christian Literature and thought of early modern Spain.

The “Problem of Paganism” in Early Modern Spain

As I have just explained, Patón became involved in the discussions concerning the salvation of the pagans. This hypothesis, intertwined with questions about pagans’ virtues and knowledge of God, has been termed “the problem of paganism” in a recent book by John Marenbon (2015), who formulated it in a comprehensive and chronological way for the first time.⁴⁵⁸ Critics have welcomed Marenbon’s work because it is the first comprehensive study of this conundrum in Christian thought, opening the door for a new research line.⁴⁵⁹ I rethink Marenbon’s categories in the Spanish context Spain, where this problem acquired extraordinary importance during the Renaissance and can be directly related to Hermes Trimegistus.⁴⁶⁰ On the basis of Patón’s complete overview on the problem of paganism applied to Hermes Trimegistus in the *Answer*, I offer a wide-ranging explanation of this subject in the Spanish baroque period.

For Marenbon, this problem extended during the ‘long Middle Ages,’ that is, from late antiquity to the beginning of the 18th century. As I will demonstrate, by defending Hermes Trimegistus, Patón placed himself in the middle of this long-lasting polemic; Patón’s argumentation not only summarizes the central controversial points of this issue, but also offers

⁴⁵⁸ *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (2015).

⁴⁵⁹ See Copenhaver (2016).

⁴⁶⁰ Actually, Marenbon refers briefly to Spain, especially in the early modern period. But the scope of his work does not allow him to go deep into the specific idiosyncrasies of the Iberian Peninsula.

new solutions based upon many different sources from all over those ‘long Middle Ages.’ Since Marenbon offers his discoveries chronologically and *à la long durée*, my approach to Hermes in Spain will do the same, especially considering that I greatly benefit from Patón’s systematic exposure of this polemic. Moreover, due to Patón’s prevailing use of ancient and medieval sources, even preferring them to conspicuous early renaissance hermetic writers such as Marsilio Ficino, we can certainly situate Patón in those ‘long Middle Ages.’ In fact, through Patón’s reasoning and solutions I go slightly beyond the scope of Marenbon’s work, and even complement it by shedding light on early modern Spanish interpretations of the writings of some Church Fathers—such as Lactantius or Augustine—and of thinkers of Neo-Scholasticism absent or not completely explained in Marenbon’s study.⁴⁶¹ In the next chapter, I will also illustrate how Patón surpasses the range of Marenbon’s thesis about pagan salvation by using a characteristically baroque school of thought: Neostoicism.

From our modern perspective, we might regard the problem of paganism as an erudite pastime for Christian scholars or a Byzantine discussion. But that was absolutely not the case, especially in early modern Spain. Since Paul, the problem of paganism was closely related to the cultural legacy of the pagans. The Fathers of the Catholic Church absorbed and utilized pagan culture personified by ancient figures like Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Hermes Trimegistus, considered predecessor and master of all of them. Therefore, during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, many Christian authorities justified this appropriation by affirming that some pagans went to heaven. For a Catholic and humanist scholar like Patón, devoted both to Christianity and Greco-Roman culture, this conflict was still an almost daily struggle. As we have seen, Patón held strong opinions about many issues related to seventeenth century politics, and he supported some of the most abhorrent practices of the period (i.e. the Inquisition and the racist laws of cleanliness of blood against converted Jews). However, concerning Mercurius Trimegistus he aligned himself with some of the most ‘liberal’ and tolerant thinkers of the Church of his time; among them, those who defended the non-violent evangelization of America, like Bartolomé de Las Casas, who praised Mercurius Trimegistus as a proto-Christian and defended the pagans with similar arguments and authorities as Patón. I show that, in a similar way Mercurius had appeared as a

⁴⁶¹ According to Copenhaver (2016), these are some of the few and somewhat inevitable gaps in Marenbon’s book about this intriguing philosophical issue which I will complement here through my inquiry into Trimegistus and my focus on Spain.

cultural mediator between the three religious traditions of Medieval Spain, Las Casas exemplifies with him again to mediate between the Christian tradition and the religious cultures of the New World. Ultimately, Las Casas used as his main sources the same ones Patón would employ later on.

To sum up, Patón decided to advocate in favor of Mercurius Trimegistus, the representative of ancient culture and love of wisdom, who had guided his steps during most of his life. As a consequence of his choice, he also had to speak out for Mercurius' Christian salvation. If Patón could save Mercurius as a Christian, he could 'save' non-Christian wisdom as well. Thus, the same argumentative reasoning that Patón used for Hermes could be used for any other pagan. And, indeed, that is what happened in Patón's time, when the problem of paganism expanded from the scholarly books to the Spanish conquest and evangelization of the Americas.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the new circumstances unleashed by America's conquest, Spanish theologians and humanists turned to the most important authorities of the Church because they had previously addressed the problem of paganism. Following their example, Spanish thinkers were able to advise even emperors and kings such as Charles V or Phillip II about what to do. Sometimes these powerful rulers listened to them and sometimes they did not, but no other empire in history promoted such a big debate about its own legitimation. By using arguments conceived in that debate, Patón was able to successfully defend his own 'exemplary' and virtuous pagan and publish his book *Mercurius Trimegistus* under that name, and also to silence those who questioned the pagan origin of an important part of Christian culture. I suggest that, without the previous Spanish theological debates about the American pagans, Patón would not have been able to save Mercurius Trimegistus and what he really represented in such an effective way. But first I am going to introduce Patón's *Answer*, the work which allows me to focus on all his arguments. In order to understand the *Answer*, I also refer to the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, where Patón first presents those 'dangerous' statements that he defends later in the *Answer*.

Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* under Suspicion

For our 21st century mind, it is astonishing that a book prepared for popular use among students, most of them in ecclesiastical institutions, carried the name of such an esoteric figure as Mercurius Trimegistus as its title. However, as we saw above, Trimegistus was considered part of

the pagan philosophical tradition (like Plato or Aristotle) and all learned men took his existence for granted. Of course, since medieval times, Trimegistus had also been associated with books of magic, astrology, and alchemy, but his remaining virtues—as legislator or father of eloquence—preceded his suspicious background during the baroque period. As a prudent scholar, Patón never took chances in doctrinal matters or polemical issues. As I explained before, throughout his life, Patón wanted by all means to avoid the troubles on account of doctrinal stances that his master El Brocense had with his own philological production.⁴⁶² Patón was a much more cautious man, a zealous Catholic, and a member of the Inquisition, precisely the institution which embittered El Brocense’s last years. For these reasons, we may think that Patón would never risk his most far-reaching intellectual project, the *Mercurius Trimegistus*. However, when he attributed the sacred rhetoric to Mercurius and affirmed that he was saved, Patón clearly crossed the line of orthodoxy, and was perfectly aware of his audacity.

Despite the increasing bibliography about Patón, no specialist has yet analyzed the *Prologue* in Latin of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, the work that consolidated Patón’s reputation as grammarian and treatise writer. It is precisely in this *Prologue*⁴⁶³ where he immersed himself in the problem of paganism. The key passage of the *Prologue* I want to examine reads as follows:⁴⁶⁴

*I do not doubt that someone might raise objections against me as to why I have made public the sacred eloquence under such a name as that of Mercurius, and I might seem to be [deservedly] branded by him as being of negligent disposition unless I satisfy his wish (for explanation). Therefore, I beseech you to listen to the reason that compelled me to this. Therefore, it isn’t thoughtless for us to attribute to him the invention of it (i.e. eloquence), and (include Trimegistus in) the title. This is all the more so because it happened perhaps that he (Trimegistus), a very learned man and a religious priest, was saved through the law of nature, even though he was a gentile and even though he was [living] among the pagans, just as was the case with saint Job (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).*⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² As we have just seen, he exposed those stances not only in the *Minerva*, his most important book, but also in many other places.

⁴⁶³ I capitalize and put in italics the *Prologue*, as well as the *Answer*, both paratexts of the published *Mercurius Trimegistus*, to make my quotations more comprehensible.

⁴⁶⁴ Patón wrote the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* in Latin, and in the *Answer* he mixes Spanish and Latin. I am going to translate both Spanish and Latin, but I will italicize my rendering of Latin to give a better understanding of Patón’s criteria for citing his sources. For consistency, I will extend this guideline to the other authors I mention in this chapter.

⁴⁶⁵ *Non dubito, quin quis insurgat mihi obiiciens, cur Eloquentiam sacram tali nomine Mercurii in medium protulerim, et supine considerationis ab eo notari videor, ni Desiderio illius satisfaciam. Ideo causa, qua ad id fui inductus, obsecro, audiat. Ergo non inconsiderate illi eius inventionem, et nomen tribuimus. Tum etiam, quia fortasse factum fuit, ut ille doctissimus vir, et religiosus sacerdos, etsi gentilis, et inter ethnicos lege naturae salvus (ut Job sanctus) fieret (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).*

Here Patón specifies that Mercurius was even the inventor of the *Eloquentia sacra*, as it is named in one of the three treatises comprised in the *Mercurius Trimegistus*; thus, Patón says: *I have made public the sacred eloquence under such a name as that of Mercurius*. At the same time that he makes such a declaration, Patón also seems to foresee the backlash and objections he would receive: *I do not doubt that someone might raise objections*. By trying to appease the hypothetical complaints which ‘someone’ might have against the choice of the title and the attribution of the sacred eloquence to Mercurius, Patón essentially makes a much more problematic assertion: Mercurius deserved to be saved and thus go to heaven as a Christian: *because it happened perhaps that he (Trimegistus), a very learned man and a religious priest, was saved through the law of nature, even though he was a gentile and even though he was [living] among the pagans*. I will clarify some concepts of this significant excerpt a little later. For now, I want to emphasize that Patón establishes that the salvation of Trimegistus “perhaps” (*fortasse* in Latin) happened, and so he does not make a completely bold assertion. Therefore, Patón seems to be aware of the danger which such a categorical proclamation entailed. Moreover, I also want to highlight that once Patón conjectures that Mercurius was saved, he is immediately forcing himself to explain not only why and how this could happen to Trimegistus, but also to some other selected pagans in ancient times.

Patón argues that, since there were pagans who believed in God and knew about Jesus Christ (even before he was born), it was possible for some of them to be saved if they were also virtuous men, *just as was the case with saint Job*, whom he explicitly mentions here (and uses again later). As it was well known, in the *Bible* Job is the paradigm of virtuous pagan. Despite the trials he had to withstand, Job remained pious and virtuous. Although a character in the *Bible*, Job was not in fact an Israelite, but a native to the undetermined Land of Uz (maybe close to Arabia). For this reason, he was viewed as a pagan by many interpreters. Once he compares Trimegistus with Job, the most renowned virtuous pagan, Patón develops his argument about salvation in the following way:

For this [salvation] was able to come to the lot of those pagans who worshipped God and [had] faith in the coming Christ. It is not incredible that this was communicated to that magnificent doctor (Aquinas), because to him belongs that very famous acknowledgement [on Trimegistus] of the highest and most saint Trinity and of the mystery of the unity with these words: “the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself”. Since he

[Trimegistus] acknowledged the true Trinity, we attribute to him most deservedly the triple eloquence and particularly the sacred one (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).⁴⁶⁶

Since Patón had run across the “problem of paganism,” he is now formulating it with the three specific elements that, according to Marenbon’s explanation, had been used for centuries: salvation, knowledge of Christ (including specific Christian dogmas), and virtue (Marenbon 3). In other words, only when a pagan was virtuous and knew about Christ was his salvation possible. Of course, determining under which conditions one could consider a pagan ‘virtuous’ and when they showed knowledge of Jesus was an intricate subject, and a clear example of that can be found here in Patón’s *Prologue*, where he starts to introduce nuances that help us to understand this problem in early modern Spain. Patón has already categorized Trimegistus as a virtuous pagan by comparing him with none other than Job. Now Patón affirms not only that Trimegistus *worshipped God and had faith in the coming Christ* but also that he was aware of the *most saint Trinity and of the mystery of the unity*, therefore, Trimegistus’ knowledge of God extended to specific Christian dogmas only intelligible for theologians.

As mentioned above, the most important theologians and doctors of the Church had already dealt with this problem and, as we will see, Patón would use a great number of them as references later in the *Answer*. However, since Patón initially only had the limited space of the *Prologue* to justify his statements, he draws from the authority of “the magnificent doctor” (*excelentissimo Doctori*), Thomas Aquinas. The choice was justified because Aquinas (1225-1274) was the first and most outstanding authority of Neo-Scholasticism, the Spanish ‘mainstream’ academic current in the sixteenth century.

Aquinas mentioned Hermes Trimegistus several times in his works. The most significant quotation appears in the *Summa Theologiae*, from which Patón extracts this passage in which Aquinas is apparently accepting that Trimegistus had knowledge of the Trinity (*Summa theologiae* 1.32.1). Aquinas’ assumption is based upon an enigmatic medieval quotation attributed to him in some medieval treatises: *Monas genuit monadem, et in se reflexit amorem* (*the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself*). Later we will see to what extent this is true, and the origin

⁴⁶⁶ *Nam id gentibus contingere poterat colentibus Deum, et Christi venturi fide; quod non incredibile est huic excellentissimo Doctori fuisse communicatum; quando illius est illa celeberrima confessio altissimi sanctissimae Trinitatis, et unitatis mysterii his verbis: Monas genuit monadem⁴⁶⁶, et in se reflexit amorem, Quando Trinitatem fidelium est confesus, triplicem eloquentiam et meritissimo assignavimus, et praecipue Sacram (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).*

of saint Thomas' words. Now I just want to emphasize that, by leaning on Aquinas, Patón is pointing at another concluding reason to entitle his book of three grammars—and specifically the sacred one—, *Mercurius Trimegistus*. According to Patón: *since he [Trimegistus] acknowledged the true Trinity, we attribute to him most deservedly the triple eloquence and particularly the sacred one*. As we will see, at least one important academic and religious authority found causes for concern in Patón's words—despite the fact that Patón invoked Aquinas as protection against Christian orthodoxy.

Fray Esteban's Scolding Notes and the *Answer* of Patón

Jiménez Patón conceived the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as a school and university manual. As a result, once Patón completed his work, he used his network of academic friends to guarantee the marketing of his book, and sent them copies of the book before its official publication for their consideration. When he did so, he received from his friends and colleagues both praise and official promises that they would use the book in their institutions, all of which Patón included in the definitive printing. However, Patón also received criticism, mainly against his assertions about *Mercurius Trimegistus*. Patón included that disapproval as an independent paratext in the book, but accompanied by his own reply and justification. This twenty-two-page text, in which Patón cites his critic's comments and extensively replies to them, is what I call the *Answer*.

From what we can deduce in the *Answer*, the Dominican father, Fray Esteban del Arroyo, professor of holy Theology in the Schools and University of Almagro,⁴⁶⁷ resumed his objections against the *Mercurius Trimegistus* in three notes (*notas*), which Patón would reproduce and dispute widely in his *Answer*. Only the first two notes, more extensive, refer to *Mercurius Trimegistus*.⁴⁶⁸ In this chapter, I will address Patón's reply to the first note, where he wants to demonstrate that *Trimegistus* deserved to be saved like a Christian.⁴⁶⁹ I call it the *Answer to Fray Esteban del Arroyo*—and abbreviate it as *Answer*—because Patón writes “I answer” (in Spanish “yo respondo”) after reproducing each one of Fray Esteban's notes and before his own responses.⁴⁷⁰ Why did Jiménez Patón decide to complement his magnum opus with this kind of polemical

⁴⁶⁷ “catedrático de santa teología en las escuelas y Universidad de Almagro.” (*Mercurius* 591)

⁴⁶⁸ The third one is about Patón's criticism of a rhetorical devise in the Biblical book of *Isaiah*.

⁴⁶⁹ In the second part, Patón sought to demonstrate that Hermes created, among other arts, the sacred rhetoric used by preachers. I will use the second part along with many other sources in my last chapter, because it is related to the *philosophia perennis* theory that Patón defended there.

⁴⁷⁰ “A esto respondo así” (p. 591); “Respondo” (p. 601); and “Respondo” (p. 609)

writing? This question demands a deep study of the *Answer*, which has only received a couple of lines of attention from two specialists in the past two centuries. The *Answer* mixes Spanish, Latin, and numerous authorities in a compressed rhetorical structure. For this reason, in order to address the questions that the *Answer* raises, I first consider its genre.

The Genre of Patón's *Answer*

This kind of “answer,” in which Patón refutes the accusations made against one of his books, was not something new for Jiménez Patón; in fact, he had written a similar treatise years before, which he included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* as well. It has been published and studied by Madroñal.⁴⁷¹ However this new *Answer* has some peculiarities; among them, it is mostly dedicated to *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and it displays a surprising number of authorities—even for an accomplished erudite like Patón. Patón's display of scholarship also raises the question of how he was able to complete such a wide-ranging work about *Mercurius* over such a short period of time between the distribution of ‘samples’ of his book and its definitive publication. I propose a solution found in the *Discreet Virtuous*—the book he wrote with advice for his own students—and easily verifiable by analyzing his other works. There is a moment in the *Discreet Virtuous* when he refers to something he used to do:

You will have a folder in which you will write down, in case you read or listen to it, any grave, elegant, or prudent phrase, or any rare, exquisite, or profitable term for the common language, in order to have it whenever necessary (*The Virtuous Discreet* f.68r).⁴⁷²

Patón is actually endorsing a practice that, according to Moss (421), is essential “to an understanding of how knowledge was organized in the early modern period,” the commonplace-book. In his *De copia*, Erasmus gave the first systematic guidelines for making commonplace-books. In the next century, Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) offered some examples of how this

⁴⁷¹ One of the triple eloquences included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* was the *Spanish Eloquence in Art*, which Patón had published in 1604. The Jesuit Francisco de Castro wrote some rhetorical, grammatical, and philological objections to Patón's book, which his friend the *licenciado* (graduate) Ballesteros Saavedra gave to him. When Patón published again the *Spanish Eloquence in Art* included in his *Mercurius Trimegistus* he took note of some of those objections, incorporated them in the text, and even wrote a text which he included at the end of this part (182r-205v). Madroñal (*Humanismo y filología* 277-312) has published this work separately and calls it *The Satisfaction to the graduate Ballesteros: a reply to the Jesuit Francisco de Castro* (*La Satisfacción al Licenciado Ballesteros: una replica al jesuita Francisco de Castro*).

⁴⁷² “Tendrás un cartapacio en el cual anotarás si leyeres, o oyeres algún dicho grave o elegante, o prudente, o algún vocablo raro esquisito, provechoso para el común lenguaje, para que lo tengas cuando lo hayas menester” (*El virtuoso discreto* f.68r).

technique could be used for the composition of treatises; indeed, Lipsius's *Politica* "is a network of quotations from ancient authorities linked together by Lipsius's own words" (Moss 421). We can say the same about Patón's *Answer*. I suggest that Patón, who had shown interest in Mercurius Trimegistus for a very long time, had prepared a folder with quotations about him to be elaborated as a small treatise and included in a future book as, for instance, the treatises he included and were embedded in the narrative of his *Commentaries of erudition* (*Comentarios de erudición*, after 1625). Actually, this practice of composing *codex exceptorius* (books of excerpts) was particularly popular among late humanists like Patón, who defended their self-elaboration against the mere reading of *polyantheas* or miscellanies published by others.⁴⁷³ Therefore, when he had to defend himself and his mythical patron from the attacks of Fray Esteban, he just resorted to his notes thematically organized on Trimegistus, the salvation of the pagans, and the *philosophia perennis*, and disposed them in a rhetorical way.

Thus, the study of the sources about Hermes which Patón brings into play shows a surprising variety of origins, from early Christianity and medieval authorities to the contemporary and Neo-scholastic or humanist thinkers, chronologists, and rhetoricians. Despite the diversity of sources, Patón has a clear awareness of a hierarchy and their disposition in the *Answer* attests to that. Thus, Patón disposes the sources and his commentaries on them in such a way that often it is possible to see whether he is addressing Neo-scholastic, Neostoic or Neoplatonic adherents. rhetoric in the early modern period as Patón taught it, established a clear categorizing of sources, which he followed in the disposition of his rhetorical treatise, *Mercurius Trimegistus*. A clear explanation of these techniques can be found in Patón's contemporary, Nicholas Caussin (1583–1651), who synthesized the concept of erudition in the first half of the seventeenth century as it can be found in Patón's books (Madroñal & others 2010 53). Caussin's treatise, *The sixteen books of Sacred and Human Eloquence* (*Eloquentiae sacrae et humanae parallela libri XVI*, 1619), influenced many books of the period, for instance *God's Providence* (*Providencia de Dios*) a posthumous work by Quevedo. López Poza has studied how Caussin's principles of rhetoric swayed the composition of Quevedo's book, and her conclusions, as follows, can be perfectly applied to Patón's *Answer* as well (2015 56).

Both Caussin and Quevedo place the sacred eloquence (biblical and patristic sources) at the beginning and leave for later the human eloquence (classical and contemporary authors). As I

⁴⁷³ See Aragües Aldaz ("Otoño del humanismo y erudición ejemplar")

will scrutinize, Patón is doing the same thing as those two authors whom he knew well, and with whom he shared many features. I will come back to Quevedo later; for now, I want to highlight that Caussin was a strong advocate of Hermes and ancient Egyptian Wisdom,⁴⁷⁴ and he also had a strong sway on Neostoicism (Reinhardt 2016 250). Like Quevedo and Caussin, Patón presents his sources prioritizing the *Bible* and patristic writings, then Scholastic and Neo-scholastic authors, and finally early modern humanists. By doing so, he sets up the doctrinal components of his arguments, then he emphasizes the knowledge of Christ by Mercurius—as well as his many virtues and lack of sins— and finally, he proves his salvation and the pertinence of attributing him the origin of all eloquences. It was really convenient for Patón to prepare his sources in such a disciplined way because Fray Esteban posed a higher challenge than any other scholar Patón had previously faced.

The Big Doctrinal Challenge

Fray Esteban was a professor at the University of Almagro, one of the minor Spanish universities. The University of Almagro was equivalent to the one of Baeza, where Patón had studied and successfully sent the *Mercurius Trimegistus* to be used as a manual. Apparently, due to both Patón's less effective network in Almagro and Fray Esteban's opposition, the book was not accepted there. Almagro is only 72 kilometers from Villanueva de los Infantes, where Jiménez Patón lived and worked as a Latin teacher. Both towns are within the La Mancha region, where Patón wanted his book to be extensively used. Therefore, Fray Esteban's opinion could be a weighty one in the final decision of academic authorities in many other places. What is more, Fray Esteban's concerns refer to religious doctrine and orthodoxy, which could put Patón into serious trouble with the Church and the Inquisition. Patón could have easily removed the controversial assertions from the *Prologue* since the book had not been published yet. Moreover, since Patón worked as a censor and writer of approvals for the Inquisition, he had supervised that task for other writers. However, he decided to answer Fray Esteban's notes, to stand up for Trimegistus, and to take sides in favor of the salvation of the pagans.

⁴⁷⁴ As Mack (198) points out in his *Electorum symbolorum et parabolarum historicarum syntagmata* (1918) Caussin combines “Egyptian wisdom with Old Testament revelation in the mode of the *prisca theologia*”, about which I will talk in the last chapter.

Fray Esteban's first note says: "What is said about Trimegistus's salvation should not be said without foundation of saints or grave doctors; and such a weighty thing should not be declared without any authority, particularly in grave books" (*Mercurius* 591).⁴⁷⁵ Fray Esteban does not completely forbid the idea that Mercurius was saved, rather, he claims that such an affirmation must be supported by very important authorities. This accusation of lacking rigor must have necessarily hurt Patón's pride. As we saw before, Patón never completed the doctorate in Theology from the University of Salamanca,⁴⁷⁶ and his opponents constantly reminded him of this failure. Therefore, Fray Esteban's accusation could spur Patón's determination to show his vast humanist and ecclesiastical erudition (probably stored in a *codex exceptorius*) by defending Hermes Trimegistus. Furthermore, Patón knew that Fray Esteban's accusation was unfair because in the *Prologue* he had indeed appealed to the main authority for the Counter-Reformation and Neo-scholastic Spain: Thomas Aquinas.

Fray Esteban, a doctor in Theology, had in fact missed Aquinas's quotation about *Mercurius Trimegistus* in the *Prologue* of the book, because Patón quoted him indirectly with the epithet "magnificent doctor." Patón would politely hint at this misreading in his *Answer*. Nevertheless, just in case any doubts about his intellectual rigor or orthodoxy remained, he added a set of new authorities and examples. In fact, for Fray Esteban, a Dominican priest, Patón would present not only Aquinas, the most important Dominican thinker of all times, but also other relevant members of the order, like Domingo de Soto and Sisto Senense, and important Church Fathers such as Lactantius and Augustine. Therefore, Patón used the arguments of ancient and contemporary authorities, but since he was a treatise writer of rhetoric and logic, he would also elaborate those arguments and exemplify them with other pagans who deserved salvation along with Hermes Trimegistus. What Patón is really offering is a late humanistic interpretation about the salvation of the pagans, which logically includes a reassertion about the doctrine of some of its main theorists through history. As follows, the modest Latin teacher of La Mancha offers us a complete picture on pagan salvation, and thus justifies the acceptance of pagan intellectual and even prophetic contributions to the Church. These concepts, valid for the biggest political and

⁴⁷⁵ "Lo que se dice acerca de la salvación de Trimegisto, no se debe con fundamento alguno de santos, ni doctores graves; y cosa de tanto peso no se dice afirmar sin autoridad alguna, particularmente en libros graves" (*Mercurius* 591).

⁴⁷⁶ But he reached the equivalent of a Master of Arts.

theological issues of the Renaissance, are necessary to understand Patón's intellectual framework in his *Answer*.

An Open Catholic View on Pagans

According to Patón, Hermes must have been one of the chosen pagans who deserved the privilege of being saved. Nonetheless, this possibility stood against another important doctrine, the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* or "outside the Church there is no salvation."⁴⁷⁷ This doctrine, however, was never a monolithic widespread position. From the beginning of Christianity up until Patón's times, there existed two views, which Walker defines as "liberal" and "illiberal." According to Walker, the liberals think that:

Gentiles as well as the Jews were being prepared for the Christian revelation. They had partial revelations, or reached God by natural reason, or learnt from the Mosaic tradition. Some of them were possibly saved. The whole of religious truth is not plainly shown forth in the Bible; valuable, indeed essential, help can be gained from non-canonical writers, both Christian and pagan (Walker *The Ancient Theology* 123).

It is my belief that Patón sided with the liberals who held these views,⁴⁷⁸ and thus he initiates his *Answer* by establishing a set of conditions for famous men born before Christ to be saved. Under Fray Esteban's requirement, he affirms that those conditions come from the "precept of Holy doctors" (591), whom he specifies later:

It is a precept of Holy Doctors, that to determine about famous men who lived before the coming of Christ, and who were not from the lineage of Abraham, whether they were condemned or if is possible to presume that they were saved, it is necessary to see and examine if they were idolaters; because if they were so, and died in idolatry, undoubtedly, they were damned (*Mercurius* 591).⁴⁷⁹

Patón's first statement is a definition of the pagans: "famous men who lived before the coming of Christ, and who were not from the lineage of Abraham." This description matches with the

⁴⁷⁷ Loe-Joo Tan (2014 288 & ss) shows an overview of the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church about this issue. It seems that this statement comes originally from Letter LXXII of Cyprian of Carthage (d.258), who wrote *Salus extra ecclesiam non est* ("there is no salvation outside of the Church"), but the same idea can also be found in Origen (185-254) and other Church fathers as Irenaeus of Lyon (130-202) and Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390).

⁴⁷⁸ The 'illiberal' ones, as opposed to the 'liberals', thought that the Jewish revelation was the only pre-Christian one. All the pagans were damned, and all their acts, including their thoughts and writings, were sinful and worthless. Thus, they think that "everything in the Bible is true; nothing not in the Bible is true, with the possible exception of some things in Augustine" (Walker 1972: 123).

⁴⁷⁹ "Sentencia es de doctores sagrados, que para determinar de los varones famosos, que fueron antes de la venida de Cristo, y no eran del linaje de Abraham si se condenaron, o se puede presumir se salvaron, se ha de ver y examinar si fueron idólatras; y habiendo sido, y muerto en Idolatría sin duda se condenaron (*Mercurius* 591)."

traditional definition of pagans in pre-modern Europe, those men neither Christian, nor Jewish, nor Muslim, who may have lived either before or after Christ came to save all mankind (Copenhaver 2016). For those pagans, Patón imposes a first condition: not to be idolaters.⁴⁸⁰ Patón identifies idolatry broadly with polytheism when he affirms that it automatically excludes salvation because “worshiping many gods contradicts natural reason, and ignorance, in this case, does not excuse it.”⁴⁸¹ This reference to ignorance is conceived in opposition to the knowledge of the true god which some Christian thinkers thought could be obtained through natural reason. To talk about natural law and natural reason, as Patón does quickly in the *Answer*, is a very complex and multilayered matter which, as we will see, has roots in Stoic philosophy. Patón is also evoking the famous legal aphorism *Ignorantia iuris non excusat* or *ignorantia legis neminem excusat* (‘ignorance of the law does not excuse’ and ‘ignorance of the law excuses no one.’)⁴⁸² In this case, Patón refers to the law that could be broken by pagans, and the liability for breaking it is condemnation. But, when was natural law applicable?

From 1000CE, theologians often divided history into three periods, each ruled by a different legal standard. From Adam to Abraham “natural” law applied; from Abraham to the birth of Christ there was the “old” law (codified with the law of Moses); and finally, the “new” law of Jesus. Patón refers to this division several times in his works.⁴⁸³ Consequently, Hermes, who was born before Moses—or around his time, depending on the sources—would have been subject to natural law in order to be saved. Once he confirms that pagans worshipped only one God, Patón thinks that it is necessary to find out if the pagans “were virtuous, and if they followed the general rule that: what you do not want for yourself, you do not want it for your neighbor; and for whom

⁴⁸⁰ Probably Patón is reflecting the complex definition of Idolatry in the *Old Testament*, where we cannot find a complete definition—from the Ten Commandments, where it is more related to aniconism: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (*Exodus* 20: 4-6; *Deuteronomy* 5:7), to the reforms of King Josiah of Judah, whose religious decrees also included removing pagan idols from the temple (*2 Kings* 22-23; *2 Chronicles* 34-35); other important remarks are the prophets’ admonishments and the hard proof in the Babylon exile described in the book of *Daniel*, when the exiled Israelites lived surrounded by idols.

⁴⁸¹ “[P]orque el adorar muchos Dios* contradice a la razón natural, y la inorancia en este caso no excusa” (*Mercurius* 591)

⁴⁸² It refers to the principle which holds that a person who is unaware of a law may not escape liability for violating that law merely because he was unaware of its content.

⁴⁸³ For instance, in the *Discourse in Favor of the Saint and Praiseworthy Statute of the Cleanliness of Blood* (*Discurso en favor del santo y loable estatuto de limpieza*, 1639, f3v.), Patón refers to “those Jews who kept the Law of Moses, when it was compulsory before the coming of Christ” (“aquellos Judíos que guardaban la ley de Moisés cuando lo era de precepto, antes de la venida de Cristo”).

this would be verified, he was allegedly saved” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 591-592).⁴⁸⁴ With this reference to virtue, Patón had already displayed the three connected questions that, according to Marenbon (1), had defined the problem of paganism during centuries: “pagan virtue, knowledge of God and salvation.” Let us see how one of the trends of late Humanism,⁴⁸⁵ represented in Jiménez Patón, answered those questions by considering the many centuries of pondering the matter.

The Church Fathers, Lactantius, and the Early Association of Hermes with the Sibyls

From the beginning of Christianity, Paul, the apologists and the Church Fathers used arguments from pagan philosophers to defend their faith. In so doing, they had to justify this adherence to pagan teachings. For this reason, some members of the Church speculated on the salvation of some pagans (mostly those whom they read and quoted). Their salvation would in turn save the orthodoxy of the Christians who were citing pagans. The Church fathers took the necessary justification for their arguments from Paul. In *Acts* 17:23, Luke narrates that when Paul was in Athens preaching to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, he identified the unknown God to whom they had consecrated an altar, with the true God he was preaching: “what therefore you worship, without knowing it, is what I preach to you.” However, in *Romans* 1 and 2, Paul himself expressed an ambiguous attitude towards the pagans. As Marenbon explains, in *Romans* 1: 20-25, Paul suggests that the pagans “did know God through his visible creation, but did not properly glorify him, and became vain and immoral” (20). However, in the next chapter (*Romans* 2:14-15), Paul refers to the gentiles who lack the law revealed by God law but have the law written in their hearts. This passage, despite its hostile tone, “could-and would-be used to give biblical authority to the idea that wise pagans knew the true God through his creation” (Marenbon 20). And this is precisely the fragment used by Patón in his *Answer* to justify the salvation of Trimegistus and other illustrious pagans.

As I explained before, Patón places the *Bible* as his main authority. By and large, posterior Christian authors derived from this passage (*Romans* 2: 14-15) the doctrine of natural law, to which *Mercurius* would have been submitted. As I will explain in the next chapter, this is also a verse

⁴⁸⁴ “[S]i adoraron un solo Dios se ha de averiguar si eran virtuosos, y si guardaron aquella regla general de todas las gentes. Lo que no quieres para ti no lo quieras para tu prójimo De quien esto se verifcare, se puede presumir que se salvó” (*Mercurius* 591-592).

⁴⁸⁵ As I clarified in a previous chapter, I understand late humanism as the humanism developed after 1600.

much used to defend the Stoic influence in the Bible (because natural law was initially a concept of that school). Patón quotes Paul: “this is clearly understood from the authority of the apostle: *when gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves*” (*Mercurius* 593).⁴⁸⁶ In the commentary which Aquinas dedicated to this Epistle (*Super Epistolam Ad Romanos Lectura*), he too referred to the natural law doctrine present in it. In brief, Patón is using this stone mark verse to confer biblical authority to the doctrine of natural law, a main point in the salvation of pagans.

After Paul, the Apologists and Church Fathers justified or questioned the use of pagan Philosophy in many ways. For instance, Justin (d. 160) affirmed that Christianity was the true Philosophy, but the other schools partially grasped the truth through *logos* implanted in the souls of all men—actually *logos* was a Stoic and Platonic concept which appears in the famous beginning of John’s Gospel. Later on, Clement (c.150-c.215) developed Justin’s argument and maintained that Christians were able to pick up what is good in the philosophical traditions through the reason (*logos*) seeded in them.⁴⁸⁷ Thus, during three centuries pagans and Christians coexisted and argued with each other in the “Age of Anxiety” described by Dodds (1965). Of course, the situation changed dramatically when Constantine decreed tolerance for Christianity in the Roman empire in 313CE, leading the way for its adoption as state religion. The Church Father Lactantius (250-325) exemplified those times of change. Lactantius worked as a religious advisor for Constantine, but he enjoyed a vast Greek culture which led him to defend some pagans as forerunners of Christendom. In fact, among the Church Fathers, Lactantius was the greatest admirer of Mercurius Trimegistus, placing him above the other philosophers.⁴⁸⁸ From then on, most defenders of Hermes referred back to Lactantius. Not surprisingly, Patón relies several times on Lactantius in his *Answer*. For instance, Patón reminds the readers (quoting *Divine Institutions* II, 6) that:

[R]epeating a lot about his doctrine, (Lactantius) says about him (Trimegistus): *notwithstanding that he was only a man, he was very ancient and very learned in all kinds of disciplines. So much that, because of his science in many things and arts, they gave him the surname of Trimegistus. He wrote books and indeed many of them about divine things,*

⁴⁸⁶ “[S]e colige llanamente de la autoridad del Apostol: *Gentes que legem non habent, naturaliter, quae legis sunt faciunt*” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 593)

⁴⁸⁷ See an summary of this early arguments in Marenbon (21-22)

⁴⁸⁸ Moreschini affirms that Lactantius “marks a moment of capital importance in the history of Christian Hermetism. He was more convinced than anyone of the affinity between Hermetic doctrines (which he systematically sought out) and Christian ones, and his interpretation enjoyed wide diffusion in the Middle Ages” (*Hermes Christianus* 33).

*in which he established the omnipotence of the only God. And he calls him, as we do, with the names of God and Father. And below talking about his doctrine and authority (Lactantius) says that (Trimegistus) said: God, on the contrary, because he always was one, has the proper name of God (Mercurius 596-597).*⁴⁸⁹

Thus, according to Lactantius and Patón, through his science, which included *divine things* (*divinarum rerum*), Trimegistus reached the knowledge of one Almighty God (*established the omnipotence of the only God*), a precondition for salvation. In order to praise Trimegistus' magisterium and take away from him any shadow of idolatry and polytheism, Patón also had testimonies from Lactantius' *De Ira Dei (On the Anger of God)*.⁴⁹⁰

But Lactantius himself, in the book *On the Anger of God*, teaching that (God) is one, repeats again the authorities of Trimegistus and his praises as well, saying that he was more ancient than Platón and other sages and that he was master of all of them: some listened to him in his own voice, and others studied what they got to know from his writings, which were many (*Mercurius 597*).⁴⁹¹

Therefore, Mercurius was more important than the other pagan philosophers, who themselves learned from him or his books; more specifically: "he was master of all of them." The main reason for this advantage was Mercurius' greater proximity to the divine realm. Patón emphasizes this 'divinity' of Mercurius by linking him with the Sibyls, who enjoyed an undisputed divine condition and closeness to Christianity. Opportunely for Patón, Lactantius includes Hermes along with the Sibyls in book I chapter 6 of his *The Divine Institutes*, which is entitled precisely "About divine testimonies, and about the Sibyls and their songs."⁴⁹² This is especially remarkable, according to Patón, because although Lactantius had dedicated the previous chapter to the profane poets and philosophers, he includes Trimegistus among the 'divines' in the next one, and includes him along with the Sibyls. As Copenhaver (1992 xxxi) points out, Lactantius, the "chief Christian advocate"

⁴⁸⁹ "y repitiendo mucho de su doctrina, dice así del. Qui tametsi homo fuerit antiquissimus, tamen et instructissimus omni genere doctrinae, adeo ut ei multarum rerum et artium scientia Trimegisto cognomen imponerit. Hic scripsit libros, et quidem multos ad cognitionem divinarum rerum pertinentes, in quibus maiestatem singularis Dei asserit, iisdemque nominibus appellat, quibus nos, Deum et patrem. Ac ne quis nomen eius requireret, sine nomine esse dixit. Y más abajo hablando de su doctrina (597) y autoridad, dice que dijo Deo autem quia Semper unus est proprium nomen est Deus" (*Mercurius 596-597*).

⁴⁹⁰ Paradoxically, Lactantius wrote that book against the doctrines of the Stoics and the Epicureans, but in 17th century the book is used to prove that Mercurius was the closest to a Stoic sage.

⁴⁹¹ "Mas el mismo Latancio en el libro de la Ira de Dios, enseñando como es uno, vuelve a repetir las autoridades de Trimegisto, y sus alabanzas, diciendo que fue más antiguo que Platón y otros sabios, y que fue maestro de todos, parte, que le oyeron en voz viva, parte, que estudiaron lo que supieron por sus escritos, que fueron muchos" (*Mercurius 597*).

⁴⁹² *De divinis testimoniis et de Sibyllis et earum carminibus*.

of the Sibyls, was also the main champion of the *Hermetica* among Christians.”⁴⁹³ Thus, Patón highlights that

(Lactantius) thought that he (Trimegistus) must be counted neither with the other philosophers, nor with the poets, but with the Sibyls, because the goodness of his life and his doctrine about God agreed completely with them, and so it is not difficult to discern that he must be counted as one of them (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597).⁴⁹⁴

As Patón knew, the Sibyls enjoyed a higher rank than Hermes in European Christendom, but especially in the Spanish baroque. Therefore, in order to equal him with the prophetesses, this assertion that Trimegistus’ “doctrine about God agreed completely with the Sibyls” is particularly relevant. These ancient prophetesses were popular not only among erudite men, as Hermes was, but also in popular manifestations as theater or art. The Sibyls, as it happened with Hermes, also guaranteed a more “open mind” to the non-Christian world, including not only that of pagans, but to a lesser extent also that of Jews and Muslims.

In their first incarnation, the Sibyls were characters of Greek and Roman mythology, usually associated with Apollo, who had the power of divination.⁴⁹⁵ The Romans preserved from the monarchy period the famous *Sibylline Books*, a collection of Oracles from the different Sibyls recognized in Antiquity, and they consulted them in moments of crisis.⁴⁹⁶ The fame of the Sibyls was again extolled when a series of texts called the *Sibylline Oracles* appeared in the Mediterranean world. The *Sibylline Oracles*

were composed between the second century BCE and the seventh century CE and assembled toward the end of that period by a Byzantine editor. About half the material in the existing collection can be traced to Jewish communities in Egypt, other parts to Syria and Asia Minor. The prevailing theme is Jewish apocalyptic in a loosely pagan framework with some Christian interpolation (Copenhaver 1992, xxix).

As can be seen, the *Sibylline Oracles* appeared at the same time, place, and cultural environment as the books attributed to Hermes Trimegistus. These allegedly prophetic texts had a messianic

⁴⁹³ “His *Divine Institutes* contains hundreds of brief quotations from six books of the *Sibylline Oracles*, and he transmitted to the middle ages the names of the ten Sibyls in their traditional configuration.” (Copenhaver 1992 xxxi)

⁴⁹⁴ “Y luego pone a las Sibilas, de suerte, que sintió del, que merecía ser contado no con los demás filósofos, ni con los poetas, sino con las Sibilas, porque su bondad de vida, y dotrina de Dios conformaba con ellas en todo, y así no es mucho arbitrar que en todo ha de ser contado con ellas” (*Mercurius* 597).

⁴⁹⁵ Their status was less institutionalized or official than the famous Pythia of Delphi.

⁴⁹⁶ The books were kept in the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol and guarded by a group of men specifically appointed (first the *decemviri*, after the *quindecemviri*). When the temple burned in 83 BC, the books were lost. The Roman Senate sent envoys in 76 BC to replace them with a collection of similar oracular sayings, in particular collected from Ilium, Erythrae, Samos, Sicily, and Africa. This new Sibylline collection was deposited in the restored temple, together with similar sayings of native origin, e.g. those of the Sibyl at Tibur (the ‘Tiburtine Sibyl’)

nature and, as the hermetic writings, served as a bridge between different religious traditions.⁴⁹⁷ If they were prophets, they could have received knowledge of God, and thus be saved. The pagan Sibyls were not only assimilated into the Christian lore, but also became a central religious, literary, and even artistic motif for centuries (i.e. from Virgil to the Sistine Chapel.)

The Sibyls also had a symbolic importance for the royal power in modern European states, especially Spain. The most important prophecy ascribed to the Sibyls by a Latin author is in Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* (I, 29), which pretends to be a rendering of the words of the Sibyl of Cumae.⁴⁹⁸ Virgil wrote in prophetic terms about the completion of a cosmic cycle and the arrival of a new Golden Age, in which the rebirth of nature and mankind would coincide with the birth of a child who once of age would become divine and eventually rule over the world. According to Virgil, a Virgin-Goddess identified with Astrea would also return to the world. Early Christians (including the Emperor Constantine⁴⁹⁹) and the Church Fathers such as Lactantius or Augustine identified this child with Jesus Christ, born from a Virgin. Most scholars think that this child refers to a powerful political figure, probably the emperor Augustus. This imperial side in the myth of Astrea made her an important figure in Renaissance Italy; later, she was included in praises for kings such as Charles V of Spain, Elizabeth II of England, or Henry IV of France. Frederick de Armas has studied the myth of Astrea and its enormous importance in early modern Spanish Literature (*El retorno de Astrea*). De Armas relates the numerous references about Astrea in writers like Calderón with the political aspirations of King Philip IV. I suggest that Patón was aware of the strong point he was making by associating the ancient prophetesses with Hermes because the Sibyl of Cumae was officially sanctioning the imperial power of Spanish kings.

If there existed any doubts about Hermes's salvation, by associating him with the Sibyls, like Lactantius had done before, Patón was dispelling those concerns, because both political and divine powers graced the Sibyls. In fact, Lactantius' chapter on the Sibyls, which Patón refers to, starts with the words "Now let us pass to divine testimonies," but the first to be mentioned are those by Trimegistus.⁵⁰⁰ In this manner, Hermes is considered more than a simple philosopher, and

⁴⁹⁷ "Like the *Orphic Rhapsodies* and *Chaldaean Oracles*, the *Sibylline Oracles* are poetic in form (hexameter verse) and their subject is the standard apocalyptic catalogue of public disasters, set in the context of universal history from Creation through Judgement to the Golden Age beyond" (Copenhaver 1992, xxix)

⁴⁹⁸ "Vergil may have been influenced by a Jewish Sibyl in his fourth Eclogue" (Copenhaver xxx)

⁴⁹⁹ According to Eusebius's *Life of Constantine* (IV, 32), the emperor expressed this idea in a speech delivered to the Roman Senate.

⁵⁰⁰ "En Latancio Firmiano se ha de notar una cosa y es, que habiendo puesto en el capítulo quinto del libro primero de sus instituciones, a los poetas y filósofos profanos, queriendo poner a Trimegisto le da lugar entre los divinos en el

becomes a divine interpreter of God’s designs— at the same level as the Sibyl prophetesses, who were considered the female counterpart of the prophets from the Old Testament.⁵⁰¹ Therefore, both Hermes and the Sibyls would be the closest a pagan could be to a biblical figure.

Patón insists that the exemplary life of both Hermes and the Sibyls made them to be regarded as saints (the paradigm of virtue to Christendom):

[A]ccording to this foundation and doctrine many men regard as true the salvation of the Sibyls, and even consider them among the saints, because it is known that they lived in the natural law, they worshipped an only God, they were virgins and had many other virtues, and they deserved that God revealed them so many secrets and articles of faith, particularly about the humanity, birth, death and judgment of Jesus Christ, man-God, our good, as it is said in the Histories (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 592).⁵⁰²

As if trying to quickly articulate again the problem of paganism, Jiménez Patón alludes here to its three main points about the Sibyls: they lived virtuously—as virgins— according to natural law; for this reason, God granted them the knowledge of Jesus Christ—including “secrets” and Christian dogmas—; finally, having both virtue and knowledge, they were saved.

However, not all Church Fathers were so convinced about the salvation of selected pagans. As I have mentioned above, Lactantius lived in a moment of transition, in which pagans and Christians coexisted in spheres of power. The situation was very different a century later with Augustine (354-430). The power of pagans had significantly decreased, as well as Christian tolerance (represented by Augustinian thought). Augustine showed a considerably tighter stance on the salvation of pagans, and clearly expressed his support for the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* doctrine in the sixth chapter of *Sermo ad Caesariensis Ecclesiae plebem*.⁵⁰³ The immense authority of the saint of Hippo, the most important of the Church Fathers, made his opinion about the salvation of the pagans the central milestone about this problem for centuries. However, since

capítulo siguiente, y le cuenta entre las Sibilas, y comienza el capítulo con estas palabras. *Nunc ad divina (testimonia) transeamus*, y pone el primero a nuestro Hermes Trimegisto.” (*Mercurius* 596)

⁵⁰¹ In this fashion, Lactantius had stated “But that these things (such as Christ’s birth or the final judgement) where thus about to happen, was announce both by the utterances of the prophets and by the predictions of the Sibyls” (*Divine Institutes* I, 6, 18)

⁵⁰² “Con este fundamento, y doctrina ponen por cierta la salvación de las Sibilas, y aun en el número de las santas: porque se sabe que vivieron en ley natural adoraron un solo Dios, fueron virgines, y tuvieron otras muchas virtudes, y fueron dinas que Dios les revelase tantos secretos, y artículos de nuestra fe, particularmente de la humanidad, nacimiento, vida y muerte y juicio del Salvador Christo Dios hombre bien nuestro. Como en las historias consta”(Mercurius 592).

⁵⁰³ *Extra Ecclesiam catholicam totum potest praeter salutem. Potest habere honorem, potest habere Sacramenta, potest cantare Alleluia, potest respondere Amen, potest Evangelium tenere, potest in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti fidem habere et praedicare: sed nusquam nisi in Ecclesia catholica salutem poterit invenire* (*Sermo* 6:2)

Augustine himself showed an ambiguous or contradictory view in many passages of his works, his words could be interpreted in a more favorable light for the pagans, including Hermes Trimegistus, to whom Augustine referred on many occasions. Patón makes one of those skewed interpretations of Augustine in his *Answer*.

A Biased Interpretation of Augustine

As we have just seen, Paton explains that both Hermes and the Sibyls— ‘divine’ pagans, according to Lactantius—were saved because of their monotheism and virtues. In a similar way, Patón exposes Augustine’s opinion about Plato and Socrates, and then relates them back to Trimegistus. As a matter of fact, Augustine had an equivocal relationship with Platonism, allegedly one of his main influences, and thus it is relatively easy for Patón to interpret Augustine’s words in his own favor, and even ascribe to the saint words that he actually never said. Patón sustains that

some men accept as true the salvation of Socrates and Plato, because saint Augustine calls the one divine, and praises him, and about the other he affirms that, because he only wanted to worship one god, denying the existence of many gods, he died publicly convicted (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 592).⁵⁰⁴

Augustine dealt with Socrates and Plato several times, for instance, in Book VIII of *The City of God*, which contains a history of Greek Philosophy. There he also offers his explanation of Socrates’ conviction and execution, to which Patón refers. Actually, Augustine merely thought that Socrates’ forced suicide was possibly not related to his attacks against polytheism, but to his distinctive way of teaching and the anger he aroused against himself for using it.⁵⁰⁵ We cannot find a passage where Augustine calls Plato ‘divine,’ as Patón maintains, or where he clearly

⁵⁰⁴ “Por esta doctrina quieren algunos opinar la salvación de Sócrates y Platón: que san Agustín llama al uno divino y le alaba, y del otro afirma que por no querer adorar más que un Dios, negando el haber muchos, murió sentenciado públicamente” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 592).

⁵⁰⁵ Augustine sustains that: “It is evident, however, that he (Socrates) hunted out and pursued, with a wonderful pleasantness of style and argument, and with a most pointed and insinuating urbanity, the foolishness of ignorant men, who thought that they knew this or that, sometimes confessing his own ignorance, and sometimes dissimulating his knowledge, even in those very moral questions to which he seems to have directed the whole force of his mind. And hence there arose hostility against him, which ended in his being calumniously impeached, and condemned to death.” *Constat eum tamen inperitorum stultitiam scire se aliquid opinantium etiam in ipsis moralibus quaestionibus, quo totum animum intendisse uidebatur, uel confessa ignorantia sua uel dissimulata scientia lepore mirabili disserendi et acutissima urbanitate agitasse atque uersasse. Vnde et concitatis inimicitii calumniosa criminatione damnatus morte multatus est.* (*The City of God*, VIII, 3)

accepted his salvation or that of Socrates.⁵⁰⁶ It is indeed true that Augustine concedes a huge importance to Plato and the Platonic philosophers. In a famous passage of his *Confessions*, he affirms that he was reading Platonic books in Milan just before the crucial moment of his conversion in 386,⁵⁰⁷ and in a no less crucial passage of *The City of God* (VIII, 5), he defended that nobody came closer to them (the Christians) than the Platonists. However, Augustine criticized Plato's followers on many other occasions.⁵⁰⁸

Despite Patón's favorable interpretation of Augustine in the *Answer*, the saint had placed an obstacle in the path of the salvation of pagans that would last centuries. Following the equation that I explained before, the pagans could have knowledge but, since they were motivated by their pride, they would lack 'real' virtues, and so they would be unable to be saved.⁵⁰⁹ As Marenbon (30) points out, an important accusation by Augustine against pagan philosophy in general and Platonists in particular had to do with pride, which he counters with Christ's humility. The seeds of this idea came from Paul's letters. We can find this thought in Augustine's *Sermon against the pagans* (38), where he sets humility as one of the conditions under which "someone living before Christ would be given the revelation needed in order to be saved" (Marenbon 33). Augustine had explained that virtues are founded on charity, and so no one could be virtuous in the proper sense without faith, which is a prerequisite for charity. As Franco Beatrice (252) notes, Augustine recognized the success of the Platonists in reaching the natural knowledge of God; however, "instead of offering God the true worship, they foolishly fell into idolatry because of their intellectual pride" (*Confessions* VII, 9, 14), an idea close to the letters of Paul I mentioned before.

Therefore, Augustine denied the possibility of pagan salvation except for those who really were "hidden Christians" (Marenbon 41). Consequently, although there could have existed some

⁵⁰⁶ However, the "divinity" of Plato can be found in other authorities, distinctly, in Agostino Steuco. Steuco's most famous book is *De perennis philosophia*, which coined that term and Patón quotes later in the *Answer*. Steuco talk about the 'divinus Plato' in *De per. phil.*, III, 10; fol. 52V, in quoting from Syrianus (See Schmitt "Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz" 519).

⁵⁰⁷ *procurasti mihi... quosdam Platoniorum libros ex graeca lingua in latinam versos* (*Conf. VII, 9, 13*). The very concept of 'conversion,' and determining to which exactly Augustine converted is a matter of discussion among scholars, because it could be a conversion into Christianity or even Neo-Platonism. The nuances and discrepancies about this conversion have been studied by Boone (2015 151 & ss) and the possible author(s) of those Platonic books (probably Porphyry), by Franco Beatrice (1989).

⁵⁰⁸ In *The City of God* IX he attacks the Platonists of his time, because they believed in worshiping lesser supernatural beings (like angels and demons), to make them serve as mediators between man and God. To justify his critics, Augustine uses the testimony of the prominent Neoplatonist, Porphyry, in his *Letter to Anebo* about practices as theurgy.

⁵⁰⁹ Augustine puts it plainly in *Against Julianus* (IV.2): "Virtues should be distinguished from vices not by their functions (*officia*) but by their ends (*fines*). See Marenbon (35)

men who accepted as true the salvation of Socrates and Plato, Augustine was not among them—though Patón seems tacitly to ascribe this belief to him. Platonists could have been closer to Christian thought than other schools of Philosophy, but in his writings Augustine never completely identified with them, not even with its founder, Plato himself. However, as we will see, Patón could find a favorable opinion to the salvation of Plato in one of his favorite contemporary authors.⁵¹⁰ The ‘divinity’ of Plato was not a minor rhetorical issue; to believe in it would necessarily imply that he was saved through the special assistance of God or “grace,” and Augustine never held that.

To be in a state of grace means that a human acts out of a disposition of charity, the third of the three theological virtues which cannot be achieved through use or effort, but are gifted by God. The first two of these virtues are faith and hope. As Marenbon explains, “faith in God and in Christ, the Redeemer, leads to the hope of salvation and that, in turn, to a state of charity, in which a person acts from love of God” (13). Augustine maintained that, properly speaking, virtues are founded on charity and so no one can be virtuous, in the strict sense, by lacking Christian faith, which is a condition for charity. Without knowing about the Incarnation there cannot be faith in the Redeemer, and without that faith, pagans’ virtues lack charity, and so they could not be saved. Augustine singles out this doctrine in his *Letter 102*, where he was allegedly replying to Porphyry, a fellow Platonist, after the latter had asked why Christ waited so much to incarnate, and thus to allow people to be saved (Marenbon 33). Augustine answers that “from the beginning of the human race, whoever believed in him and in some way understood him and lived piously and justly according to his commands, whenever and wherever they might be, were without doubt saved by him” (*Letter 102* II.12). Augustine hints at the possibility of salvation for any pagan, since whoever was worthy would be given the necessary revelation.

As Patón knew very well, since Jesus supposedly was revealed to the Sibyls, their salvation was assured. Actually, as it happens with Hermes, Augustine refers to the Sibyls in different passages of his works both to praise and to criticize them. In *The City of God*, the saint of Hippo shows that he is perfectly aware of texts belonging to the Sibylline Oracles; as Roessli (267) points out, Augustine maintained (*The City of God* 23) that even though the Sibyls belong to pagan history and not the history of the people of God narrated in the *Old Testament*, they enjoyed a privileged status because they announced the coming of Jesus Christ and rejected the cult of the

⁵¹⁰ Domingo de Soto, whom I will introduce later.

false gods and the idols—because of which, they have to be considered members of *The City of God*.

Augustine was the one most responsible for the long-lasting popularity of the Sibyls in the Spanish and European Middle Ages, and Patón takes advantage of this fact in his attempt to associate Mercurius with the Sibyls. In *The City of God* (18, 23) Augustine includes a fragment of a longer poem, which has been related to other *Sibylline Oracles*.⁵¹¹ In its original Greek, the initial letters of the verses used by Augustine formed an Acrostic, which says “Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour.”⁵¹² The number of verses, 27, a multiple of three, would also be a sign of the revelation of the Trinity to the Sibyls. There is a direct thread that links this poem to medieval Spain after it was included in its entirety in the famous sermon of *Quodvultdeus* entitled *Contra Judæos, Paganos, et Arianos* or *Sermo de Symbolo*.

This poem, falsely attributed to Augustine, was composed in the fifth or sixth century during the apogee of the Arian heresy and includes a series of prophecies set aside to prove the divinity of Jesus. In consort with ten biblical prophets, the Sermon includes three pagans: Nebuchadnezzar (because of the prophecy of *Daniel* 3, 91), Virgil (due to the Sibyl’s prophesy of *Bucolics* 4,7) and the Sibyls, who sang a version of Augustine’s poem included in *The City of God*. This Sermon is the direct source for the famous medieval liturgical drama *Ordo prophetarum*. This piece has been represented in churches all over Europe—and especially Spain—for centuries.⁵¹³

Although Patón focused on Augustine’s favorable passages about Hermes and the Sibyls, they were not always so positive. As we will see, Hermes’s adversaries would focus on those less lenient passages. Levitin (490) reminds us that among those adversaries of the pagan sages who used Augustine was the protestant scholar Casaubon (1559-1640), famous for his important attack on the Hermetic writings.⁵¹⁴ One of Casaubon’s toeholds was Augustine’s *Contra Faustum*. There the saint questions both the Sibyls and Hermes:

If any truth about God or the Son of God is taught or predicted in the Sibyl or Sibyls, or in Orpheus, or in Hermes, if there ever was such a person, or in any other heathen poets, or theologians, or sages, or philosophers, it may be useful for the refutation of pagan error, but cannot lead us to believe in these writers. For while they spoke, because they could not help it, of the God whom we worship, they either taught their fellow-countrymen to

⁵¹¹ This poem was translated into Latin from Greek by Flaccianus and attributed to the sibyl of Erythræ, who was supposed to know more about Jesus than any of her Sibyl companions.

⁵¹² *Iesous Chreistos Theou vios soter, quod est Latine, Iesus Christus Dei filius saluator* (*The City of God* 18, 23).

⁵¹³ From the 12th century until now.

⁵¹⁴ I will come back to Casaubon in last chapter.

worship idols and demons, or allowed them to do so without daring to protest against it (Augustine's *Contra Faustum*, in Levitin 490).

Patón ignores this passage, although it is difficult to determine if he really knew it. Most significantly, however, he avoided Augustine's long dissertation on Hermes Trimegistus in *The City of God* (VIII-IX), in which he even quotes long excerpts of the Hermetic *Asclepius*. Since Augustine casts the shadow of idolatry over Trimegistus there, Patón avoids this passage; instead, he uses many other sources which refute or interpret an Augustine more favorably inclined toward Hermes. Since Patón focuses the discussion of this issue on contemporary authors, I will come back to it later (to keep my chronological exposition). I just want to resume here by insisting that Patón uses a biased interpretation of Augustine, which ignores the references made by the saint to the pagans' lack of virtue, as well as the attacks against both Hermes and the Sibyls. Nonetheless, Patón could also resort to late medieval thinkers who adopt a more constructive stance in pagan matters.

Aquinas on the Salvation of Pagans

Although Augustine's opinion about pagans' general lack of virtue prevailed during the Middle Ages, there were also some theologians who thought that there were genuine pagan virtues. Accordingly, while most theologians thought that their virtues would not lead to salvation, the important French thinker, Abelard (1079-1142), suggested that "pagan virtues might lead to salvation, indirectly, by gaining those who cultivate them a special divine revelation of the articles of faith" (Marenbon 161). Therefore, for Abelard, virtues permitted revelation and so knowledge of Christ. However, Abelard required for salvation explicit knowledge of Incarnation, the main article of faith (Marenbon 168), but this raised important problems of interpretation. A rigid application of the norm would prevent almost all pagans from being saved.

In contrast, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) adopted the theory of the implicit faith, which provided the main medieval assumption for the salvation of pagans. Since Aquinas' opinion about the salvation of pagans (including Hermes) enjoyed the widest recognition and he was the key authority for Spanish Neo-Scholasticism—even above Augustine who was preferred by most Protestants—, Patón relies heavily on his judgment about this topic.⁵¹⁵ Thus, Patón recalls

⁵¹⁵ On the other side, as Marenbon points out "the strong influence of Augustine on many Protestant authors made it comparatively easy for them to resolve the Problem of Paganism, to their own satisfaction, in an Augustinian way"

precisely Aquinas' opinion about implicit faith when he mentions in the *Answer*, as I examined before, that it was necessary for the salvation of the gentiles who kept properly the natural law "to have faith, at least implicitly, about the coming of the Savior." To support this claim Patón adduces a passage of the *Summa Theologica* (II-II, 2, 7) in which the saint specifically mentions the Sibyls.⁵¹⁶ In this passage, against the opinion of Dionysius Areopagita⁵¹⁷ and others after him, especially Abelard, Aquinas argues that the gentiles did not need explicit faith in the mystery of Christ to be saved; it was enough for them to have implicit faith. As a learned man of his time, Patón is perfectly aware of the problems which proving implicit faith carried. Fortunately, he also knew that, according to both Augustine and Aquinas, the knowledge of some articles of faith by the Sibyls was explicit through revelation. This would put the prophetesses above most pagans, including some exemplary ones, such as Plato or Cato. By associating Hermes with the Sibyls, Patón also includes him in this "chosen among the chosen" group of pagans with explicit knowledge of Christ.

Trying to solidify his association between Hermes, Job, and the Sybils, Patón insists that Aquinas considered all of them as prophets of the gentiles. Patón quotes Aquinas when he argues that: *a revelation about Christ was made to many of the gentiles, as it is clear from what they predicted. For instance, Job 19:25 says, I know that my redeemer lives. Similarly, as Augustine points out, the Sybil announced beforehand certain things about Christ (Mercurius Trimegistus 593).*⁵¹⁸ Immediately after and as Patón mentions, Aquinas, records a legend of the time of Constantine and his mother Irene when:

a certain tomb was discovered in which lay a man with a golden breast plate on which it was written, «The Christ will be born of a virgin and I believe in him. Oh, sun, during the time of Irene and Constantine you will see me again. Still, if some were saved to whom no revelation

(6). For this reason, in the sixteenth century "a radically dismissive attitude to pagan philosophy would become common amongst Protestants, inspired by Luther" (Marenbon 243).

⁵¹⁶ "Era necesario también para que se salvaran los gentiles, que así guardaban la ley natural rectamente, tener fe (al menos implícita) de la venida del Salvador, como lo enseña santo Tomás por estas palabras" (*Mercurius* 593)

⁵¹⁷ Dionysus the Areopagite was a judge of the Areopagus in Athens who according to the *Acts of the Apostles* was converted by Paul. In the 6th century appeared a series of writings attribute to him with a Neoplatonic flavor. Recently those writings were recognized as *pseudepigrapha*, calling their author Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Aquinas dedicated many fragments of his *Summa* to comment or refute passages of Dionysus, like here is doing with the Angelology work *De Coelesti Hierarchia*.

⁵¹⁸ *Ad tertium dicendum, quod multis Gentilium facta fuit revelatio de Christo, ut patet per ea, quae praedixerunt. Nam Job. 19. Dicit: scio, quod redemptor meus vivit: Sybilla etiam pronuntiavit quaedam de Christo, ut Augustinus dicit (Summa Theologica II-II, 2, 7, quoted by Patón, Mercurius 593)*

*had been made, they were not saved without faith in a mediator (Mercurius Trimegistus 593).*⁵¹⁹

Even though it was well known that the emperor Constantine believed in the Sibyls,⁵²⁰ Patón also introduces a supplementary interpretation about the occupant of that mysterious tomb which we cannot find in Aquinas: “most people say that it was Plato, and others, one of the Sibyls.”⁵²¹ Once again, Patón wants to stress that the Sibyls and Hermes shared the knowledge about the coming of Jesus Christ, which they would have announced in a prophetic way. As I will show later, Patón extends this knowledge to the Holy Trinity, which entails a much more complicated theological demonstration. Again, by reinforcing the analogy with the Sibyls, whom important figures of the Church had defended before, and who were consecrated in Spanish culture, Patón is securing Hermes’s salvation

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas opened the logical possibility of salvation for pagans as well because, as Tan (288) points out, he “worked out a theology which allows for the possibility of salvation of those who were unbaptized before death by arguing for a distinction between those who lack baptism in reality (*in re*) and those who lack in desire (*in voto*).” That is, had they achieved the possibility, some pagans would have been baptized, and thus they can be saved. In addition, Aquinas opened more possibilities for pagans when he affirms that truth can be known through both reason (natural revelation) and faith (supernatural revelation). *Supernatural* revelation has its origin in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is made available through the teaching of the prophets. Therefore, Jewish and Arab philosophers could have come to the truth through reason, though not to the higher truths of faith.⁵²² But as many other medieval thinkers, Aquinas considered that, superseding philosophers—either pagan, or Jewish, or Muslim—the Sibyls, as pagan prophetesses, received and transmitted explicit knowledge of Christ.

However, as Patón indicates, either with explicit or implicit faith, the gentiles needed to keep properly the natural law to be saved (*Mercurius 593*). Both natural reason and natural law

⁵¹⁹ *Invenitur etiam in historiis Romanorum quod tempore Constantini Augusti et Irenae matris eius inventum fuit quoddam sepulcrum in quo iacebat homo auream laminam habens in pectore in qua scriptum erat, 'Christus nascetur ex virgine et credo in eum. O sol, sub Irenae et Constantini temporibus iterum me videbis'. Summa Theologica II-II, 2, 7.*

⁵²⁰ Probably influenced by Lactantius, who worked for him; Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* also says that he made a speech about them.

⁵²¹ “[q]ue los más dicen fue Platón, y otros alguna sibila” (*Mercurius 593*).

⁵²² In the *Summa Contra Gentiles IV, 1* he called this a “a twofold truth” about religious claims, “Since there exists a twofold truth concerning the divine being, one to which the inquiry of the reason can reach, the other which surpasses the whole ability of the human reason.”

appear many times in Patón's *Answer*, thus, it is important to clarify this concept which Patón supports through Aquinas. For instance, Patón affirms that “worshiping many Gods contradicts *natural reason*;⁵²³ that “it was also necessary for the salvation of the gentiles, who thus kept *natural law*;⁵²⁴ that “the gentiles who had this belief in the true God and lived well were saved, through the *natural law* before the coming of Jesus Christ;⁵²⁵ and, finally, he refers to “the *law of nature*; in which law lived our Trimegistus.”⁵²⁶ Let us interpret what Patón meant.

We have defined natural law as that which compelled all pagans before Moses, and also those who could not have access to the Gospel. However, natural law also applies to Jews and Christians. But where does this rule of natural law come from? Juan Cruz⁵²⁷ reminds that, according to Aquinas—and the Spanish neo-Scholastics and Patón who followed him—, natural law is contained firstly in eternal law, and second, in the judgment of natural reason, and the violation of natural law is the violation of the eternal law as the reason and will of God. Therefore, in doubt or absence of the Old and New Laws, we should use our natural reason to discern the precepts of natural law, which is, in Aquinas's famous definition: “the participation of the eternal law in the rational creature” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II.94).⁵²⁸ For Aquinas, law is always a dictate of reason from the ruler to the community he rules, and God rules the world. Besides, a law is not only in the reason of a ruler, but may also be in the thing that is ruled. In the case of the eternal law, the beings created (by God as the ruler) carry that Law imprinted on them through their nature or essence (*Summa Theologiae* I-IIae, 91: 2).

As the rest of humans, pagans have an inborn knowledge of God, ruler and legislator of all creatures. This knowledge of God comes from the natural light he imprints in every human's soul (Aquinas would develop this idea in his *Summa contra gentiles* III: 38).⁵²⁹ Since we are capable

⁵²³ “Porque el adorar muchos dioses contradice a la razón natural” (591)

⁵²⁴ “Era necesario también para que se salvaran los gentiles, que así guardaban la ley natural” (593).

⁵²⁵ “Y los gentiles, que tenían esta creencia del Dios verdadero, y vivían bien se salvaban, por la ley natural antes de la venida de Cristo” (593)

⁵²⁶ “de la ley de naturaleza; en cuya ley vivió nuestro Trismegisto” (600).

⁵²⁷ In González (59)

⁵²⁸ The eternal law is an *Old Testament* concept with pre-Israelite origins, which paradoxically Christian philosophers and theologians had to reconcile with extra-biblical pagan philosophy. As Niditch and Geller (310) points out the term “eternal law” is related to priestly religions in the ancient World, which “were viewed as timeless, rooted in the origin of the cosmos. The priestly writers share this viewpoint, as is made clear by their extensive use of creation theology in the Tetrateuch in regard to the Sabbath and the temple.” The “eternal law” is used specially for the priestly and cultic order (cf. Exod. 28:43), “something never said about the covenant in the Deuteronomic texts” (Niditch and Geller 310).

⁵²⁹ As we will see, this concept was profusely used by defenders of American pagans as Las Casas.

of doing it, as human beings we must exercise our natural reason to discern the precepts of natural law. In this way, we will be able to discover what is best for us in order to achieve the end towards which our nature leans: in this case, salvation. According to Patón's logic, since Trimegistus was an outstanding ruler for the Egyptians, he was also able to understand and apply natural law and thus to achieve God's gift of salvation. We are able to recognize Trimegistus' good deeds through the natural law imprinted by God in our souls. Therefore, by constantly reminding us of Trimegistus' obedience to natural law precepts, Patón spurs our natural reason to help us recognize the salvation of the ancient Egyptian.

As we will see in the next section, Patón relies on the Spanish Neo-scholastic adherents of Aquinas, who developed these concepts to their most precise expression. Moreover, as Marenbon explains "Aquinas's thought was a shaping force behind the theology of the Council of Trent, called to respond to the challenge of Protestantism" (238). Therefore, in the tridentine Spain of Patón, natural law—as conceived by Aquinas—was even more rigorous when applied to ancient and new pagans than it had been in days of the ancient and medieval Church Fathers. The interpretation of natural law, however, became much more open ended, as we will soon see.

Conclusion.

Aquinas' vision of unity between Christian theology and (pagan) philosophy was no longer prevalent in medieval European universities after the famous 1277 prohibitions.⁵³⁰ This situation would not change until the end of the fifteenth century. Subsequent important thinkers, such as Duns Scotus (1266-1308) or William of Ockham (1285-1347), defended a stricter separation of theology and philosophy; they would be the founders of the so called *via moderna* (Marenbon 157) opposing the *via antiqua*, represented by Aquinas' doctrines.⁵³¹ In the following centuries, "the defenders of pagan Wisdom turned out to be the followers of the *via antiqua*" (Marenbon 237). Defenders of the *via antiqua*, such as Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), opened the

⁵³⁰ In that year Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris, published a document written by a commission of Theologians, "listing 219 propositions which he forbade, on pain of excommunication, from being held or defended" (Marenbon 149). Among them there were many Aristotelian positions taught by Aquinas' followers.

⁵³¹ Both were involved in the famous *Wegestreit* or scholastic conflict between nominalism and realism (represented, respectively, by the *via moderna* and the *via antiqua*).

way for future humanist defenders of the Ancient Theology and *philosophia perennis* authors, such as Ficino and Mirandola.⁵³²

Ultimately, the final victory of the *via antiqua* in the Catholic world was especially important for Spain. For example, Peter Crockaert (c. 1465–1514), from the University of Paris, substituted the *Sentences* of Peter the Lombard for Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* as the textbook for his classes. Crockaert was the teacher of Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546), the founder of the *School of Salamanca*, who did the same as his master when he came back to Spain and started teaching his brilliant students, such as Melchor Cano (1509-1560), Domingo Báñez (1528-1604), or Francisco Suárez (1548-1617). Vitoria was also the professor of Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), whom I will introduce in the next section because he is, indeed, the main authority in theological and juridical issues for Patón.

This reverence for Aquinas among the academic Spanish intellectual elite allowed for a more open view about pagan wisdom. In fact, it also expanded the medieval respect for Arab and Jewish philosophers (for instance, Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides), whom Aquinas used extensively. Paradoxically, some of those philosophers were themselves from Spain, or known to Aquinas through translations made there. It was precisely the prestige of those translations which had compelled the saint to affirm that the practice of philosophy was the faithful pursuit of wisdom wherever it might be found, and which included not only that of the pagans, but also of Jews and Arabs.⁵³³ Ultimately, I argue that Patón adopts precisely these values of tolerance from the School of Salamanca.⁵³⁴ In the second part of this chapter, I will show how Patón added to his ancient sources the theological principles of the Salamanca School developed from Aquinas’s thought, which provided him with the definitive intellectual tools to prove Trimegistus’ salvation.

PART II. Ancient and New Pagans in Salamanca’s Neo-Scholastic Theology

⁵³² As Marenbon (244) points out, the Ancient Theology “was a particular and extreme form of the path of unity, originally championed by Aquinas as his response to the Problem of Paganism.”

⁵³³ *Summa Contra Gentiles I, 2*: “While humans are finite, among all the human pursuits, the pursuit of wisdom is the ultimate end, and it is the most noble, and the most useful, and that pursuit that can provide the greatest joy. Through Philosophy, we humans are more like God and can apprehend the truth of things which calls us to a better life.” Actually, in the first half of sixteenth century, Arabic enjoyed renowned prestige in the University of Salamanca. Hernán Núñez “El Pinciano” (1475-1553), master and friend of El Brocense, offered courses of Arabic and Hebrew, which he had learned in Granada.

⁵³⁴ Although he limited the application of these values to pagans, and did not include Jews or Muslims.

Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, I explained how Patón refers to the ancient and medieval Church Fathers to justify the salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus. However, Patón is in fact mostly relying on the interpretation of contemporary Spanish theologians. This confidence in his fellow experts is hardly surprising because he studied at the University of Salamanca. The Salamanca School was at that time one of the most dynamic philosophical communities in Europe. Salamancan scholars rethought the structures of medieval Aristotelianism, which Aquinas had built up and applied them to contemporary social, juridical, political, and economic issues in Spain, including the conquest of the New World, which dramatically changed the scope and extension of the monarchy. In the second part of this chapter, I aim to show how Patón's arguments in the *Answer* are related to these philosophical and theological enhancements which accompanied the new age. As we have seen, for a long time, the salvation of pagans was a conflict between cultural heritage, learning, and Christian orthodoxy. For many centuries, pagans were mostly illustrious characters in books. Thus, learned men in the Middle Ages and early humanists dedicated their lives to copying, editing, and commenting on the works of ancient pagans. However, almost none of those Europeans had ever seen a pagan, nor had any pagans frequented their countries for over a thousand years. But at the end of the fifteenth century, an entire New World of pagans was 'discovered,' and the Old World had to learn how to deal with them.

The Valladolid debate (1550–1551) exemplified how Neo-Scholastic thought was applied to burning political problems like this one, and so I focus my following analysis on it. I will introduce its historical roots later. Here, I want to emphasize that it was the first moral debate by European colonizers to discuss the rights and treatment of their colonized people. In the Valladolid debate, Spanish thinkers commissioned by the Emperor discussed the right of Spain to conquer the Americas and to evangelize by force the pagans inhabiting there. Thus, the big religious and moral question was to determine the best way to save the American pagans. The debate led to the confrontation of two intellectual luminaries of the period: Bartolomé de Las Casas (c.1484-1566), known as the major defender of Native Americans, and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1573), who supported the subjugation of what he called inferior cultures by superior ones. A board of theologians also participated in The Valladolid debate to supervise the discussions and to take notes and summaries. Among those theologians was Domingo de Soto (1494-1560). Soto was a teacher at the University of Salamanca and, as I advanced above, he was also the main legal and

theological authority for Patón in the *Answer*. Even though Domingo de Soto was entrusted to record the sessions and tried to remain neutral—as one of the four theologians who acted as consultants—he clearly backed Las Casas’s thesis. Soto studied with Francisco de Vitoria, the founder of the Salamanca School, whose own critical examination of evangelization in the Americas precluded that of Las Casas and helped him develop his own arguments. Both Vitoria and Soto are considered the fathers of international law and rights. As it can be more appreciated, the salvation of pagans, with which Patón was dealing, was a crucial political matter.

When Patón, a former student in Salamanca (as Las Casas had been before him) decided to defend Mercurius Trimegistus and thus re-opened the possibility for pagans like him to be saved, a whole century of Spanish political, theological, and philosophical debates on the issue had already taken place—with its peak in the Valladolid debate. Mercurius Trimegistus himself was not absent from these early modern debates about American pagans; he was invoked as both example and argument, and so in spirit and intellect he continued to mediate between different religious traditions.

In what follows, I will demonstrate to what extent Patón’s *Answer* and Mercurius Trimegistus are connected with these significant debates about the evangelization of the Americas and the salvation of the pagans who lived there. For this purpose, I will relate Patón’s reasoning, which borrows from Soto, to the ideas that Bartolomé de las Casas exposes in his *An Apologetic Summarized History* (*Apologética historia sumaria*), in which Las Casas reflects on many of the ideas he defended in the Valladolid debate. In his book, Las Casas makes a comparison between the pagans of the New World and the pagans of Antiquity, among whom he includes Trimegistus, whose virtues, knowledge of Christ, and thus salvation, he presumes. Las Casas re-thinks and re-argues the ideas and concepts from Aquinas pertaining to the salvation of ancient pagans that we have just reviewed, and applies them to those in America. Paradoxically, his intellectual talent, supported by other luminaries as Soto, also made the salvation of some ancient pagans more reasonable than ever. As a result, by the time Patón defended the Christian salvation of Trimegistus, he had ample intellectual resources at his disposal.

Patón’s Main Authority on Pagans: Domingo de Soto

Early in his *Answer* Patón invokes the authority of Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), who was not a mere follower of Aquinas, but an authentic sage of his own time.⁵³⁵ Aside from his participation in the Valladolid debate, Soto was the confessor of Charles V, and played a leading role in many important political, social and religious events. For example, he had the honor of representing the Spanish Emperor in the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Therefore, Patón is employing the ideas of the true personification of the Counter Reformation. Patón underlines this fact before quoting him: “Soto, most grave father, and one of those who shone most in the Council of Trent, from the religion of our saint Dominic [...].”⁵³⁶ In short, Soto was one of those thinkers from the School of Salamanca who brought Aquinas’s ideas to the height of their expression, and especially the ideas about the salvation of pagans. An important distinction between both is that, for Aquinas, pagan salvation was closely related to the ancient knowledge he wanted to preserve, whereas for Soto, pagan salvation was also a crucial issue in the politics of his time—as applied to the Native Americans. However, Soto also discussed the subject of ancient pagans, and that is the part of his writings that interested Patón more in the *Answer*. For this reason, I will start with Soto’s thoughts on the salvation of renowned pagans.

Patón is quoting *On Justice and Law (De iustitia et iure 1553)*, a truly canonical legal text of early modern Europe, which Patón used on many occasions in other works.⁵³⁷ In this book, Domingo de Soto rejected the view that all pagans were sinners and idolaters, and defended the position that some of them could have been saved before having access to the Sacred Scriptures. Virtuous behavior is a precondition for this salvation, especially for those most illustrious pagans. In Soto’s words:

Therefore, if about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cato, Seneca and pagans of distinguished name you wish to find out if whether this kind (of men) had entered in the way of salvation, first it must be examined carefully by you, or by any way, if they committed vices so openly opposing natural reason so that they would not be able to use the shield of ignorance for themselves. For when you come across such men, it would be impiety to suspect that they had been saved. Therefore, none of the idolaters could be excused, nor (anyone) of those

⁵³⁵ His capabilities are proven by a saying current in sixteenth-century Spain and Europe: *qui scit Sotum, scit totum* (“Whoever knows Soto, knows everything.”) For instance, he is considered the discoverer of the law of acceleration in falling bodies, influencing Galileo who quoted him in his *Juvenilia* (Wallace 2004).

⁵³⁶ “Soto gravísimo padre, y uno de los que más lucieron en el Concilio de Trento de la religión del nuestro santo Domingo, dice a este propósito así” (*Mercurius* 592).

⁵³⁷ For instance, in the *Perfect Preacher*, Patón uses *De Iustitia et Iure*’s criteria to decide the alms that a preacher can receive (Madroñal 2009 168).

who indulged in adultery and theft or the worse sins (Soto *De iustitia et iure*, f.32v.; Patón quotes this excerpt with some typos and omissions in *Mercurius Trimegistus* 592).⁵³⁸

Reading this paragraph in relation to the concept of natural law that I discussed in the first half of this chapter allows one to understand better the scope of its precepts. In the absence of the Old (Mosaic) Law, and the New Law of Jesus, pagans have to obey natural law, whose precepts are all mandatory,⁵³⁹ and any violation must be punished. In addition—as one can see in this paragraph—if one fails to discern the vices of the gentiles when using one’s natural reason, one can be as guilty of impiety as sinful pagans were; as Patón quotes from Soto: *when you come across such men* (the truly sinful pagans), *it would be impiety to suspect that they had been saved*. Thus, one must think twice if certain sins do not prevent pagans from salvation. As can be observed, the question Patón is dealing with here was not an insignificant matter: had his argumentation against Fray Esteban in the *Answer* shown any flaws in delicate theological matters, he could be prosecuted for it—as it had happened with Patón’s master, El Brocense.

Here, Soto is talking about “pagans of distinguished name” such as Socrates or Plato, and trying to determine if their behavior opposed natural reason. Can we think, as Patón does, that the Dominican could include Mercurius Trimegistus among them? Indeed, we can affirm it, because later in this text Soto refers directly to the Egyptian. Following Isidore of Seville, when Soto addresses the origin of law he acknowledges Hermes as the first legislator of the Egyptians (as Moses was for the Jews).⁵⁴⁰ Therefore, Soto establishes a hierarchy of sins within natural law for

⁵³⁸ *Igitur, si de Socrate, Platone, Aristotele, Catone, Seneca et id genus ethnicis praecipui nominis explorare cupis fuerint ingressi salutis viam, perpendendum tibi primum est, an aliqua vitia admiserint tam aperte cum naturali ratione pugnantia; ut nullum sibi possent ignorantiae clipeum obtendere. Nam quos tales inveneris, impietas esset suspicari fuisse servatos. Quare nullus idololatrarum excusari potuit: Neque eorum, qui adulteria et furta, ac peiora flagitia ignorarunt (De iustitia et iure, f.32v.).*

⁵³⁹ Other medieval thinkers as Saint Buenaventura, Duns Scott, or Ockham thought that not all of them were mandatory.

⁵⁴⁰ “Among the mortals Moses was certainly the first publishing sacred laws, as having been given to him from the divinity. Because afterwards there existed the legislators about whom talks saint Isidore in book 5 (of Ethimologies). Phoroneus, he says, was the first who gave laws to the Greeks; Mercurius Trimegistus to the Egyptians, Solon to the Athenians, Lycurgus to the Lacedaemonians, and finally Numa Pompilius, who followed Romulus, to the Romans.” *Nempe inter mortales Moysem prius sacras promulgasse leges, ut divinitus sibi traditas. Nam post multo tempore illi extiterunt legistatores quos Isidorus initio 5 Libri refert. Phoroneus enim, inquit, rex Graecis primus leges constituit : Mercurius Trimegistus Aegyptiis: Atheniensibus Solon: Lycurgus Lacedaemoniis: ac deinde Romanis Numa Pompilius, qui successit Romulo (De Iustitia et Iure f.4.r).* This topic of Hermes as ‘divine’ lawgiver at the same level as Moses is also attested by Marsilio Ficino in his commentary of Plato’s *Minos, Concerning Law*: “For this reason, all the illustrious lawgivers have ascribed the discovery of laws to God, but through different names and means. Zoroaster, lawgiver to the Bactrians and Persians, acknowledged Horomasis; Trimegistus, lawgiver to the Egyptians, acknowledged Hermes; Moses, lawgiver to the Hebrews, most justly referred to God, the Father of all creation” (in Farndell 22).

pagans, and exemplifies those pagans with ancient philosophers. Since the most important of ancient philosophers would have been Trimegistus, Patón applies Soto's scale of sins to the Egyptian sage, and he looks for any of those sins in Trimegistus.

According to Soto, the worst sin committed by pagans is idolatry, the sin against God, then comes suicide, and after it, theft and adultery; pagans guilty of any of these sins could never be saved. It seems that Soto is following here the *distinction* between *flagitia* (sins against oneself) and *facinora* (sins against others). This distinction was established by Augustine in the *Confessions* and *De doctrina christiana*.⁵⁴¹ Soto first talks about theft and adultery, which are clearly sins against others (*facinora*); then he focuses on suicide, which is undoubtedly the worst of the *flagitia*, or crimes against oneself. Using this classification, Patón quotes ancient and modern sources that he has consulted about Hermes's life; subsequently, he concludes that none of those sins, which Soto considers prohibitive to the salvation of pagans, is found in Trimegistus:

Because about his life, no one writes that there was vice, he did not commit either serious felonies or small ones: neither adulteries, -or thefts are written about him, but laws that he established against these felonies and other ones, and he taught many virtues by word with examples by deeds; and because of that they gave him this name of Trimegistus (according to most men), which means three times great (*Mercurius* 596).⁵⁴²

Therefore, Trimegistus not only did not commit sins (neither *flagitia* nor *facinora*), but took measures against them as a legislator. Moreover, since he did not commit suicide, he is beyond suspicion of having been condemned because of that crime, unlike other renowned pagans of Antiquity, which Patón finds in Soto's account. In brief, Patón's *Answer* elevates Trimegistus to the level of Soto's other famous pagan philosophers. Comparing Soto's standards with Patón's allows us to examine the problem of paganism applied to individual cases. Soto affirms that:

it is possible that Socrates, even though he drank the poison, could have been saved, something which in reality is not allowed; he was believing without doubt that this law through which he was condemned was good. And similarly, it must be said about Seneca: to him the option of death was given by the tyrant. But legitimate ignorance does not excuse neither Cato nor anyone of those who brought death upon themselves. For the light of

⁵⁴¹ Quod agit indomita cupiditas ad corrumpendum animum et corpus suum, flagitium vocatur; quod autem agit ut alteri nocet, facinus dicitur. Et haec sunt duo genera omnium peccatorum; sed flagitia priora sunt (*De doct. Christ.* 3.10.16)

⁵⁴² "Porque de su vida no hay quien escriba fue vicio, no cometi6 delitos graves, ni pequenos: no se escriben del adulterios, ni hurtos, sino leyes que estableci6 contra estos delitos, y otros, y ense6o mucha virtud de palabra con ejemplos de obra, porque le dieron este nombre de Trimegisto (seg6n los m6s) que quiere decir *Termaximus*" (*Mercurius* 596)

*nature certainly teaches that it is not allowed for anyone to bring death upon himself (De iustitia et iure f.32v.).*⁵⁴³

Although Patón does not quote this section (which comes just after the part he does use), he clearly has it in mind, because in the *Answer* he compares Mercurius with exactly these “suicidal pagans” cited here. Alluding to Aquinas’ *Summa contra gentiles* III: 38, Soto explains that suicide contravenes the natural light which God placed in every man’s soul. Since by committing suicide, several famous pagans disobeyed natural law—and their own natural light—, Patón draws the conclusion that Hermes deserves salvation more than any of them. According to Patón—who clearly has Soto in mind— “neither of Socrates, nor of Plato, who others presumed were saved, it is possible to find so many reasons, although some can be found, and they are not weak” (*Mercurius*, 599).⁵⁴⁴ Who are those who, according to Patón, presume that Plato was saved? Among them is Domingo de Soto himself, who wrote: “However, Augustine strongly praises Plato in the book *About the True Religion*, because he kept continuous temperance. And it is certain that through this temperance he was received in the grace of God” (*De iustitia et iure* f.32v.).⁵⁴⁵

However, when it comes to Cato, Patón agrees with Soto who mentions the Roman politician in the quotation we have just seen. Notoriously, Cato decided to kill himself without a death sentence: “Nor will I follow the opinion of those who say that Cato was saved, because he died desperate, having given death to himself, in order to avoid falling into Caesar’s hands” (*Mercurius* 599).⁵⁴⁶ The younger Cato (95-46 BC), to whom Patón refers, was known for his moral integrity, Stoic philosophy, and for having committed suicide after the Roman Civil War—when he refused to live in a world ruled by his enemy, Julius Caesar.⁵⁴⁷ Plutarch also narrated Cato’s death in a famous passage of his *Parallel Lives*, one of Patón’s favorite books.⁵⁴⁸ This passage of Plutarch was so celebrated that it made Cato one of the most well-known suicidal examples of

⁵⁴³ *Sicuti & Socratem & si venenum epotauit, quod re vera non est licitum, potuit tamen ignorantia excusari, nimirum credens legem illam qua condemnatus est fuisse bonam. Et simile dicendum de Seneca: cui data a tyranno fuit mortis optio. At neque Catonem, neque aliorum quempiam qui mortem sibi consciverunt, legitima ignorantia excusat: lumen enim naturae plane docet nemini licere sibi mortem consciscere (De iustitia et iure f.32v.).*

⁵⁴⁴ “pues de Socrates, ni Platón, que otros presumieron haberse salvado, no se hallan tantas razones, aunque se hallan algunas y no débiles.” (*Mercurius* 599).

⁵⁴⁵ *Platonem autem August. in lib. de vera relig. valde comendat quod perpetuam servavit continentiam. Et certe est per quam verisimile in Dei gratiam fuisse receptum (De iustitia et iure f.32v.).*

⁵⁴⁶ “Ni seguiré la opinión de los que dicen se salvó Catón por haber muerto desesperado dándose el mismo la muerte por no venir a las manos de César.”

⁵⁴⁷ About Cato see, for instance, Hadot (2004:174)

⁵⁴⁸ According to Bosch et alia in their *Introduction to the Commentaries of Erudition* (Book 16th), by Jiménez Patón, Plutarch is the Greek author most used by him (out of other forty Hellenic writers).

Antiquity. Hence, popularity prevented Cato from gaining salvation. This famous Roman politician and thinker belonged to the same philosophical school as Seneca: Stoicism. As Hadot explains, posterity admired Cato “even as one of the rare Stoic sages to have ever existed” (173). This allegiance to the Stoic school made Cato and Seneca particularly relevant in the Neostoic context in which Patón is writing. As we will see in the next chapter, Patón also wants to make Trimegistus a model sage of Stoicism. Yet Trimegistus was saved, and Cato—as a suicidal example—was not.

In Soto’s account of famous philosophers, Patón finds a more defying rival for Trimegistus in Seneca, the other Stoic philosopher mentioned by the Dominican friar. Seneca’s status, which came from the Middle Ages, was especially relevant in Spain; for Patón, specifically, he was also the most important moral philosopher. I argue that in order to enable Trimegistus to compete with Seneca, who was born in Córdoba, in the south of Spain, Patón made the originally Egyptian Mercurius a Spanish wise man too. Soto accepts Seneca’s salvation because his suicide was an order of Nero; Patón accepts this opinion and underpins it with saint Jerome’s judgment:

and I would even refute what is said about the salvation of Seneca [i.e. that it happened], if I did not have (for him) such big love as saint Jerome had, who put him in the catalogue of saintly men. And if it happened that he was saved because of the familiarity that he had with Paul, he could not make use of the natural law, because for him the evangelic law had been promulgated because he had such a friendly relationship with the vessel of election, preacher of the peoples.⁵⁴⁹ Therefore, if he was saved he must have been necessarily baptized, and must have kept the law of God, loving him more than all things, the neighbor as himself, and believing the articles of the Christian faith with more esteem than those of the natural law, in which law lived Trimegistus with the straightness that we have proven with such weighty and true authorities (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 599-600).⁵⁵⁰

Consequently, there is a distinction between the requirements of salvation for Seneca and the ones for Trimegistus, because the Roman philosopher (4BC-65 AD) lived after the birth of Jesus Christ, and thus even had the opportunity to listen to some of his disciples. As it can be appreciated from these fragments, Patón puts the standards for Seneca at quite a higher level than for Trimegistus.

⁵⁴⁹ Luke in *Acts* describes Paul as “vessel of election,” which means “instrument chosen by God.”

⁵⁵⁰ “[Y] aun lo que se dice de la salvación de Seneca reparara, sino tuviera un tan grande amor como san Jerónimo, que lo pone en el catálogo de los varones santos, y si es así que se salvó este por la familiaridad que tuvo con san Pablo, no se pudo este ya valer de la ley natural, porque ya para él se había promulgado la ley evangélica, pues tan amigable trato tenía con el vaso de elección, predicador de las gentes. Así que si se salvó fue forzoso haberse batizado, y guardado la ley de Dios amándole más que a todas las cosas, al prójimo como a sí mismo, y creyendo los artículos de la fe Christiana con más distinción que los de la ley de naturaleza. En cuya ley vivió nuestro Trimegisto en la rectitud que habemos probado con tan graves y ciertas autoridades (*Mercurius* 599-600).”

Whereas Trimegistus submitted to the natural law, Seneca had to obey the New Law of Jesus. According to Patón, Seneca “must have kept the law of God, loving him more than all things, the neighbor as himself, and believing the articles of the Christian faith with more esteem than those of the natural law.” Thus, if Seneca was saved “he must have been necessarily baptized” out of his legendary friendship with Paul.⁵⁵¹

Yet, to enhance the status of Trimegistus, Patón goes a step further than Soto in one important point regarding Aristotle’s salvation. Soto, a strong supporter of Aquinas as he was, could never have admitted the condemnation of Aristotle, Aquinas’s admired philosopher. However, Patón asserts: “I will not count Aristotle but with the damned, because he had the heresy of [sustaining that] the world is *ab eterno* (and) he was vicious and a traitor, because to his king, lord, and disciple, he prescribed the poison and bane from which he died” (*Mercurius*, 599).⁵⁵² On the one hand, Patón’s judgment is due to one of those controversial issues which put Aristotle under suspicion during the Middle Ages: the eternal (and not created by God) nature of the world—other issues were the creation *ex materia* (and not *ex nihilo*) and the mortality of the Soul, etc. On the other hand, Patón is also echoing the ancient legend which attributed Alexander the Great’s poisoning to his master Aristotle. The Stagirite would have been disappointed with the authoritarian development of his pupil, who had also ordered the execution of Callisthenes, Aristotle’s nephew.⁵⁵³ Therefore, Patón sends Aristotle, ‘literally,’ to hell. As we have seen, Patón placed Trimegistus above some renowned pagans because he did not commit the vices and crimes of which he could have been convicted but also—as it will become more evident—, because he held greater virtues than the rest, and his knowledge of Christian dogma was better.

As I argue in this work, in the *Answer* Patón defends the salvation of Trimegistus with more effectiveness than at any previous moment of Christianity, and in this matter, he puts him above many other famous philosophers. In doing so, Patón ratifies for Christian authors like

⁵⁵¹ Moreschini (2005 405) informs us that Seneca’s notoriety among Christians appeared quite early. An apocryphal correspondence between Paul and Seneca appeared during Constantine’s period due to the religious syncretism of that age. Jerome knew those letters, which confirmed his conviction that there existed a real affinity between Seneca and Christianity. That is why Jerome included Seneca among the ‘famous men’ of the Christian religion (*Viris illustribus* 12).

⁵⁵² “Con los cuales no contaré yo a Aristóteles, sino con los condenados, porque tuvo la herejía de ser el mundo ab eterno, fue vicioso y traidor, pues a su Rey y señor y dicipulo le ordenó el veneno y ponzoña del que murió.” (*Mercurius*, 599)

⁵⁵³ This rumor came from some medieval works about the Macedonian conqueror. Like the Armenian version of the *Romance of Alexander the Great* by Pseudo-Callisthenes. But also from an insinuation included by Plutarch in his biography, who suggested Aristotle’s involvement in a plot against Alexander.

himself the use of works by pagans; the big issue at stake dating back to the apologists and Church fathers. According to these evidences, I argue that Patón was able to prove Trimegistus' salvation because he was using the intellectual apparatus provided by the contemporary Salamanca School as personified in Domingo de Soto.

Soto refined the arguments from the more 'progressive' side of Christian thought I introduced before—and especially those of Aquinas—regarding the salvation of ancient pagan authorities, and thus Patón grounded his own arguments on those of Aquinas as well. However, Soto also tackled the no less controversial issue of modern pagans. He was able to refine his logical demonstration about the salvation, knowledge and virtues of pagans along with his colleagues at the School of Salamanca and Las Casas (a former student there). Thus, all of them were able to help the Spanish monarchy with the problems and queries provoked by the conquering of the New World and by the new pagan subjects found there.

There is an intellectual link between Patón's sources and the contemporary debates about American pagans that I aim to illustrate in what follows. In the *Answer*, Patón quotes Soto's *De iustitia et iure*, which was published in 1553. The Valladolid debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda was held in 1551-1552. There, Domingo de Soto was the president of a commission of experts who had to determine who held the truth. Thus, Soto wrote *De iustitia et iure* (1553) just after, or even during the Valladolid debate (1551-1552) and the elaboration of the abstract he made about it. Undoubtedly, the important event and the deliberations which took place there influenced the composition of *De iustitia et iure*, in which he defends the salvation of the pagans and he mentions both the illustrious pagans of Antiquity, including Trimegistus, and the pagans of the New World. Marenbon notes that the same underlying questions “posed about the prodigiously intelligent and cultivated long-dead philosopher could be posed too about ordinary, unsophisticated and perhaps uneducated living pagans” (4). I am going to analyze this close relationship by examining the circumstances and intellectual setting of the Valladolid debate. In this way, I will also demonstrate the relevance of Trimegistus and the pagans he represented in another crucial controversy of early modern Spain. My account of the Valladolid debate must start with his most renowned instigator, Bartolomé de las Casas, whose biography will allow me to offer a brief summary of the issues provoked by the emergence of the Spanish Empire, and how they relate to the early modern debates about paganism.

Bartolomé de Las Casas and the Intellectual Setting of the Valladolid Debate

Las Casas⁵⁵⁴ was born in 1484 in Seville. After studying in Salamanca, he arrived at the Island of Hispaniola (modern Dominican Republic and Haiti) in 1502, only ten years after Columbus led the first expedition to the New World. Initially, Las Casas went as a colonizer, and thus he managed his own *encomienda*, the polemical institution for the administration of the West Indies developed by the Spanish Crown. In 1511, Las Casas heard the famous Advent Sermon of Fray Antón Montesinos, where he denounced all maligning treatment of the Native Americans. As a result, Las Casas abandoned his properties, entered the Dominican order, and began his life as “protector of the Indians,” as the Spanish prime minister Cardinal Cisneros (1436-1517) ‘baptized’ him. Back in Spain, Las Casas managed to have an interview with King Ferdinand of Aragon, the sole ruler of Spain after the death of Queen Isabel I of Castile (d. 1506), his wife, and influenced the promulgation of the Laws of Burgos in 1512, the first Law Code for America. The Laws of Burgos were inspired by the Roman *ius naturale* and Aristotelian and scholastic ethics—as developed by Aquinas and his followers in Spain. Once again in America, Las Casas spent more than twenty years trying to make those laws and justice for the Indians effective. In 1540, an ecclesiastical meeting in America headed by Juan de Zumárraga, the archbishop of Mexico, commissioned Las Casas to come back to Spain and convince Emperor Charles V to abolish the *encomiendas* and the mass forced baptisms of natives without previous religious instruction.⁵⁵⁵

Las Casas finally met the Emperor at a fortuitous moment, when he came back from the disastrous attempt to conquer Algiers in 1541, which he took as divine punishment. Las Casas prepared for the Emperor his influential book, *A Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (*Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*) in 1542, where he denounced the excesses and abuses in the administration and the conquering of the Americas. The Emperor was convinced by Las Casas and ordered an inquiry, to which followed the dismissal of all those responsible in the *Consejo de Indias* (Council of Indies), including its president. The Emperor also put in place

⁵⁵⁴ On Las Casas, Sepúlveda, and the Valladolid Debate see, for instance: Clayton (*Bartolomé de las Casas. A Biography*), Crow (*The Epic of Latin America*), Wagner & Parish (*The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas*), Hernández (“The Las Casas-Sepúlveda Controversy: 1550-1551”), Hanke (*All Mankind is One: A study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indian*), Padgen (*The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*), Losada (*Bartolomé de las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and His Work*), Zavala (“Aspectos formales de la Controversia entre Sepúlveda y Las Casas en Valladolid, a mediados del siglo XVI y observaciones sobre la apologia de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas”).

⁵⁵⁵ See Martínez Torrejón (129-130).

Las Leyes Nuevas (The New Laws) for the welfare of the Indians. Las Casas went back to America, where he served again as a bishop in Chiapas (Mexico) and fought again for those New Laws. However, he faced new problems, including the hostility of many colonizers for whom he had implemented additional punitive measures. For instance, Las Casas prohibited communion for slave owners. When he came back to Spain, looking for solutions for his bishopric and the Americas, Las Casas had to face Fray Ginés de Sepúlveda, the biggest adversary of his life.

Sepúlveda studied theology in Alcalá (the second largest university), and in Italy he received lessons from the Humanist Pomponazzi. However, Sepúlveda was never a supporter of Humanism and remained close to anti-Erasmian currents.⁵⁵⁶ Sepúlveda translated Aristotle's *Politics* (and other important books) from where he took ideas about the rights of the so-called dominant cultures over inferior ones and the barbarians. Actually, in their arguments, both Sepúlveda and Las Casas used different interpretations of the same source: Aristotle. However, Las Casas' ideas are closer to Aquinas' interpretation of the Stagirite. Las Casas studied in Salamanca just at the outset of Neo-Scholasticism, thus he was able to oppose Sepúlveda on the grounds of strict Aristotelianism—for instance, in favor of the natives' rational capacity.

As soon as Las Casas reached Spain, he found that Sepúlveda was printing his *Democrates alter, siue de justis belli causis apud Indos* (1548).⁵⁵⁷ In this work, conceived as a humanistic dialogue, Sepúlveda justified all the wars against the Indians, including the legal slavery derived from them, and he also conceived the Native Americans as inferior beings and “natural slaves.” Sepúlveda followed a still controversial passage of Aristotle's *Politics* (1254b16–21), in which the Stagirite defines natural slave as “anyone who, while being human, is by nature not his own but of someone else.”⁵⁵⁸ Sepúlveda's main argument to justify waging war against and enslaving the Indians was their violation of natural law in practicing idolatry, human sacrifices, sodomy, and other crimes against nature (Sepúlveda 155). As we have seen, natural law was the measure by which God judged all pagans without access to the *Bible*, both ancient and contemporary. Therefore, according to Sepúlveda, the Indians' violation of natural law led to the slavery and

⁵⁵⁶ See Crow (15-22).

⁵⁵⁷ As Clayton explains “this work is sometimes known as *Democrates segunda* since its argument closely parallel the work he wrote in originally in 1535, *Democrates primus*” (Bartolomé de las Casas 351)

⁵⁵⁸ Marenbon (250) explains that Aristotle “ identifies a class of people whose excellence consists in their bodies and who are so intellectually weak that they cannot reason, although, unlike other animals, they know that such a faculty exists. Such people, Aristotle says, are natural slaves, made by nature with sturdy bodies to perform work and who should belong to and serve those fully endowed with reason and able to take part in civic life.”

punishment inflicted by the Spanish Empire. Sepúlveda's stances were not, however, the most widespread in Spain. Francisco de Vitoria who, as we have seen, possessed immense prestige and was the founder of the School of Salamanca, pronounced there in 1539 his *relectio* (re-reading or re-interpretation) *De indis (On the Indies)*, in which he questioned not only the methods and legitimacy of conquest, but also the possession of the Indies itself.⁵⁵⁹ As Marenbon points out, among the arguments with which Vitoria dismisses the conquest is the fact that those who had actually broken natural law were the Spaniards by maligning the natives (250). Therefore, Sepúlveda's judgment countered the mainstream Neo-scholastic current of thought.

Thus, the Council of Indies denied the necessary permission for Sepúlveda to print his *Democrates alter*. Meanwhile, the Council of Castile (the most powerful political institution inside Spain) sent the work to the Universities of Salamanca and Alcalá to be examined. This reliance provides evidence of the considerable influence of Neo-scholastic thinkers over the political powers in sixteenth century Spain and their leverage in conflict resolution. The pagans, their relation to natural law, and the theological and philosophical opinions about them—like their salvation—really were a matter of state.

Las Casas was enraged against Sepúlveda and activated his network against him; as a consequence, the dictamen of the university experts was against the printing of his work.⁵⁶⁰ Sepúlveda then published in Rome his *Defense (Apologia)*, an abstract of the *Democrates alter*; however, Las Casas' pressure removed all the exemplars from distribution. Sepúlveda replied denouncing Las Casas' works to the Inquisition and the Council of Castile. Finally, Las Casas, confident in his own argumentative capacity, planned a definitive solution to the controversy. Thus, he incited the Council of Indies and the Crown of Spain itself to organize the Valladolid debate, which would consist of a paradigmatic scholastic *disputatio* witnessed by a commission of experts, who would decide which stance was better defended and must prevail.⁵⁶¹ The resolution would have transcendental political consequences. During the deliberations, for instance, any

⁵⁵⁹ Actually, although Vitoria questioned the right of pope Alexander VI to guarantee the right of America's conquering, because neither the pope nor the emperors were the owner of the world, he pointed at other possibilities that justified what had been already done in America (Martínez Torrejón 126-127). About Vitoria and his *relectios* see Abellán (1979 436-448).

⁵⁶⁰ See Martínez Torrejón (134)

⁵⁶¹ It was formed a junta (committee) of fifteen members: seven from the Council of Indies, two from the Council of Castile, one from the Council of Military Orders, four theologians and the bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo (see Thomas *El Imperio Español* 549).

further conquest of the Empire was prohibited until the outcome of the debate was determined.⁵⁶² In the end, a disparaging set of circumstances prevented the judges from rendering a definitive and unanimous verdict,⁵⁶³ yet the commission's president, Domingo de Soto, prepared a summary of the deliberations in which he clearly sides with Las Casas.⁵⁶⁴

The Intellectual Outcome of the Valladolid Debate on Paganism: *An Apologetic Summarized History*

The Valladolid debate enhanced Las Casas's already important intellectual productivity. Thus, in 1552 he prepared a new edition of his famous *A Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (*Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*), which was very widely read and translated. But the debate also led him to write, at leisure and while adding previous material, two lengthy and erudite studies of the Indians, their history, way of life, geographical setting, and religion. Those treatises are *A History of the Indies* (*Historia de las Indias*), and *An Apologetic Summarized History* (*Apologética Historia Sumaria*), which Las Casas would not see published in his lifetime.

This last book was composed as a retrospective refutation against Sepúlveda, his adversary in Valladolid, who maintained that the Native Americans lacked any capacity for political life according to Aristotle's doctrine on natural slavery (*Politics* 1254b16–21). Las Casas diverged strongly with this assertion, and so in this book he brings to light the 'real' Indians as he knew them, demonstrating that they can lead a civilized life on their own. As Thomas demonstrates in his abstract of the deliberations in the Valladolid debate, there Las Casas used long sections that would be later included in his *An Apologetic Summarized History* (545-556).

The biggest and central section of *An Apologetic Summarized History* is "On the priesthood" ("De los sacerdotes," chapters 71-194). In this section, Las Casas makes a thorough comparative study of religion between the peoples in the New World and those of the Old one. That is, Las Casas compares the old pagans, who were known through books, and the new ones, known by his own experience or the direct recounting of his contemporaries. As Porlier (xliv) points out,

⁵⁶² As Hanke explains "probably never before, or since, has a mighty emperor – and in 1550 Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, was the strongest ruler in Europe, with a great overseas empire besides – ordered his conquests to cease until it was decided if they were just" (*All Mankind* 68).

⁵⁶³ On the context and aftermath of the Valladolid debate see Martínez Torrejón (128-135)

⁵⁶⁴ For an abstract on the principal points of this summary see Thomas (*El Imperio español* 545-556).

Las Casas considers his enormous topic under two aspects: man's possibility of knowing God in a natural way and idolatry—including its causes, types, and meaning. In this way, Las Casas is covering two important aspects of the problem of paganism: the knowledge of God and the virtues of pagans, since idolatry, as we have seen, was the worst of sins, and prevented men from being virtuous and thus saved. By explaining the causes of idolatry, Las Casas shows that the pagans of the New World were more virtuous than the ones of the Old one (Thomas 552). The Dominican also argues to what extent, and under what circumstances, they needed the help of the Spanish Empire to be saved.

In the chapters “On the natural knowledge of the True God” (71-73), Las Casas follows Aquinas' theory of the natural light. As I explained before, Aquinas maintained that God introduced in all souls a natural light which would be enough to reach the knowledge of God, and a will to obtain it as well.⁵⁶⁵ This is, however, a confused knowledge, closer to an innate feeling of God's existence—far removed from theological speculations, which prove rationally the existence of God. With this light alone one cannot know if there is one or many gods (according to Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles* III: 38, which Las Casas cites). By using reason, men can deduce that there is a cause of the order in the world's natural things, and by connecting some causes with others, they can reach the conclusion of the first cause—as Aristotle, which Las Casas interprets in a Thomistic manner, established. However, for a more precise knowledge of God's properties and attributes, men need the light of faith, long study, and demonstration. Since men are not always prepared for these assets, it is easy to understand that pagans frequently fell into idolatry.

In chapter 74, Las Casas studies the nature of idolatry. He affirms there that, when man is lacking grace and doctrine, the worship which he naturally owes to God, the *latría*, is misdirected by the soul's will, degenerating into *idolatria*. This idolatry is the natural expression of man's religiosity, yet miscarried, and thus its origin is in nature and not the devil's interference. It also implies that the Indians were not violating natural law, as Sepúlveda asserted, and thus they did

⁵⁶⁵ Following the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition, Las Casas identifies this natural light with the agent intellect: “La lumbre natural sosodicha es el entendimiento que llaman los teólogos y aún filósofos el entendimiento agente, que es una impresión y comunicación que se diriva del divino resplandor” (*Apologética historia sumaria* libro III, capítulo LXXI).

not deserve any punishment or slavery.⁵⁶⁶ As Marenbon explains, Las Casas condemns idolatry entirely (and exclusively) from the “absolute point of view of Christian Truth,” and yet also sees it “relativistically as an expression of genuine piety” (253).

Once Las Casas demonstrates that the pagans lived in natural law, just as Patón demonstrates for Trimegistus in the *Answer*, there are still issues to be addressed. For instance, Las Casas also had to solve the big question that the problem of paganism had raised since the Church Fathers: why did God keep the pagans without the Gospel for so long? There were two solutions for this question: either the Gospel had indeed reached the pagans before the Spaniards arrived there or God had guaranteed the Christian truth to selected pagans through revelation. Las Casas actually addresses both solutions, invoking Hermes Trimegistus himself to answer the second one.

The first possibility, that the Indians actually received Christian preaching before the arrival of the Spanish, is clearly demonstrable. Las Casas says that, when he was bishop in Chiapas, he sent a priest who knew the Indian’s language to a remote region to preach to them. There the priest

found a local lord, and when he inquired about the beliefs and ancient religions that they had in that kingdom, he told him that they knew and believed in God who was in heaven, and that this God was Father, and Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that the Father was called Izona, who had created men and everything, the Son was called Bacab, who had been born from an everlasting virgin, who is called Chibirias, who is in heaven with God... (and the son) was lashed and they put a crown of thorns [on his head] and placed him with extended arms in a pole... (and the son) was three days dead, and he came back to life in the third, and he went up to heaven, and he is there with God (*An Apologetic Summarized History III. 124: 648*).⁵⁶⁷

After this astonishing display of Christian dogmas by the Indians, Las Casas connects the account with the legend of twenty men who had come to those lands out of the sea, and he also refers to

⁵⁶⁶ The Indians did not break the natural law even when they performed human sacrifices, a practice with Las Casas justifies with relativistic arguments which reminds one of Montaigne’s *On Cannibals*. In other occasions, Las Casas’ idyllic picture of Indian societies anticipate the noble savage of Rousseau (Thomas 552).

⁵⁶⁷ “Halló a un señor principal que, inquiriéndole de su creencia y religión antigua que por aquel reino solían tener, le dijo que ellos cognoscían y creían en Dios que estaba en el cielo, y que aqueste Dios era Padre E hijo y Espíritu santo, y que el padre se llamaba Izona, que había criado los hombres y todas las cosas, el hijo tenía por nombre Bacab, el cual nació de una doncella siempre virgen, llamada Chibirias, que está en el cielo con Dios. Al Espíritu Sancto nombraban Echuac (...) que lo hizo azotar y puso una corona de espinas y que lo puso tendido los brazos en un palo (...) Estuvo tres días muerto y al tercero, que tornó a vivir y se subió al cielo, y que allá está con su padre (*Apologética Historia Sumaria III. 124: 648*).

the evidence of St. Thomas that the Portuguese allegedly found in Brazil.⁵⁶⁸ Las Casas knew that, although pagans were able to deduce the Trinity through reason, it was impossible to come to other Christian dogmas like the Incarnation, which he mentions here, without preaching or revelation. Thus, some of the Indian pagans, who had the human natural light endowed by God, did not actually need the direct help of the Spanish priests to get the Christian truths because they had already ‘heard the good news.’ What is implied is that somehow the Spanish Empire was altering the natural course of events with forced conversions and violence. With preaching alone, as it had happened with those mysterious twenty men or with St. Thomas, the Spanish priests could extend Christianity, because the pagans were predisposed to it through their natural light and their still imperfect religions. As Clayton points out, Las Casas “was certain that the Indians were predisposed by nature, and endowed by the one true God, to receive Christianity when it was properly and peacefully revealed to them” (*Bartolomé de las Casas* 416).

Therefore, and as Marenbon highlights, Las Casas confirms that there was a widespread view that the Gospel had been preached to all peoples, “a view shaken, but not entirely displaced, by the discoveries of new lands in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries” (12). However, before Christ, the Incarnation could be known only through prophecy. In *An Apologetic Summarized History*, Las Casas also recognizes this possibility of Christ’s knowledge for the pagans, and although he usually gives preference to the American pagans before the ancient ones, he mentions Trimegistus as an example of an ancient sage to whom God gave the gift of prophecy, and thus knowledge of Christ before he was born. Las Casas refers to Hermes Trimegistus basing his beliefs on Haly (the interpreter of Ptolemy), Augustine, and Isidore:

He (Haly), also talks about Hermes Trimegistus, who was a philosopher in Egypt, in whose time philosophy studies shone there, because before him the Egyptians only cared about Astronomy, and he (Hermes) only believed in one true God, maker of everything, and he acknowledged his parents’ mistake, who had come across the superstition of idols, and he prophesized the destruction of idols, which was later fulfilled with the coming of Christ. And on these traits [see] Augustine, book eight, chapter 28, and the last chapter of *The City of God*, and Isidore, book eight, chapter eleven of the *Etymologies* (*An Apologetic Summarized History* II, 29: 148).⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Since Antiquity, the apostle Thomas was supposed to have been preaching in India. Since America was initially identified with India, those stories were extrapolated there.

⁵⁶⁹ “Dice también de Hermes Trimegistus, que fue filósofo de Egipto, en cuyo tiempo resplandecieron allí los estudios de filosofía, como quiera que antes no curasen los egipcios sino de la astronomía, el cual tuvo opinión de uno solo y verdadero Dios de todas las cosas hacedor, y acusaba el error de sus padres que habían hallado la superstición de los ídolos y profetizó la destrucción de los ídolos de Egipto que se cumplió después en la venida de Christo. Desto tracta

For Las Casas, just as for Patón, Trimegistus was much more than an ancient philosopher. According to Las Casas, Trimegistus not only “believed in one true God” (centuries before he was born), but also “prophesized the destruction of idols” and for both Las Casas and Patón the only legitimate prophets were the Christian ones. Moreover, Trimegistus’ prophecy “was later fulfilled with the coming of Christ,” therefore, Trimegistus’ foresight could only have been granted by God himself. Las Casas also highlights that Trimegistus prevented the Egyptians from continuing to be idolaters and star-worshippers.⁵⁷⁰ Once Las Casas has acknowledged Trimegistus’ importance in this passage, he mentions him as representative of the ‘good’ pagans many other times in *An Apologetic Summarized History* and from many other significant sources.

Indeed, Hermes’s recurrent presence in the great book of Las Casas on paganism proves to what extent he was representative of the better part of Ancient culture, that part that both Las Casas and Paton wanted to preserve. Las Casas’ admiration for Trimegistus contrasts with his criticism of most other ancient gods or religious traditions of Antiquity. Of course, when dealing with Hermes as a pagan god, Las Casas usually follows the euhemerist interpretation of this figure, but without avoiding his Egyptian Mythology heritage, including his blending with the god Thoth: “because (Mercurio Hermete) was very wise and astute, they depicted him with a dog head, since the dog is a wiser animal than the others” (*An Apologetic Summarized History III*, 106: 563).⁵⁷¹ In this occasion, and clearly following Isidore of Seville, Las Casas confuses the representation of Thoth and Hermes Trimegistus— when actually, the dog headed god was Anubis. However, on other occasions, he properly identifies him with the Ibis (as the Egyptians did)

Mercury turned into a crank or an Ibis, who is similar to the crank, and eats and destroys serpents as in Egypt, because the land would not be habitable (...) And for this reason the Egyptians prosper so much by seeing ibis or cranks [in their land], that they serve and worship them as a god, according to Juvenal and what I said above (*An Apologetic Summarized History III* 106: 566).⁵⁷²

Sant Agustín, libro 8, cap 28 y capítulo último y otros libros *De Civitate Dei*, y Sant Isidro, libro 8, capítulo 11 de las *Etimologías*” (*Apologética Historia Sumaria II* 29: 148).

⁵⁷⁰ As I advanced before, I will come back to Augustine’s passage mentioned here, because Patón had dismissed it by countering contemporary authorities.

⁵⁷¹ “El cual, como fuese sapientísimo y sagacísimo, lo figuraron con cabeza de perro, como el perro sea animal más sagaz que los otros animales” (*Apologética Historia Sumaria III*, 106: 563).

⁵⁷² “Mercurio se tornó en cigüeña o en Ibis, que es semejante a la cigüeña, la cual come y destruye las serpientes como en Egipto, que si cigüeñas y o ibis no hobiese, no sería la tierra habitable (...). Y por esta causa tanto crecen los egipcianos de ver a las ibes o cigüeñas, que las sirven y adoran por dios, según dice Juvenal y arriba pareció” (*Apologética Historia Sumaria III* 106: 566).

The Dominican also quotes Cicero's *De natura deorum* to which I referred before,⁵⁷³ and the passage in *The City of God* where Augustine paraphrases Cicero and alludes to the many mercuries in the past: "There were many Mercuriuses or Hermetes, according to saint Augustine's teachings, book I, chapter 26" (*An Apologetic Summarized History III*, 106: 563).⁵⁷⁴ Thus, although Las Casas put the American pagans ahead of the ancient pagans, regarding Hermes Trimegistus or "Mercurio Hermete," he only shows praise, and offers him as an example of a pagan philosopher to whom the coming of Christ was revealed.

Both Las Casas and Patón substantiate in the same passage of the *Bible* the association of Mercurius with Paul, the most relevant figure of early Christianity. Thus, Las Casas mentions the Biblical comparison of Mercurius with the apostle, the paradigm of man blessed by God, regarding god's attribute of eloquence: "[And they called] saint Paul Mercury, because he was *dux verbi* (the leader of the word), because he was the principal one speaking, and he must have had strength and a great eloquence in his talking" (*An Apologetic Summarized History II*, 104: 552).⁵⁷⁵ And Patón mentions the same argument in the *Answer*, where he considers Paul just one more of those who received the name of Mercurius, as Trimegistus himself. Patón also quotes the specific *Acts* 14: 11-12 passage:

Yet if one of those who received this name (Mercurius) was the apostle Saint Paul, on account of his great eloquence, why would we not we give it to the divine Mercurius? And that this is so is evident from the book of *Acts*: *They were saying: «the Gods having become like men, came to us» and they truly called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the main speaker (Mercurius 607-608).*⁵⁷⁶

Thus, in a book devoted to defending contemporary pagans, Las Casas presents Mercurius as the paradigm of a 'good' pagan, to whom Paul himself was compared. But, were there philosophers in America comparable to Trimegistus, to whom the knowledge of God was provided? Although

⁵⁷³ "Dice Tullio (...) Libro II *De natura deorum* (...) *ab artibus autem vocantur Mercurius quod mercibus praeest.*" (*Apologética historia sumaria III* 76,)

⁵⁷⁴ Fueron muchos Mercurios o Hermetes, según san Agustín enseña, libro I, cap 26 (*Apologética Historia Sumaria III*, 106: 563).

⁵⁷⁵ "Y a Sant Pablo Mercurio, porque era *dux verbi*, que era el principal que hablaba y debía de tener fuerza y grande elocuencia en su habla" (*Apologética Historia Sumaria II*, 104: 552).

⁵⁷⁶ "Pues si uno de aquellos a quien dieron este nombre es el apóstol san Pablo por su grande elocuencia, por qué no le daremos a este divino Mercurio esta. Y que sea esto así consta del libro de los Actos. *Dicentes dii símiles facti hominibus (608) descenderunt ad nos. Et vocabant Barnabam Iovem Paulum vero Mercurium, quoniam ipse erat dux verbi*" (*Mercurius 607-608*).

Las Casas implies the possibility, he does not mention any American philosopher equal to Trimegistus.

However, that possibility was developed fifty years later by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), who perfectly knew Las Casas' works (and sometimes disagreed with him). I want to explore Garcilaso's works briefly now, because he extended the debate about American pagans up to Patón's most productive period at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Moreover, Garcilaso also offers a direct link between American pagans and Renaissance Hermeticism. Garcilaso was a mestizo from both Spanish and Inca nobility; he was born in Perú and went to Spain in 1561, where he completed his humanistic studies and stayed until his death. His most famous book is the *Royal Commentaries* (*Comentarios Reales*, 1609), where he tells the history of the Inca Empire. This book is considered the starting point of Latin American literature.⁵⁷⁷

According to the Inca Garcilaso, at the time the Spaniards arrived to the Andes, the Incas had suppressed human sacrifice and polytheism; in reality, even though the Incas worshipped the Sun in an external way, the "Inca philosophers" had a deeper belief:

Other than worshipping the Sun as visible God (...), the Inca kings and his *amautas*, who were the philosophers, tracked with natural light the true supreme God and Lord of ours, who made heaven and earth, as we will see later in the arguments and assertions which some of them made about the Divine Majesty, whom they called Pachacamac (*Royal Commentaries* II, 2: 176).⁵⁷⁸

As we saw earlier, in the same way, that Hermes Trimegistus brought the Egyptians out of idolatry to Monotheism, the Incas and their *amautas* brought the Andean people to worship of the Sun, as an external form of Monotheism. In the next chapter (II,3), the Inca Garcilaso explains how the Incas achieved knowledge of specific Christian beliefs like the resurrection and the soul's immortality. Thus, the Incas had great philosophers comparable to the ancient ones—like Trimegistus himself. The Inca *amautas*, through the natural light and profound study, were able to approach the True essence of God. This link between the *Royal Commentaries* and Hermetism is not casual, because Garcilaso's own work is related to one of the most important works of renaissance Neoplatonism, the *Dialogues of Love*. It is significant that both el Inca Garcilaso and

⁵⁷⁷ See, for instance, Serna Arnáiz (2009 153).

⁵⁷⁸ "Demás de adorar al Sol por Dios visible (...), los Reyes Incas y sus amautas, que eran los filósofos, rastrearon con lumbre natural al verdadero sumo Dios y Señor Nuestro, que crió el cielo y la tierra, como adelante veremos en los argumentos y sentencias que algunos de ellos dijeron de la Divina Majestad, al cual llamaron Pachacamac" (*Comentarios reales* II, 2: 176).

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the other unavoidable figure of Hispanic Colonial literature, had evident Hermetic influences.⁵⁷⁹ I will expand on this matter in the last chapter too.

The Inca Garcilaso translated into Spanish the *Dialogues of Love* (*Dialoghi d'amore*) by León Hebreo (Judah Leon Abravanel, 1465-1523), a descendant of Spanish Jews. The *Love Dialogues* is one of the most relevant works of renaissance Neoplatonism, which Hebreo mingles with Hispano-Semitic currents of thought that I presented in the first chapter (as Ibn Gabirol or Maimonides). It had a deep influence on sixteenth-century Spanish writers, including Cervantes. Menéndez Pelayo called it “the most monumental work of Platonic Philosophy since Plotinus’ Enneads” (520). As we will see in the last chapter, the *Love Dialogues* are heavily influenced by the Hermetic Writings and other currents of renaissance Neoplatonism such as the *philosophia perennis*. Therefore, the Inca Garcilaso knew very well Mercurius Trimegistus and the Ancient Theology path which allegedly led to Christianity. The *Dialogues of Love* refer unmistakably to Trimegistus in a similar way than Las Casas and Patón when he affirms that “there were many among men called Mercurius, distinctly some sages from Egypt and physicians who shared the mercurial virtues.”⁵⁸⁰ The Inca Garcilaso not only links Mercurius with rhetoric like Patón in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*, but also relates him with the disciplines of the *quadrivium* in a similar way that the medieval king Alfonso X in his *General Estoria* (as we saw in the first chapter). Both Alfonso X and Leon Hebreo (whom Garcilaso is translating) used Jewish and Arab sources. Thus, Garcilaso reminds that “this Mercury is said to be the god of eloquence and the sciences, distinctly mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology,”⁵⁸¹ that is, the four (related to Mathematics) liberal arts of the *quadrivium*. The divine nature of Mercurius is explained by León Hebreo in Garcilaso’s translation when he highlights that the ancients interpreted that “he was son of Jupiter because of his divine wisdom and virtue.”⁵⁸²

As it can be appreciated, in his translation of León Hebreo, the Inca Garcilaso, inheritor of the pagan Inca civilization, attributed to the pagan Mercurius the same “divine wisdom” and

⁵⁷⁹ Sor Juana’s Hermetic influences are especially significant in her most important work: *El primero sueño* (*The First Dream*); see Soriano Vallés (200). Buxo suggests that Sor Juana’s Hermetic influences could come from the Inca Garcilaso himself and his *Dialogues of Love* (129).

⁵⁸⁰ “Y entre los hombres hubo muchos llamados Mercurius, principalmente algunos sabios de Egipto y médicos que participaron las virtudes mercuriales” (*Diálogos de amor* 103).

⁵⁸¹ “El cual Mercurio dicen ser dios de la elocuencia, dios de las ciencias, mayormente matemáticas, aritmética, geometría, música y astrología” (*Diálogos de amor* 103).

⁵⁸² “Otros dicen ser Mercurio hijo de Júpiter por su divina sabiduría y virtud” (*Diálogos de amor* 103).

“virtue” than Las Casas and Patón. Those attributes are the ones used by Patón to justify Trimegistus’s salvation. For the purposes of this chapter, I will not refer to the numerous Hermetic influences in León Hebreo and the Inca Garcilaso, both of them readers of Ficino and Pico Della Mirandola. I just want to highlight that these virtues and wisdom of Mercurius that the Inca Garcilaso translated from León Hebreo’s *Dialogues of Love*, can be found attributed to the Inca *amautas* in his *Royal Commentaries*.

In the same way that the Egyptian philosopher was able to reach Christian dogmas, so the Inca *amautas* were able to discover some of them. As Serna points out, Garcilaso’s *Royal Commentaries* stands out because of the dialogue he proposed between two civilizations, and that dialogue had its launch in the translation of Leon Hebreo that Garcilaso had made years before (3). In fact, the Hermetism in the *Love Dialogues* perfectly matches both classical Humanism and the revival of the ancient American world which the Inca Garcilaso proposed (Serna Arnáiz 5).

We have just seen how the way of salvation could be opened to the Indian philosophers according to the Inca Garcilaso. What happened, however, to the “common” pagans before they met the Spaniards, to those Indians who were not learned philosophers as the *amautas* and were not guaranteed God’s revelation? Were they saved? Indeed, the more open-ended position on the matter at that time—and maybe of all times (Marenbon 290)—was developed in Spain by Domingo de Soto, Patón’s utmost authority in the *Answer* regarding Trimegistus’s salvation.

Domingo de Soto published his treatise *On Nature and Grace (De natura et Gratia)* in 1547, just in the middle of Las Casas’ controversy with Sepulveda, and two years before the Valladolid debate in which he was so deeply involved. In this book, Soto put forward a very bold position about natural knowledge of God. According to Soto: “The light of reason alone, he said, allowed people to know of the existence of God and that he is a rewarder, and in this there is implicit a confused cognition of Christ.”⁵⁸³ As we saw, this position would be adopted by Las Casas in *An Apologetic Summarized History*. However, Soto goes beyond this initial stance, because he also affirms that “Since at the time of natural law there was no more detailed revelation, nothing more than this naturally available knowledge was needed for salvation, although there was also the need for supernatural aid to raise up people’s inclinations.”⁵⁸⁴ According to the historical

⁵⁸³ I am quoting Marenbon’s rendering (290) on Soto’s *De natura et gratia* II.12 (f.148r.-149r.)

⁵⁸⁴ See Marenbon (290).

path on the problem of paganism that I took through Patón's *Answer*, no theologian had ever made such a categorical assertion before. Although Soto is not dealing there with contemporary pagans, his argument implies that they could be saved as well. In 1549, Soto published a second edition of the treatise, in which he partially retracted his view. For instance, he specifically addresses "invincibly ignorant pagans of his own time,"⁵⁸⁵ and he wonders whether they existed or not. If they really existed, he insists that they could be saved just with the implicit knowledge of Christ.⁵⁸⁶

After a debate lasting hundreds of years Soto, the respected Neo-scholastic thinker of Salamanca elaborated the old thesis and tried to open the door to heaven to millions of American pagans; actually, Soto was not very far away from Las Casas' thesis. Las Casas' as Clayton explains, believed that "salvation was freely given by Christ to all. Even those outside the Church," since the Indians were "members of the body of the Church, potentially" (*Bartolomé de las Casas* 418-419). But Soto not only defended the salvation of American pagans, three years later, in *On Justice and Law* (1553), he also cleared the way for illustrious pagan philosophers. That was the authoritative argument Patón needed to save Trimegistus, and so he places Soto at the center of his claim to save the ancient philosopher.

Conclusion

The old ways of adapting non-Christian culture were modernized in order to face the biggest challenge of the Spanish Empire: to integrate the American territories and peoples not only in its political system, but also in its culture and the religion embedded in it. There was, however, a big difference. Just before the scientific revolution, Greek and Roman culture was still perceived as superior by the Europeans, whose educational system mostly tried to re-cover in its purest way the glories of the pagan past. Christianity did not put an end to these practices, still sustained during the Renaissance by enthusiastic admirers of renowned pagans. However, in the same way that they admired the ancient pagans, part of the Spanish intellectual elites, represented by Sepúlveda, reviled the new pagans of America as inferior beings, whose culture was a mixture of

⁵⁸⁵ Invincible Ignorance refers to the state of persons (such as pagans and children) who are ignorant of the Christian message because they have not yet had an opportunity to hear it.

⁵⁸⁶ The two possibilities are an update of the main positions of pagan's debate that I have examined before. If they existed, he proposes, they can be saved without explicit faith, as Aquinas defended. The other possibility is that actually those invincibly ignorant pagans did not exist. Had they been virtuous enough, "they would have been would have been illuminated with the truths they required" (Marenbon 290). This last stand seems a new rendering of Augustine' severe judgement.

superstition and idolatry. Nevertheless, there was an evident contradiction in accepting one and despising the other, especially when it became evident that the great American civilizations were as old and rich as the ancient Old World ones had been. Bartolomé de las Casas reached this conclusion in his *An Apologetic Summarized History*. By comparing new and old civilizations, Bartolomé de las Casas was able to successfully sustain his thesis. He aligns with a long tradition of Christian philosophers and theologians who faced, and tried to solve, the problem of paganism.

One of the last exponents of this long Christian tradition was Domingo de Soto, who sided with Bartolomé de las Casas in the Valladolid debate, and defended a similar thesis in treatises published just before and after it. Soto was one of the most distinguished representatives of the School of Salamanca, and studied there under Francisco de Vitoria. Vitoria was as firm as Las Casas in the defense of the Americans and connected Spain with the Neo-Scholastic thought coming from Aquinas. As we have seen, Aquinas elaborated concepts which permitted him to overcome the rigid interpretation of Augustine about the virtues, the knowledge, and the salvation of the pagans, and related him to the ‘more liberal’ early Church Fathers like Lactantius. The Neo-Scholastics of Salamanca developed these concepts to their highest degree. Thus, Soto was arguably able to sustain the most open interpretation about the salvation of the pagans. Moreover, Soto’s thought was pertinent both to modern pagans as well as the ancient illustrious ones, such as Trimegistus.

For this reason, Patón picks Soto as his foremost authority regarding the salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus, who for him represented the epitome of pagan culture which he wanted to preserve for his own humanistic goals and the traditional syllabus he taught to his students. That is why he entitled with that name his most important work—and also defended his choice by affirming Trimegistus’ salvation in the prologue of the book. When narrow-minded ecclesiastical authorities questioned him, Patón was able in the *Answer* to effectively resume and elaborate on this theological issue around Mercurius. As he demonstrates there, Patón was not alone in that controversy, for the most well-known thinkers of Christianity had dealt with it.

As I argue in this chapter, the salvation of the pagans and how to demonstrate it was not a minor matter. It was at the center of Spanish political and cultural life and involved the most extensive conquest undertaken by the Empire. Because of that, Spanish rulers consulted with theologians of Salamanca who questioned their practices and trusted them to map out the path to follow. Bartolomé de Las Casas lived long enough to interview with three Spanish kings. The last

of these kings was Philip II, who as his father and grandfather was influenced by Las Casas, and made the Dominican friar instrumental in a new set of laws proclaimed in 1573. However, once again the greed of some influential settlers and conquistadores stood in the way of the enforcement of those laws. As Thomas points out, in Spain the “benevolent friars” won the intellectual dispute, but in the Indies, on the terrain, the colonizers prevailed (556).

Nonetheless, relying on old theological theories— distinctly, those regarding the salvation of pagans—Las Casas, Vitoria, Soto and others promoted laws extraordinarily advanced for their time. As Elliot points out, both the call of the Valladolid debate and the laws which followed it are testimony to the commitment of Spanish kings influenced by theologians, to guarantee justice for its Native American subjects. Due to the effects and constancy of this commitment, “it is not easy to find parallel laws in the history of other colonial empires.” (Elliot 2006 130). Clearly, this constant reassessment of the principles supporting the conquest would not have been possible without the assistance of the Neo-Scholastic thinkers of Salamanca, who defended modern pagans with the intellectual tools developed in much earlier epochs for the ancient ones.

Therefore, this thriving school of thought from Salamanca made an effort to defend all pagans, old and new. Patón knew perfectly this forward-thinking school, since he quotes its main representatives on many occasions. Fray Esteban confronted Patón’s affirmation that Mercurius Trimegistus was saved in the prologue of the book with his name, and required Patón to provide reliable authorities on the matter—although Patón had already quoted Aquinas, without Esteban noticing it. Therefore, Patón attempted to rationalize even more his defense of Hermes Trimegistus’ salvation in the *Answer*, and thus he naturally resorted to Domingo de Soto, whose works he had used before. As Patón knew, Soto had taken to the next level Aquinas’s ideas on the salvation of pagans. In the second part of this chapter I have shown how Bartolomé de las Casas, Domingo de Soto, and other students and professors of Salamanca took up and developed the doctrines on the salvation of pagans in relation to the ‘new’ pagans of America; in the third and last part, I will show how Patón put into effect those doctrines for Hermes Trimegistus, and even bolstered them with his own erudition and rhetorical skills. In this way, I will continue demonstrating how Hermes Trimegistus was related to controversial political and cultural subjects in early modern Spain, and how he was able to exalt Trimegistus throughout Spain as the epitome of the wise pagan to whom God granted His grace.

PART III. Proving the Salvation of Mercurius Trimegistus

Introduction

As we have seen above, Mercurius Trimegistus ranked highest among those ancient pagans who deserve salvation in the writings of important theologians. According to the Neo-Scholastic thinkers whom Patón is invoking, Hermes's salvation as a pagan would ultimately be determined by his lack of sins, proven virtues, and knowledge of Christian dogmas. To explain this complex matter from a logical and rhetorical point of view, Patón uses a number of resources from ancient, medieval, and early modern times. Since Fray Esteban has precisely asked Patón for consistent authorities on Hermes's salvation, the sources he uses and how is extremely significant for my work. In this third and last part of this chapter, I will show not only how Patón casts off the most important obstacles for Hermes's salvation, but also the ranking of his sources, both to verify Hermes's salvation and to portray the intellectual coordinates of Patón. As I will demonstrate—and contrary to what still might be expected from most scholarly studies—the medieval sources on Hermes were still more important for the late humanist Patón than the renaissance and baroque ones. Furthermore, although some critics have affirmed the supposedly anti-Scholasticism of Patón, the most important of his sources is, in fact, Aquinas, whom Patón uses to close his argumentation and avoid any further discrepancy.

In the previous section I have shown how the salvation and defense of both modern and ancient pagans was supported through the same authorities, and how this explains why Bartolomé de las Casas (who defends American pagans) and Patón (who focuses on ancient philosophers) have points in common. For instance, Hermes is the only one, along with the Sibyls, singled out by Bartolomé de las Casas in *An Apologetic Summarized History* as an example of virtuous pagans, whom God gifted with the prophecy of the coming of Christ. As we have seen, Patón also related Hermes to the Sibyls as an example of virtue and knowledge of Christ. But there are more arguments that las Casas and Patón shared. For instance, both knew that the best way to prove someone's virtue was, *a contrario sensu*, by demonstrating that they never committed sins or that these sins cannot be demonstrated. In this way, Patón, the teacher of rhetoric, proved his expertise: no better way to demonstrate one thing than to completely deny the opposite.

In the case of Patón, we saw how he compared Trimegistus to other important pagan philosophers (Seneca, Cato) for whom important sins had been recorded, namely suicide. However, Patón argued that this was not the case with Trimegistus, which led him to affirm that:

Because about his life no one writes that there was vice, he did not commit neither serious felonies, nor small ones: neither adulteries, nor thefts are written about him, but laws that he established against these felonies and other ones, and he taught many virtues by word with examples by deeds; and because of that they gave him this name of Trimegistus (according to most men), which means three times great (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).⁵⁸⁷

Since no sins can be found for Hermes, Patón even suggests that this greatness is what led ancient people to call him Trimegistus—although he also says in the prologue that the nickname Trimegistus is related to his triple dimension as governor, priest, and philosopher, the most common opinion. Despite Patón’s assertiveness, he is withholding a very important accusation against Trimegistus, although he was aware of it. Indeed, Trimegistus was accused of idolatry by many theologians, among them Augustine. Moreover, in Domingo de Soto’s doctrine which Patón is using and I examined before, it is clear that the worst sin of pagans is idolatry; Soto resumed it in a sentence which Patón quotes in the *Answer: quare nullus idololatrarum excusari potuit/ therefore, none of the idolaters could be excused* (Soto *De iustitia et iure* f32v. also in Patón *Mercurius Trimegistus* 592). This doctrine is reaffirmed by Patón with his own words, when he establishes the conditions for Hermes to be saved: “The first (condition) is that he worshipped a True God without staining himself with the idolatry and worshipping of many Gods (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).⁵⁸⁸

As we have observed, for both Patón and Las Casas, the defense of ‘their’ respective pagans against idolatry was a priority. In his *An Apologetic Summarized History* Las Casas tried to justify the religious practices of native Americans, which had been branded as idolatrous by many conquistadores and clerks. His enemy, Sepulveda, justified wars and forced conversions precisely because of those idolatrous practices. As we saw, Las Casas uses scholastic doctrines and those of Aquinas—as the natural light in our souls—to excuse some problematic features of American civilizations. In turn, Patón would have an even more difficult task when defending Hermes against

⁵⁸⁷ “Porque de su vida no hay quien escriba fue vicio, no cometió delitos graves, ni pequeños: no se escriben del adulterios, ni hurtos, sino leyes que estableció contra estos delitos, y otros, y enseñó mucha virtud de palabra con ejemplos de obra, porque le dieron este nombre de Trimegisto (según los más) que quiere decir *Termaximus*” (596).

⁵⁸⁸ “Lo primero es que adorase a un verdadero Dios sin mancharse con la Idolatría y adoración de muchos Dioses” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

the accusations of idolatry because, as we will see here below, the Latin *Asclepius* had problematic passages about the worshipping of statues. Patón does not mention the accusation but he does include, just in case, some arguments and authorities against it. The main author he uses to argue that Hermes was not an idolater is Marsilio Ficino in a passage where the Florentine addressed the alleged idolatry of the *Asclepius*. Paradoxically, this is the only time Patón quotes Ficino in his treatise of Hermes, despite the fact that Ficino is considered the greatest figure in renaissance Hermetism. Due to the weight of the accusation of idolatry against Hermes, and the relevance of Patón's use of Ficino (or lack of it), in the next section I will address this matter; in the rest of the chapter, once I have completely tackled Hermes's virtues and lack of sins, I will show how Patón uses other sources—distinctly, Aquinas—to prove Hermes's knowledge of Christian dogmas and ultimately, his salvation.

Mercurius' Idolatry in the *Asclepius* and Ficino's Relevance for Patón: a Reassessment

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) is considered the paragon of renaissance Hermetism. Ficino had an indisputable importance for Humanism, and I will return to him in a posterior phase of my work dedicated to the *philosophia perennis* and its relationship with Neo-Platonism and the revival of pagan myths. Patón did use Ficino briefly and for a very specific purpose related to Mercurius' salvation: to clear doubts about his idolatry. Does this make Ficino so important for Patón? I suggest the answer is no. I will demonstrate that this figure was not as important for Patón as other authorities, but the quotation that he takes from him remains relevant, indeed, since nothing could be more harmful for Hermes's Christian salvation than the sin of idolatry.

In her classical work on Western Hermetism, which in fact created the new field of modern studies about Hermes and his tradition, F. Yates acknowledged Ficino as the origin and most authoritative source about Trimegistus for early modern Europe (Yates *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*). In her recent work about Ficino, Susan Byrne does the same for Spain, where she includes the *Mercurius Trimegistus* and the *Answer* by Jiménez Patón, which she mentions briefly. In this section, I will discuss the real weight of the renaissance Hermetic tradition coming from Ficino in Patón (as representative of the entire Late Humanism. In Patón's *Answer*, at least, Ficino is less significant than the works of these two scholars suggest. And I want to clarify it in this section because Ficino's short contribution to Patón's *Answer* is precisely about the problem of paganism. In short, Ficino only helps Patón in saving Hermes against the accusation of idolatry.

In her paramount study about the influence of Ficino in Spain, Susan Byrne mentions briefly both Jiménez Patón's *Mercurius* and the paratext to his book, which I call the *Answer*. I am indebted to this author because she succeeds at contextualizing Hermes in the Ficinian tradition within the Spanish context; nevertheless, as I have shown in this work, the figure of Hermes in Spain had wider and more ancient roots. Paradoxically, those roots and sources seem to be more prominent in Patón and in many other authors of the Spanish Golden Age than Ficino himself. I think that Byrne's account of Ficino in Spain must be complemented with other aspects of the Hermetic tradition, equally or more relevant than the Ficinian legacy. While in the previous chapter, I counter Byrne's suggestion that the complete title of Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* is inspired by Ficino, here I want to emphasize that Patón only mentions Ficino once, and ignores his crucial role as translator of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Nevertheless, the quotation that Patón takes from another of Ficino's books is particularly important because both Ficino and Patón were interested in exonerating Hermes from the sin of idolatry. For centuries, a controversial passage from the *Asclepius* had casted a shadow of idolatry over Hermes, and the most serious accusation came from Augustine in his *The City of God*.

It is difficult to determine if Patón knew firsthand Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Indeed, for the secondary sources about *Mercurius* that Patón is using, the Latin *Asclepius* seems to be the main source about *Mercurius'* Philosophy and not the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum*. The *Asclepius* and the *Corpus Hermeticum* (or *Pimander*, as translated by Ficino) are the most renowned works attributed to Hermes. Although I will look into Patón's secondary sources later, I want to specify now that Patón only mentions the *Pimander* once, in a quotation of one of his sources: Sisto Senense (1520-1569). Regarding the *Asclepius*, important as it is for most secondary sources from Augustine to Aquinas, I propose that Patón probably did not even read this book, or at least did not review it carefully to write his *Answer*. This can be seen when Patón refers to San Antonino (Saint Antoninus of Florence 1389-1459) in his famous *Summa*,⁵⁸⁹ and says that "it is enough to know that [Trimegistus] composed an entire work about the perfect word (or verb); from this book, and from that one entitled *Asclepius*, it is possible to obtain many sentences,

⁵⁸⁹ San Antonino de Siena is one of Patón's favorite sources regarding both rhetoric and erudition; for instance, in his *Perfect Preacher* (*Perfecto predicador*), Patón advises the reader: "See [this matter] in Saint Antoninus of Florence, since it is not of my condition to hide the author from whom I take the biggest profit" ("Vea a san Antonino de Florencia, que no es de mi condición callar el autor del que más me aprovecho" in Madroñal *Humanismo y filología* 256)

which are of our faith (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).”⁵⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the ‘book of the perfect word’ and the *Asclepius* are actually the same book. “Perfect word” is a translation from the Greek *logos teleios*, which seems to be the original Greek book from which the Latin *Asclepius* was translated. Since this is also mentioned in the early modern *Asclepius* editions, it seems clear that Patón did not read the *Asclepius* as a primary source. Nonetheless, as I show in this work, the prestige of Mercurius in all the learned scholarship of his time was so big, and the quotations about him so diffused, that Patón decided to entitle his book with that name, despite the fact that he apparently does not treat directly with the philosophical books attributed to Hermes and available in Spain at that moment (the *Asclepius* and Ficino’s *Pimander*).

This also explains why Patón’s quotation of Ficino is not from his translation of the *Pimander* (this is the first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum* translated by Ficino, which often gave its name to the entire *Corpus*). It is in fact from his translation and commentary of Plato, which was an even more diffused work in the Spanish Golden Age, especially in humanistic environments. Actually, what probably made Marsilio Ficino the most eminent philosopher of the Renaissance—rather than his translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*—is that he translated all of Plato’s *Dialogues* (mostly lost during centuries) and employed Neo-Platonism, the characteristic form of renaissance philosophy, as support for Christianity. As we saw before, Hermes Trimegistus was part of the Middle and Neo-Platonism *milieu* in Antiquity, and Ficino himself reinforced this connection during the Renaissance. This philosophical syncretism, which in fact was Ficino’s development of ideas especially from ancient but also late medieval authors, maintained Ficino’s popularity in Europe for centuries. Byrne rightly shows that Ficino’s celebrity in Spain has not always been properly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, I do not think that we can attribute only to Ficino’s toil the popularity of Hermes Trimegistus and his doctrines, which were in fact already known in Europe from the Middle Ages through the quotations of classical and medieval authors, the Latin *Asclepius*, and through other books of practical Hermeticism which I addressed before. In this sense, I am following Moreschini’s *Hermes Christianus* (2012), in which he demonstrates that “even Marsilio Ficino, the man responsible for this diffusion, in many ways remained bound to the Hermetic texts (whether authentic or apocryphal) recognized as canonical in the Middle Ages” (Moreschini 127).

⁵⁹⁰ “[Y] baste saber que compuso un libro entero de Verbo perfecto: del cual, y del que tituló Asclepio se saca muchísimas proposiciones, que lo son de nuestra fe” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

It is significant, nonetheless, that what Patón is using from Ficino comes from his translation and commentary of Plato. Why was Hermes present in Ficino's commentaries of Plato? In the next lines I will address this question, which also reveals important features of the humanist and renaissance culture in which Patón was still involved. Hermes's and Plato's translations were in fact interrelated in Ficino's oeuvre.⁵⁹¹ Cosimo de Medici, the ruler of Florence, impressed with Ficino's precocity, gave him the opportunity to learn Greek and presented him with his country house in Florence, the Villa Careggi, where Ficino presided over the humanist studies of young Tuscans and interested foreigners⁵⁹². In 1462 Cosimo gave the young and still unknown Marsilio Ficino several Greek manuscripts from his own extensive library, partly obtained in the recent contacts with Byzantine scholars. Among these was a codex containing Plato's entire works, a great rarity in the fifteenth century, since not even the Vatican library possessed a whole collection of Plato.⁵⁹³ Ficino was entrusted with the task of translating the entirety of Plato's work into Latin, and he completed the first part of his translation in April of 1463. A revised translation circulated in manuscript form in 1482 and was printed in an edition of 1025 copies in 1484 (Von Stuckard 53). It is difficult to calculate the enormous influence of this translation. The rediscovery of Plato's lost works in the Latin West denotes, probably more than anything else, the beginning of the Renaissance in all of Europe. While the Byzantine world knew most, if not all, of Plato's *Dialogues*, the Latin West only had knowledge of Plato's works mainly through the summaries of his successors.⁵⁹⁴ Thanks to Ficino, all of Plato was available for European Humanism. It seems that more than a century later, Patón, a representative figure of Late Humanism, was still using Ficino's translation—and actually Patón quotes Plato abundantly in his works.⁵⁹⁵ But, why is Patón not using Ficino's translation of Mercurius' allegedly Greek works in a book called *Mercurius*

⁵⁹¹ Ficino also translated the works of Neoplatonist philosophers such as Plotinus (the *Enneads*), Porphyry, Proclus, and Dionysius the Areopagite, as well as Middle Platonists such as Iamblichus or Julian the Theurgist (supposed author of the *Chaldean Oracles*).

⁵⁹² This center sometimes has been called a new "Platonic academy" (even this name seems to be an invention of modern scholars).

⁵⁹³ It is likely that Cosimo had this codex copied during the council of Florence or possibly received it directly from Pletho. This old man was a Byzantine ambassador who strongly influenced Ficino and other young humanists in the ways of a reinterpreted Plato with influences not only from Middle and Neo Platonists, but also Zoroastrism, the Jewish Torah, and other pagan Near East and Greek religions. In fact, among his disciples Pletho "advocated a complete restoration of the Greek pantheon and religion" (von Stuckard 53).

⁵⁹⁴ It was merely the third part of the *Timaeus*, as translated in Late Antiquity by Chalcidius, that provided the medieval West with its firsthand knowledge of Plato "until, in later medieval times, the *Phaedo* and parts of the *Parmenides* would come to be known" (Joost-Gaugier 15).

⁵⁹⁵ For instance, there is a big quotation of Plato, translated into Spanish, at the beginning of the *Institutions of Spanish Grammar*, one of the books included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus* (f.167v.).

Trimegistus and only Ficino's translation of Plato? The answer is that both works had been intertwined in Ficino's life.

In the middle of his translation of Plato, Hermes interrupted Ficino. A manuscript of the *Corpus Hermeticum* arrived in Florence in 1462, brought from Byzantium by a monk, a certain Leonardo da Pistoia. Cosimo ordered Ficino to postpone his work on Plato and translate this document first. Hermes would have been arguably the most ancient and therefore most authoritative source from which Plato had derived his wisdom, and Cosimo wanted to have a chance to read him before his death (Hanegraaf 2012 42). In this way, Plato was postponed by his supposed forerunner, Hermes himself. According to some accounts, the Egyptian directly or indirectly had taught Pythagoras, Plato's master, and was the great sage of Egypt from where all Greek philosophers extracted their knowledge. Ficino finished the translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* in April 1463, and it was published in 1472 as *Liber de potestate et sapientia Dei* or *Pimander* (referring to the first book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Poimandres*). *Pimander* was the name that Ficino gave to his translation of the collection of fourteen Hermetic writings. The first dialogue was called *Pimander* because in its start a divine figure supposedly appears to Trimegistus and introduces himself in this way: "I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty; I know what you want, and I am with you everywhere" (*Corpus Hermeticum* I translation by Copenhaver). Ficino decided to entitle the whole collection *Pimander*, and so it was published many times.

According to the successful interpretation of Frances A. Yates in *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964), this was the beginning of the 'Hermetic Tradition' of the Renaissance; and, in fact, Yates' book was also the beginning of the serious and academic studies of Hermetism in modern scholarship. Nevertheless, as my study of the figure of Hermes in Late Humanism seeks to demonstrate, things are more multifaceted. To talk about Hermes, Patón uses humanistic authors from before and after Ficino, and is not indebted at all to the Florentine humanist; moreover, Patón also mentions Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic theologians and thinkers who used different sources about Mercurius than those used by Ficino.

After finishing the translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Ficino continued his work on Plato, and he was able to present ten dialogues to his patron, Cosimo de Medici, before the nobleman died in 1464. It took Ficino another three years to complete the task. But the renaissance philosopher "as part of the huge output of his life, provided commentaries to help the understanding of these (effectively brand-new) monuments of thought," as Shepherd

contextualizes (2006 x). These commentaries were included in most of the numerous editions of Ficino's translation of Plato.⁵⁹⁶ The importance of Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was big, but cannot be compared to his translation of Plato. Paradoxically, the references on Hermes in the commentaries of Ficino included in his translation of Plato also contributed to popularize the figure of Hermes. Patón's *Answer* provides evidence of this.

Thus, Ficino's references to Hermes in the commentaries and summaries of his translation of Plato are understandable, since he was undertaking the two projects at the same time, and both Plato and Mercurius are pivotal figures of his thought. When Patón looked for examples to demonstrate Mercurius' salvation, he found a very useful one in Ficino's translation of Plato, because it addressed controversial passages of the Latin *Asclepius*, which had made Mercurius suspicious of idolatry. I suggest that Patón remembered Mercurius' good deeds mentioned by Ficino from his own erudite use of Plato's *Dialogues* (in Ficino's translation) and considered them suitable to defend the salvation of the ancient sage. I did not find other direct references to Ficino's works in Patón. This is what Patón quoted from Ficino:

It should not be forgotten what Marsilio Ficino repeats about him (Mercurius) on the *Apology* that Plato made in favor of his master Socrates; he said, then, that Mercurius Trimegistus, who condemned the statues of the Idols because the demons inhabited in them, is worthy of being listened to, and he finishes with these words as if they were from him: *they made statues as dwellings for the daemons, which they worshipped as household gods* (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597; Farndell 126, for Ficino's Latin quotation in italics).⁵⁹⁷

Patón is specifically referring to Ficino's summary or commentary about Plato's *Apology*, in the passage where Ficino is especially concerned about the nature and classification of the daemons, whom Ficino conceived in their Greek meaning and not as the Christian demons. The reason for choosing this topic is the need to explain for Christian renaissance readers the nature of the famous daemon of Socrates. Ficino is clearly following Iamblichus (in *De Misteriis*), Plutarch, and other Middle and Neo-Platonists who studied the different kinds of daemons, for instance, Apuleius, who in his *Concerning the God of Socrates*, also addressed Socrates' daemon.⁵⁹⁸ This topic led Plutarch to expand on the different kinds of demons and their qualities, the same path that Ficino

⁵⁹⁶ For instance, in those of 1548, 1550 and 1551 that I am consulting.

⁵⁹⁷ "No es de olvidar lo que repite del Marsilio Ficino sobre la apología que Platon hizo en favor de su maestro Socrates, dice pues que es dino de escuchar Mercurio Trimegisto, que condenaba las estatuas de los Idolos porque afirmaba que habitaban en ellas los demonios, y concluye con estas palabras como suyas: *Fabricavere statuas habitacula daemonum, quos quasi familiares colerent Deos* (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597).

⁵⁹⁸ On the evolution of the Greek word *daemon* or *daimon* see, for instance Montaner ("Sobre el alcance del «ocultismo» renacentista" 641)

went through in his commentary of Plato's *Apology* (although much briefly). The very noteworthy fact is that Augustine is commenting the same fragment on daemons in *City of God* (IX, 14-19) as Plutarch and this commentary led him to elaborate on Hermes and the *Asclepius*;⁵⁹⁹ this famous passage, where Augustine mixes admiration and censorship for Trimegistus, is precisely the one where he makes Hermes suspicious of idolatry on the grounds of the contents of the *Asclepius*.

The *Asclepius* includes several famous and controversial passages about the animation of statues by daemons. Of course, this fell extremely close to the contentious issue of idolatry, from which both Ficino and Patón, as we have seen, clearly want to separate Hermes.⁶⁰⁰ Both had in mind Augustine's accusations in his most important book. In his attempt to demonstrate Mercurius' virtues and to separate him from any sin or vice, Patón needed a refutation against Mercurius' alleged idolatry because this sin could prevent Trimegistus from salvation. One of the evidences Patón found is in Ficino's commentary on Plato, even though he forgot, or rather ignored, the rest of Ficino's specific endeavors with Hermes.

In the work chosen by Patón, Ficino is commenting on Plato's *Apology* and explaining Socrates's daemon, but he is also explaining the contentious relationship among Hermes, the daemons, and the statues, which most cultivated people had read in the Latin *Asclepius* or in Augustine's criticism. The Church father starts talking about the *Asclepius* when he establishes a distinction between the interpretation of the daemons made by Apuleius and the one found in the *Asclepius*, attributed to Trimegistus. Apuleius interpreted the daemons as intermediary beings between god and men, a common belief of Platonists after Plato's famous passage of the *Symposium* (202c-d). Nevertheless, in the *Asclepius* (which does not lack ambiguity in many of its parts), Augustine inferred that those who inhabited the statues and idols of the pagans were 'bad' daemons. According to the Christian interpretation, those 'bad' demons would have been the ancient gods of the pagans. This is how Augustine relates Hermes with the demons:

The Egyptian Hermes, whom they call Trimegistus, had a different opinion concerning those demons. Apuleius, indeed, denies that they are gods; but when he says that they hold

⁵⁹⁹ In *The City of God* (IX, 14-19), after his study of Socrates, Plato and his followers, and just before his long commentary about the *Asclepius* and Trimegistus, Augustine is specifically quoting this book of Apuleius and a few others by the same author, specifically his own *Apologia* (*A Discourse on Magic*), where Apuleius defended himself against a charge of magic. We have to remember that a copy of the Latin *Asclepius* was found in a corpus of Apuleius works, and because of that it was attributed to him during a long time (today only a few specialists defend this origin).

⁶⁰⁰ The Latin *Asclepius* had been printed in 1469, two years before Ficino's *Hermetica*, and both works would be printed together in many 16th and 17th century editions.

a middle place between the gods and men, so that they seem to be necessary for men as mediators between them and the gods, he does not distinguish their worship and the religion to the supernal gods. This Egyptian, however, says that there are some gods made by the supreme God, and others made by men (The City of God, VIII, 23).⁶⁰¹

As Augustine says, the *Asclepius* effectively says that “God, the father and master, made gods first and then humans” (*Asclepius* 22), but later the book attributes to humans the capacity to make their own gods (*Asclepius* 23-24), alluding to the statues inhabited by angels and demons. For Augustine, only demons had certainly inhabited the pagan idols, and “these demons cannot possibly be friends with the good gods who dwell in the holy and heavenly habitation, by whom we mean holy angels and rational creatures” (*The City of God* 24). In fact, the *Asclepius* comprised a somewhat Monotheism, which acknowledges a supreme god as creator of both the inferior gods (later interpreted as demons and angels) and the rest of the mortal creatures; this is what allowed Trimegistus during centuries to be included in Christian philosophy. Monotheism is especially remarkable in the famous prophecy included in the *Asclepius*, particularly praised by Augustine. According to that prophecy, the human gods (of the statues), after a period of chaos, would abandon the world and then the supreme God would restore the order and be the only one worshipped by mankind (*Asclepius* 24-26). Although this makes Augustine prefer Trimegistus vis-à-vis other Platonist philosophers such as Apuleius, he is not able to understand why in the *Asclepius* Trimegistus says “How mournful when the gods withdraw from mankind” (*Asclepius* 25) and displays a deep sorrow. This makes Augustine criticize Hermes:

For these vain, deceitful, pernicious, sacrilegious things caused the Egyptian Hermes sorrow, because he knew that the time was coming when they should be removed. But his sorrow was as impudently expressed as his knowledge was imprudently obtained; for it was not the Holy Spirit who revealed these things to him, as He had done to the holy prophets, who, predicting these things, said with exultation, ‘If a man shall make gods, behold, they are no gods [Jeremiah 16:10] (The City of God VIII, 24).⁶⁰²

⁶⁰¹ *Nam diuersa de illis Hermes Aegyptius, quem Trismegiston uocant, sensit et scripsit. Apuleius enim deos quidem illos negat; sed cum dicit ita inter deos et homines quadam medietate uersari, ut hominibus apud ipsos deos necessarii uideantur, cultum eorum a supernorum deorum religione non separat. Ille autem Aegyptius alios deos esse dicit a summo Deo factos, alios ab hominibus (The City of God, VIII, 23).*

⁶⁰² *Haec uana deceptoria, pernicioosa sacrilega Hermes Aegyptius, quia tempus, quo auferrentur, uenturum sciebat, dolebat; sed tam impudenter dolebat, quam imprudenter sciebat. Non enim haec ei reuelauerat sanctus Spiritus, sicut prophetis sanctis, qui haec praeuidentes cum exultatione dicebant: Si faciet homo deos, et ecce ipsi non sunt dii (The City of God VIII, 24).*

Hermes, although preferred over Apuleius by Augustine, is considered inferior to the biblical prophets, inspired by the Holy Ghost.⁶⁰³ Moreover, since Hermes has not been inspired by the Holy Ghost, Augustine expresses this suspicious sorrow, which dangerously moves him closer to idolatry; other prophets like Jeremiah, as Augustine highlights, gladly denied the existence of false gods. Augustine also quotes the next paragraph of the *Asclepius*, which is the one interpreted by Marsilio Ficino in a very different way. The *Asclepius* defines reason as a divine gift for mankind, but there is something even more wondrous, namely the capacity to ‘make’ gods, something which

exceeds the wonderment of all wonders that humans have been able to discover the divine nature and how to make it. Our ancestors once erred gravely on the theory of divinity; they were unbelieving and inattentive to worship and reverence for god. But then they discovered the art of making gods. To their discovery they added a conformable power arising from the nature of matter. Because they could not make souls, they mixed this power in and called up the souls of demons or angels and implanted them in likenesses through holy and divine mysteries, whence the idols could have the power to do good and evil (*Asclepius* 37 trans. by Copenhaver).

According to the *Asclepius*, the fabrication of idols and rituals known in Egypt and the Near East from ancient times is a human mistake, and an error of ancient theology. For centuries, there existed rituals such as those intended to “open the mouth” of the statues, allowing the God living in it to be worshipped and maybe even to speak and perform miracles and astounding deeds. In the specific setting of Hellenistic Egypt, those rituals were described as part of the theurgy practices by Neoplatonic philosophers like Porphyry and Iamblichus. The primitive Church and the first saints were known for having combatted those practices, which the European and Spanish societies knew well through popular hagiographic stories.⁶⁰⁴ Both in the *Old* and *New Testaments*, idolatry was the worst sin, and the cause of disgrace for the people of Israel. A learned man of his time like Patón knew perfectly the enormity of that crime and so he records, and partly quotes in Latin, Ficino’s clarification of those specific lines of the *Asclepius*, which were considered disturbing by

⁶⁰³ Augustin is in fact following previous opinions, like the ones of Lactantius, much favorable to Hermes that their own. As Moreschini (2011 34) points out, Lactantius said that Trismegistus follows “the teaching of the prophets (*Div. instit.* VI.25.20) and spoke of the mysteries of the Father and the Son (IV.27.20) although (as the context of this passage seems to admit) he gained his knowledge of the truth from the teaching of demons (a limitation that anticipates Augustine).”

⁶⁰⁴ For instance, the legend of the apostle saint Bartholomeus destroying the speaking statue of the demon Astaroth had been depicted in many paintings, and it is the central plot of Calderón de la Barca’s play *The chains of the demon* (*Las cadenas del demonio*). I have dedicated two articles to this play and its relationship with Spanish Golden Age Art (Udaondo 2014; 2015).

Augustine and could still prevent Trimegistus from being saved. This is how Ficino justifies and explains the controversial passage

If you consult Trimegistus, you will learn that a statue fashioned with all due observances from natural materials of the world which accord with a specific daemon is forthwith animated through that concordant daemon. Trimegistus says that it is inspired either through a daemon or through an angel, by which we may understand him to mean a spirit that is less pure and a spirit that is more pure. You will also hear this Hermes condemning many people of ancient times because, not believing that there are divine powers above heaven or that the prayers of people on earth rise to the higher heavenly beings, they made statues as dwellings for the daemons, which they worshipped as household gods. He clearly thought that, although beneficent daemons were occasionally summoned into the temples, harmful ones often came down (Ficino *Summary of the Apology of Socrates* in Farndell 126).

Both Patón and Ficino want to interpret that, when in the *Asclepius* Mercurius talks about the fabrication of statues and describes it as a mistake, he is simply condemning their worshiping among his contemporaries. That is why Patón, as we saw, resorts to Ficino, and reminds us how he says that Mercurius “condemned the statues of the Idols because the demons inhabited in them” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597); Patón also accentuates how Ficino affirms that *they made statues as dwellings for the daemons, which they worshipped as household gods*. With these quotations both Ficino and Patón align Trimegistus with the official interpretation of the Church according to which the pagan gods in the statues of pagans were demons. Therefore, Trimegistus’ piety is ratified, the shadows of idolatry casted away, and his salvation closer.

However, neither Ficino nor Patón, refer to the pity felt by Trimegistus when the dawn of idolatry and statues came. Moreover, Patón not only affirms Hermes’s resolute opposition to idolatry, but also emphasizes that Augustine completely agrees with it (although it is not true):

*Hermes Trimegistus completely believed in one only God, creator of everything, he acknowledged the mistake of his forefathers, who invented the superstitions of idols. And saint Augustine agrees with that in his books of The City of God. Because the famous confession repeated in our prologue features that with the unity that he professed in God he also professed the Trinity (Patón Mercurius Trimegistus 594).*⁶⁰⁵

Therefore, Patón ignores Augustine’s concerns for Hermes’s sorrow in *The City of God* due to the destruction of the idols in the *Asclepius*. Patón only affirms that Augustine agreed that Mercurius

⁶⁰⁵ *Hermes Trimegistus Deum omnino unum opinatur omnium conditorem, erroremque fatetur parentum suorum, qui superstitiones idolorum invenerint. Y conforma con esto san Agustín en sus libros de la ciudad de Dios. Pues que con la unidad, que confesaba en Dios confesase la Trinidad consta de aquella famosa confesión repetida en nuestro prologo (Patón Mercurius Trimegistus 594).*

“*acknowledged the mistake of his forefathers, who invented the superstitions of idols.*” However, just in case, he recalls once again “the famous confession repeated in our prologue” which is referring to the quotation of Aquinas where he supposedly accepts Trimegistus’ belief in the Trinity and the unity of God. It is not a coincidence that Patón adds Aquinas just after Augustine to ‘corroborate’ him. In Patón’s eyes and also in his Neo-Scholastic environment, Aquinas was an even bigger authority than Augustine. Therefore, if Aquinas acknowledged that Hermes believed in God and the Trinity, he would be the supreme authority in the question. I will come back to Aquinas’ quotation at the end of the chapter, since it is the definitive evidence for Patón.

In Patón’s particular interpretation, Mercurius not only was a virtuous man who avoided idolatry, but also tried to prevent others from committing it. To prove this, he supports the ecclesiastical authorities (Augustine, Aquinas), with authoritative secular ones such as Ficino, but, apparently, not as the translator and interpreter of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (something that Patón seems to ignore), rather, as one of the most important translators and commentators of Plato who ever existed.

For this reason, although I agree with Byrne that Ficino’s influence in Spain has been underrated many times (and she is correcting this with her work), I also think that Trimegistus was so imbedded in Christian and Humanist culture that writers and erudite men could interpret his figure and legacy without referring to Ficino’s work. Jiménez Patón is evidence of that. Moreover, I do think that Patón was pontificating about Trimegistus, and risking his career, probably without even having read the available original works attributed to him. He does not seem to have consulted directly either Ficino’s translation (i.e. *Pimander*) or the Latin *Asclepius*, which were usually published together, and so have been preserved in Spanish libraries.⁶⁰⁶ I consider that Patón talks about Mercurius, to whom he dedicated his most important work, only through secondary sources. Ficino’s *Pimander* only appears in Patón’s *Answer* mentioned alongside the quotation of another author.⁶⁰⁷ That is the only instance of the *Pimander* in Patón’s text, and he does not quote it directly or indirectly.

Patón seems to ignore or avoid all these facts, including Ficino’s important role in the early modern revival of Hermeticism. It is still a matter of work to demonstrate Ficino’s status in the

⁶⁰⁶ See Byrne (*Ficino in Spain*).

⁶⁰⁷ As I pointed out before, Patón quotes in Latin Sisto Senense (or Sixtus Senensis, 1520–1569) in his *Bibliotheca sancta* (1566), when he mentions that “under the name of Trimegistus stands out two dialogues: the *Pimander* and the *Asclepius*” (*Mercurius* 598).

entire Late Humanism (in which Patón takes part). Therefore, Ficino is relegated, from the central figure of renaissance Hermeticism and Trimegistus' interpreter, to one more source used by Jiménez Patón to demonstrate the absence of sins in Trimegistus. However, it is no minor sin the one Ficino is helping Patón deny, but the worst of them: idolatry, which had been implied by Augustine himself.

Therefore, if Ficino is not the main source about Hermes for Patón, who are those more relevant information pools he uses? At the end of this chapter, I will directly address these sources, which are also related with the most complicated challenges to prove Hermes's salvation, namely, to demonstrate that he was aware of complex Christian dogmas such as the Trinity or the eternal incarnation of Jesus Christ. By using those authorities Patón was not only able to demonstrate Hermes's salvation, but also that his own humanistic expertise included the greatest theologians of Christianity. In point of fact, the extraordinary importance of ecclesiastical sources in the late humanist Patón cannot come as a surprise—in the next section I will examine how he lines up and harmonizes them with other secular sources to prove Trimegistus' salvation.

Patón's Sources and the Sphere of Late Humanism

Eclecticism is one of the main features in the scholarship of this period. The study of the sources about Hermes used by Jiménez Patón shows a surprising variety of origins, from early Christianity to the contemporary heavyweights of Neo-Scholastic thinkers, without forgetting chronologists, erudite humanists and Golden Age Spanish scholars. Patón has to respond to the challenge thrown to him by Fray Esteban, who demanded grave authors to support Mercurius' salvation. This precondition allows us to assume the reputation of his erudite choices in the moment he is writing. Moreover, Patón knew that if everything should go well, as it finally happened, the book would have a huge diffusion in all the Latin schools of the important region of La Mancha, in the center of Spain. For a man proud of his own knowledge, but self-conscious for not having completed his Theology studies, this was the perfect occasion to demonstrate his merit.⁶⁰⁸ Finally, he would even be able to embarrass the doctor and theologian Fray Esteban who

⁶⁰⁸ Madroñal (*Humanismo y Filología* 75) reminds that one of Patón's constant worries is that notwithstanding being a modest grammarian, his wide studies and erudition allowed him to write about many different topics, despite his enemies' critics.

did not identify a quotation from the *Summa Theologiae* by Aquinas in the original prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, hinted at by a ‘humble’ Latin teacher.

Fray Esteban ignored that, for Aquinas, Hermes was such a valuable source of authority. Aquinas was actually not only familiarized with the Latin *Asclepius* and the quotations about him gathered by Church Fathers such as Lactantius, but was also aware of the medieval Latin Hermetic developments, in many cases linked to Arab translations that took place in Spain, and to the practical part of Hermetism: alchemy, astrology and magic. The quotation of Hermes which Patón takes from Aquinas came from the obscure *Book of the twenty-four Philosophers*, a version of Arab Hermetic writing which experienced an enormous success in medieval Europe, despite its controversial content. Aquinas was also familiarized with the wide Ancient and Medieval Hermetic tradition through his master Albertus Magnus (1200-1280).⁶⁰⁹

Aquinas, the touchstone of all Scholasticism (old and new) is in fact the most important source for the late humanist Patón for the salvation of Hermes. This could be surprising for someone used to hearing about the radical opposition between Humanism and Scholasticism, which has prevailed in European and Spanish Renaissance studies. Rey (*The Last Days of Humanism* 20) highlights ideas that Kristeller had already defended forty years earlier. Kristeller (*Renaissance Thought* 85 & ss.) criticized some common assumptions about the Renaissance and Humanism studies, which had been established by Jacob Burckhardt in his *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien (The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* 1860). Among the mistakes of Burckhardt’s important book was to emphasize the rupture, to ignore continuities between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and to misrepresent Renaissance attitudes towards religion. Yet, this strong medieval-renaissance opposition is still defended by renowned scholars such as Greenblatt, who in his bestselling books is still attached to the idea of obscurantist and religious Middle Ages, in which men were waiting to be released from ignorance and the dogmatism of the Church by atheist and brave renaissance scholars who made the world modern.⁶¹⁰ In Spain, Gómez Canseco (*El humanismo después de 1600* 112), who affirms that “renaissance thought is a philosophy of negation. Renaissance and Humanism repudiated medieval culture and the

⁶⁰⁹ Saint Albert was greatly interested in astrology, alchemy and magic, and many works of these disciplines were attributed to him, creating for his figure a reputation of magician.

⁶¹⁰ For instance in *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (2012) which won both the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award. Of course, these ideas have been criticized by other scholars, for instance, John Mofasani who described Greenblatt's Voltairean and Burckhardtian interpretation of the Renaissance “eccentric,” “questionable,” and “unwarranted” (See Mofasani’s review in *Reviews in History* 1283).

scholastic thought in which it was sustained.” Examples like Patón force us to nuance such strong antagonism. Following Kristeller, Rey (*The Last Days of Humanism* 20) reminds us that on many occasions, Renaissance culture was based

on the coexistence of classical letters, patristics, Platonism, and scholasticism, which each author assembled in his own personal way. The old opposition between Humanism and Scholasticism, as it is believed to have been manifested by Petrarch and Erasmus, was overcome in Quevedo’s Spain, which was formed in an atmosphere inclined towards the synthesis of methods and traditions (Rey 20).

This coexistence is exactly what we can appreciate in Patón’s works and specially in this *Answer*. Following Kristeller and Rey’s still minority position, it is not surprising that Patón relied so much on both Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic authorities. A cautious reading of Patón’s *Answer* leads me also to contradict Madroñal, one of the main specialists in Patón, who affirms that Patón was against Scholasticism as his master El Brocense (*Humanismo y Filología* 82). It is indeed true that El Brocense was suspicious of undermining the scholastic pedagogical system, as one of his inquisitorial accusers said, and Gomez Canseco collects (113); it is also veritable that sometimes El Brocense tried to separate the reason of science from religion, however, other scholastics before, such as Siger de Brabant (1240-1245), had defended the idea of a *double truth*, especially after Averroes’ translations were diffused in Europe (an idea that Aquinas rejected). Therefore, was El Brocense truly attacking all of Neo-Scholasticism or some of its interpretations?

In 16th century Spain it was undeniably controversial to offer an alternative system of logic against Aristotle, since it would dangerously move its defendants close to Erasmus or even worst, to the protestant Petrus Ramus (1515-1572), who did something similar. For criticizing Aristotle, El Brocense was accused of attacking Aquinas “because saint Thomas is founded in Aristotle and our faith is founded on saint Thomas; therefore, to condemn Aristotle is to talk bad about our faith,” as one accuser of El Brocense said in his trial.⁶¹¹

In any case, as Jerphagnon points out (*Histoire de la pensée* 483-487), critics of Aristotle and specially of his logic and syllogistic method were not a patrimony of anti-Scholastics in the early modern period (with Descartes as the clearest example). This criticism started some time before with Sextus Empiricus (2nd century), and continued at least to the XIX century with John

⁶¹¹ *Inquisitorial proceses against Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas (Procesos inquisitoriales contra Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, 132)*

Stuart Mill, which demonstrates that the Spanish ‘Neo-Scholastic’ Baroque was not the last stronghold of Aristotelianism. According to Kristeller

there has been a tendency, in the light of later developments, and under the influence of a modern aversion to scholasticism, to exaggerate the opposition of the humanist to scholasticism, and to assign to them and importance in the history of scientific and philosophical thought which they neither could nor did attain. The reaction against this tendency has been inevitable, but it has been equally wrong (Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 91).

This distaste of scholasticism can still be perceived; in the case of the Spanish academy, it is a highly-regarded topic to impute scholasticism all the developmental and academic problems of Spain during centuries, from the 16th century up to today. Examples of this can be found in Guy (1985), Gómez Canseco (2003 116-117), and specially Rodríguez de la Flor in numerous works (2000); this last author is especially critical against what he calls *The Metaphysical Peninsula* (*La península metafísica* 1999), referring to the prestige of Scholasticism in Spanish universities and intellectual milieu during the baroque period. This line of interpretation also has wanted to make heroic the efforts of El Brocense and other thinkers, including Patón, as a line of resistance against the prevailing Neo-Scholasticism.

Even if Patón partly follows his master’s anti-Aristotelianism in the *Necessary Instrument*, his book of logic-dialectics (as we saw in the previous chapter), he never published it. Despite this, it is undeniable that Patón is actually following el Brocense when he criticizes Aristotle and some of his theories about rhetoric and agrees with him on many rhetorical and grammatical theories which grew apart from Aristotle. Maybe we have a hint of that when Patón does not allow Aristotle to be saved and throws him literally to hell, as we have seen. By contrast, in other works like the *Answer*, Patón is able to be as Scholastic as any other Spanish scholar of his time, and to use Aquinas as the biggest authority.

In the *Answer* to Fray Esteban, the late humanist Patón seems to be alien to these modern disputes and preferences, as well as to the anti-Scholasticism which has been attributed to him. However, we can follow a clear logic in his choices of authorities. As we have seen before, in the sources he used for his argumentation he starts mentioning generic “sacred doctors” referring to the doctors of the Church; shortly after, he concretizes them in the most important Church Father, Augustine, but then he appeals to his main source, the Neo-Scholastic Domingo de Soto. Patón picks Soto because he offers a Neo-Scholastic—and so Thomistic— formulation of the *problem*

of paganism in *De iustitia et iure* which could be applied to Hermes, and from this source he will take his key model to defend his salvation; afterwards, Patón uses the authority of the *Bible* (Paul's letters), and then Aquinas appears in the long quotation about the Sibyls and Trimegistus that I translated and commented before. Once Aquinas's authority has been established, Patón finally introduces two secular sources: Johannes Nauclerus (1425-1510) and Raphael Volaterranus (1451-1522). This sequence and preference of sources is a clear indication that, at least in the humanist Patón, Kristeller and Rey were right about the real weight that medieval and early modern tradition had for many renowned humanists.

My interpretation is that Patón takes the doctrine of the salvation of pagans from the interpretation made by a Neo-Scholastic authority, Domingo de Soto, from the Bible and doctors of the Church such as Augustine or Aquinas. Once he has established the criteria for salvation, that is, virtues and knowledge of Christ, Patón can furnish additional evidence from either ecclesiastical or secular authorities. We have already seen how Patón proved Hermes's virtues and lack of vices, with authorities both ecclesiastical (such as Lactantius) and secular (Ficino); let's see now how he proved the much more complicated matter of Hermes's knowledge of Christian dogmas, starting with the Trinity.

Hermes and the Holy Trinity

Early in the *Answer*, Patón posits the obligation for pagans to believe in the Holy Trinity: "(although they were gentiles) to be able to be saved they had the obligation of believing in the mystery of the Holy Trinity."⁶¹² As I explained before, once the doctrine from ecclesiastical authorities has been established, Patón can provide evidence from both prestigious ecclesiastical and secular authors. For instance, Patón uses the authority of two humanist authors of *Chronologies*: Johannes Nauclerus (1425-1510) and Raffaello Maffei (1451-1522), called Volaterranus. This reliance on chronologists cannot come as a surprise because, as Grafton has studied, chronologies were among the most important and prestigious sciences for the early modern period, although not free at all from forgeries and mistakes—which made them target of attacks during the enlightenment. In fact, to defend Hermes, Paton would also use the most famous forger of chronologies: Annius of Viterbo—I will come back to him in a posterior stage of my

⁶¹² "También tenían obligación para haberse de salvar (aunque fuesen gentiles) de creer el misterio de la Santísima Trinidad" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 593).

work, dedicated to the *philosophia perennis*. Despite forgeries and the Biblical dependence of those chronologies, Grafton has always defended their value, and has demonstrated that debates and polemics about their method and authenticity allowed for the development of History and other humanistic disciplines; furthermore, by conciliating ancient and modern sources with the *Bible*, they occupied a prominent role in all intellectual productions.⁶¹³ For better or worse, chronologies (and their forgeries), were another product of the Renaissance such as philology, and it was normal for a philologist like Patón to use them.⁶¹⁴ As we saw in the third chapter, according to Céspedes' model of humanist, Chronology and Geography were among the disciplines that the humanist must know well (*The Humanist* 5).

Thus, it is not strange that Patón proved Hermes's values through chronologies, which at the same time gave the Egyptian sage a Historical and Geographical context, sometimes through complicated arithmetical calculations—always harmonized with the undoubted holy History from the Bible. In his book about the Sibyls, Baltasar Porreño also resorts to inserting the pagan prophetesses in a chronology all throughout his book.⁶¹⁵ Among the chronologists, Patón first brings Nauclerus to the stage,⁶¹⁶ who provides valuable information about Mercurius

Nauclerus satisfies this very well in his *Chronology* saying: *Mercurius Trimegistus was the first discoverer of the stars among the Egyptians. It is said that when he went out of Egypt he founded one hundred cities, also that he taught men to worship the true god.*⁶¹⁷ Not only does he say that he worshipped the true god but that he taught the men who inhabited those

⁶¹³ In the 16th century: “Chronology was essential to civilized life. As one of the eyes of history (geography being the other) it gave order and coherence to man’s past”, and there existed a “widespread agreement about the ends and merits of chronology” which, however “was not accompanied by a similar agreement about its methods and results” (Grafton *Defenders of the Text* 105). Grafton (1975 164) also has defended that even the chronological forgeries of Viterbo “provided a far more unified and, for many purposes, a more useful body of information than did the real historians of Greece and Rome”

⁶¹⁴ “Forgery and philology fell and rose together, in the Renaissance as in Hellenistic Alexandria; sometimes the forgers were the first to create or restate elegant critical methods, sometimes the philologist beat them to it. But in either event one conclusion emerges. The rediscovery of the classical tradition in the Renaissance was as much an act of imagination as a rediscovery; yet many of the instruments by which it was carried out were themselves classical products rediscovered by the humanist.” (Grafton 2010 32)

⁶¹⁵ Porreño uses chronologists such as Caesar Baronius (1538-1607) in his *Annales (Oráculos de las doce Sibilas, f5r.)* or Gilbert Générard (1535-1597) in his *Chronologie sacrée, Oráculos de las doce Sibilas f6r.)*

⁶¹⁶ The Swabian humanist Giovanni Nauclerus (1425-1510) under the suggestion of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, grandfather of Charles I, wrote his World Chronicle (*Memorabilium omnis aetatis et omnium gentium chronici commentarii*, 1516), printed posthumously, with its foreword written by Johann Reuchlin (a famous French expert in Hermes Trimegistus). He followed the later polemical historiographical method of Viterbus and narrates facts from the creation to the year 1500, using Biblical, Greco-Roman and contemporary sources.

⁶¹⁷ I have translated and contrasted this quotation in Latin from a 1564 edition of Nauclerus book

cities to worship the true God a trinity in persons and one in essence (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).⁶¹⁸

Patón operates Nauclerus' account to introduce Mercurius as the inventor of astronomy and astrology (here at least among the Egyptians), and as a civic founder and governor of cities—later on I will show how this fact can be added to Mercurius' portrait as a Neostoic sage; however, in this quotation, even more important than his 'civic' and secular merits, are the religious ones: Mercurius not only worshipped the true God, but also taught his citizens to worship him and to believe in the mystery of the holy Trinity. To corroborate Nauclerus, Patón adds another writer of chronology and geography:

Raphael Volaterranus⁶¹⁹ in his *Anthropology* after having talked about his virtue and science, and that he prospered after Moses' times, and that in his time that gypsy⁶²⁰ province (because it has such a good master) started to flourish in the good arts, disciplines and sciences, related to this man says: *Hermes Trimegistus completely believed in only one God, creator of everything, he acknowledged the mistake of his forefathers, who invented the superstitions of idols.* And saint Augustine agrees with that in his books of *The City of God*. Because the famous confession repeated in our prologue features that with the unity that he professed in God he also professed the Trinity (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).⁶²¹

Volaterranus is used in a similar way as his colleague Nauclerus.⁶²² Since they were famous humanists, Patón first mentions how they chronicled Hermes's secular virtues in sciences and arts, and how he contributed to the development of Egypt; then we go into an account of religious

⁶¹⁸ "A esto nos satisface y muy bien en su Cronología Nauclero, diciendo. *Mercurius Trimegistus primus stellarum apud Aegyptios inventor. Qui ex Aegypto digressus centum civitates condidisse fertur, ibidem verum deum colere homines docuisse.* No solo dice que adoró al verdadero Dios, más que enseñó a los hombres que poblaron aquellas ciudades lo adorasen al verdadero Dios trino en personas y uno en esencia (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

⁶¹⁹ Raffaello Maffei (1451-1522), called Volaterranus because he was from Volterra, Italy, was a famous humanist historian, theologian and chronologist, his most famous work was the *Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII* (Rome 1506). The first part of this work is called *Geography*, and the second *Anthropology*, from which Patón takes the title he is using here. I am translating and contrasting Patón's quote from a 1526 edition (f.clix. r.) <https://books.google.com/books?id=EcdjAAAACAAJ&dq=Suidas+vero+dicit+vocatum+trimegistus&q=mercurius#v=snippet&q=hermes&f=false>

⁶²⁰ Patón is calling Egypt "provincia gitana" following a common assumption developed in the early modern period. In fact, both the English gypsy and the Spanish gitano, come from the Egyptian country, because gypsies were supposed to come from Egypt.

⁶²¹ "Rafaele Volaterraneo en su *Antropologia* después de haber dicho de su virtud y ciencia, y que floreció después de los tiempos de Moises, y que en su tiempo comenzó aquella provincia gitana (por tener el tan gran maestro) a florecer en las buenas artes, disciplinas y ciencias a este propósito dice: *Hermes Trimegistus Deum omnino unum opinatur omnium conditorem, erroremque fatetur parentum suorum, qui superstitiones idolorum invenerint.* Y conforma con esto san Agustín en sus libros de la ciudad de Dios. Pues que con la unidad, que confesaba en Dios confesase la Trinidad consta de aquella famosa confesión repetida en nuestro prologo (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594)."

⁶²² As Grafton (1975 159) points out, Nauclerus had a real interest in Near Eastern studies; so he tried to contextualize Hermes in the classical sources about Egypt.

virtues and beliefs, which includes the repudiation of idolatry. I used this fragment in the previous section on idolatry and Ficino, where I also emphasized how Patón is reinforcing Ficino's quote with Augustine in a 'sophistic way'—since Augustine was not actually that sure about Hermes's absence of idolatrous ideas.⁶²³ Finally, Patón concludes by hinting to his previous quotation from Aquinas on the Trinity in the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*. As Patón points out, in Aquinas's quotation, Hermes's belief in the Trinity is assured since it “features that with the unity that he professed in God he also professed the Trinity.” Patón only advances briefly the quotation he used in his *Prologue*, exactly in the part that arouse the suspicion of Fray Esteban, because that decisive quotation refers precisely to the knowledge of the Trinity, but he is going to wait until the end of this part of the *Answer* to play his most important card. As Patón, I also postpone this issue to the end of the section.

Patón reminds that Volaterranus also recorded that, actually, the name Trimegistus comes from the Trinity, a reference that Volaterranus took from the *Suda*: “And even *Suidas* affirms that they gave him the name of Trimegistus for this reason (the Trinity), and so says Volaterranus” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).⁶²⁴ It is significant that Patón takes this reference from Volaterranus, because he was a Hellenist, and thus he probably could read the *Suda* in Greek. Contrary to what Patón thinks, *Suidas* was not a scholar, but an enormous 10th-century Byzantine encyclopedia about the ancient Mediterranean world. From its name, it has been attributed to an author called *Suidas*, a mistake that both Volaterranus and Patón make. The *Suda* had been composed in the period in which the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* would have been compiled precisely in Byzantium, probably by purging it from magic, astrology, alchemy and all the technical *Hermetica*, but keeping the theoretical and philosophical part—that one which could be more easily conciliated with Christianity. It would have also responded to the abhorrence of magic expressed the next century by scholars such as Psellus (1008-1078). Admiration of Trimegistus and hatred of magic were absolutely compatible—as we saw, Patón expressed his rejection of magic in *The Discrete Virtuous*. Copenhaver explains this process and underlines Trimegistus's knowledge of the Trinity contained in the *Suda*:

⁶²³ This is a misleading reference to the polemical Book VIII of *The City of God*, in which, as we have learned when talking about Ficino's quotation used by Patón, Augustine both praises *Mercurius* because he announces the end of the worshipers of idols, and reprehends him because he attributes *Mercurius*' knowledge to a demon. Neither Volaterranus nor Naclerus said, as Ficino, that Hermes reprimanded his citizens for worshiping idols.

⁶²⁴ “Y aún *Suidas* afirma que el nombre de Trimegisto se le dio por esto, y lo refiere el Volaterraneo” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

For Christian readers of the Latin West and the Greek East alike, a Corpus purged of magic would better befit the authorship of the pagan sage described in the *Suda* around the year 1000: “Hermes Trimegistus... was an Egyptian wise man who flourished before Pharaoh’s time. He was called Trismegistus on account of his praise of the Trinity, saying that there is one divine nature in the Trinity.” The *Hermetica* are full of random pieties, which is why Christians from patristic times onward so much admired them (Copenhaver *Hermetica* xli).

As it can be appreciated, a medieval source, the *Suda* (or *Suidas*) was the definitive confirmation of Trimegistus’ knowledge of the Trinity since the Middle Ages until Patón’s time, who also takes profit from it for his own disputes. Therefore, Patón takes from the *Suda* a quotation on Hermes and the Trinity from Volaterranus. A passage which also includes surprising information about Trimegistus’ death. Since once again Patón has small mistakes and omissions, I have consulted and translated the Latin part of the *Answer* on Trimegistus’ death from his source, Volaterranus’ *Anthropology*. Patón writes:

Suidas truly said that he was called Trimegistus and accordingly he (almost) had discerned the Trinity of God and when he was dying he prayed with these words: «oh wise sky, work of the great God, and you, oh voice of the father which he first sent forth* (+ when he placed the word in the universe); I swear for his only begotten word, and the [Holy] Ghost apprehending all things, have pity on me.»* When he was dying he asks for the mercy of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and he begs the heavenly things, and the sky, which he calls the wise deed of God, to have pity on him; and for this reason, he puts the verb in plural [i.e. *miseremini*] and not because he was thinking in a plural God, because as it appears he worshipped all three persons as an only God (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594-595).⁶²⁵

Therefore, Patón is interested in highlighting that, according to the *Suda*, which Volaterranus quotes, in the very moment of his death, Hermes referred to every single one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, which constitutes an undeniable proof of Hermes’s belief in it. Remarkably enough, Patón suppresses the adverb *fere* (*almost*) from Volaterranus’ translation of the *Suda*. According to Volaterranus’ translation, Hermes “*almost* had discerned the Trinity of God” whereas Patón, by silencing the ‘almost,’ grants Hermes greater faith in the Christian dogma. Moreover, the *Suda* also acknowledges that God was the creator of the world and the universe; in addition, he emphasizes how Hermes died asking mercy to God, as if any possible sin could have been

⁶²⁵ “*Suidas vero dicit eum vocatum trimegistum et consentanea (fere)* trinitati senserit de deo morientemque haec fuisse precatum. O caelum magni dei sapiens opus, teque o vox patris quam ille primam emisit, (quando universo constitui mundum)* adiuro per unigenitum eius verbum et spiritum cuncta comprehendentem miseremini mei. Muriéndose pide misericordia a Dios Padre, a Dios hijo, a Dios Espíritu Santo, y ruega a los celestiales, y cielo a quien llama la obra de Dios sabia, tengan misericordia del, que por eso puso el verbo en plural, y no porque lo tuviese a Dios por plural, pues como consta a todas las tres personas adoró como a un solo Dios.*” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594-595).

pardoned at that moment. I also find extremely interesting that some of Hermes’s final words, in Volaterranus’ translation of the *Suda* (*miseremini mei / have pity of me*) are the same used by Job in the Latin *Vulgate*: *miseremini mei miseremini mei saltem vos amici mei quia manus Domini tetigit me / Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me* (Job 19:21). Job uses a plural imperative *miseremini*, because he is calling his three (significant) friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar), whereas, as Patón explains, Hermes uses the plural because he is invoking the three persons of the Trinity.

As we have seen before, Patón mentions Job in the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* and in two occasions in the *Answer*; in these two occasions he repeats what he had said in the prologue (below) and also includes another quotation of Aquinas related to both Hermes and Job:

*Therefore, it isn’t thoughtless for us to attribute to him the invention of it (i.e. eloquence), and (include Trimegistus in) the title. This is all the more so because it happened perhaps that he (Trimegistus), a very learned man and a religious priest, was saved through the law of nature, even though he was a gentile and even though he was [living] among the pagans, just as was the case with saint Job (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).*⁶²⁶

Therefore, Hermes and Job, both gentiles and living among the pagans, were saved according to the natural law. And so Patón justifies the inclusion of Hermes in his title. Later, in the *Answer*, Patón repeats these same words on Job that he had already said in the prologue (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600). Both in the prologue and the *Answer* he immediately relates this thought with the quotation of Aquinas that I will explain at the end of the chapter. However, before that, Patón has already brought up another quotation of Aquinas on the salvation of pagans and Job: *a revelation about Christ was made to many of the gentiles, as it is clear from what they predicted. For instance, Job 19:25 says, I know that my redeemer lives. (Mercurius 593).*⁶²⁷

In brief, Patón strengthens the relationship between Job and Hermes—since both were pagans with knowledge about god—by quoting that passage in the *Suda* which puts in Hermes’s mouth the same words as those in Job 19: 21: *miseremini mei*. I also want to point out that Quevedo, Patón’s friend, quotes exactly these words in Latin in his *The Constance and Patience of Saint Job*, which he wrote during his ailments in prison, and was published posthumously: “And

⁶²⁶*Ergo non inconsiderate illi eius inventionem, et nomen tribuimus. Tum etiam, quia fortasse factum fuit, ut ille doctissimus vir, et religiosus sacerdos, etsi gentilis, et inter ethnicos lege naturae salvus (ut Job sanctus) fieret (Mercurius Trimegistus 20).*

⁶²⁷ [D]icendum quod multis Gentilium facta fuit revelatio de Christo, ut patet per ea, quae praedixerunt. Nam Job. 19. Dicit: scio, quod redemptor meus vivit (Aquinas *Summa Theologica II-II*, 2, 7, quoted by Patón, *Mercurius Trimegistus* 593)

Job confirms this universal abandonment when he says consecutively to his three friends in this chapter, verse 21: *Miseremini mei, saltem uos amici mei*: ‘at least you, my friends, have pity of me’” (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1199).⁶²⁸ In this work, Quevedo seeks solace for his own sufferings in the figure of Job, who, as I will show next chapter, was a model for Neostoic thinkers, in the same way that Patón is presenting Trimegistus—we will also see how Quevedo quotes Trimegistus and Job as equal authorities for his Neostoic thought. Now I want to emphasize how Job and this precise quotation from the *Vulgate* appears in the mouth of Trimegistus when he died, according to the *Suda* and Volaterranus, and serves to argue in favor of Hermes’s knowledge of the Trinity.

As proof of Mercurius’ knowledge of the Trinity, Patón also brings to the stage another of his favorite sources who also used the *Suda*:⁶²⁹ “And the very learned Tiraqueau confirms this [i.e. that Trimegistus knew the Trinity] in the *Admonitions on Alexandro of Alandro*.”⁶³⁰ Patón is referring to the humanist André Tiraqueau (1488–1558), famous not only because he was Rabelais’ patron,⁶³¹ but for his prolific writings—among them an erudite commentary on the *Geniales dies* of Alessandro Alessandri (1461-1523), to which Patón alludes.⁶³² Effectively, in this book Tiraqueau mentions Trimegistus several times, and also uses the reference to the Trinity in the *Suda* (*In genialium dierum Alexandri ab Alexandro* 157).

Other than these three humanists—Nauclerus, Volaterranus, and Tiraqueau—Patón also includes a really ‘weighty’ ecclesiastical authority to talk about Mercurius’ virtues, including his knowledge of the Trinity: the Dominican Sixtus Senensis, or Sixtus of Siena (1520–1569), one of the most important counter-reformation theologians and Biblical experts.⁶³³ As Patón underlines, Sixtus Senensis seems to resume everything Patón has attested before about Mercurius from other authorities

⁶²⁸ “Y confirma este desamparo universal cuando dice a sus tres amigos consecutivamente en este capítulo, verso 21: *Miseremini mei, saltem uos amici mei*: ‘Siguiera vosotros, que sois mis amigos, apiadaos de mi’” (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1199).

⁶²⁹ For Patón’s used of Tiraqueau see Bosh & others (*Comentarios de erudición* 42).

⁶³⁰ “Y esto confirma el doctísimo Tiraquelo en las Advertencias sobre Alexandro de Alandro” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

⁶³¹ Rabelais included the character Trinquamelle in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* as an ‘homage’ to Tiraqueau.

⁶³² Alessandro Alessandri, known as Alexander ab Alexandro (1461-1523) was an erudite Neapolitan lawyer who wrote his miscellany *Geniales Dies* (1522) following the example of *Noctes Atticae* by Aulus Gellius, and the *Saturnalia*, by Macrobius.

⁶³³ Sixtus Senensis was a converted Jew who, after becoming a renowned Biblical scholar, coined such important terms in the history of Biblical studies as *deuterocanonical*, *protocanonical*, and *apocryphal*.

Sixtus Senensis, a very learned man from the religion of the preachers, in his *Bibliotheca Sancta* says very great things about this philosopher, which encompass and include the proof of our attempt with these words: *[In the] fourth or last part he examines the portion of Egyptian Wisdom about death, and of living according to political reason, about which laws and institutions Laertius refers to Mercurius (...); under his name remain two dialogues: Pimander and Asclepius, in which he brought forth, with worthy admiration, so many prophecies about God, about the Trinity, about the coming of Christ, and about the Last Judgement; so that he seems not only philosopher, but foreknowing prophet of the future things.*⁶³⁴ And he (Sixtus) goes forth telling other praises from the ancient Iamblichus, Seleucus, Manetho, and other ancient authors (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).⁶³⁵

Therefore, Sixtus Senensis one of the greatest authorities in Biblical studies not only in the Renaissance, but in the history of Catholicism, corroborates that Trimegistus could be suitably Christianized. Trimegistus, according to Sixtus, epitomized all Egyptian wisdom, which included anything from death to political reason and law. Actually, in this quotation we observe that Trimegistus held all the skills and qualities that a model wise man needed for the 17th century, represented in Spain and Catholic Europe by the Neostoic sage, who lived according to nature, overcame difficulties, as his Egyptian fellow citizens' idolatry, and taught them all kinds of disciplines—I will dedicate next chapter to this motif. Moreover, Trimegistus' two main dialogues, correctly identified by Sixtus as *Pimander* and *Asclepius* include *many prophecies about God, about the Trinity, about the coming of Christ, and about the Last Judgement*, that is, all important Christian doctrines, including the Trinity.

In this section, we have seen how Patón, once he established the doctrine on the salvation of pagans appropriate to Trimegistus—and based it upon ecclesiastical authorities such as Aquinas and Domingo de Soto—looked for evidence on this doctrine in both illustrious humanists (Nauclerus, Volaterranus, and Tiraqueau), and Biblical scholars (Sixtus Senensis). These humanists and churchmen grounded the information they provided of Trimegistus on relevant

⁶³⁴ We can find Patón's quotation in *Bibliotheca Sancta*, 1993, 40

⁶³⁵ "Sisto Senense varón doctísimo de la Religión de los predicadores en su Biblioteca dice desde Filosofo muy grandes cosas, que comprehenden, y abarcan la prueba de nuestro intento por estas palabras. *Quarta, ac postrema Aegyptiacae sapientiae pars spectat ad mortes, ac politicam vivendi rationem, cuius leges et instituta Loercius* (Laertius in Sixtus) in Mercurium refert, quem Graeci Trismegiston, hoc est ter maximum apellarunt, quoniam et philosophus maximus et sacerdos maximus et rex maximus fuerit, sub cuius nomine nunc extant dialigi (dialogi in Sisto) duo Pimander et Asclepius: in quibus tot admiratione digna de Deo et (*de in Sixtus) Trinitate, de Adventu Christi de ultimo iudicio oracula protulit, ut non philosophus tantum, sed propheta futurorum praescius videatur:* y pasa adelante diciendo del otras alabanzas de autoridad de los antiguos Iamblico, Seleuco, Meneto, y otros autores muy antiguos" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).

disciplines of the period that I commented in the third chapter—explained by Baltasar de Céspedes in *The Humanist*—, among them, Chronology, Geography, and philological commentaries of both the Bible and Greek sources like the *Suda*. Indisputably, Patón knew how to wield powerful and erudite proofs of both Hermes’s virtue and knowledge of a Christian dogma, the Trinity. However, another even more complex Christian dogma than the Trinity in relation to the salvation of the pagans had been debated for centuries.

Hermes Trimegistus and Jesus’ Eternal Generation, Incarnation, and Last Supper

In this process of Hermes’s Christianization that I am explaining in my work, other than the Trinity the other important dogma which Trimegistus should know to be saved is the Eternal Generation, an idea closely related to the Incarnation. The dogma of the Eternal Generation emanates from an interpretation of the Gospel of John;⁶³⁶ it explains the process according to which the second person of the Trinity and preexistent divine *Logos*, by taking on a human body and human nature, was made flesh and was conceived by Mary.⁶³⁷ Therefore, Jesus existed from the beginning of times as the *Logos*. Church fathers and theologians had striven during centuries to justify Mercurius’ and other pagans’ knowledge of these complicated notions, which also provoked schisms and splits in the heart of the Church.

Before continuing with Patón’s *Answer*, I am going to examine how some important contemporaries of Patón—not directly quoted by him—addressed this issue. Some of the better elucidations on pagans and Christian dogmas were provided by Golden Age scholars and theologians educated in Neo-Scholasticism. For instance, Fray Luis de Granada (1504-1588) was a successful and controversial rhetorician and theologian. Although he was influenced by Erasmus and questioned by the Inquisition,⁶³⁸ his books of rhetoric and preaching are considered among the best of 16th century Spain,⁶³⁹ and his *Introduction of the Symbol of faith (Introducción del símbolo de la fe)* (1584), is among the few theological books included in most ‘canons’ of Spanish

⁶³⁶ “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (*John* 1:1); “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (*John* 1:14).

⁶³⁷ This doctrine, therefore, implies that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, and has two natures joined in hypostatic union.

⁶³⁸ See López-Muñoz (*Fray Luis de Granada y la Retórica*), and the classical study of Laín Entralgo (*La antropología en la obra de Fray Luis de Granada*).

⁶³⁹ See, for instance, the recent edition of *Los seis libros de la Retórica Eclesiástica o Método de Predicar* (2010).

literature.⁶⁴⁰ Patón knew Fray Luis de Granada perfectly and quoted him on many occasions, but paradoxically not in the *Answer*, although there is a passage in the *Introduction of the Symbol of faith* directly related to Patón’s argument (not even Patón’s prodigious memory was infallible). Granada defends precisely the knowledge of the Eternal Generation and the Incarnation by Trimegistus and other pagan philosophers:

Many philosophers testify about this eternal generation of the son of God, with such clear words that they admire whoever reads them (...) But among all those philosophers, the most ancient (who was Mercurius Trimegistus) talks so clearly about this divine generation, that scares whoever reads it. [Trimegistus], by teaching his son, says this: Oh Son, the Verb, or Word of the Creator, is eternal, he is moved by himself, he does not suffer increasing nor decreasing, he is immutable, incorruptible, singular, always similar to himself, identical, concordant, stable, one in himself. Therefore, what bigger praises could be said about the divine word, than these. Eugubinus says about these words that he could not be any more amazed, and that he was astonished to see what Ancient Philosophy testified about the Son of God (*Obras del v.p.m. Fray Luis de Granada*, 546).⁶⁴¹

Fray Luis de Granada not only assures that many pagan philosophers knew about the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, but also singles out Trimegistus—according to him, the most ancient philosopher—because he talked about this issue when he was teaching his son. Granada quotes Hermes’s words which, with a Christian flavor, seem to acknowledge the eternal generation: “Oh Son, the Verb, or Word of the Creator, is eternal, he is moved by himself, he does not suffer increasing nor decreasing, he is immutable, incorruptible, singular, always similar to himself, identical, concordant, stable, one in himself.” Actually, Granada apparently quotes a selection of some fragments of the *Hermetica*, for instance the *Corpus Hermeticum* XII 9-11. “(Son,) you must understand (...) the question that you asked me before, the one about fate and mind (*logos*/word) (...) you will find that mind, the soul of god, truly prevails over all, over fate and law and all else. And nothing is impossible for mind (...) Every mover is incorporeal, but not everything moved is body; incorporeals are also moved by mind;”⁶⁴² and also from the *Corpus Hermeticum* IV.10-11

⁶⁴⁰ For instance, in the recent ‘Clásicos de la lengua española’ by the Spanish RAE, N. 35.

⁶⁴¹ “Muchos filósofos testifican esta misma generación eterna del hijo de Dios con palabras tan claras que ponen admiración a quien las lee (...) Mas entre todos estos filósofos, el más antiguo (que fue Mercurio Trimegisto) habla tan claro desta generación divina, que pone espanto a quien quiera que lo lee. El cual enseñando a un hijo suyo, dice así: O hijo, el Verbo, o palabra del Criador es eterno, mueve por si, no sufre aumento ni disminución, es inmutable, incorruptible, singular, siempre semejante a si mismo, igual, concorde, estable, uno en si mismo. Pues ¿qué mayores alabanzas se pudieran decir del verbo divino, que estas? Sobre las cuales palabras dice Eugubino que no se hartaba de maravillarse, y que quedaba atónito de ver lo que la antigua filosofía testifica del hijo de Dios” (*Obras del v.p.m. Fray Luis de Granada*, 546).

⁶⁴² In Copenhagen *Hermetica* 45.

on the Monad: “But everything generated is imperfect and divisible, subject to increase and decrease. None of this happens to what is perfect. And what can be increased takes it increase from the monad.”⁶⁴³ It is difficult to identify the origin of Granada’s quotation, undoubtedly from a Spanish translation of a Hermetic treatise, or if it is Fray Luis de Granada’s own translation, and even an interpretation, because it has clearly ‘christianizing’ interpolations which make even more plausible the knowledge by Trimegistus of the Eternal generation of the Son—for instance, the sequence “Son, the Verb, or Word of the Creator, is eternal.”

At the end of this excerpt, Fray Luis de Granada also refers to Eugubinus, who corroborates Granada’s opinion on these words of Trimegistus. Eugubinus is in fact a nickname of Agostino Steuco (1497-1548), because he was an Augustine friar from Gubbio, in Italy. Steuco wrote the famous *De perenni philosophia*, where he coined the term, although drawing from the ideas of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola—in a future phase of my work, I will delve into Steuco’s work and look carefully for Granada’s quotation in his famous book.⁶⁴⁴ It seems that both Steuco’s ideas and the knowledge of Christian dogmas by the pagans were an ongoing debate in early modern Spain. As it turns out, another important Golden Age preacher, Diego Murillo (1555-1616), contrary to the view of Fray Luis de Granada, defends that pagans were not able to have a complete knowledge about any Christian dogma, but especially about the Incarnation. In his *Predicable speeches about the Gospels (Discursos predicables sobre los Evangelios 1610)* Murillo affirms:

None of the mysteries which have been preached in the world has been (it seems to me) so difficult to be persuaded about as the Incarnation and death of the Son of God (although it competes with the Holy Trinity). And that is why it seems that, with the natural light, ancient philosophers glimpsed something about the unity of the essence of God and the essence of the divine persons, although they did not penetrate the point of truth (see Agustinus Eugubinus *De Perenni Philosophia*). But in their understanding no vestige of the mystery of Incarnation had ever a place. Because of that the apostle called it: *the mystery hidden for ages and generations (Colossians 1:26)*. It seems that the glorious Augustine wanted to teach something about this doctrine in the 7th book of his *Confessions* (7: 9), where he affirms that he read in a book by the Platonic philosophers (although with different words) all the beginning of John’s Gospel, until he says: *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5)*. But he did not read that God came to earth, and was welcomed by their people. Augustine says: «I read that God was the Word, neither of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but born by God: *but what*

⁶⁴³ In Copenhaver *Hermetica* 17.

⁶⁴⁴ Maybe Granada’s quotation from Hermes is actually a paraphrasis or Spanish translation from Steuco, who probably Christianized Hermes’ original words even more.

I did not read there was that the holy word was in flesh, and he inhabited among us.”
(*Predicable speeches about the Gospels* 87-88).⁶⁴⁵

As we can observe, Diego Murillo justifies a more restrict understanding of the ancient philosophers about Christian dogma than other opinions we have examined before. Thus, with the natural light defined by Aquinas, as we have seen, Murillo admits that philosophers could have a certain glimpse of the Trinity, “about the unity of the essence of God and the essence of the divine persons, although they did not penetrate the point of truth.” To justify his point, Murillo also cites Augustin Eugubinus (Steuco) in *De perenni philosophia*, but also interprets him in a more restrictive sense than Fray Luis de Granada—for Granada, some philosophers actually did understand the Trinity, for Murillo, they only had a glimpse of it thanks to the natural light. As I said before, in a posterior phase of this work I will develop the *philosophia perennis* theories in Spain and how Steuco, Ficino and other of its representatives interpreted it.

However, Murillo denies that philosophers were able to understand the dogma of Incarnation, and so he raises the opinion of Augustine (of Hippo) in the *Confessions* 7:9, where he talks about the Platonic philosophers. Murillo limits the already restricted opinion of Augustine on the salvation of pagans and their knowledge of God. Therefore, although Augustine saw at the beginning of the Gospel of John similarities with the Platonists, Murillo specifies that Augustine did not see *that the holy word was in flesh, and he inhabited among us* (*Confessions* 7:9).

Finally, Murillo also refutes that philosophers could apprehend the mystery of Incarnation, even though they were sometimes able to understand the Trinity, precisely on the grounds of Aristotelian philosophy. Thus, Murillo goes back to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, where the philosopher said: “it is not possible to have science about contingent things” (*Discursos*

⁶⁴⁵ “Ninguno entre los misterios que se han predicado en el mundo ha sido (a mi parecer) tan dificultoso de persuadir (aunque entre competencia de la Santísima Trinidad) como el de la Encarnación y muerte del hijo de Dios. Y de aquí es que los filósofos antiguos, parece que con la luz natural rastrearon alguna cosa de la unidad de la esencia de las Divinas personas, aunque no penetraron el punto de la verdad (Vite Augustinum Eugubinum de perenni Philosophia). Pero jamás cupo en su entendimiento rastro alguno del misterio de la encarnación: por lo cual el apóstol san Pablo le llamó, Mysterim quod absconditum fuit a saeculis et generationibus (Ad Colos I.nu.21). Misterio escondido desde el principio del mundo a todas las generaciones. Algo desta doctrina parece que quiso enseñar el glorioso Augustino en el libro séptimo de sus confesiones (Augustinus. Lib.7.confes.c.9), donde afirma que leyó en un libro de los filósofos platónicos (aunque con diversas palabras) todo el principio del Evangelio de San Juan, hasta donde dice, Lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebra eam non comprehenderunt (Ioannis I, num 5): Pero que Dios viniese a la tierra, y que no le recibiesen los suyos, esto dice que no lo leyó “leí que Dios era el Verbo” (dice Augustino) “no de carne ni de sangre, ni de voluntad de varón, sino nacido de Dios: Sed quia Verbum caro sanctum est, et habitavit a nobis, non ibi legit” (*Discursos predicables sobre los Evangelios* 87-88)

predicables 88).⁶⁴⁶ I cannot extend now on Aristotelian logic, but I will just point out that Murillo defends that the dogma of the Trinity is natural and necessary, whereas Incarnation is contingent and free. Without entering in Aristotelian subtleties, and broadly speaking, Murillo means that God has always been three persons, whereas Incarnation is a specific decision he took in a moment of time, and so more difficult to apprehend by human reason.⁶⁴⁷ This reference to Aristotle remits us again to the Scholastic philosophy used in Patón's times to justify the salvation of pagans in early modern Spain—but not always, since in this case it is used against it. I want to underline how Christian authors used non-Christian philosophy to attack or defend the study of non-Christian philosophers like the Platonists or Hermes. As we can observe again, the knowledge of Christian dogmas among the pagans was a big question in the Spanish Golden Age, and the most renowned scholars participated in the discussion. I have shown how two important priest writers debated on the Eternal Generation and the pagans, let's see now how Patón deals with this complicated quarrel.

In this historical context of theological discussions, Patón brings up his own authorities on the Incarnation and the Eternal Generation of God in the *Answer*. One of Patón's favorites authorities on rhetoric, theology, and all kinds of erudite matters is Antoninus of Florence (1389-1459). Fortunately for Patón, Antoninus had defended Trimegistus' knowledge of Christian dogmas, so he reminds us:

And whoever should want to see more about the eternal generation of the Son of God he will be able to in the archbishop of Florence, saint Antoninus, great master of Theology and History, who repeats in his own book what Vincent wrote about this philosopher in his *Historical Mirror*; and it is enough to know that he (Trimegistus) composed an entire work about the perfect Word, from which, and from the one that he entitled *Asclepius*, it is possible to obtain many propositions (in the rhetorical meaning), which are of our faith (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).⁶⁴⁸

For the purpose of my work, what is noteworthy about Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459) is that he was writing (and exerting his holy ministry) in Florence during Ficino's youth, just before the

⁶⁴⁶ “Por lo cual dijo el filósofo, que de las cosas contingentes no puede haber ciencia” (*Discursos predicables* 88).

⁶⁴⁷ “Pero el misterio de la encarnación como fue contingente y libre no fue posible rastrearle sin que primero constase haberlo Dios determinado y puesto en efecto” (*Discursos predicables* 88).

⁶⁴⁸ “Y quien quisiere ver más de la generación eterna del hijo de Dios podrá en el arzobispo de Florencia san Antonino gran maestro de Teología y de historia, el cual repite en la suya lo que Vicencio sacó de las deste filósofo en su Espejo historial; y baste saber que compuso un libro entero de Verbo perfecto: del cual, y del que tituló Asclepio se saca muchísimas proposiciones, que lo son de nuestra fe” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

translator of Plato published his most important works. So, this man of the Church was already talking about Trimegistus in Florence before the recovery and translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* by Ficino. In the *Answer*, one of the last medieval scholastics, Antoninus, was judging Trimegistus by following another medieval Dominican precedent to whom Patón also alludes, Vincent of Beauvais (1190-1264). I also want to emphasize that, since Fray Esteban was a Dominican theologian, Patón sustained what he addressed to him in the *Answer* through numerous Dominican scholars: Soto, Aquinas, Antoninus, Beauvais, Senense, etc. Vincent of Beauvais wrote the *Speculum Maius*, the most important encyclopedia used during the Late Middle Ages. It was divided in three parts, one of them was the *Speculum Historiale* to which Paton alludes.⁶⁴⁹ Vincent used numerous Ancient and Medieval sources and he also echoed translations of Arab works which had been brought to France from Spain a century before him; he also echoed authors which elaborated their works from those translations, distinctly the Spanish Jewish convert, Petrus Alphonsis (c.1062-c.1140) and his *Disciplina clericalis*.

From what I explained in the first chapter, it is not strange that in the 13th century, Vincent was interested in Trimegistus, a figure which fascinated both with his philosophy (defended by some Church fathers) and the mastery of occult sciences that many Arab books recently translated had attributed to him. Antoninus, therefore, is using in the 15th century Vincent of Beauvais (of the 13th) as his main source on Mercurius. As a matter of fact, Vincent was still an important author in the 17th century, and his *Speculum* was published and printed several times. I have found the passage of Antoninus to which Patón is referring and compared it with its Vincent model (in a 1624 edition,⁶⁵⁰ contemporary to Patón). Antoninus paraphrases and copies Vincent all over the passage. He introduces Mercurius, and acknowledges that Vincent is his source, in this way: “On the philosopher Hermes, who was called Trimegistus and Mercurius, he wrote that book about the perfect word, about which Vincent in his *Speculum Historiale* extracts these things” (*Chronicon* 123).⁶⁵¹ Afterwards, Antoninus inserts a quotation of the *Asclepius* (the same as Vincent), both

⁶⁴⁹ The other two were the *Speculum Naturale* and the *Speculum Doctrinale* .

⁶⁵⁰ *Bibliotheca Mundi seu Speculi Maioris. Vincentii Burgundii. Tomus Quartus, ex officina typographica Baltazaris Belleri, Douai, 1624* (120).

⁶⁵¹ I am using a 1587 edition of the so called *Chronicon partibus tribus distincta ab initio mundi ad MCCCCLX*, which in this edition has this long title *Diu Antonini Archiepiscopi florentini ... Chronicorum tertia pars: quae ab Innocentio III. Pont. Max. vsque ad Pium II ... res toto fere orbe gestas exponit ; adiectis etiam aliquot doctorum catholicorum sententiis ... totius iuris Canonici capitibus, necnon & quorundam Sanctorum...* This is the Latin I translated: *De Hermete Philosopho, qui dictus est Trimegistus et Mercurius, hic scripsit librum de verbo perfecto, de quo vincen in Speculum Historiale librum 5 haec excerpit* (123).

Vincent and Antoninus have several references about Mercurius as astrologer, undoubtedly, an inheritance of those sophisticated Arab astrological books translated just before Vincent's time. For instance, Antoninus includes a reference to Mercurius' unknown mathematical and astrological books: "He also wrote two books about Mathematics, in which he tried to state something about the constellation of destiny" (Antoninus *Chronicon* 123). Vincent was doubtful about this reference to the practical and occultist Mercurius ("he tried"), Patón just ignores it.⁶⁵² At the beginning of his section on Hermes, Antoninus mentions that the philosopher wrote a book "on the perfect word" (*de verbo perfecto*), and mentions some sentences from it; however, a little bit later Antoninus says that: "there also remains another book of Mercurius other than *Asclepius*, about which Vincent extracted these things."⁶⁵³ Both Vincent and Antoninus are a little bit confusing here, because in fact the first was using the *Asclepius* both times, and referring to the same book—so there is not "another book" since *verbo perfecto*, *logos teleios* in Greek, is the original name of the *Asclepius*. Because Patón probably did not have the original *Asclepius*, he just followed Antoninus and thought that there were two books: the *Perfect Word* and the *Asclepius*. Let's see how Patón comments on Antoninus. Considering that the details matter a great deal here, I am going to correct some omissions and mistakes in Patón with the original by Antoninus, and also to leave provisionally the Latin untranslated. When quoting Antoninus, Patón says:

[From Antoninus] it is enough to know that he (Trimegistus) composed an entire work about the Perfect Word from which, and from the one that he entitled *Asclepius*, it is possible to obtain many propositions, which are of our faith; and I will only repeat and leave here those words with which Saint Antoninus concludes, so similar to the ones of the Apostle, as whoever consider them will see; he says, talking about the eternity of God: *omnium** (*omnia* in Antoninus) *autem Dominus Deus, omnia a eo et in ipso et per ipsum nos ergo agentes gratias adoramus*. And telling other correspondences of God with men, he says this: *Et haec** (*hoc* in Antoninus), *est merces pie sub deo* (*+ *diligenter* in Antoninus) *cum mundo viventibus* (*+ *haec ille* in Antonino). (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² *Scrpsit etiam duos libros de Mathesi, in quibus fatalem constelationem conatur asserere* (Antoninus *Chronicon* 123).

⁶⁵³ *Extat et alius liber Mercurii ad Asclepium, de quo ista excerpst Vincen* (Antoninus *Chronicon* 124).

⁶⁵⁴ [Y] baste saber que compuso un libro entero de Verbo Perfecto: del cual, y del que tituló Asclepio se saca muchísimas proposiciones, que lo son de nuestra fe, y dejadas solo repetiré con las que concluye san Antonino tan parecidas a las del Apóstol como verá el que las considerare; dice hablando de la eternidad de Dios, dice: *omnium** (*omnia* in Antoninus) *autem Dominus Deus, omnia a eo et in ipso et per ipsum nos ergo agentes gratias adoramus*. Y diciendo otras correspondencias de Dios para con los hombres dice así: *Et haec** (*hoc* in Antoninus), *est merces pie sub deo* (*+*diligenter* in Antoninus) *cum mundo viventibus* (*+*haec ille* in Antonino). (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

At the beginning we can observe Patón’s confusion by thinking that the *Perfect Word* and the *Asclepius* are two books from Trimegistus, rather than the same. Patón explains that ‘in these two books’ there are many propositions (in the rhetorical sense) which pertain to the Christian faith. In their original books, Antoninus and Vincent quote several fragments from medieval versions of the *Asclepius*; among those fragments, Patón only collects the last one, which is actually the more interesting, although it is apocryphal. But, where do the fragments actually come from? In his original book, Antoninus, just as Vincent following him, first quotes the famous beginning of the *Asclepius*—although both introduce some variants.⁶⁵⁵ But then, after an original fragment from the *Asclepius*, Vincent inserts a part which is not present in the modern editions of the Latin text,⁶⁵⁶ and alternates fragments of the *Asclepius* with some unknown interpolations, which could be either Vincent’s own reflections or a medieval addition or commentary to the *Asclepius*. The thought-provoking fact is that what Patón quotes next is precisely this medieval interpolation to the *Asclepius* included by Vincent, but not the original text of the *Asclepius*, or the versions that circulated in the 16th century—for instance, those accompanying Ficino’s version of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Patón is interested in the dogma of the Eternal Generation which Hermes supposedly treats in the *Asclepius*. Vincent, and Antoninus included an apocryphal quotation of the *Asclepius*, not included in the standard versions (Nock 1992; Festugière 2002). This is what Patón includes, with his own changes: “Talking about the eternity of God [Trimegistus] says: *omnium** (*omnia* in

⁶⁵⁵ This is the beginning of the *Asclepius*: “God, Asclepius, god has brought you to us so that you might join in a divine discourse, such a discourse as, in justice, seems more divine in its reverent fidelity than any we have had before, more than any that divine power inspired in us. If you are seen to understand it, your whole mind will be completely full of all good things – assuming that there are many goods and not one good in which all are. Admittedly, the one is consistent with the other: all are of one or all are one.” (*Asclepius* 1, translation by Copenhaver), in Latin reads: *Deus deus te nobis, o Asclepi, ut diuino sermone interesset adduxit, eique tali, qui merito omnium antea a nobis factorum uel nobis diuino numine inspiratorum uideatur esse religiosa pietate diuiniore. Quem si intellegens uideris, eris omnium bonorum tota mente plenissimus – si tamen multa sunt bona et non unum, in quo sunt omnia. Alterum enim alterius consentaneum esse dinoscitur, omnia unius esse aut unum esse omnia; ita enim sibi est utrumque conexum, ut separari alterum ab utro non possit.* Latin edition *Corpus Hermeticum, t. II, Traités XII-XVIII, Asclepius*, texte établi par A.D.Nock, cinquième tirage revu, Paris 1992 (Collection des Universités de France)

⁶⁵⁶ This is the part which is not in the *Asclepius*: *Philosophia sola est, qua quidem in cognoscenda diuinitate frequens es obtutus diuini sanctaeque religio*, to which follows another that it is in the *Asclepius* (14): *Simplici enim mente et anima diuinitatem colere eiusque facta uenerari, agere etiam dei uoluntati gratias, quae est bonitatis sola plenissima, haec est nulla animi inportuna curiositate violata philosophia.* Then comes a new interpolation: *Solum animal homo duplex est et eius illa pars simplex, quam uocamus divinae similitudinis formam.* And again text from the *Asclepius* (23) *humanitas semper memor naturae et originis suae in illa diuinitatis imitatione perseuerat* Interpolation: *“Immobilis esta eternitas, in qua omnium temporum agitatio sumit exordium, et quod est mobile temporis, in aeternitatem Semper revocatur: Sicque efficitur ut etiam aeternitatis stabilitas semper moveatur: et temporis mobilitas stabilis fiat, fixa lege currendi,* and then this interpolation continues in the part that Patón takes.

Antoninus) *autem Dominus Deus, omnia a eo et in ipso et per ipsum nos ergo agentes gratias adoramus*” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595). I left the last part in Latin because I find this fragment, supposedly from the *Asclepius*, extraordinarily similar to the script of the Roman Catholic Latin Mass, which in fact refers to the eternity of God, “**Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso est tibi, Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor et Gloria per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen**” / *Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. Amen.* This is the doxology recited in the Roman Catholic Mass during the Eucharist, the most important moment of the rite.

Therefore, when Patón wanted to demonstrate Mercurius’ knowledge of the eternity of the second person with God father, he remembered this part in his cherished saint Antoninus, which was in fact extraordinary similar to the dogma expressed in the Latin mass which Patón listened at least every Sunday—anyone raised as a Catholic immediately identified these words, as it happened when I was examining them. What could be a better way to demonstrate Mercurius’ knowledge of Christian dogmas? As we can observe, according to Patón’s *Answer*, Mercurius would be quoting in the *Asclepius* similar dogmas to the one included in the Roman Catholic Latin Mass. The only problem for Patón’s point is that, in fact, this part was not in the *Asclepius*; it is an interpolation or commentary of Antoninus, based upon Antoninus source of the 13th century Vincent de Beauvais—although I cannot (yet) determine the true origin of the interpolation.

But to make things more perplexing, Patón decided to add a new fragment from Antoninus (and Vincent) which is actually from the *Asclepius* (I add Patón’s mistakes or omissions from his source): “And telling other mercies from God to men, he says this:⁶⁵⁷ *Et haec* (hoc in Antonino) est merces pie sub deo (*diligenter in Antonino) cum mundo viventibus (Mercurius Trimegistus 595).* This last part effectively comes from the *Asclepius* 12, “Yes, this is the pay for those who live faithfully under god, who live attentively with the World.”⁶⁵⁸ All those quotations of the *Asclepius* highlight the similarities between Mercurius’ thought with Christian faith. To these similarities, Patón exclaims: “Therefore, about he who told, taught, and wrote so many and such Catholic truths, why would it not be fair to consider, presume and conjecture that he was saved.” (*Mercurius* 595-596).⁶⁵⁹ Mercurius seemed to be Catholic indeed, so much so that he even recited

⁶⁵⁷ “Y diciendo otras correspondencias de Dios para con los hombres dice así” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595).

⁶⁵⁸ *Haec est enim merces pie sub deo, diligenter cum mundo uiuentibus* (*Asclepius* 12, Nock 1992)

⁶⁵⁹ “Pues quien tantas verdades tan católicas dijo, enseñó y escribió (596) por qué no será lícito opinar, presumir y conjeturar haberse salvado (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 595-596)

parts of the Catholic mass! Too bad parts of the *Asclepius* are in fact interpolations, probably from a 13th century medieval commentator.

Following this daring line of argumentation, Patón also provides a contemporary Spanish authority, Juan de Pineda (1513-1593), who I suggest not only offers evidence of Hermes's knowledge of the Incarnation, but connects Trimegistus to the Christian mass as well. Pineda was considered to be the most erudite man in 16th century Spain, someone who knew 'all' available literary sources. In his books, Pineda made many references to Mercurius Trimegistus following the *philosophia perennis* and *prisca theologia* theories; he was diffusely read too, even by important authors like Lope de Vega, so I will deal with his writings more extensively in a posterior stage of my work. Patón reminds his reader that: "Fray Ioan de Pineda, a very erudite man, says that Mercurius Trimegistus talked about creation, like Moses, and he praises him very much, and he calls him inventor of letters and sacred ceremonies, and says again many of his praises." (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).⁶⁶⁰ This etiological dimension of Hermes, was especially popular in the Renaissance due to Plato's *Phaedrus*, which here serves Patón to emphasize Mercurius as benefactor of humanity. Then Patón cites a fragment of Pineda's *Christian Agriculture* (*Agricultura Christiana*),⁶⁶¹ which shows Mercurius as a moderate and restrained wise man, who completely subdues human desire and excesses:

In [a fragment of the] *Agriculture* [Pineda] says in his praise of the number four that Trimegistus, who Pineda calls 'his acquaintance' (*familiar* in Spanish), introduced four friends in a banquet, who were: Trimegistus himself, Tacius, Asclepius and Ammon, who used to meet in that way to deal with lofty matters about God and Religion; and after having dealt with these matters he turned to the body aliment to repair the vital substance, but not to get drunk; and in that meal they did not eat meat, but vegetables, and then the banquet was finished by giving thanks to God. In this way, along with many other virtues he had

⁶⁶⁰ "Fray Ioan de Pineda varón muy erudito dice del Mercurio Trimegisto habló de la creación como Moisés, y lo alaba mucho, y le llama inventor de letras y ceremonias sagradas, y vuelve a decir muchas de sus alabanzas."

⁶⁶¹ I found this passage in *Agricultura Cristiana* Dialogue I.39 (BAE 161 vol. 1 39), where Pineda talks about "del ultimo fragmento del Asclepio de mi familiar Trismegisto, donde son introducidos Trismegisto, Tacio, Asclepio y Amnón para tratar de cosas subidísimas de Dios y de religión, y después de cansados de tratar de aquéllas, se convierten al convite corporal para tomar la substancia nutrimental del cuerpo y no para borrachear y donde no se comió carne, mas entrevino una solenísima oración a Dios; lo cual hace por cuán conforme a la ley natural sea el bendecir la mesa y dar gracias a Dios." Pineda also addresses tidily Trimegistus in *Agricultura Cristiana* Dialogue XIX.XXIII (BAE 163 vol. 3 307-309), and also includes a quotation of the Corpus Hermeticum in (BAE 162 vol. 2 147), which I will comment next chapter. However, I did not find this section on Trimegistus' meal with his friends, I suspect it is in the other famous book of Pineda *Monarquía eclesiástica o Historia universal del mundo* where Trimegistus appears many times. I will look for it.

the temperance in drinking and eating, with gratitude to the creator for those things (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 599-600).⁶⁶²

All of Mercurius' virtues that Patón showed before are completed with his moderation and temperance which really seems close to the ideal *ataraxia* of the Stoics—I will come to this topic in the following chapter. These four characters are the ones who appear in the writings attributed to Trimegistus. In the original text of *Christian Agriculture*, Pineda clarifies that he is specifically talking about: “the last fragment of the *Asclepius* by my acquaintance Trismegisto” (“del ultimo fragmento del *Asclepio* de mi familiar Trismegisto”). Now I want to emphasize that this meal which Mercurius had with his friends, in the context of Patón's *Answer* and his argumentation, looks really similar to a Christian mass. Moreover, From the mass reference, we can also evoke the Last Supper of Christ. As Jesus, Hermes meets with his friends and disciples, they talk about God and religion, and then they eat and drink, not just to indulge themselves, but to “repair the vital substance” (“para reparar la substancia vital”), which implies a ritual procedure and an internal transformation; finally, all of them offer thanks.

This close relation of Hermes with his friends and disciples, which reminds us of Jesus' with his apostles, according to another reference of Patón in the *Answer*, is also analogous to the one that Plato had with his own disciples. Trimegistus not only had this knowledge about Christ, but also transmitted it to posterior philosophers such as Plato. In fact, according to what Patón writes a little after, Plato acquired from Trimegistus important information about Christ: “And from whom (Mercurius) he (Plato) learned the answer that he gave to his disciples, that his precepts should last until a man who would be more saintly than any man should come to the world to teach the truth” (*Mercurius* 597-598).⁶⁶³ I think Patón is effectively taking this reference from Fray Luis de Granada's *Introduction to the Symbol of Faith*, the book I mentioned before, in which Granada defended Trimegistus' knowledge of the Eternal Generation—Patón does not include this fragment in the *Answer*, but he does include this other part of the *Introduction to the Symbol of Faith*, in

⁶⁶² “En la *Agricultura* dice en alabanza del número cuatro, llamando su familiar a Trimegisto, que en un combite introdujo cuatro amigos, que es el mismo Trimegisto, Tacio, Asclepio y Amnon, que se juntaban, así para tratar cosas subidas de Dios, y de Religión, y después de haber tratado destas cosas se convertían a tratar del alimento corporal para reparar la sustancia vital, y no para borrachear: Y que en aquel combite no se comía carne, sino legumbres de hortaliza, y luego se acabó el combite haciendo oración de gracias a Dios. De suerte que con otras muchas virtudes tubo la de templanza de comer y beber, y con reconocimiento al criador de aquellas cosas” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 599-600).

⁶⁶³ “Y deste dependio aquella respuesta que dio a sus discípulos, que habían de durar sus preceitos hasta que viniese al mundo un hombre que fuese más santo que todos los hombres a enseñar la verdad” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597-598)

which, almost with the same words as Patón, Granada affirms that Plato announced the coming of Christ:

And the necessity of that teaching of such a big authority (i.e. that of Jesus Christ), I do not know with which light it was reached by that great philosopher Plato: who says that his disciples should keep with such limitation the precepts which he (Plato) had taught them, until a more sacred man would come to teach them a more excellent doctrine (Granada *Introducción al símbolo de la fe* 462).⁶⁶⁴

Therefore, Patón mentions in the *Answer*, with similar words, this anecdote about Plato mentioned by Granada, although he does not refer back to—or perhaps, remember—the source. For that reason, I think Patón most probably had read it in Granada’s book, which he quotes many times in other writings. Thus, I propose that Patón forgot that he had read a specific reference of Granada on Trimegistus’ knowledge of the dogma of Eternal Generation, as he forgot the source of the other one on Plato, Hermes, and Jesus. However, Patón remembered and included a reference on the Eternal Generation as good as the one of Granada from his dear Antoninus of Florence, and also tells Granada’s anecdote on Hermes, Plato, his disciples, and Jesus, which he had, indeed, read because it is identical to his own.

We have seen in this section how Patón associates Trimegistus with Jesus Christ. Patón explains that Hermes not only knew important dogmas related to Jesus, like the Eternal Generation and the Incarnation, but also had with his disciples a relation analogous to the one of Jesus with the apostles, including common meals which remind us of the Last Supper. Moreover, according to an (apocryphal) quotation of the *Asclepius* included by Patón in the *Answer*, Hermes also wrote words that closely recall those of the Christian Mass, which is a commemoration of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ. To prove Hermes’s salvation, Patón puts forward erudite proofs of Trimegistus’ virtues and knowledge of Christ to the extent that Hermes is – maybe dangerously - close to Jesus himself. As Patón knew very well, the ideal for any Christian is the *imitatio christi*, the attempt to live and act as Christ lived and acted. In this sense Hermes could not be more Christian than how Patón presents him.

⁶⁶⁴ “Y la necesidad que había del magisterio de tanta autoridad, no sé con qué lumbré la alcanzó aquel gran filósofo Platón: el cual dice que con esta limitación debían sus discípulos guardar los preceptos que él les había dado, hasta que viniese algún hombre más sagrado que les enseñase otra más excelente doctrina” (Granada 462).

Back to the Prologue and Aquinas: Patón closes his Argument in the *Answer on Trimegistus' Salvation*

Once Patón has demonstrated with weighty authorities all the preconditions for Hermes to be saved: absence of sins (especially idolatry), virtuous life, knowledge of Christ, and Christian dogmas (Including the Trinity, the Eternal Generation, and the Incarnation), he considers that he has adequately answered the first note of Fray Esteban. As I explained before, Fray Esteban reacted to Patón's affirmation in the prologue of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* with these words: "What is said about Trimegistus' salvation should not be said without foundation of saints or grave doctors; and such a weighty thing should not be declared without any authority, particularly in grave books" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 591).⁶⁶⁵

After providing those authorities demanded by Fray Esteban, at the end of the *Answer* Patón can justify what he wrote in the *Prologue*: "These testimonies of such grave authors (and others who do not occur to me now) gave me license to presume, judge and conjecture the salvation of this philosopher who was so wise concerning the matters of our faith. And it seems that this license does not exceed the one that Christian theology gives" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).⁶⁶⁶ Therefore, Patón's reasoning completely agrees with Theology's precepts, and he shows how he is 'the winner' of the duel with Fray Esteban, the doctor in Theology, whom he wanted to confront.

Now, backed with such a powerful selection of Ancient, Medieval and contemporary authorities, Patón can confidently ratify what he said in the *Prologue* where, in fact, he had already alluded to Aquinas, the most important authority in the matter, even though Fray Esteban was not able to notice it. Just in case, Patón repeats Aquinas' authoritative quote once again in the *Answer*. In addition, Patón makes a general invocation to *authority*—i.e. referring to all the authors he has used—which really seems to be a swan song of the medieval system of thought by one of the last humanists who, as late as 1621, is still imbued with medieval Scholasticism. Patón claims that this authority reassesses the premise of his logical framework, therefore, the final consequence is that Trimegistus was saved.

⁶⁶⁵ "Lo que se dice acerca de la salvación de Trimegisto, no se debe con fundamento alguno de santos, ni doctores graves; y cosa de tanto peso no se dice afirmar sin autoridad alguna, particularmente en libros graves" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 591).

⁶⁶⁶ "Estos testimonios de autores tan graves (y otros, que ahora no se me ocurren) me dieron licencia a presumir, opinar y conjeturar la salvación deste filósofo tan sabio en las cosas de nuestra fe. Y no parece escede esta licencia de la que da la teología cristiana" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).

And because the authority is such, and from so many and of such men, we not only affirm it, but presume, conjecture and judge, as it is clear from the words with which we say it (in the prologue), which are these: *This is all the more so because it happened perhaps that he, a very learned man and a religious priest, was saved through the law of nature, even though he was a gentile and even though he was (living) among the pagans, just as was the case with saint Job. For this was able to come to the lot of those pagans who worshipped God and (had) faith in the coming Christ It is not incredible that this was communicated to that magnificent doctor,*⁶⁶⁷ *because to him belongs that very famous acknowledgement of the highest and most saintly Trinity and of the mystery of the unity with these words: “the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself” (Mercurius Trimegistus 600).*⁶⁶⁸

By repeating the statements he had made in the prologue, Patón is demonstrating that, in fact, all the arguments he has used in his *Defense* had been included already in a more succinct way. Fray Esteban turned out to be that “skeptical man” about Trimegistus whom Patón had already foreseen in the prologue. Since the brief arguments Patón had offered before in the prologue were not enough, he showed that he was able to reinforce them with many more. The three instances of the problem of paganism had also been suggested in the prologue, where Mercurius had also been assimilated to another illustrious pagan, Job, a Biblical model of virtuousness and endurer of difficulties—which in the context of 17th century Spain was often interpreted from a Neostoic perspective. Apart from these previous references to the prologue, in the *Answer* Patón would bring up many more pagans who deserved to be saved, both philosophers and prophets. Among the latter, Patón specially insisted in assimilating Mercurius with the salvation of the Sibyls, a clear demonstration that pagans were part of the Catholic interpretation of History. History in Christendom was an annunciation of the coming of Christ and then of the kingdom of God. That was the big development in Augustine and the texts of the Church fathers and so was sustained during the Middle Ages. As prophets, both Hermes and the Sibyls had given an invaluable

⁶⁶⁷ He is referring to Thomas Aquinas (because Patón used to call him with this name).

⁶⁶⁸ The Latin part of the text presents some little mistakes and probable word omissions that I have corrected with the invaluable help of Donka Markus. Since those errors are difficult to believe in Patón, a proud Latin teacher eager to demonstrate his skills specially in the prologue of a new book (as it was the costume from ancient times), they are perhaps due to carelessness of the printer or his lack of knowledge of Latin. I mark them with parenthesis in my translation and *sign here: “Y con ser la autoridad tanta, y de tantos y tales, no afirmamos sino lo presumimos, conjeturamos y opinamos como consta de las palabras con que lo decimos que son estas: *Tum etiam, quia fortasse factum fuit, ut ille doctissimus vir et religiosus sacerdos etsi gentilis lege naturalis salvus (ut job sanctus) fieret: Nam id gentibus contigere poterat, unum colentibus Deum et Christi venturi fide*(fidem) quod non incredibile est huic excelentissimo doctore fuisse communicatum, quando illius est illa celeberrima confession altissimi santissime trinitatis et unitatis misterii his verbis. Monas genuit monadem et in se reflexit amorem.*” (Mercurius Trimegistus 600).

contribution to these announcements. Since Patón has shown in the *Answer* that Aquinas also believed in the prophetic gift conceded by God to the Sibyls and Hermes, now it makes even more sense what Patón had said in the prologue:

It is not incredible that this was communicated to that magnificent doctor, because to him belongs that very famous acknowledgement of the highest and most saintly Trinity and of the mystery of the unity with these words: "the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself" (Mercurius Trimegistus 600).⁶⁶⁹

Clearly, Fray Esteban did not realize that with the epithet 'magnificent doctor' Patón was in fact quoting Aquinas, a saint, a grave doctor and the biggest authority for 17th century theology, and also from his gravest (or weightiest book): the *Summa theologiae*. I am going to show where that enigmatic sentence 'the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself' which Patón attributes to Aquinas comes from, which would demonstrate, according to Patón, that the 'magnificent doctor' acknowledged that Hermes knew Christian dogmas as the Trinity and the unity of God. But it will also show once again the real intellectual hierarchy for the late humanist Patón.

This sentence comes from the *Liber viginti quattuor philosophorum* (*The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*), an influential philosophical and theological medieval text of uncertain authorship. It contains a collection of aphorisms, sentences and definitions of God ascribed to twenty-four philosophers gathered to solve the question about what is God (*quid Deus?*). The first testimony of the text is from 12th century France, and it was usually copied with a scholastic commentary; there are actually two famous commentaries, which are traditionally known as the shorter and the longer one. Some scholars think that the *Liber viginti quattuor philosophorum* can date back to the school of translators of Toledo, and others think that it could be the translation of a lost work allegedly attributed to Aristotle: *De philosophia*. The book echoes many previous disquisitions about the first cause or the nature of divinity. It has Late Antiquity and especially Neoplatonic philosophical influences, but it was also influenced by the *Asclepius*. For this reason, many erudite commentaries attributed it to Hermes Trimegistus. As Moreschini points out, the most important sentences (*sententiae*) of *The Book of the Twenty-Four*

⁶⁶⁹ [N]on incredibile est huic excelentissimo doctore fuisse communicatum, quando illius est illa celeberrima confession altissimi santissime trinitatis et unitatis misterii his verbis. Monas genuit monadem et in se reflexit amorem" (Mercurius Trimegistus 600).

Philosophers, and also the most widely diffused, are the first two “although the text in no way attributes them to Hermes” (*Hermes Christianus* 110). The first sentence of the book is precisely the one that Patón uses as the definitive proof of Mercurius’ salvation and Christianization (quoting it from Aquinas). This is how it figured in the original *The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*:

*God is a monad that generates a monad and reflects in itself one sole fire of love. The definition is given by representing the first cause as multiplying numerically in itself, such that the multiplier is conceived as the one, the multiplied as the two, and that which is reflected as the three. This is actually the case with numbers: each unit has its own number, since it is reflected by the others in a different number (The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers, in Moreschini *Hermes Christianus* 110).⁶⁷⁰*

These reflections of the Monad recall certain passages of the *Corpus Hermeticum* with a similar Neoplatonic and Pythagorean flavor, especially the treatise IV, usually entitled precisely “The Krater (mixing bowl) of the Monad;” on it Hermes says, for instance:

The monad, because it is the beginning and root of all things, is in them all as root and beginning. Without a beginning there is nothing, and a beginning comes from nothing except itself if it is the beginning of other things. Because it is a beginning, then, the monad contains every number, is contained by none, and generates every number without being generated by any number (Corpus Hermeticum IV.10-11).⁶⁷¹

Probably because of the likenesses between this passage and others in the *Asclepius* and other works attributed to Hermes, the first sentence of the *Liber viginti quattuor philosophorum* was attributed to Trimegistus in Alexander Neckam’s *Sermo de Trinitate* (1190-1197) and *Speculum speculationem* (c.1210), to demonstrate the possibility of knowing the divine mysteries by means of reason. That is, from the beginning it was associated to pagans’ knowledge of Christianity. Before Aquinas, the first sentence of the *Book of the Twenty-four philosophers* had also been used by Alain de Lille (c.1128-c.1202) to declare Trimegistus’ knowledge of Christian dogmas. In his *Summa quoniam homines*, de Lille, a French theologian and famous poet, wrote that “the monad generates the monad and reflects its flame on itself. That is, the Father generated the Son, which means that the Holy Spirit is also of the same nature as the Father and the Son (*Summa* I. 31, p.168, in Moreschini *Hermes Christianus* 105). In both Neckam and Lille the first sentence is understood as “extraordinary evidence of the ancient wise men’s prophetic knowledge of the mystery of the

⁶⁷⁰ *Deus est monas monadem gignens, in se unum reflectens ardorem. Haec definitio data est secundum imaginationem primae causae, prout se numerose multiplicat in se, ut sit multiplicans acceptus sub unitate, multiplicatus sub binario, reflexus sub ternario. Sic quidem est in numeris: unaquaque unitas proprium habet numerum quia super diversum ab aliis reflectitur (The Book of the Twenty Four Philosophers, in Moreschini *Hermes Christianus* 110).*

⁶⁷¹ In Copenhaver *Hermetica* (17).

Trinity” (Moreschini *Hermes Christianus* 111). Although not all theologians agreed,⁶⁷² this interpretation, which “tends to see the sentence as a piece of pagan knowledge, is also taken up by Thomas Aquinas, for whom the life of the monad signifies the creation of the world” (Moreschini *Hermes Christianus* 111). Going beyond Moreschini’s remarks, I suggest that an attentive reading of the *Summa* allow us to see that Aquinas recognizes certain knowledge, and by certain means, of the Trinity, but not at all a complete knowledge of the Trinity, as Patón affirms, interpreting Aquinas to his own profit.

Contrary to his master Albertus Magnus, Aquinas attributed this sentence to Trimegistus, and so it is taken by Patón in his *Answer*. In the *Summa Theologiae* 32, 1, Aquinas is answering the question: *can the divine persons be known by natural reason?*⁶⁷³ And he replies that: *it seems that the Trinity of divine persons can be known by natural reason. For philosophers did not come to the knowledge of God in any other way than by natural reason. However, we find that they said many things about the Trinity of persons.*⁶⁷⁴ And one of the examples he uses is precisely this sentence of Mercurius from *The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*: *Trismegistus also said: the monad generated a monad and turned love towards itself. Through which the generation of the son and the procession of the Holy Ghost seem to be known. Therefore, knowledge about the divine persons can be held by natural reason.*⁶⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Aquinas had a nuanced clarification of this question. The *Summa theologiae* is structured in questions, objections (*argumenta*) and answers, which gave its mature form to the Scholastic model—actually, in the *Answer* to Fray Esteban Patón is somewhat following this model.

Respecting this Scholastic template, Aquinas first acknowledges that Trimegistus had knowledge of the Trinity, later he nuances this statement. Thus, Aquinas appends that, even though philosophers like Trimegistus could have had some knowledge of the Trinity, they *did not know*

⁶⁷² For instance, Peter Lombard (1100-1160) disagreed and limited the speculations of natural reason, saying that it is impossible “to arrive at the truth about God independently of revelation.” Therefore, according to Lombard neither the sentence nor the book could be from Hermes. Albertus Magnus had the same skepticism about Hermes’ knowledge, and he interpreted the sentence as “a law of the love that radiates toward others and returns into itself” In Moreschini (*Hermes Christianus* 111).

⁶⁷³ [U]trum per rationem naturalem possint cognosci divinae personae? (*Summa Theologiae* I 32, 1)

⁶⁷⁴ Videtur quod Trinitas divinarum personarum possit per naturalem rationem cognosci. Philosophi enim non devenerunt in Dei cognitionem nisi per rationem naturalem. inveniuntur autem a philosophis multa dicta de Trinitate personarum (*Summa Theologiae* I 32, 1)

⁶⁷⁵ Trismegistus etiam dixit, monas genuit monadem, et in se suum reflexit ardorem, per quod videtur generatio filii, et spiritus sancti procession intimari. Cognitio ergo divinarum personarum potest per rationem naturalem haberi. (*Summa Theologiae* I 32 1).

*the mystery of the Trinity of the divine persons by its proper attributes, such as paternity, filiation, and procession.*⁶⁷⁶ In fact, it could not be otherwise because, as Aquinas comments, according to the Apostle's word (1 Cor. 2:6): *We talk about the wisdom of God which none of the princes of the world (philosophers) knew,*⁶⁷⁷ which means that the apostles had a revelation that no philosopher had before. Nevertheless, Aquinas acknowledges that the philosophers *knew part of the mystery of the holy Trinity like some of the attributes appropriated to the persons.*⁶⁷⁸ In the specific case of the first sentence of *Twenty-four philosophers*, attributed to Trimegistus by Aquinas and related to the knowledge of the Trinity, that knowledge could not be complete, comprehending the attributes of the divine persons. In fact, Aquinas establishes another interpretation for the sentence. Trimegistus *does not refer to the generation of the Son, or to the procession of the Holy Ghost, but to the production of the world. For one God produced one world by reason of his love for himself.*⁶⁷⁹

As it can be observed, in Aquinas there is no absolute declaration about Trimegistus' knowledge of the Trinity (nor about any other famous philosophers), but a very nuanced one. Nevertheless, Patón takes from the *Summa Theologiae* (I 32) the first part of Aquinas' reasoning, the one that Patón is interested in to justify his point, but ignores Aquinas' posterior clarifications. Hence, Patón just remarks that Aquinas wrote that Trimegistus had knowledge of the Trinity, but he does not clarify how much knowledge Aquinas specified that Trimegistus had.

In short, Patón takes this sentence attributed to Trimegistus from Aquinas for the prologue of his *Mercurius*. That is simply what Patón needs to justify Hermes's knowledge of the Trinity, and therefore his Christian essence and salvation. Specifically, Patón borrows from Aquinas only his early affirmation that Hermes believed in the Trinity, which the philosopher argues at the beginning of the *Summa Theologiae* I 32; however, he ignores Aquinas' subsequent development (and relativization) of this affirmation. This kind of intricate scholastic schemes, which later

⁶⁷⁶ [D]icendi quod philosophi non cognoverunt mysterium Trinitatis divinarum personarum per propria quae sunt paternitas, filiatio et procession (Summa Theologiae I 32 1).

⁶⁷⁷ [S]ecundum illud apostoli, 1 ad Cor II, 'loquimur Dei sapientiam, quam nemo principum huius saeculi cognovit' (Summa Theologiae I 32 1).

⁶⁷⁸ [C]ognoverunt tamen quaedam essentialia attributa quae appropriatur personis (Summa Theologiae I 32 1).

⁶⁷⁹ [S]ed ad productionem mundi, nam unus Deus produxit unum mundum propter sui ipsius amorem (Summa Theologiae I 32 1).

become even more difficult than in Aquinas, provoked the criticisms of many humanists from the beginning of the movement to *El Brocense*, Patón's master, and even to Patón himself. That is why, as we saw in the previous chapter, El Brocense defended a new way of understanding logic—sometimes following dangerous paths, like the one of the protestant Petrus Ramus. Nevertheless, as we can observe in the *Answer*, Patón is comfortable with Scholastic logic—so comfortable as to distort it for his own purposes.

Conclusion

In this work, I suggest that not only the medieval approach to knowledge, but also the medieval tradition about Trimegistus, are more substantial for Patón than Humanistic Historiography or erudition, even more so than the Hermetic renaissance tradition from Ficino and Bruno. The opinions and quotations about Trimegistus were so diffused in 17th century Spain that Patón did not truly need to read the (attributed) works of the Ancient Sage, neither the *Pimander* (with Ficino's or another Renaissance scholar's translation), nor even the *Asclepius*, known from Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages. For Patón, it is more important to refer to the *Twenty-four philosophers*, an obscure Neoplatonic work probably translated in Spain during the 12th century from Arab sources, and enshrined as evidence of pagan knowledge by Aquinas himself. This 'pearl' of Ancient knowledge from Trimegistus quoted by Aquinas is so valuable for Patón that he subordinates to it the rest of the authorities included in the *Answer*. To some extent, Patón transforms ancient, medieval, and renaissance sources into mere glosses of Aquinas' declaration—which makes sense in Patón's scholastic scheme although, of course, he also admits humanistic sources.

Patón insists that, actually, all this first part of his *Answer* is a longer explanation which was already exposed in the brief quotation he reproduced in the *Prologue* of the book: "And if here (in the prologue) it seems that it is succinct and abbreviated, although it is explicit, you must repeat the cited authorities, see the adduced authors, particularly saint Antoninus, and you will find it very copious and extended (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600)."⁶⁸⁰ He also declares his familiarity with the authors he has quoted in the *Answer*—to the point that he had not considered necessary to quote them in the prologue: "And if in that *prologue* I did not quote these fundamentals it was because I

⁶⁸⁰ "Y si aquí parece que está sucinta y abreviada (aunque es esplicita) repítanse las autoridades citadas, véanse los autores alegados, y particularmente san Antonino, y la hallarán muy copiosa y larga (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600)."

supposed them as true (because I have seen them many times).”⁶⁸¹ This is mostly accurate because Patón also quotes most of those authorities in many other of his preserved works—as I have detailed throughout this chapter. As an erudite humanist, Patón was familiarized with many ancient, medieval and contemporary books, either by constant reading or by gathering quotations from those books in a folder (as he advised his disciples in *The discreet Virtuous*). From Patón’s quotations of those books, we can have a glimpse about the eclectic selection a late humanist could have in his library. That selection includes and prioritizes—by contradicting long-lasting contemporary views on Humanism—a good selection of medieval and even Scholastic authors (something surprising for a ‘so-considered’ anti-scholastic scholar as Patón), along with Late antiquity and renaissance writers. In fact, after Aquinas, the most important authority whom Patón insists on is saint Antoninus of Florence. Patón also claims in the *Answer* that in no way could he have quoted so many authors in the *Prologue* because, as the author of a Rhetoric book, he is perfectly aware about what the extension of a prologue should be:

[A]nd because it would have exceeded the limits of a prologue, which consists only on giving reasons of the author’s attempt, and not to prove this (Mercurius’ salvation) with the need I now have to satisfy whoever should have noticed it (*Mercurius* 600-601).⁶⁸²

Patón means that the information he gave on the prologue on the salvation of Trimegistus should have been enough for the limited extension a prologue must have; however, since someone has repaired on the affirmations he made in it (and disagreed), Patón is more than prepared to justify his points and to expand on the matter as needed—and so he does in the *Answer*.

Furthermore, although Patón claims to have faithfully quoted all those authorities, he also maintains that he hoped to have gone beyond them in the fundament of the text, that is, the salvation of Trimegistus. That is what makes this short *Answer* really priceless, that in it we find a short compendium of testimonies about Trimegistus to solve the problem of paganism applied to him which was not at all solved yet for Church authorities—as Fray Esteban’s protests demonstrate. Both some philosophers and pagan prophetic figures like the Sibyls were still examined and studied as objects of salvation. But I think, as Patón himself, that his use of different sources together is more effective than any one separately:

⁶⁸¹ “Y si en aquel prólogo no cite estos fundamentos fue, porque como ciertos (por habellos visto muchas veces) los supuse” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 601)

⁶⁸² “[P]orque escudiera los límites del prólogo, que consiste solo en dar razones del intento del autor, y no en probar esto con la necesidad que ahora [tengo] para satisfacer a quien haya reparado en ello” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 601).

And I would like to have succeeded in the fundament that is missed in saints and grave doctors, because they are the owners of the places (topics), which have been faithfully repeated, in order to make explicit that such a weighty thing (as he said) is not without authority; because there are so many, and so I do not affirm but presume, because I say: *perhaps it happened that he was saved with the law of nature (Mercurius Trimegistus 601).*⁶⁸³

Once he had hidden behind the authorities he is using, Patón also refers to “the fundament that is missed in saints and grave doctors,” which I interpret as a claim that he is offering a stronger statement about Trimegistus’ salvation by adding the different isolated testimonies. Nevertheless, just in case, he also emphasizes the ‘perhaps’ (*fortasse*), that he used before in the prologue and now again: perhaps Trimegistus was saved with the natural law (since so many authorities point in that direction).

To ‘save’ (now also in the broader sense of the word) Trimegistus for the 17th century, Patón has to ‘translate’ him to the cultural *milieu* of his time. Among other factors that I have shown, this implies: Mercurius’ adaptation to the still imperfect historical science of his time, based upon chronologies and subordinated to moral lessons; an actualization of Trimegistus’ Christian knowledge—through the new theological subtleties of Neo-Scholasticism, without forgetting its Thomistic origins; and finally, an interpretation of Trimegistus’ moral, philosophical and even political virtues in a way any early 17th century reader could understand it, that is, through Lipsius and the Neostoic movement—into which I will delve next chapter. In conclusion, according to Patón, through natural reason, and because he was submitted to natural law, Trimegistus was an authentic sage of his time, and his moral virtues guaranteed him both knowledge of Jesus and Christian Dogmas.

The problem of paganism, which went back to the 2nd century, was in early modern Spain more pressing than ever, especially when America, an entire new continent of pagans, was integrated in the Spanish Empire. In this chapter I have shown how important and interwoven with Spanish and European history the problem of paganism was. And I have done so through a small Spanish work dedicated to Mercurius Trimegistus, who had been the most fascinating pagan for centuries. Following Patón’s path we can understand how this Spanish erudite, although rejecting

⁶⁸³ [Y] holgaría haber acertado en el fundamento que se echa de menos de santos y doctores graves, pues lo son los dueños de los lugares, que se han repetido fielmente, para que conste que no es sin autoridad cosa de tanto peso pues hay tantas, y con habellas no afirmo sino presumo pues digo: *fortasse factum fuit ut soluss* fieret lege natura.*

the practical part of Hermetism, was able to jeopardize his career in order to defend Mercurius' philosophical and prophetic legacy. We have seen how, once he is put on the spot by Fray Esteban, Patón defines the problem of paganism in his country and time. And with this purpose, he makes use of his logical, rhetorical, and humanistic background. That is why Patón relates Hermes to other renowned pagans of the past: on the one hand, Plato and celebrated philosophers, and on the other, the Sibyls. We have seen how the ancient prophetesses were not only more important than the Greek and Roman philosophers (or even Hermes) in Christianity, but also that in Spain the salvation was more guaranteed for the Sibyls than for any other pagan. In addition, Patón links Hermes with the Biblical figure of Job, the most tangible evidence of a pagan saved by God.

The late humanist Patón establishes a set of rules for the salvation of pagans based upon a Neo-Scholastic thinker, Domingo the Soto, and to this logic he subordinates ancient, medieval, and renaissance authorities; in order to understand those rules, it was necessary to clarify natural reason and law, which justified them from a theological and juridical point of view. Patón also proves that Mercurius was not afflicted by sins and vices as most other pagans were, especially considering that the worst sin from the Old Testament was idolatry. Precisely to free Hermes from suspicion, Patón uses a brief quotation from Marsilio Ficino, considered by scholarship as the most influential source about Hermes for renaissance learned men. In this chapter, we have seen how that is not entirely accurate, because at least for Patón, ecclesiastical and medieval authorities on Hermes were more important than Ficino. Marenbon recently reassessed the 'problem of paganism' with a helpful theoretical stance, and he allowed me in this chapter to clarify this controversial issue with respect to Hermes in early modern Spain. Therefore, we can now continue and see how Patón goes one step further in the Christianization of Hermes Trimegistus by means of Neosticism, a 17th century current of thought that, although Marenbon does not mention in his book, made more for the Christianization of pagans than any other philosophical school had done before.

CHAPTER V

The Final Christianization of Hermes. A Convenient Solution to the Problem of Paganism in the Neostoic Era.

Introduction

In this chapter I will show how Patón offers a Christianized image of Mercurius as a Neostoic sage and interprets the virtues he finds in a variety of sources about Mercurius according to Neostoic moral standards—in the first part of the chapter I will explain why he does so, and in the second part how he develops this aim. As I explained before, the Hellenistic *Hermetica* was influenced by the three main currents of Greek philosophy: Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Stoicism.⁶⁸⁴ One of the goals of my work is showing how these three currents had their correlation in the three most important philosophical trends of early modern Spain: Neo-Scholasticism, renaissance Neoplatonism, and Neostoicism, which were in turn influenced by the *Hermetica*, and participated in some of the most important political and intellectual issues of this time. In the previous chapter I addressed Neo-Scholasticism and the salvation of the pagans in America. In this chapter I will look into the Neostoic movement and how it contributed to the development of a new model of both a ‘baroque learned man’—whom Patón represented—and an ancient sage to be imitated by the learned men of that time.

As a representative of late Humanism, Patón was influenced by the Neostoic movement, which sought, among other things, to Christianize pagan philosophers. As most humanists from the beginning of the movement,⁶⁸⁵ Patón was an eclectic when it came to philosophy, who integrated all these currents in his own thought. Humanists translated or retranslated the sources

⁶⁸⁴ For instance, as Lapidge points out (“The Stoic inheritance” 103), the Latin *Asclepius* is indebted in many respects to Stoic cosmology: “in its monism, whereby god and universe are one (*Asclepius* ch.4), in its concise statement of the two Stoic principles, θεός and ὕλη (ch. 14), in its account of the spiritus or πνεῦμα which penetrates all things, so animating them (ch. 6), and in its extended treatment of Εἰμαρμένη or fate/destiny (ch. 39-40).”

⁶⁸⁵ See Kristeller (*Renaissance Thought* 252)

of Greek philosophy, among them some doctrines that were not connected with the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions, the main ones known by medieval philosophers. Thanks to humanist efforts, the Renaissance not only was based in Plato and Aristotle, but also “witnessed a revival of such ancient systems as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism” (Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 252). By doing so, Humanism provided new alternatives for philosophical and scientific thought, of which Patón, for instance, could take advantage. Stoicism became the most important of these alternative philosophical paths, probably because it was also the most compatible with Christianity, and because it had a developed moral philosophy, which humanists claimed as part of their sphere. Although most foundational texts are lost, Stoicism had many important figures in Antiquity whose names and doctrines have come to us.⁶⁸⁶ Actually, from the third century BCE until approximately the third century CE Stoicism was the principal philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world and “within the Roman sphere its position was even more prestigious than in Greece” (Lapidge “The Stoic Inheritance” 81). At the end of the sixteenth century, the Neostoic movement, chiefly developed by Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) renewed the school, which regained its bygone grandeur, and then Lipsius’s thought quickly extended to Spain.

This Stoic revival explains why in the *Answer* to Fray Esteban, Patón raises Trimegistus to the top of the civic, moral, scientific, and religious standards of a seventeenth century intellectual authority, just as the Neostoic doctrines defined a wise man. Lipsius and his followers kept to the model of the Stoics of Antiquity who, as Lapidge explains (“The Stoic Inheritance” 89) “were only concerned with the wise man” or sage (in Latin, the *sapiens*), or “the man striving to become one” (the *proficiens*); the sage’s main activity was the pursuit of moral excellence or ‘virtue’ (ἀρετή), which was the absolute moral perfection and hence equivalent to ‘the good’ (ἀγαθόν). Therefore, by depicting Hermes as a Neostoic sage, the moral standard of his time, Patón would also demonstrate that he was a virtuous man. With this strategy, Patón contributes to the solution to the problem of paganism which I defined in the previous chapter: in the previous chapter I have examined how Patón demonstrates Hermes’s knowledge of God and virtuous behavior, in this chapter I will examine how Patón goes a step further and shows Trimegistus as the epitome of virtuous man for the most successful philosophy of the first third of 17th century: Neostoicism; in

⁶⁸⁶ We can distinguish three moments in the classical Stoicism: the ancient Stoicism (end of 4th to 3th century BC), of Zenon, Cleanthes and Chrysippus; the middle Stoicism (1st century BC), of Posidonius and Panaetius; and finally, the Imperial Stoicism (1st to 3rd century AD) of Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius (Singlard 2)

this way Patón would definitely demonstrate Mercurius Trimegistus salvation and his own merit of picking him as title of his book.

I will first show how Neostoicism was introduced in the Spanish baroque period, specifically among personalities very close to Patón, who was at the center of the Spanish Neostoic network; then I will explain how this doctrine of Neostoicism turned out to be the most suitable for integrating Hermes Trimegistus into the new cultural environment of Spain and, by extension, into the entire Catholic world.

In brief, the first sections of this chapter explicate how Neostoicism worked in the intellectual circles of Patón and with that in mind how he adopted it as the most suitable way to Christianize Hermes. The rest of the chapter clarifies how Patón provides a Neostoic rendering to the idea of a pagan virtue—closely related, as we have seen to the possibility of salvation for pagans—and applies it to Hermes Trimegistus. By doing so Hermes, once Christianized, could pass the trial not only of severe critics from the Catholic Church, whom Fray Esteban represented, but also of the Spanish Inquisition itself, which Patón knew very well because he worked for it. Hermes was not only a virtuous ancient sage as the Stoics defined him, but also a Christian one, just as Lipsius re-defined the Stoic *sapiens*.

First, however, I elucidate how Neostoicism worked as a Christian philosophy, why this idea had been a problematic concept before the baroque period, and how it was then definitely accepted in the form of Lipsius's Neostoicism, who also regarded Trimegistus as a validated sage.

The Path towards a Neostoic Christian Philosophy: from the Church Fathers to Lipsius

Over the centuries, starting with the Church Fathers such as Origen or Lactantius, heterodox and mainstream Christian philosophers tried subtly to integrate thoughts, concepts and even esoteric doctrines from pagan philosophy and science. Christians faced philosophical problems in a pluralistic world, such as: “Is there one God? Can man speak of him? Is man free? Why is there evil in God's world?”⁶⁸⁷ To confront these challenges, they adopted the language of the philosophers, who had grappled with these same questions centuries earlier. This process of synthesis with the literary and philosophical traditions of the Greeks and the Romans still belongs

⁶⁸⁷ In Osborn (*The beginning of Christian philosophy* 1).

to the later phases of classical antiquity.⁶⁸⁸ As I showed previously, it was this syncretic moment which allowed the appearance of Hermes Trimegistus. In fact, the Stoics had played a fundamental role in sowing the seeds of Hellenistic syncretism because, in the aftermath of Alexander's conquests they effected a fusion of Greek ideas with the Egyptian and Babylonian ones (Fowden *The Egyptian Hermes* 91). This phenomenon permitted the Egyptian god Thoth to be integrated into Greek culture under the name of Hermes. In his writings, Trimegistus resonated with Christian thinkers, because he addressed the same metaphysical questions mentioned above, and by using a similar philosophical language. In the second and third centuries, Christians, philosophers and the heirs of Ancient Near Eastern Religions had Greek as the utmost way of expressing thoughts.

This dialogue with pagan doctrine, which important figures such as Augustine accepted within limits, lasted many centuries throughout the Middle Ages. With the dissemination of Aristotelian doctrines translated from Arabic, an important change occurred after the thirteenth century. Suddenly, philosophers, and especially Aristotle, occupied the center of intellectual life, mostly fostered by members of the Church. Despite the attempts to relate Christian dogma to pagan philosophy by such important figure as Aquinas, whom I addressed in the previous chapter, in the fourteenth century the teaching of philosophy was separated from theology. The superiority of theology was absolute, while philosophy's autonomy was confined to its own domain. As Kristeller (*Renaissance Thought* 116) clarifies, theology was Christian, but philosophy was Aristotelian, and the question "was not to substitute Christian for Aristotelian philosophy, but to determine their relationship and to reconcile them as far as possible" (*Renaissance Thought* 118).⁶⁸⁹

Afterwards, the Renaissance would again open the door to the possibility of a Christian philosophy. Platonists, invigorated with Plato's *Opera omnia* translated by Ficino, emphasized the harmony between religion and philosophy; Kristeller (*Renaissance Thought* 119) sees in it a position closer to Aquinas than to posterior scholastics. The metaphysical unity of the world, which Ficino defended in his *Platonic Theology*, had a counterpart in the historical development of philosophy and theology which are referred to as sisters in one of Ficino's letters. According to Ficino there was a "fountain of truth from which two parallel streams run their historical course;

⁶⁸⁸ See Kristeller (*Renaissance Thought* 116)

⁶⁸⁹ According to Kristeller "It is the position which Siger of Brabant took, and it is usually referred to as 'Averroism' or as 'the doctrine of the double truth.'" (*Renaissance thought* 116).

the one is philosophy the other is theology. True philosophy is Platonism and true theology is Christianity” (Schmitt 508).

On another Renaissance frontage, Erasmus’s deliberate combination of Christian dogma and classical letters also opened the door for a new Christian philosophy. Although Erasmus was discredited after being accused of inspiring the Lutheran Reformation, Ettinghausen explains how many features of Erasmism, like the emphasis on the word and on inner piety, or the exploitation of the classics for Christian purposes, were absorbed by the Counter-Reformation itself, notwithstanding the fact that Erasmus had officially been branded as *auctor damnatus* (6).⁶⁹⁰ An emphasis on inner piety led Erasmus to develop his *philosophia Christi*, “a term already used by the fathers to denote the living faith” (Rummel, 29), which influenced and proved the possibility of a new Christian philosophy, and a more intellectual approach to faith and belief for both Catholics and Protestants. Thus, in two pillars of renaissance Humanism, Ficino and Erasmus, the idea of a philosophy for Christians was present. This aim continued and fructified in the last stage of Humanism influenced by Lipsius and his Neostoicism.

Regardless of whether Neostoicism actually accelerated the decline of Erasmus’s influence in Spain, the new movement from Northern Europe⁶⁹¹ “answered a need similar to that which Erasmism had satisfied previously” (Ettinghausen 6). Neostoicism filled the need for a variety of Christianity which, “by taking account of the solutions to ethical problems provided by the classics, should place due stress upon the feasibility of leading a moral life largely through the exercise of reason and will.” Neostoicism, at least in some of its currents, turned out to be the Christian philosophy which previous attempts had tried, but failed to be. Kristeller observed that Stoic philosophy had had a wide influence on the moral thought of the Renaissance and “it found a systematic and learned interpreter towards the very end of the period in Justus Lipsius, whose writings exercised a strong influence on the moralists of the subsequent centuries” (*Renaissance*

⁶⁹⁰ Ettinghausen, following other authors like Elliot or Bataillon, extends this influence of Erasmianism to such characteristic features of Spanish Counter Reformation period as Mysticism or Jesuits’ *ratio studiorum*; in this way “the upsurge of mysticism in Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century can be regarded as the Erasmian ideal forced into a new channel” (*Francisco de Quevedo* 7). In a posterior moment, as González Maya points out (“De cruce christi” 636), post Tridentine Church separated itself from mysticism and free (or inner) expressions of faith; Patón inscribed himself in this line, because he was aware that the expression of religiosity among large sections of Spanish population channeled through external manifestations and popular forms of religious behavior. The Rome of the Counter-Reformation preconized this exteriorization, or even ostentation, of faith (González Maya “De cruce christi” 635).

⁶⁹¹ Justus Lipsius was Flemish, but he also traveled, studied and wrote in many other countries of Northern Europe, and he taught in the universities of Jena, Leiden and Leuven.

Thought 31). In Lipsius's Neostoic interpretation, the teachings of all ancient schools of philosophy (including the *Hermetica*), were rationalized according to Christian values. During late Humanism and the Baroque period, when Patón is writing, the Neostoic solution sometimes went beyond the previous attempts of conciliation or harmonization of pagan philosophy with Christianity; by using Neostoicism, some late humanists tried to directly transform worthy pagans into Christians, because then they finally had something that could work out as a suitable Christian philosophy. That is exactly what Patón is doing with Mercurius Trimegistus in order to validate him with the baroque *milieu*, as I argue in this chapter.

Neostoicism and Late Humanism

As a twilight humanist, Patón tried to save the Greek and Roman legacy which gave sense to most of his endeavors, and so he had to overcome the criticism of even more rigorous Christians than himself. According to the *Answer*, for him the main representative of that legacy was Hermes, who was allegedly the teacher of philosophers who came after him (Pythagoras, Plato), and creator of the most important disciplines for the humanists, starting with rhetoric. As I demonstrated before, during the Middle Ages the widespread interest in pagan heritage made Hermes a cultural mediator between the three Abrahamic religions, and, in fact, an advocate for contributions by other religions. By defending Hermes during the baroque period, Patón once again made him a cultural mediator, but this time between the Christian culture of Spanish late humanist and the Non-Christian pagan legacy that they wanted to preserve. In point of fact, at that time the defense of the pagan inheritance was more pressing than ever, because the first beatings of the scientific revolution started questioning its very fundamentals. We have seen how the protean Hermes transformed himself from his Hellenistic origins and Arab developments, and operated in the vernacular and 'multicultural' pre-humanist environment of the thirteenth century, represented by Alfonso X the Wise. During the Latin Italian Humanism Hermes was reinvigorated with Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and Pico della Mirandola's philosophy. Finally, in the post 1600 late Humanism Hermes altered once again his shape and became a Neostoic sage and virtuous Christian *avant-la-lettre*. A new type of humanist, the last one, fostered this change.

The cultural impact of the Counter-Reformation changed the intellectual status of learned men in 17th century Spain. A new model of baroque learned man appeared, which Madroñal calls the "perfect humanist" of the Spanish Golden Age period ("Modelos de perfecto humanista" 357).

This new humanist shattered the stereotypical image of renaissance Humanism by reinterpreting its postulates, and brought out completely new concerns as well. For Madroñal, Patón is the most representative of these intellectuals; not only his personality and biography correspond to this pattern,⁶⁹² but his intellectual postulates as well, among which we can count: the will of Christianize, Neostoicism, ‘Spanishness’ (‘españolidad’), and historical criticism. In this chapter I will demonstrate how Patón applied these notions to Trimegistus.⁶⁹³

The Christianization of classics is explained by Madroñal as a symptomatic feature of 17th century men of letters like Patón (“Modelos de perfecto humanista” 358). In a different way than the humanists of the Renaissance, those last humanists of the Counter-Reformation period gave preference to their way of living and understanding religion before curiosity and wisdom, in such a way that the classical works and the legacy of the gentiles frequently needed to be completely Christianized. Some gentile thinkers could be made Christians because they shared Christian morals with the *Bible* and the Patristic. Referring to this period, Iventosch talked about “a Pan-European movement toward the adjustment of the ancient philosophies to Christianity,” in which Spanish intellectuals such as Quevedo participated (“Quevedo and the defense II” 184). We have a clear example of this in Patón, who tried to adapt Trimegistus for his own epoch in a Christian way by defending his moral virtues, starting with diverse sources.

Actually, after the publication of the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, Patón would change the first tendency of his works, philological and rhetorical, to a moralistic one; thus, after 1621 Patón dealt with all kinds of cultural and social issues, but always from a severe and critical moral point of view (Madroñal “Modelos de perfecto humanista” 358). A characteristic work of that last stage of his intellectual production was *The Discreet Virtuous* (*El virtuoso discreto* 1631), which also embodies this Christianizing and moralistic turn. As we saw, this treatise was dedicated to his numerous Latin and Rhetoric disciples in Villanueva and to his own sons, and it contains maxims and apothegms in which Patón condenses his knowledge and thoughts of Christian and pagan sources and assumes himself, at the end of his life, the role of a (more or less humble) sage. This apodictic genre was characteristic of all Humanism from Erasmus to Lipsius, and was especially cherished by Neostoic followers. In the *Discreet Virtuous*, as Garau and Bosch point out, Patón

⁶⁹² As I explained before, Patón was close to the Church (he tried to be a Clerk and worked for the Spanish Inquisition), and abandoned the court to work in a remote place of the Spanish Geography where he created a regional school.

⁶⁹³ Although I will leave for a posterior stage of my work, in which I will delve into Patón and the *philosophia perennis*, the explanation of how patón demonstrates through historical and philological data that Hermes was a Spaniard.

recommends to the apprentice of Humanism permanent study as an ideal of life and virtue (*El virtuoso discreto* 360). As it happened with ancient sages as Trimegistus, that ideal must be subordinate to religious beliefs because Patón attributes the Truth to them. Truth, in the middle of the Counter-Reformation, could not be separated either from the *Bible* (first source of any knowledge), or from the official interpretation of the Bible that the Church advocates. Any other truth must be dependent on the one that the Church spreads. Jiménez Patón's continuous zeal of Christianizing the classics came from this principle and the Neostoic influence from Justus Lipsius (Garau and Bosch *El virtuoso discreto* 360). In the next sections, I will explain how Patón came into contact and absorbed Lipsius's Neostoicism and then used it to explain the figure of Hermes Trimegistus.

How Neostoic Philosophy Reached Patón, the Admirer of Seneca

Neostoicism extended to Spain after the end of sixteenth century from France. In France, Neostoicism had provided consolation at the end of the wars of religion. Both Lipsius's *De Constantia* and Du Vair's *De la constance* were written out of a need for personal relief. Regarding Spain, as Ettinghausen observes, Neostoicism also found a troubled state of affairs, and thus the "first great crisis in the modern period between 1598 and 1620 provided a rich soil for Stoical ideal" (Ettinghausen 8). It is no coincidence, therefore, that Patón's *Answer* included in the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, published in 1621, reflected that Neostoic influence. It seems clear to me that Patón absorbed Stoic philosophy through both his acquaintances and his own admiration for Seneca; in this section I will address this second factor and in the next one Patón's Neostoic network. Seneca's philosophy had come to terms with Christendom from the beginning, therefore, no other Stoic could have appealed to the pious Patón in the same way. Moreover, the first half of the seventeenth century saw the publication of an entirely new series of Spanish and European translation of Seneca, who had been the most popular Spanish Stoic philosopher in the Iberian Peninsula since the Middle Ages. I will trace an intellectual line of humanist thinkers which, starting with an early interest in Seneca and a posterior development of Neostoic ideas, reached Patón in the seventeenth century. Those precedents will make clear how Trimegistus matched in Patón's intellectual coordinates.

Seneca's popularity on Iberian soil had never waned, partly because Seneca had been a Spaniard himself, born in Cordoba in 4BCE. Moreschini informs us that Seneca's notoriety among

Christians began quite early (2005, v.1: 405). An apocryphal correspondence between Paul and Seneca was known during Constantine's period due to the religious syncretism of that age.⁶⁹⁴ Jerome was familiar with those letters, which confirmed his conviction that there existed a real affinity between Seneca and Christianity. That is why Jerome included Seneca among the 'famous men' of the Christian religion (*Viris illustribus* 12). Seneca's works were well known during the Middle Ages, "which thought about him as *princeps ethicorum, fons philosophiae*, and even *theologus*" (Moreschini *Early Christian Greek And Latin*, v.1, 405). The Stoic school had had several periods and different tendencies in a number of authors, but Seneca's particular interpretation of many Stoic teachings made him particularly suitable for Christians,⁶⁹⁵ who took his writings, both genuine and apocryphal, as the chosen source of Stoic thought throughout the Middle Ages and after. As Ettinghausen points out, the 'cordobés' Seneca "was revered in Spain as in no other country as the type of the philosopher *par excellence*" (Ettinghausen 2), to such an extent that Spanish Medieval Literature as a whole can be characterized by its keenness of Seneca. Thus, even though Neostoicism reached Spain relatively late, Spanish enthusiasm for Seneca had been considerable since many centuries before. Ettinghausen underlines how John II of Castile (1405-1454) patronaged the translation of Seneca's most important works, and from that moment onwards, we can find a relevant presence of the philosopher in Spanish literary works from the *Celestina* to the *Quixote* (Francisco de Quevedo 3-6).

In earlier Italian Humanism, Stoicism had been represented by Seneca who was "the chief Roman Spokesman for the sect," and also by Cicero, "a sympathetic and well-informed outsider" (Kraye 21). In the 14th century, Petrarch in *De remediis utriusque fortunae* had transformed Christ into a Stoic hero, beating the Stoics in their own game "the patient endurance of suffering" (Kraye 24). He considered, as Jerome before him and Lipsius after, that Stoicism was compatible with Christianity. Poliziano (1454-1494), arguably the most learned humanist of the fifteenth century, was interested in Epictetus, and so he started the interest for this 'minor' Stoic. Poliziano strategically used the commentary of Epictetus' *Enchiridion* by the Neoplatonic Simplicius in the 6th century, probably because the authoritative support of Plato was a guarantee in the Florence of

⁶⁹⁴ For instance, Tertullian "speaks of him as a writer who is 'often one of ours;' and Lactantius opined that Seneca could have been a true devotee of God if someone had shown God to him" (Moreschini *Early Christian Greek And Latin*, v.1, 405).

⁶⁹⁵ Ettinghausen (Francisco de Quevedo 2) refers in particular to "his view that the soul is incorporeal and capable of immortality, his transformation of the immanent Stoic *Logos* into something approaching a transcendental, personal god, his modification of Stoic 'apathy', and his insistent preaching of the need to prepare for death."

Lorenzo de Medici and Ficino. Nonetheless, the Stoic doctrines (as the one which pursued a state of mind emptied of all emotions, or virtue as the only foundation for happiness) aroused critics of other humanists such as Rinuccini (in *De libertate*, 1479); even Erasmus made fun of the Stoics in his *Praise of Folly* (1511). Erasmus, however, admired certain aspects of Stoic tradition, and so he published Seneca's letters in 1515 and again in 1529. Erasmus rejected the Christian conversion of Seneca and his apocryphal correspondence with Paul, but he thought that Seneca, while not a Christian, deserved to be read like a Christian (Kraye 31). Erasmus also provided a list of topics in which Seneca was not in accord with Christian philosophy. Among this mixture of admiration and criticism for Seneca, eximious protestants such as Calvin and Melanchthon leaned towards the later.

Agostino Steuco in his *De perenni philosophia* (1540)⁶⁹⁶ included both Seneca and Epictetus, along with other *prisci theologi* (ancient theologians) as Hermes Trimegistus and Pythagoras, in a line of Ancient Wisdom that anticipated Christian faith, and whose teachings were well-matched with the Bible (Kraye 31). The combination of Hermes and Seneca, as Patón did in his *Mercurius Trimegistus*, had had relevant precedents.

But the definitive turn to Stoicism took place in 1584 with the publication of *De Constantia*, named after Seneca's *De constantia sapientis*. In this work, Justus Lipsius made his first attempt to combine Stoicism and Christianity in a philosophy that "would help the individual to live through the difficult period of the religious wars and establishing constancy as the crown of virtues" (Papy 48). Lida emphasizes that the publication of *De Constantia* made the Flemish philologist the master of those who insisted on extracting a Christian wisdom from pagan letters for a long time (157). If, for previous humanists like Erasmus, Seneca was "a suitable pagan thinker for a propaedeutic towards the philosophia Christiana," for Lipsius, the Roman philosopher was the "unique foundation of a secular ethics that could be regarded as complement to Christian, biblical morality" (Papy 51). This secular ethics could be formulated either "as an alternative to or as support for Christian moral teaching" (Ettinghausen 1). With this and posterior works, Lipsius and his followers achieved a thoroughly eclectic compound of classical and Christian elements which together made up Renaissance ethics (Ettinghausen 2). In Italy, Petrarch, Ficino, and Pico

⁶⁹⁶ I will delve into Steuco and his work in a posterior stage of my work, regarding Patón and the *philosophia perennis*.

had tried to Christianize Plato and Cicero before. Now Lipsius not only confronted Christian and Stoic ethics, as the previous humanists had done, but also established the reconciliation between Christian faith and Stoic virtue as the primary aim of his program; he also extolled “a philosophical stoicism to be the only safe way to demonstrate that conflicts between the two were more apparent than real” (Papy 50).

This eagerness to extract from the ancient authors a moral doctrine seemed to be the hope of that entire epoch. Michel de Montaigne was an attentive reader of *De constantia*. In his *Apology for Raymond Sebond* he included compliments, maybe ironic, for Lipsius “the most learned man left, a polished and judicious mind,” and he wished that

he had the health, the will and sufficient leisure to compile an honest and careful account which listed by class and by category everything we can find out about the opinions of Ancient philosophy on the subject of our being and our morals; it would include their controversies and their reputations, it would tell us who belonged to which school, and how far the founders and their followers actually applied their precepts on memorable occasions which could serve as examples. What a beautiful and useful book that would be! (Montaigne 652).

Lipsius never completed his projected book of *Ethics*, which would have fulfilled the eagerness for a logical corpus of Ancient moral doctrine well-matched with Christianity, as Montaigne required (and erudites like Patón would attempt). Nevertheless, in his *Manuductio ad Stoicam Philosophiam* (1604), Lipsius effectively reconstructed “a coherent philosophical system of Stoic orthodoxy, focusing once again on the compatibility of Stoic philosophy and Christian doctrine” (Papy 64). In the *Manuductio ad Stoicam philosophiam* (1604), accompanied the next year by an annotated edition of his letters (dedicated to Pope Paul V), Lipsius settled on a new reading of Seneca that would influence Europe as a whole. Seneca became the *princeps ethicorum* (prince of ethics) and *paene christianus* (almost Christian). As Raimundo Lida recounts, that same year Lipsius wrote to his young Spanish friend and later famous writer Quevedo (Patón’s friend), and told him: *Seneca vester me totum habet* (“your Seneca has me completely”).⁶⁹⁷ In letter 97 of his first *Centuria*, Lipsius answered the bishop of Antwerp, who had admonished him (in a similar way as Fray Esteban to Patón), not to forget the eminent and unique role of Christianity. In his letter-answer to the bishop, Lipsius defends Seneca and Epictetus as ‘maîtres penseurs’ of Stoic philosophy (Papy 58). This defense is, he assures once again, “nothing but an attempt to reconcile

⁶⁹⁷ By, “your Seneca” meaning the country where the philosopher was born (Lida 113)

ancient pagan philosophy with Christian truth” (*aptare veterem philosophiam ad christianam veritatem*). In so doing he is putting the Stoics in front of even Plato and Aristotle, especially due to the advantage to cultivate virtues which the philosophers of the Stoa had.

It is easy to see how Lipsius could influence Patón through his Senequism, and how then Patón could connect with Lipsius’s lifelong project to transform contemporary moral philosophy through a new reading of Seneca. However, Patón saves Trimegistus for heaven before Seneca, as we have seen, and he does so by praising his virtues, something far from foolish given the ancient model of virtue for Patón’s generation. Following the inclination that Lipsius inaugurated, Patón demonstrates that he is an attentive reader of Seneca; he quotes Seneca’s letters on many occasions and with extreme accuracy. For instance, in the *Spanish Eloquence (Elocuencia española)*, one of the three books which form the *Mercurius Trimegistus*, Patón recalls (as desiring to prove his mastery on the philosopher): “Seneca in the eighth book, first epistle, says these words” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 188v.).⁶⁹⁸ At the very beginning of the *Necessary Instrument (Instrumento Necesario*, his book on Dialectics), Patón summons Seneca: “That Spanish philosopher, in my opinion, prince of the moral ones (...).”⁶⁹⁹

In the prologue of his *The virtuous discreet*, a work that demonstrates as no other his eagerness for the Christianization of the classics, Patón also invokes the figure of Seneca. This prologue demonstrates, as Garau and Bosch (*El virtuoso discreto* 361) point out, that Patón was an admirer of the stoic Seneca as a way of interpreting Christian thinking, but at the same time he was a zealous follower of the Tridentine doctrine

Following Seneca’s advice, I do not read any master lesson in the explanation of authors, which do not demonstrate in them some lesson related to our Christian religion, policies and morals, along with the humanity of the lesson and the precepts of Grammar and Rhetoric. I try to escape from that which the very learned Navarre in his *Manual* piously reprehends in some teachers of this faculty, and to follow what some men advice must be done for the interpretation of the gentiles, in order that it will not be with harm, but with benefit for Christian souls (Patón, *El virtuoso discreto* ff. 63-63v.).⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁸ “Séneca en el libro octavo epístola primera, dice estas palabras.”

⁶⁹⁹ “Aquel filósofo español (a mi parecer príncipe de los morales (...).” See Madroñal (2009: 313).

⁷⁰⁰ “Siguiendo el consejo de Séneca, ninguna lección magistral leo en la explicación de autores, que no les declare alguna sentencia que toque a cosas de nuestra religión cristiana, policía y moralidad, juntamente con la humanidad de la lección y preceptos de gramática y retórica, procurando huir lo que el doctísimo Navarro en su Manual piadosamente reprehende en algunos profesores desta facultad, y seguir lo que algunos aconsejan se deba hacer en la interpretación de gentiles para que no sea con daño, antes sí con provecho de las almas cristianas” (*El virtuoso discreto* f.63r-63v).

Therefore, among the ancient authors Patón only picks those whose fragments could be related to Christian dogma and morals, and thus he avoids any possible harm for either himself or his students. These ideas of Christianizing the classics, which he defended all his life, put Patón in the trail of Lipsius, who in a similar way had said that “our mission is to choose those precepts which are most in conformity with the principles of the Christian religion.”⁷⁰¹

It is important to highlight that, although Lipsius’s influence in Patón is evident, as I will show down below and is sustained by many specialists, Patón never mentions Lipsius directly. Actually, it was not strange at all for a Spanish seventeenth century writer to imitate Lipsius without naming him, as Patón does. As López Poza points out, Lipsius was both an admired and a polemical figure in Spain (2008 212). Thus, Patón avoided quoting Lipsius’s still controversial works directly, in the same way that many Spanish followers of the Flemish philosopher rarely named him. As a renowned scholar, Lipsius moved both between different universities in central Europe (Jena, Leuven, or Leiden) and between confessions. Although finally he (apparently) converted definitely to Catholicism—to the delight of Spanish intellectuals—, this veering made him remain suspicious for a long time. Moreover, as Grafton has proved (*Bring out your dead* 130), probably Lipsius kept heretical beliefs all his life, and made adherents even in the court of Philip II of Spain himself.⁷⁰² Many saw Lipsius’s changes of faith and activities as suspicious, and the Vatican included Lipsius’s *Politica* in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1590.⁷⁰³ The Spanish inquisitor Sandoval also included chapter 11 and 12 of *De Constantia* in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*. It explains why many writings from Patón acknowledge this Neostoic influence but he never mentions Lipsius.

Among those passages which prove Lipsius’s sway in Patón, Rodríguez Cacho (195) sees Neostoic inspirations in Patón’s *Reform of garments* (*Reforma de trajes*, Baeza, 1638) because Neostoicism criticized any prevalence of appearance over being. In addition, González Maya (2016 636) appreciates direct influences of Lipsius’s *De Cruce* (1593) in Patón’s *Decent laying of*

⁷⁰¹ In Saunders (1955 75).

⁷⁰² As Grafton explains, for a long time Lipsius “belonged to a heretical sect, the Family of Love. This group included rich merchants, learned scholars, and illiterate but charismatic prophets. It centered in the great printing and publishing house of Christopher Plantin, who himself lived in Leiden during the 1580s. Its members spread in thin but strangely powerful streams across geographical and confessional boundaries. One tiny group flourished under the nose of Philip II in the Escorial, a second in Leiden, the intellectual citadel of his Calvinist enemies. All members claimed a direct access to God’s commandments. All felt that they could take part in the public ceremonies of any Christian Church, since all external acts were secondary to the illumination that burned within them.” (Grafton *Bring out your dead* 130).

⁷⁰³ As López Poza explains, the most polemical passages of Lipsius’s *Politica* were related to religious tolerance (2008 212-124)

the Holy Cross (Decente colocación de la Santa Cruz 1635). At the end of his life, Patón was praised by his fellow late humanist and friend Francisco Cascales (1563-1642), who compared Patón with Lipsius himself. According to Cascales, Patón “takes away from us the desire of Scaliger, Lipsius and Boulenger.”⁷⁰⁴ In this way, Cascales equals Patón with the most important European philologists (especially with Lipsius) of the 17th century with whom, from his remote school in La Mancha, Patón shared some features.

The most secure way of preserving the wisdom of the Ancients was by demonstrating the harmony of their morals with the Christian ones through philological work and textual interpretation. Thus, Jiménez Patón’s purposes seem to be completely suitable with Lipsius’s own educational program, which the Flemish thinker, according to Papy, propagated in his entire oeuvre and teaching (59). The two indissoluble components in Lipsius’s works are “philology as the attentive study of classical authors in order to collect the treasures of antique wisdom, and philosophy oriented toward a praxis of virtue” (Papy 59). As Grafton sustains (*Defenders of the text* 38), Lipsius treated his systematic manuals, the *Politica* and *De constantia*—which, as we will see, would have a deep influence in Spain—“as the culmination of his whole career as editor and exegete.” In a letter to a friend, Lipsius boasted that: “I was the first or the only one in my time to make literary scholarship serve true wisdom. I made philology into philosophy.”⁷⁰⁵ The next step for Lipsius would be to extract from that philosophy moral values and ethics compatible with Christianity.

In his *Commentaries of erudition* (f162v.) Patón affirms in a manner similar to Lipsius that “the different loves help each other to the declaration of thoughts, just as the human letters take help from the divine ones, and in this declaration, the human letters can be Christianized, mainly those which themselves are founded in moral doctrine.”⁷⁰⁶ Equally, both Lipsius and Patón oriented their philological endeavors to cultivate moral virtues.

As I have reasoned, it is easy to interpret Patón’s affinities with Lipsius through the reverence that both felt towards Seneca. In fact, as I will show from now onwards, Patón was at

⁷⁰⁴ “[n]os quita el deseo de los Escaligeros, Lipsios y Bulegeros de la Tramontana” (*Discurso de los tufos, copetes y calvas* (Baeza 1639), fol. 66r.

⁷⁰⁵ Lipsius to J. Woverius, 3 November 1603, in Lipsius, *Epistolarum selectarum centura quarta miscellanea postuma* (Antwerp 1611), ep. 84, 70: *Ego ad sapientiam primus vel solus mei aevi Musas converti: ego e Philologia Philosophiam feci* (in Grafton *Defenders of the text* 256)

⁷⁰⁶ “Se debe advertir que unos amores a otros se ayudan a la declaración de los pensamientos, como las letras humanas se ayudan de las divinas, y también pueden en la declaración cristianarse las humanas, principalmente las que de suyo están fundadas en doctrina moral” (*Comentarios de erudición*, f. 162v^o, in Garau 2014 377)

the very center of the Spanish reception of Neostoicism and its intellectual networks, which related Patón's acquaintances not only with Lipsius, but with the outmost representatives of the current in Europe.

Patón and the Spanish Neostoic Network

Two famous Neostoics of Spain stand out among Patón's closely related influences: his master in Salamanca, Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas "El Brocense," and his friend, Francisco de Quevedo. In this chapter, I expand on those two authors and also on Lope de Vega. In this way I both enlarge and justify the introduction to these three authors (along with Patón) which I made in the second chapter, where I label them as the most important ones of Patón's network. As we will understand, they accompanied and oriented Patón in the intellectual currents of early modern Spain, used in Patón's 'apologetics' for Mercurius Trimegistus.

The University of Salamanca was the center of a brilliant Neo-scholastic school, as we saw in the previous chapter, but it also had a special relationship with Stoicism, which started long before Patón arrived there to complete his Master of Arts and met El Brocense. The Spanish humanist Hernán Núñez de Toledo y Guzmán "El Pinciano" (1475-1553) had problems for his Erasmian ideas, which made him abandon the University of Alcalá and go to Salamanca, where he became a professor of Greek in 1523. There, he published Seneca's letters accompanied by his famous *Castigationes* (emendations) to the Roman philosopher, in which he attempted to ingratiate Seneca with Christian and Humanist critics.⁷⁰⁷ Lipsius often quoted El Pinciano's commentary in his own edition of Seneca.⁷⁰⁸ El Pinciano realized that all the accusations leveled against Seneca could not be made, "even in jest, against Epictetus, a humble, modest, and sickly ex-slave turned Stoic philosopher, whose writings have a distinctly devout and religious tone" (Kraye 40). It is probably thanks to El Pinciano that Salamanca produced the first two translations of Epictetus, as he had left to the rector of the University the copy from which was published the only Greek text of Epictetus to appear in Spain in the period (Salamanca 1555). The first translation of the *Manual* or *Enchiridion* from Epictetus was made by El Pinciano's pupil and successor in the Chairs of Greek and Rhetoric, El Brocense (1523-1600), Patón's master, whose learning impressed even

⁷⁰⁷ Ettinhausen underlines that Hernán Núñez de Guzmán, El Pinciano, was the only Spanish Senecan scholar of note in the sixteenth century apart from Martín Antonio del Río,

⁷⁰⁸ Sandys (1921, ii, 158) specifies the importance of Hernán Núñez's commentary, *In omnia L. Annaei Senecae philosophi scripta... castigationes utilissimae* (Venice 1536) in Lipsius's own edition of Seneca.

Lipsius (Ettinghausen 10). Both el Brocense and Lipsius shared “the same effort for rehabilitate the Stoic thesis and to show that they are not at all contraries to the requirements of Christian faith” (Singlard 2). El Brocense maintained a correspondence at the end of his life with Lipsius, who praised the Spanish humanist.⁷⁰⁹

Marcel Bataillon highlighted that the most important Spanish learned men of his time held it as a great honor to exchange letters with Lipsius (773). Bataillon also remarked upon the importance of El Brocense as the one who opened Spain’s door to Lipsius.⁷¹⁰ The year of his death (1600), El Brocense published a commentary and translation of the *Enchiridion*⁷¹¹ by Epictetus (c.50-130 BC), the first one into Spanish; this publication was a significant moment in the diffusion of Neo-Stoicism in Spain. Other Spanish authors would translate Epictetus after him, distinctly Quevedo in 1635, who owed the inspiration he had from El Brocense. Like many others, El Brocense considered Epictetus more suitable for Christianity than Seneca, with his harsh doctrine of apathy (to seek the absence of emotions) and his concept of fortune. With respect to Epictetus, El Brocense thought that, “but for his references to the gods... he recalls *Ecclesiastes* and the writings of the Apostles.” Finally, the old humanist expressed his regret at having reached to such a great destination (‘tan buen Puerto’) later in life (Ettinghausen 11). As Singlard (7) points out, the professor from Salamanca considered that Epictetus’ book was the best and biggest to make man wise, and in fact condensed everything that Plato wrote to make a perfect and thorough man. It is as much on account of this personal attachment to Stoicism as because of his specific comparisons between Stoic and Christian thought that Ettinghausen considers that El Brocense “deserves to be called the first Spanish Neostoic” (11).

Thus, a new model of wise man appeared, and precisely Patón’s most important mentor introduced this model into Spain. Nevertheless, there are nuances between the Humanism and Stoicism of El Brocense and the ones of his disciple Patón. As I have shown before, the former

⁷⁰⁹ In a letter to Sarmiento de Mendoza (Ramírez 1966 295)

⁷¹⁰ According to Bataillon (773) and the end of his life El Brocense was, regarding Neostoicism, in the same situation that the previous important Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522) was in relation to Erasmism. Paradoxically, Nebrija, a disciple of Lorenzo Valla, had smoothed the way to the new ideas of Erasmus; El Brocense, a Erasmus’s disciple, would did the same to Justus Lipius (who represented the 3rd and last great moment of European Humanism, after the ones represented by Valla and Erasmus).

⁷¹¹ This text was in fact a compilation of Epictetus’ courses notes by his disciple Arrian (c. 86/89 – c. after 146/160 AD). This work had been translated into Latin by Niccolo Perotti in 1450, Poliziano in Rome in 1493; Beroaldus in Bologna in 1496; English translation appeared in 1567 by Sanford; nevertheless, the French translations of Antoine du Moulin (Lyon 1544), Andre Rivaudeau (1567), and Guillaume du Vair (1591) were particularly important and influenced thinkers as Montaigne, Descartes and Pascal.

was much more of a rebel against the cultural and intellectual establishment, something that Patón never was, even though he was able to defend the pagan Trimegistus against the Church authorities. As we saw before, El Brocense suffered two trials by the Spanish Inquisition, although the main reason for the prosecutions was not strictly a matter of religion.⁷¹² Following the example of other humanists like Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540), el Brocense attacked the philosophy and the academic world of his time in works like *De nonnullis porphyrii aliorumque in dialectica erroribus scholae dialecticae*, published in 1588. As a result, he would be accused of undermining the bases of scholastic philosophy and the principle of authority.⁷¹³ Not surprisingly, El Brocense always praised Erasmus and his freedom in judging the biblical text with philological methods.⁷¹⁴ In contrast, as Garau and Bosh underline, Patón was much more cautious and even fearful than his master (*El virtuoso discreto* 32).⁷¹⁵ He scarcely quoted Erasmus, and never about thorny matters.⁷¹⁶

Nevertheless, the definitive disapproval of Erasmism at the end of 16th century finally forced El Brocense, as many others, to find new venues for the intellectual expression of religion, and his answer were the Stoics, particularly Epictetus. Like other humanists, El Brocense used skepticism to face the problem of knowledge, and Stoicism for the question of morals, virtue, and human behavior. This intromission of ancient philosophy in human behavior directly interfered in religious affairs, compelling late humanists to Christianize the ancient sages, including Trimegistus.

But Lipsius's influence in those years extended beyond Patón's academic network to other illustrious friends like Lope de Vega. Lope's ambitious and miscellaneous work *La Filomena*, was published the same year as Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus* (1621), this work includes a small poetical treatise written in the epistolary genre, in which Lope deals with the revolutionary poetic

⁷¹² As Gómez Canseco (1993 108) underlines El Brocense was submissive with the dogma in matters of faith but he conducted himself with absolute freedom in the field of his science (which for him had no intersection with the truths of religion).

⁷¹³ However, in the middle of his second process the authorities allowed a new edition of the book (1597), and praised his effort to improve the university studies.

⁷¹⁴ And sometimes he was even beyond Erasmus, striving for a rational demonstration like the mathematicians did (Gómez Canseco 1993 112).

⁷¹⁵ Like Garau and Bosch underlines, he often insinuated care, in expressions on the type of "I conduct myself about everything with a great caution"; "Yo, aunque en todo voy con muy gran cuidado" (*The Discreet Virtuous*, f.29v)

⁷¹⁶ For instance, in the *Commentaries of Erudition*, he only quotes Erasmus once, regarding the sound of laurel when it is burned (*Comentarios de Erudición. Libro decimosexto* 31).

style of Góngora (*Paper which wrote a man of these kingdoms to Lope de Vega Carpio regarding the new poetry*).⁷¹⁷ On the one hand, in it Lope finally acknowledges Góngora's merit, but on the other hand he deprecates the pernicious influence he had on his Spanish imitators. According to Lope, this would have been the same case as it happened with the imitators of Lipsius's Latin, who, with catastrophic results, were unable to follow the difficult style of the Flemish writer. Among those imitators of Lipsius's style was Lope's mortal enemy, Torres Rámila, who wrote against him the Latin *Spongia* 1617.⁷¹⁸ Probably Lope is thinking about Rámila when he says: "and I know someone who has invented another language and style, so different as the one Lipsius teaches, that I could make a slang dictionary with it."⁷¹⁹ To pay for his advices, Lope says that the 'man of these kingdoms' finally sent Lipsius's complete works to him (*Obras Completas* 889); this seems to be typical of Lope's pedantic ostentation, because he presents himself as a proficient reader of the great Lipsius and his difficult style—especially considering that Rámila had accused Lope of being ignorant in Latin (*Conde-Tubau Fuego cruzado* 25 and 279-280).

Lope actually uses Lipsius as the paradigm of the wise man in the play *Los melindres de Belisa*, included in his *IX Part of Comedies* (1617), where he compares Lipsius with Íñigo López de Mendoza, the famous Marqués de Santillana.⁷²⁰ In the *Laurel de Apolo* (Madrid 1630), Lope equates Lipsius with Quevedo, the mutual friend he had with Patón: "Call the learned Francisco de Quevedo/ as light of your beautiful shore/ Spain's Lipsius in prose."⁷²¹ Therefore, as it is clear from these allusions, the Neostoic Lipsius was also for Lope de Vega the utmost example of the wise man of his time. Therefore, Lipsius's model of Neostoic sage, applied by Patón to Trimegistus, could be perfectly validated as well by Lope de Vega, Patón's most cherished friend.

Quevedo, praised as a Spanish Lipsius by Lope de Vega, is in fact the second important figure of Neostoicism related to Patón that I would like to address. Quevedo had an ephemeral correspondence with Justus Lipsius which began in 1604, when he was still a student of theology

⁷¹⁷ "Papel que escribió un señor destes reinos a Lope de Vega Carpio en razón de la nueva poesía," in *Obras completas*, 872-902.

⁷¹⁸ According to Tubau and Conde (*Fuego cruzado en el nombre de Lope* 28 & ss) Lope had done the same in his *Carta echadiza a Góngora* (1615).

⁷¹⁹ "[Y] yo conozco alguno que ha inventado otra lengua y estilo tan diferente del que Lipsio enseña, que podía hacer un diccionario, como los ciegos a la jerigonza" (Lope de Vega *Obras* 879). I have translated the last part of the quotation freely, following Blecua's note and interpretación of it.

⁷²⁰ "Lipsio con capa y espada, / fama inmortal tiene y goza; / persona fue celebrada / don Íñigo de Mendoza."

⁷²¹ "Al docto don Francisco de Quevedo/ llama por luz de tu ribera hermosa, / Lipsio de España en prosa." In *Laurel de apolo vii*, silva II, 364-365, Vega 2007).

in Valladolid (Ettinghausen 19). According to a preserved letter, in 1605 Lipsius gifted Quevedo with both his *Manuductio* and *Physiologia Stoicorum*, his introductions to Stoic doctrine. Furthermore, Quevedo is most probably the only Spaniard to have had connections with all four leading figures of (or influenced by) Neostoicism: Lipsius, du Vair, Scioppius, and Montaigne (although Montaigne cannot be considered one of the Neostoics).⁷²² Quevedo either knew or read all four thinkers, and he diffused their doctrines in Spain.⁷²³ Quevedo was a devotee of El Brocense, on whose translation of Epictetus he based his own version of Epictetus' *Manual*, and he also knew Tamayo de Vargas, the Spanish translator of Lipsius's *De Constantia*. In 1612 Quevedo sent Tamayo de Vargas an unknown Stoic work authored by him, allegedly the first one Quevedo dedicated to this school. Ettinghausen thinks that this work was the *Stoic Doctrine* (*Doctrina Estoica*), which he would publish later in 1635 together with his translations of Epictetus' *Manual* and the *Pseudo-Phocylides*. *Stoic Doctrine* is the only one of Quevedo's works which deals exclusively with the Stoics and their philosophy, and it is based almost entirely on Lipsius's *Manuductio*. As we saw, precisely after that year of 1612 when he composed the *Stoic Doctrine*, Quevedo visited Villanueva many times.⁷²⁴ There he usually lodged in Patón's house, who was composing his ambitious *Mercurius Trimegistus* and with whom we know he talked about intellectual interests frequently. It justifies the mutual intellectual influence between both authors, which I focus here in Neostoic philosophy.

In the *Stoic Doctrine*, Quevedo's concern is less with the Stoics themselves than with bringing them into the Christian fold at almost any cost (Ettinghausen 26-27). At the same time, he claims "that the Stoic school is older than its name and that its origin is nobler than has

⁷²² As Lewis Schaefer points out ("Montaigne and the Classical Tradition" 179), it has been common to interpret Montaigne's *Essays* as recording "an evolution that their author underwent as he wrote, from Stoic to Skeptic to Epicurean" (although Lewis nuances that schema). In any case, it is undeniable, as Desan highlights, that even though Lipsius frequently praised Montaigne, Montaigne progressively disliked Lipsius, especially after his fast conversion to Catholicism (against his own idea of *constantia*), and that, for instance "Montaigne never embraced Lipsius's conception of politics, and the third book of the *Essays* might even be seen as a refutation of Justus Lipsius" (*Montaigne. A Life* 558-559)

⁷²³ As Ettinghausen (22) informs us, by 1609 Quevedo talks about the translation of Guillaume du Vair's *Meditations sur les lamentations de Jeremie*; Scioppius was in Madrid in 1613-14, where he probably met Quevedo, because both held a correspondence later (Scioppius wrote the *Elementa philosophiae stoicae moralis* in 1606, the only work of the period comparable in aim and scope with Lipsius's *Manuductio* and *Physiologia*); finally, Quevedo is known for being the first Spaniard who read Montaigne, whose *Essays* he described as "such a great book, that whoever for read it should not read Seneca and Plutarch, he would read Plutarch and Seneca" ("libro tan grande, que quien por verle dejara de leer a Séneca y a Plutarco, leerá a Plutarco y a Séneca).

⁷²⁴ Sometimes even forcedly. For instance, he was confined there in 1628 for his attacks on the proposal to make St. Teresa co-patron of Spain, one in Villanueva "he wrote a Stoical letter in Senecan Latin" (Ettinghausen 40).

commonly been thought.” According to Ettinghausen, “the basis for this claim is the traditional assumption that any truth perceived by the ancients must have been divinely inspired;” of course, this shows a clear agreement with the *philosophia perennnis* theories that I will address in a posterior stage of my work. With this same frame of mind, Lipsius’s *Manuductio* also started with an outline of ancient philosophy, in which Lipsius observes that many Greek philosophers, among them Zenon, the founder of the Stoa, were native to the Orient.⁷²⁵ Quevedo also engaged in demonstrating the relationship of the Stoic doctrines with the *Bible*. Following El Brocense, Quevedo traces back Epictetus philosophy to the book of Job, and establishes a link between Job and Zeno, the founder of the school.⁷²⁶ Whereas Lipsius made in his *Manuductio* an objective reconstruction of the Stoic system, Quevedo transformed it “into what amounts to a plea for the adoption of Stoic ethics as a pattern for Christian living” (Ettinghausen 41). What really mattered to him is that Stoicism should be seen as an earnest precursor of Christianity.

In two other books, *Defense of Epicure* and the *Spanish Epictetus (Epicteto español)* both published along with the *Stoic Doctrine* in 1635, Quevedo reveals his eagerness for Christianizing both Stoics and Epicureans.⁷²⁷ In the *Spanish Epictetus*, he made a translation in verse of the *Manual*, derived from the second Spanish translation, published by Gonzalo Correas in 1630 (although he uses El Brocense’s one extensively as well, and recognizes his influence). As we saw, Gonzalo Correas was also part of Patón’s network.

Some of the most famous works of Quevedo acknowledge a Stoic sway as well; specifically, the first five chapters of *The Cradle and the Grave (La cuna y la sepultura)*, which were written and published separately before the main work (1630), under the incontestable Stoic title of *Moral doctrine of self-knowledge and disenchantment of alien things*.⁷²⁸ Ettinghausen identified several Stoic influences in this book—from Montaigne’s *Apologie de Raimond*

⁷²⁵ In Bluher, 398.

⁷²⁶ In Quevedo’s opinion “the whole of the Book of Job is concerned with the Stoic distinction between ‘internals’ and ‘externals’, things within and beyond the individual control (Ettinghausen 28)

⁷²⁷ The complete title of the work was *Epictetus and Phocylides in Spanish in verse. With the origin of the Stoics and their defense against Plutarch, and the defense of Epicure, against the common opinion (Epicteto, y Phocilides en español con consonantes. Con el origen de los Estoicos, y su defensa contra Plutarco, y la defensa de Epicuro, contra la común opinión.)* As Raimundo Lida points out, for Quevedo the teachings of the Stoic philosopher are associated with the work of the pious franciscan Francisco de Sales (1567-1622) and his *Introduction to the devote life (Introducción a la vida devota, 1604)*.

⁷²⁸ *Doctrina moral del conocimiento propio y del desengaño de las cosas ajenas*. This work became the first of Quevedo’s Stoical works to reach the public (Ettinghausen 73).

*Sebond*⁷²⁹ to moral advise which recall Seneca, Juvenal, or Persius—but in a way that suggests Counter-Reformation doctrine and thus, already far away from the inner piety of Erasmus’s Christian philosophy.⁷³⁰ As Juan Eusebio Nieremberg noted in his *Approbation* to the book, in *The Cradle and the Grave*, Quevedo “made it seem that Epictetus had turned Spaniard and Seneca Christian” (Ettinghausen 91). This is also what Patón turned Mercurius to: Christian and Spanish.

As it happened with Patón, Quevedo often swung between the fascination for the classics and his rigorous Catholic dogmatism which led him sometimes to underestimate them. This is why in the *Virtud Militante* he said that “The Catholic Church has rewarded us with the doctrine of so many holy fathers and doctors, that we do not have to beg for the teachings of the philosophers; a better and safer school is the one of the saints.”⁷³¹ Nevertheless, Quevedo also said there that “considering suspicious all philosophers’ doctrines, I will use the Holy Writings and the sacred Fathers, knowing that even though in those there is something good, in these there is nothing which it is not.”⁷³²

Similarly to Quevedo, Patón affirms that he follows this same criteria of subordinating pagan philosophers to Christian truth, especially to avoid troubles with the Spanish Inquisition (Garau and Bosch *El virtuoso discreto* 52). In this Neostoic context, Patón many times insisted on the moral usefulness of pagan doctrines to support Christendom; for instance, Patón asserted that

It is good to read letters of humanities to understand the divine ones and, with the sentences of the secular sages, convince those men who cannot be convinced with the testimonies from the holy writings; because in the gentiles we find many examples and sentences of moral virtues to live well (*The Discreet Virtuous* f67v.).⁷³³

⁷²⁹ Ettinghausen (84) refers to “the argument for the impotence of human reason from the disagreements between the various philosophical schools of Antiquity; and dismay at the sway of scholasticism, in which Aristotelian natural philosophy is singled out for the harshest censure”

⁷³⁰ As Ettinghausen (88) reminds us, Quevedo gives a formula for becoming a *proficiens* in Christian philosophy really far away from the inner piety of Erasmus: “then you will be an apprentice in Christian philosophy, when you would not pray hidden and mumbling and you would not beg in the byways to God those things you are ashamed the men to listen to” (“Entonces serás buen principiante en la filosofía Cristiana cuando no rezares escondido y entre los dientes, y pidieres por los rincones a solas a Dios aquellas cosas que te da vergüenza que las oigan los hombres”).

⁷³¹ “La Iglesia católica nos ha enriquecido con la doctrina de tantos santos padres y doctores, que no tenemos ocasión de menguar enseñanza de los filósofos; mejor y más segura escuela es la de los santos.” (Q, II. 101a., in Ettinghausen 92).

⁷³² “Teniendo por sospechosa toda la doctrina de los filósofos, me valdré de las sacrosantas escrituras y de los santos padres, sabiendo que, como en aquéllos hay algo bueno, en éstos no hay algo que no lo sea.” (in Ettinghausen 95)

⁷³³ “Bien es leer letras de humanidad para entender las divinas y para, con las sentencias de los sabios del siglo, convencer a los que no se convencen con los testimonios del divino testo, pues en los gentiles hallamos tantos ejemplos y sentencias de virtudes morales para vivir bien” (*El virtuoso discreto* f67v.)

In this same way, Patón used Augustine’s metaphor of the lady and the maid referring to the Bible and the human letters respectively.⁷³⁴ Nevertheless, Patón closed *The Virtuous Discreet* adducing Christian authorities for a solid defense of the use of pagan authors: “Bede, Jerome, Augustine and the Canonic Law say that the pagans have very useful sentences, and Saint Thomas, talking about curiosity, said that the curiosity employed in looking sentences on them is good, because they originated in the faithful authors from whom they took those sentences, and that is why Origen called Plato ‘Athenian Moses’” (*The Discreet Virtuous*, f.105r.).⁷³⁵ Thus, Patón closed his last important work with a quotation which, in fact, Origen took from Numenius of Apamea (second century). This quotation has been used since then both as a justification for using pagan wisdom because of its Christian origin, and as a foundation of the *philosophia perennnis* doctrines in the Middle Platonism *mileu*.

Ettinghausen remarks how Quevedo, in a similar way as Patón, noted in his posthumous work *Militant Virtue* (1651) that the Church Fathers themselves often cite pagan philosophers; but more contemptuously Quevedo also estates that he, too “may from time to time cite the classics in order to teach bad Christians that even pagans who lacked the benefit of Christian doctrine were better than they.”⁷³⁶ Despite their sometimes ‘guilty conscience’ of using pagan authorities, it is evident that both Quevedo and Patón used, defended, and Christianized them until their very last works. As Ettinghausen (109) remarks, two posthumous works of Quevedo’s *Providencia de Dios* and *La constancia y paciencia del santo Job*, both written during his long imprisonment in León, “show that our author’s admiration for the Stoics and his belief in the utility of Stoical ideas and arguments in religious writing remaining with him until the end of his life.” In both works Job is shown to have acted virtuously in all circumstances, “thanks to his proto-Stoic knowledge of the real worth of ‘internals’ and ‘externals’, and in both Seneca is Quevedo’s chief classical

⁷³⁴ “The Holy Writings are the true wife who established a house, the rest of human sciences and letters are her servants, so we will use them when they could serve to explain the main thought, because extracting thoughts from human letters is a well-known mistake, as Augustin said, in the same way as it would be to give a better place to the maid than to the lady”; “La Sagrada Escritura es la verdadera esposa que puso casa, las demás ciencias y letras humanas son criadas suyas, así las habremos de traer a propósito en lo que puedan server para la explicación del principal pensamiento, porque sacar los pensamientos de las letras humanas, dice san Agustín, es yerro conocido, como lo será darle mayor lugar a la criada que a su señora” (*Perfecto predicador* 236)

⁷³⁵ “Beda, san Jerónimo, Agustín y el derecho canónico dicen que los gentiles tienen sentencias muy provechosas y santo Tomás, hablando de la curiosidad, afirma que es buena la que se pone en buscar en ellos estas sentencias, porque tuvieron principio en los autores fieles de quien ellos las tomaron, que por esto llama orígenes a Platón Moisés ateniense” (*El virtuoso discreto* f105r.)

⁷³⁶ In Ettinghausen 95.

authority.”⁷³⁷ But more importantly, Job was a biblical model for the Stoic Sage, a pattern with which Patón would compare Mercurius in his *Answer*.

Finally, I want to address the most obvious proof of Quevedo’s like-mindedness with Patón not only regarding the Neostoic thought and Christianization of classics, but also the admiration for Hermes Trimegistus, whom both present as a model for the Neostoic sage, as I will explain from now on.

Indeed, Quevedo presents Hermes Trimegistus as a source of wisdom, at the same level of Epictetus, Plato or even Paul. However, as it happens with many other serious topics and characters, Quevedo also mocks Hermes and the philosophy and arts he represented. I will address this droller side of Quevedo’s depiction of Trimegistus first, since it reveals that, although Quevedo despises the ‘technical’ part of the *Hermetica* that I defined in the introduction (alchemy, astrology, and magic), he took seriously the ‘theoretical’ or philosophical one and the figure of Trimegistus himself, at the same level of other thinkers close to his Neostoic stances.

Although Quevedo could be a stern moralist, as we have just seen, he is mainly known in the Spanish letters for his mockeries and satirical skills. Not even Hermes Trimegistus escaped from Quevedo’s sharpness. Chapter XXX of Quevedo’s *The Hour of Everybody and Fortune with Sense* (*La hora de todos y la fortuna con seso*) is entitled *The Alchemist*. On it appears a swindler alchemist who tries to trick a coal merchant in order to make him invest in his dubious activities of creating gold. The Alchemist uses all kinds of fancy terminology associated with the alchemical art (which reveals Quevedo’s knowledge on the subject), and finally reveals all the authorities who, supposedly, give credibility to his claims.⁷³⁸ Among those authorities, Hermes is cited twice: “¿Is it that I, with the *Ars Magna*, with Arnaldus [de Vilanova], Geber, and Avicenna, with Morienus, Roger, Hermes, Theophrastus, [Philippus] Vistadius, Evonymus, Andreas Libavius, and the *Smaragdine Table* of Hermes, cannot make gold?”⁷³⁹ As we saw in chapter one, the *Smaragdine*

⁷³⁷ In fact, the two titles recall Seneca’s *De providentia* and *De constantia sapientis*. In Stoic doctrine, internals are those things under control of the Stoic sage, such as his character and disposition, which can be perfected by him; the externals, on the other hand, would be the outside circumstances which the wise man cannot control, and thus he must not suffer or have great expectations for them.

⁷³⁸ On Quevedo, alchemy, and astrology see Martiniego (*La astrología en la obra de Quevedo* 13 and ss.). Also in Nider 45.

⁷³⁹ ¿[P]or qué yo con la *Arte magna*, con Arnaldo, Géber y Avicena, Morieno, Roger, Hermes, Theofrasto, Vistadio, Evónimo, Crollio Libavio y la *Tabla smaragdina* de Hermes no he de hacer oro? (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 310).

(or *Emerald*) *Table*, attributed to Hermes, was one of the most important Alchemical treatises in the European Middle Ages. *The Emerald Table* is characterized by its cryptic style, which Quevedo parodies in several occasions.

For instance, Quevedo's satirical miscellany *Book of All Things and Many Others* (*Libro de todas las cosas y otras muchas más*) includes a very brief *Treatise of Divination through Chiromancy, Physiognomy, and Astronomy* (*Tratado de la adivinación por quiromancia, fisonomía y astronomía*) which provides diverse comic aphorisms imitating the style of Hermetic and divinatory Works; among them: "Full moon nothing more fits in, and this is Hermes's aphorism."⁷⁴⁰

In *The dream of Hell*, Quevedo recounts his humorous trip through the diverse sections of Hell and its inhabitants. In one of them, Quevedo finds "a confused people in a very big room, about whom the demons confessed they could neither understand nor find out about them. They were astrologers and alchemists."⁷⁴¹ After describing the laborious (and kind of disgusting) activities of those 'professions' traditionally associated with Hermes Trimegistus' arts, Quevedo specifies that "some of them, with the sign of Hermes, made a start on the *great work*" (in alchemy, the *opus magnum* was the name of the progressive operations to fabricate the Philosopher's Stone, which transformed minerals into gold). Those alchemists in Quevedo's hell supported their works with sayings such as "the proportion of nature, with nature rejoices nature herself, and helps herself with herself, and the rest of her blind oracles (...)."⁷⁴² Quevedo is clearly mocking the paradoxical and contradictory style of Hermetic works such as the *Emerald Table* or the *Pimander*.

Despite these facetious allusions to Hermes and the 'practical' side of his arts, Quevedo also refers seriously to Trimegistus theological and philosophical knowledge of the eternal generation of God and the Holy Trinity in his *Homily to the Holy Trinity* (*Homilía a la Santísima Trinidad*).⁷⁴³ After quoting sentences of Apuleius and Synesius related to those Christian dogmas, Quevedo affirms that "These, and what can be read in Trimegistus, are enigmas in which the curious conjecture finds, or invents, appearances which allude to this mystery."⁷⁴⁴ Despite the

⁷⁴⁰ "Luna llena no cabe nada más, y es aforismo de Hermes" (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 105).

⁷⁴¹ "[E]n una alcoba muy grande una gente desatinada, que los diablos confesaban que ni los entendían ni se podían averiguar con ellos. Eran astrólogos y alquimistas" (Quevedo, *Obras Completas. Prosa* 218).

⁷⁴² "[L]a proporción de naturaleza, con naturaleza se contenta la naturaleza, y con ella misma se ayuda, y los demás oráculos ciegos suyos" (Quevedo, *Obras Completas. Prosa* 218).

⁷⁴³ In Quevedo, *Obras Completas. Prosa* (1045)

⁷⁴⁴ Esto, y lo que se lee en Trimegisto, son enigmas en que la conjetura curiosa o halla o inventa semblantes que aluden a este misterio (Quevedo, *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1044).

astonished suggestion of incredulity which Quevedo insinuates, these testimonies of pagans' knowledge of Christian dogmas engage with both the salvation of the pagans I discussed in the previous chapter and the Neostoic Christianization of pagans I am arguing in this one.

The most relevant reference of Quevedo to Mercurius Trimegistus is in a last short (and also serious) composition, deeply embedded in Neostoic thought. It is a letter which probably Quevedo wrote to the courtly poet and playwright Antonio de Mendoza (1586-1644). Although we ignore the date, exact addressee, and circumstances in which the letter was composed,⁷⁴⁵ it is most probably an "open" letter, intended to be either disseminated or published (as it has been since the 17th century);⁷⁴⁶ for this reason, Sánchez Sánchez classifies this letter with three other ones "of public intent," which were published by Tarsia at the end of his biography of Quevedo, the first one to be published (*Vida de don Francisco de Quevedo* 1663).⁷⁴⁷ Tarsia conceived these letters as the "spiritual legacy" of Quevedo which illustrate the writer's attitude towards death, and so Tarsia added them as an epilogue after narrating Quevedo's death. According to Tarsia, at the end of his life Quevedo shared Seneca's Stoic disillusionment for death, and he expressed this closeness to Seneca and fearlessness for death precisely in the *Letter to Antonio de Mendoza*.⁷⁴⁸

The most recent publisher of the letter, Valentina Nider, prefers to consider the *Letter to don Antonio de Mendoza* as a manifestation of the classical *consolatio* 'contaminated by other genres' which sometimes transgress the norms of the *consolatio* genre as, for instance, when it avoids the arguments that allow the expression of grief and weeping (Nider 17-34). Considering that *consolatio*s were close to Neostoic thought, as Nider acknowledges, I actually think that the idea of restraining manifestations of grief which Quevedo preconizes is precisely one of the clues that characterize the *Letter* as a mainly Neostoic composition with some consolation features, nearer to the other Neostoic writings of Quevedo that I have just mentioned than to the classic *consolatio*. As Brady highlights, although the Christian and Neostoic sage "can understand the necessity of grief," he knows that it is usually a product of attachment "to worldly goods and to the material body (...)" that "can be loosened by spiritual and rational reflection" (Brady 43). As we will see, Quevedo uses a quotation from the *Hermetica* precisely to argue the detachment to

⁷⁴⁵ See Nider (12-13).

⁷⁴⁶ For more details about the letter see Nider's critical edition (*Una «consolatio» de Quevedo: la «Carta a Antonio de Mendoza»* 2013)

⁷⁴⁷ See M. Sánchez Sánchez "Epistolario" in Quevedo's entry of *Diccionario filológico de la Literatura española. Siglo XVII* (2010). Consulted in Nider (12).

⁷⁴⁸ See Nider (12-13).

the material body. Actually, as Nider points out, Quevedo's *Letter to Antonio de Mendoza* is closer to Seneca's *Epistles to Lucilius* (the most cited work in the *Letter*) than to his *Consolationes*.

In addition, the first quotation of the *Letter* is from the Stoic Epictetus. After remembering a recently dead friend, Quevedo justifies his lack of sadness (improper of *consolatio*) by indicating that Epictetus thought that "death is unworthy of tears" ("el parecer de Epicteto hace sea indigna de lágrimas la muerte").⁷⁴⁹ In point of fact, as Brady points out, of all the secular philosophies "Stoicism proved most useful to writers of consolation" and, "like the *ars moriendi*, the consolatory formularies showed the influence of Stoicism's *contemptus mundi* as well as Pauline precepts."⁷⁵⁰ Following these premises, Quevedo supports his advise mixing Epictetus and Paul's thought, for instance, when he develops the baroque topoi of *theatrum mundi*: "even our own life, as Epictetus says, is a comedy; (...) my friend already performed his character, God gave him a small role (...) and thus, saint Paul says,⁷⁵¹ is passing away the present form of this world."⁷⁵²

After Paul's quotation regarding the *topoi* of life as a theater, Quevedo passes to another traditional theme: the body as grave of the soul. Quevedo goes back to the major authority on it, Plato in the *Cratylus*:⁷⁵³ "and to confirm that it is a grave, he himself in *Cratylus* says: 'our body is called *soma* or *sima*, which is grave of the soul.'⁷⁵⁴ As Quevedo knew very well, this quotation has been used many times to prove Plato's affinity with the Christian dogma of bodily resurrection, an idea usually foreign to Greek thought.⁷⁵⁵ Just after Plato's quotation, Quevedo continues with what seems to him and even bigger authority on the 'body as a grave' topoi, and thus on the pagan's knowledge of the resurrection of the body: Hermes Trimegistus.

Mercurius Trimegistus, ancient theologian, says in the *Pimander* that "love for the body is cause of death, and whoever should not abhor the body could not love himself, because the body is garment of ignorance, foundation of evil, bond of corruption, opaque veil, living death, sensitive corpse, portable sepulcher and house thief, who, while he flatters, abhors; and while he abhors, envies." Of such a condition is the house that we bring with ourselves. It (the body) draws us after itself in order for us not to see the modesty of truth; it weakens

⁷⁴⁹ See Quevedo (*Obras Completas. Prosa* 1746)

⁷⁵⁰ See Brady (*English Funerary Elegy* 37)

⁷⁵¹ Quevedo is referring to *1 Corinthians 7:31: praeterit enim figura huius mundi*.

⁷⁵² "(...) hasta la vida propia, como dice Epicteto, es una comedia (...) hizo mi amigo ya su personaje, Dióle Dios el papel corto (...) que así, como dice san Pablo, pasa la figura de este mundo" (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1748).

⁷⁵³ These are Plato's words in Reeve's translation: "Thus some people say that the body (*sōma*) is the tomb (*sēma*) of the soul, on the ground that it is entombed in its present life" (*Cratylus* 400b).

⁷⁵⁴ "(...) y en confirmación de que es sepulcro, él mismo in *Cratilo* dice nuestro cuerpo se llama soma, o sima, que es sepulcro del alma (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1748).

⁷⁵⁵ See Cosby (*Apostle on the edge* 14).

the sight of the exterior senses, and blinds it, and with the heavy matter suffocates them. It makes them drunk with abominable defects, so that we never listen or see those things that must be listened and heard (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1749).⁷⁵⁶

Ciocchini wonders if Quevedo had read either the Latin versions of Ficino or the one by Diacceto, or maybe the vernacular one of Tomasso Benci (Quevedo traveled to Italia several times), I think with Nider that most probably he used Ficino's translation (46). Quevedo's quotation comes from two sentences of treatises I.18 and IV.6, and a longer excerpt from treatise VII.2-3 of the *Hermetica*. The first two sentences used by Quevedo suggest that Quevedo is making (or using) a translation of Ficino's Latin *Pimander* rather than the original Greek;⁷⁵⁷ Ficino translated the following works using this method: *amorem corporis mortis causam esse discite* ("learn that the love of the body is cause of death") and *nisi of filii, tuum corpus oderis, te ipsum amare non poteris* ("unless, oh son, you should hate your body, you would not love yourself"). In Treatise VII, 2-3, the last big quotation of the *Hermetica* used by Quevedo in the *Letter to Antonio de Mendoza*, Hermes advises how to solve our ignorance concerning God; it reads in the following way, close to both Ficino's translation and the Greek original (I include here Copenhaver's translation from the Greek):

[F]irst you must rip off the tunic that you wear, the garment of ignorance, the foundation of vice, the bonds of corruption, the dark cage, the living death, the sentient corpse, the portable tomb, the resident thief, the one who hates through what he loves and envies through what he hates. Such is the odious tunic you have put on. It strangles you and drags you down with it so that you will not hate its viciousness, not look up and see the fair vision of truth and the good that lies within, not understand the plot that it has plotted against you when it made insensible the organs of sense, made them inapparent and unrecognized for what they are, blocked up with a great load of matter and jammed full of loathsome pleasure, so that you do not hear what you must hear nor observe what you must observe (Copenhaver *Hermetica* 24)

⁷⁵⁶ "Dice Mercurio Trimegisto, antiguo teólogo, (en el Pimandro), que «el amor del cuerpo es causa de la muerte, y que quien lo aborreciere el cuerpo no se podrá amar a sí; porque es el cuerpo vestidura de ignorancia, fundamento de maldad, ligadura de corrupción, velo opaco, muerte viva, cadáver sensitivo, sepulcro portátil y ladrón de casa, que, mientras halaga, aborrece; y, mientras aborrece, invidia.» Desta condición es la casa que traemos con nosotros mismos. Él nos lleva tras sí porque no vemos el decoro de la verdad; él embota la vista de los sentidos exteriores, y la ciega, y con la materia pesada los ahoga. Embriágalos con abominables defectos, porque nunca oigamos ni veamos aquellas cosas que se deben oír y mirar." (Quevedo *Obras Completas. Prosa* 1749).

⁷⁵⁷ As Nider points out, we know that Quevedo was a reader of Ficino, because Ficino's *Theologia platonica* is in the list of books seized to Quevedo before his imprisonment, and published by Maldonado ("Algunos datos sobre la composición y dispersion de la biblioteca de Quevedo"). Schwartz has studied Ficino's influence in Quevedo as well ("Ficino en Quevedo: pervivencia del neoplatonismo en la poesía del siglo XVII").

As we saw before, in his own version of these excerpts Quevedo introduces Trimegistus as an “ancient theologian,” not only representative of Quevedo’s most extreme Neostoic beliefs, but also someone whose style—full of metaphors on the existential meaning of life and the relationship soul-body—is really close to the one of Quevedo. However, Quevedo changes some details, as the metaphor of body as a tunic, of both the original Greek and Ficino’s, for the body as a house—in the original Greek we find “such is the odious tunic,” but in Quevedo’s version “of such a condition is the house.” Actually, as Nider points out, this metaphor of body as house had been used before by Quevedo in the *Stoic Sermon of Moral Censorship* (*Sermón estoico de censura moral*).⁷⁵⁸ Quevedo’s insertion proves how he related Hermes’s doctrines with his own Neostoic philosophical constructions.

It is also important to consider, as Nider highlights (47), that Quevedo could not have taken these three quotations from the *Hermetica*, but from an intermediary writer. As a matter of fact, the second and third parts quoted by Quevedo (*Hermetica* IV.6 and VII. 2-3) formed a common association, included in works as *Lectiones Antiquae* (1516) by Ludovicus Caelius Rodiginus, from which they are taken by Fray Luis de Granada in 1574 for his *Additions to the Remembrance of the Christian Life*.⁷⁵⁹ As we saw before, Granada noted Trimegistus’ knowledge of the Trinity and other Cristian dogmas in his most important work,⁷⁶⁰ and this same knowledge was indicated by Quevedo in his *Homily to the Holy Trinity* which I mentioned above. The third quotation of the *Hermetica* had been used by the Portuguese theologian Heitor Pinto in his *Image of the Christian Life* (*Imagem da vida cristã* 1563-1571, translated into Spanish in 1571).⁷⁶¹ Susan Byrne has also related the third quotation (VII.2-3), and his metaphors of the body as veil of prison, with the poetry of Francisco de Aldana, fray Luis de León, and san Juan de la Cruz, all of them influenced by the Hermetic writings.⁷⁶² These metaphors also appear in Juan de Pineda’s *Christian Agriculture*.⁷⁶³ The erudite Pineda is one of Patón’s contemporary sources about Hermes. I think that the most important factor to consider is how Quevedo takes these excerpts and their metaphors,

⁷⁵⁸ See Nider (47).

⁷⁵⁹ Adiciones al Memorial de la vida cristiana (*Obras* BAE 1848, II 433)

⁷⁶⁰ *Introducción al Símbolo de la Fe* IV: 2.

⁷⁶¹ Traducción de la Imagen de la vida cristiana de Fray Héctor Pinto (trad. E. Glaser, Barcelona, Juan Flors, 1967 498). In Nider (48).

⁷⁶² See Byrne (*El Corpus Hermeticum y tres poetas españoles* 57-60, 81-85, and 157-66). Also in Nider (48)

⁷⁶³ *Agricultura Cristiana* (BAE 162 vol. 2 147)

already used by other early modern Christian and devote writers, and reworks them in a Neostoic composition, which articulates pagan wisdom and Christian doctrine in the Lipsian way.

Quevedo also reveals himself as an attentive reader of the entire *Hermetica*,⁷⁶⁴ since he has specifically taken those so defined ‘dualistic’ or ‘pessimist’ portions of it which are more related to his own ideas. As Copenhaver indicates, scholars “have taken pains to analyze and schematize parts of the Corpus as monist or dualist, optimist or pessimist” (*Hermetica* xxxix). Fowden (*The Egyptian Hermes* 99) proposes to consider those variations as sequential; thus, a positive view of the cosmos (and the body) would be presented to the ‘hermetic beginner’ to whom a more realistic approach to the reality of existence would be revealed later. In this sense, topics closer to the culmination of *gnōsis* would entail the liberation of the body (Copenhaver *Hermetica* xxxix). In this sense, the excerpt of Treatise IV of the *Hermetica*, from which Quevedo takes the first sentence of his quotation of Hermes, ends in this way: “Unless you first hate your body, my child, you cannot love yourself, but when you have loved yourself, you will possess mind, and if you have mind, you will also have a share in the way to learn.” (Copenhaver *Hermetica* 16).

As I explained in the Introduction, the theoretical *Hermetica* presents a theory of salvation through knowledge or *gnōsis*. This salvation entailed freeing oneself from the earthly ties of the body. Moreover, the hermetic *Asclepius* also affirms that “Among all living things god recognized mankind by the unique reason and learning through which humans could banish and spurn the vices of bodies, and he made them reach for immortality as their hope and intention (Copenhaver *Hermetica* 80). According to the *Asclepius*, the reason for this is that God made humans “[take] equal portions from the more corrupt part of matter and from the divine; thus it happened that the vices of matter remained coupled with bodies, along with other vices caused by the foods and sustenance that we are obliged to share with all living things” (*Hermetica* 80). As it is confirmed in the *Letter to Antonio de Mendoza*, this kind of salvation clearly resonated with the Neostoic and Christian parameters of Quevedo.

I am going to point to a last strong Neostoic evidence in the complete title of the piece: *Letter which don Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, knight of Santiago’s habit, wrote to don Antonio de Mendoza, knight of the Order of Santiago and valet of King Philip IV, in which he*

⁷⁶⁴ Ciocchini wonders whether Quevedo has consulted the Latin version of the *Hermetica* by Ficino or the vernacular one by Tomasso Benci (*Quevedo y la construcción de imágenes* 403)

*proves that the wise man should not fear the necessity of dying.*⁷⁶⁵ In the title we find a clear reference to the ‘wise man,’ the Neostoic sage to whose training were dedicated most Stoic compositions, from Seneca to Lipsius, as I will expand on in the next section. Quevedo is neither offering his advice to Antonio de Mendoza, nor to whoever would read his composition in the future. Quevedo is actually addressing any ‘wise man’ or apprentice (‘proficiens’) desiring to become wise. This is the actualized Neostoic model of the Senecan ‘sapiens,’ and thinkers such as El Brocense, Quevedo or Jiménez Patón—members of what I have called a ‘Spanish Neostoic Network’— which offered not only plenty of advice to become so wise, but also ancient models to pursue this goal, among those models, Hermes Trimegistus himself.

The Neostoic Sage in Other Contemporary Spanish Golden Age Writers

As we saw in the previous chapter, in the crucial and polemical passage of the *Prologue* of the *Mercurius Trimegistus* where Mercurius’ salvation is defended, and again in the *Answer*, Patón compares Mercurius with Job, as an example of a wise, religious and pious pagan who was saved. In the *Letter to Antonio de Mendoza* that we have just seen, Quevedo also specifically addresses Mercurius Trimegistus along with Stoic philosophers as Seneca and Epictetus, but also mentions Plato, the apostle Paul and of course Job. In this section I am going to show how Jiménez Patón in the *Answer* presents Mercurius Trimegistus as a Neostoic sage, in the same way as both the ‘real’ Stoic philosophers such as Seneca and Epictetus, whom Patón and his Neostoic network admired, and others famous figures as Job or Paul. I argue that we can find a parallel phenomenon observing that, in the same way that ancient philosophers as Trimegistus were Christianized, other famous Biblical and Christian authorities were ‘stoicized.’ This is how the model of the Neostoic sage appeared, by joining the Christian and pagan traditions; therefore, it is not strange that Patón approached Trimegistus to this paradigm of his time.

The Stoic sage is the last important notion which can help us understand the way in which Patón wants to introduce Trimegistus in his *Answer*. As I have argued above, Patón is presenting Mercurius as a model of the Neostoic sage or wise man by applying ideas already present in Lipsius and in several of his Spanish followers (all members of Patón’s network). At that juncture, it was

⁷⁶⁵ *Carta que don Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, caballero del hábito de Santiago, escribió a don Antonio de Mendoza, caballero del hábito de Calatrava y ayuda de cámara del rey don Felipe IV. En que prueba que el hombre sabio no debe temer la necesidad del morir (Quevedo Obras Completas. Prosa 1746).*

not ridiculous at all to consider the pagan Mercurius as both a proto-Stoic and a proto-Christian sage, and I am going to extend that to other important writers contemporary to Patón. I see a clear proof of Hermes's plausibility as a Neostoic sage in the influential Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526-1611). Ribadeneyra was a friend and companion of Ignatius of Loyola, of whom he wrote a popular biography. Ribadeneyra wrote a famous book of hagiographies, the *Flos Sanctorum*, in which he mentions Trimegistus as a wise man several times and affirms that he knew the Trinity (p. 124). Ribadeneyra was also an influential writer of political treatises. As Fernández-Santamaría (vol.2. pp. 45 & ss.) points out, Lipsius and Ribadeneyra influenced each other and both shared anti-Machiavellian ideas. Patón knew and quotes Ribadeneyra's books and he recommends him in the *Mercurius Timegistus* as an example of good writing (f178v.). Ribadeneyra also wrote the *Treatise of Tribulation* (*Tratado de la tribulación*, Madrid, 1589), with an undeniable Stoic and Senecan bias. But I am principally interested in a quotation from the influential political treatise and 'mirror of princes' *Treatise about the religion and virtues which the Christian prince must have*⁷⁶⁶ where Ribadeneyra presents Trimegistus, among other Platonist philosophers (as Iamblichus or Plato himself), in this fashion

Mercurius Trimegistus says that the ornament and measure of men before all things should be religion accompanied by goodness, which should be perfect when, strengthened with virtue, it would despise greed and desire of all things; because everyone shines both with piety, religion, and prudence, and with God's worship and veneration. Whoever is illuminated with the light of truth, together with its knowledge and glimpse, and with the trust of his belief, stands out among men, as the sun among the stars with its clarity (Ribadeneyra, *Treatise about the religion and virtues which the Christian prince must have* 36).⁷⁶⁷

As we can observe, Ribadeneyra presents Trimegistus as an authentic Christian Neostoic philosopher and Sage. Here Mercurius is close to ancient Stoics like Seneca, who inspired his disciples to turn from their *proficiens* (progressor) state, trying their best to move forward in their way of life toward the ideal of becoming a *sapiens*, a Stoic wise man or sage. As we have seen in this excerpt, the *proficiens*—according to the qualities which Ribadeneyra attributes to

⁷⁶⁶ *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe cristiano para gobernar y conservar sus Estados. Contra lo que Nicolás Machiavelo y los políticos de este tiempo enseñan* (Madrid 1595).

⁷⁶⁷ "Mercurio Trimegisto dice que el ornamento y medida del hombre ante todas cosas debe ser la religión acompañada de la bondad, la cual entonces será perfecta cuando esforzada con la virtud despreciare la codicia y deseo de todas las otras cosas; porque cada uno resplandece con la piedad, religión, prudencia y con el culto y veneración de Dios, como quien está alumbrado con la luz de la verdad, y con el conocimiento y vista della, y con la confianza de lo que cree se señala entre los hombres, como el sol entre las estrellas por su claridad (*Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe cristiano* 36)."

Trimegistus—must strengthen his virtue by despising “greed and desire of all things.” It should not surprise us that Ribadeneyra, in a similar way that Lipsius, recommends “piety, religion, and prudence,” because in this treatise Ribadeneyra receives the influence and uses passages of Lipsius’s *Politica*, and actually both books belong to the genre of ‘mirror of princes’ (López Poza 2008 211). Ribadeneyra reinterprets here the Stoic apathy and the Neostoic *Constantia* in a Christian way for Trimegistus, as a renouncement of earthly desires.⁷⁶⁸

Thus, Trimegistus encourages God’s worship and men’s piety and goodness. Trimegistus also invites Christian readers to perfect themselves through the cultivation of virtue. Therefore virtue, according to the Neostoic doctrine that Ribadeneyra attributes to Trimegistus, allows men to “despise greed and desire of all things.” In Lipsius, constancy is a virtue which provides the individual “with the strength to endure any misfortunes as well as the disorder caused by the passions” (Constantinidou 350). If constancy, following Lipsius, was the virtue required in private, “the virtue directing one in public ought to be prudence” (Constantinidou 348). Indeed, that is the main virtue for the politician, the governor, and the prince. Prudence is the virtue “which selects and distinguishes between those things which we ought either to desire or to refuse.” Prudence, derived from ‘use’ (experience) and ‘memory’ (experience and knowledge either read or heard), is necessary “above all in government, where it has the role of a compass, navigating the ship” (Constantinidou 351). With this in mind, we can understand better Trimegistus’ doctrine—according to Ribadeneyra—that everyone “shines with piety, religion, and prudence.” In the *Politica*, Lipsius declares that “Everything yields obedience to prudence, even Fortune itself.”⁷⁶⁹ Ribadeneyra’s Christian interpretation of ‘prudence’ is more comprehensible if we consider the etymology of this word, a contraction of the Latin term *providentia* (foresight). Actually, when Lipsius transformed the Stoic faith into Christian divine providence he made his doctrine flawlessly suitable to Christendom.

Ribadeneyra presents Trimegistus as an ancient sage and authority, just as Lipsius would also present the ancient Egyptian ten years later in his *Manuductio* and the *Physiologia Stoicorum*, his most thoughtful introductions to Stoic doctrines. In these books Lipsius included many ancient authorities and among them, one of the most frequent was Hermes Trimegistus, whose *Asclepius*

⁷⁶⁸ Contancy, according to Lipsius in his book with this title “represents liberation from internal and external evils achieved through detachment from outer expression of motion and tension. Immovable strength, mind, reason and wisdom are all marshalled in opposition to external affairs” (Constantinidou 350)

⁷⁶⁹ *Politica* I.7 in Constantinidou (363)

and *Corpus Hermeticum* he quotes frequently.⁷⁷⁰ In a letter to another Spaniard, Lipsius praised El Brocense, saying that “he was the Mercurius of your Spain” (*Ille Mercurius...est Hispaniae vestra*).⁷⁷¹ Thus, for Lipsius, Mercurius was a synonym of wise man.

But there are more virtues, as defined by Lipsius, which would be applied to Trimegistus. In *De Constantia*, Lipsius depicts himself in dialogue with his friend Langius, “who represented for Lipsius the Stoic sapiens who had achieved mastery over the emotions by Reason” (Papy 53). Lipsius wants to escape from the Netherlands and the turmoil of the war, but Langius counsels him “not to flee from his country but from his emotions,” because wisdom will not mean “withdrawal from public affairs and retreat into private life.” Cosmopolitan Stoic and Christian citizens, to whom “the sky is the true native land, ought to be good citizens in order to be good men” (Papy 55). As I will show later in this chapter, Patón portrays his Mercurius Trimegistus as the best governor from his country, who invented valuable things and wrote books to improve the existence of his Egyptian citizens.

The philosophical reading of Seneca that Lipsius spread all over Europe portrayed the philosopher as an inspirer of *sapientia*: “The stoic wisdom of living by virtue and reason, of living according to nature” (Papy 62). According to Lipsius, who is quoting Seneca’s *De vita beata*, “to live happily is the same as living according to nature” (Papy 65). As we saw in the previous chapter, Patón insisted many times that Trimegistus lived according to the precepts of the *natural law* and *natural reason*; for instance, when talking about the law of nature he affirms that “in this law lived our Trimegistus in the righteousness that we have proved with so important and true authorities” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).⁷⁷² Natural law and natural reason were Christian concepts which, in fact, had been inspired by Stoic doctrines in Late Antiquity. Although some ancient stoics separated the natural from the divine, Lipsius had abundant testimonies which connected nature with God.⁷⁷³ This interpretation finally prevailed in the late medieval concept of natural law developed by authors such as Gratian (12th century) and Aquinas, who reached Patón

⁷⁷⁰ As Papy (69) points out, in the *Physiologia Stoicorum*, “Lipsius also seems to be much indebted to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, as he quotes frequently from these writings when dealing with the notion of Platonic ideas and its relation to that of God. When arguing that God is not only the divine Fire of the Stoics, but also the *Spiritus igneus*, the fiery Breath, Lipsius quotes Posidonius and Trismegistus to demonstrate that Christianity has a similar view: no one sees God and yet everyone sees God appearing daily in all things.”

⁷⁷¹ In *Letter from Lipsius to Manuel Sarmiento de Mendoza* (Ramírez 295). We can remember from second chapter that Lope de Vega also called El Brocense “Mercurius.”

⁷⁷² “[L]a ley de naturaleza. En cuya ley vivió nuestro Trimegisto en la rectitud que habemos probado con tan graves y ciertas autoridades” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).

⁷⁷³ The testimonies collected by Lipsius are recounted by Papy (65-66).

through the theologians from the Salamanca School. Therefore, living according to nature, as Patón insisted Hermes did, was the first step to consider him a Stoic sage.

This model of Stoic wise men is decisive in other important Spanish works of that time, like *El Criticón* by Baltasar Gracián (1601-1658), as López Poza has studied. In this prominent novel, second in importance to *The Quixote* in seventeenth century Spain, Critilo is presented as the model Stoic Sage, who will guide the savage Andrenio in the path of wisdom (López Poza 2013 160). This influence is also evident in the *Empresas políticas*, by Saavedra Fajardo (1584-1648), where López Poza also finds the characteristics of the Stoic sage. This specialist sums up the features of the Stoic sage in Saavedra Fajardo in the following way

The wise man, the *sapiens*, lives according to the dictates of virtue and reason, in harmony with nature, free of emotions such as wrath, fear or hope. He is able to differentiate correctly between important things and those which are unimportant (wealth, health, success, etc.); he knows how to distinguish between those things that are truly worthwhile (*proegmena*) and those which ought to be rejected. The Stoic wise man accepts the will of God, he confronts adversity with constancy and he is willing to accept public responsibilities because he is concerned about human beings whose sufferings he views with objectivity and mercy. And, finally, the *sapiens* must make good use of his *otium* in order to attain *negotium animi* and make progress in philosophy (López Poza 2002 692).

Thus, *Empresas Políticas* reveals Lipsius's influence as well, and modifies the ancient model of *mirror of princes* (also used by Rivadeneyra) to definitely convert the ideal prince into a Neostoic Sage. One of the most important Neostoic goals "was to serve mankind" (López Poza 2003 695), and thus the example and advices of Lipsius motivated many Spanish writers and thinkers like Quevedo or Saavedra Fajardo himself to intervene in politics (López Poza 2003 701). As López Poza explains, Lipsius demanded a balance between reflection (*meditation*) and action (*exercitatio*), between *otium* and *negotium*. As I will show later, Patón emphasizes Trimegistus' dimension of governor and ruler, because, as López Poza underlines, the stoic wise man "is willing to accept public responsibilities because he is concerned about human beings whose sufferings he views with objectivity and mercy." Probably, Patón saw his public responsibilities as secretary and employee of the Inquisition as part of his own duties of wise man consecrated to both God and his Spanish fellows, although now we value them in a very different way.

Included in this same current of thought, Juan de Vera y Figueroa (1583-1658), a trusted diplomat, published his *Ambassador (Embajador)* in 1620, only a year before Patón's *Mercurius Trimegistus*. The *Ambassador* offers a study of the art of diplomacy which would be successfully

translated into French and Italian. As Davies (161) pointed out, this work shows a direct influence from the Spanish translation of *De constantia*, published in Seville in 1616. As we saw before, the translator was Tomás Tamayo de Vargas, Quevedo's friend, who used an original expurgated by the Church (Bluher 402).⁷⁷⁴ In the *Ambassador*, Juan de Vera inserted (now we would say plagiarized) long sections of the Spanish *Libro de la Constancia de Justo Lipsio*. In addition to his professional expertise, the moral qualities defended by Lipsius are of course the same of Vera's *Ambassador* (Davies 170).

Consequently, Patón wrote his *Mercurius Trimegistus* at the highest point in the Spanish reception of Lipsius's Neostoic doctrines. Thus, it is not strange, as I am claiming, that his virtue and knowledge were perfectly compatible with the most prominent model of the wise man in his time: the Stoic sage. As with all the other pagan authorities, Mercurius had to be Christianized in order for erudite men to take advantage of his teachings, something that Patón defended through his entire career. This Christianization went one step beyond the conciliation and harmonization of paganism with Christianity which had been attempted in previous centuries. As Lipsius and his followers had done before, Patón used his philological and literary erudition to take all the testimonies that he could gather to offer his Christian interpretation of an ancient philosopher. What Patón found not only depicted Trimegistus as a Christianized Neostoic sage, but also solved the *problem of paganism* for him, and opened the doors of heaven. Nobody would doubt Hermes's virtues, interpreted under a Neostoic light, because those were decidedly the virtues of a Christian. In this way, Augustine's denial of true pagan virtues could be solved for those who actually had been followers of Jesus. Similarly, nobody would refute a virtuous Christian like Hermes the knowledge of Christ. Therefore, the gate to salvation was open, and the problem of paganism (defined by virtue, knowledge of Christ and salvation), solved.

In the context of Lipsius's popularity in Spain, Mercurius' salvation could be defended with more conviction than ever before, but only once he was successfully Christianized. In the last pages, I will examine the sources Patón is using, how he extracts from them the virtues and knowledge of Trimegistus necessary for his salvation, and his portrait as a Christianized Neostoic Sage. Thus, this will help us understand what those sources applied to Mercurius can tell us about

⁷⁷⁴ A previous translation of Lipsius's *Politica* had appeared in 1604 by Bernardo de Mendoza (*Los seis libros de las politicas o doctrina Civil de Justo Lipsio*, Madrid 1604).

late Humanism intellectual history and cultural coordinates, specifically in the middle of the Spanish Counter-Reformation period.

Hermes as a Neostoic Sage in Patón's Sources in the *Answer*

I have talked before about eclecticism as one of the main features of Neostoic scholarship from Lipsius, who influenced all his followers and admirers. This is, nonetheless, a general characteristic of the entire period, also reflected by Patón in his *Answer* through the variety of sources (ancient, medieval, and contemporary; pagan and Christian) that he used. Despite the diversity of sources, however, there is clearly a ranking and priority on them, palpable when Patón is trying to depict Trimegistus as a Neostoic sage. In this ranking, the Bible and the religious sources have the primacy.

The first Biblical quotation that Patón uses is from *Romans 2:14*, a passage from which posterior Christian authors derived the doctrine of natural law, to which Mercurius would have been submitted, as we have seen. This is a verse much used to defend the Stoic influence in the Bible. Paul wrote: *when gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law*. Of course, Patón is using the Latin vulgate.⁷⁷⁵ As Kries (107) points out, Catholics interpreters especially have seen in this verse a Stoic influence.⁷⁷⁶ In the commentary which Aquinas dedicated to this letter (*Super epistolam ad romanos lectura*), he referred to the natural law doctrine present on it too. Patón is using this verse to confer biblical authority to the doctrine of natural law, which has a Stoic origin.

Therefore, Patón was very thorough in his Christianization process of Mercurius, and once his knowledge of Christ and Christian dogmas became plausible, Patón can insist on his flawless morals and virtues not only as an individual, but also as a wise man and governor: someone who could be acknowledged by any seventeenth century learned men as an authentic Neostoic sage.

Because about his life, no one writes that there was vice, he did not commit neither serious felonies, nor small ones: neither adulteries, nor thefts are written about him, but laws that he established against these felonies and other ones, and he taught many virtues by word with examples by deeds; and because of that they gave him this name of Trimegistus (according to most men), which means three times great (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ Patón only wrote the first part of the well-known verse: *Gentes que legem non habent, naturaliter, quae legis sunt faciunt* (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 518)

⁷⁷⁶ Martens has thoroughly defended this posture this posture (199).

⁷⁷⁷ “Porque de su vida no hay quien escriba fue vicio, no cometió delitos graves, ni pequeños: no se escriben del adulterios, ni hurtos, sino leyes que estableció contra estos delitos, y otros, y enseñó mucha virtud de palabra con

In a Neostoic way, Patón is not only interested in emphasizing Trimegistus' individual virtues, but also his qualities as an exemplar teacher, lawyer, and governor. Rey (*The Last Days of Humanism* 91) remembers that Lipsius's ideas about "the ideal citizen (a man that acts according to reason) would have been at the basis of rationalization of the state and its apparatus of government, autocratic rule by the prince, and military defense." Lipsius had stated in "The letter to the reader" of his *Politica* that in the same way that the citizen had to follow reason (*ratio*), the ruler had to apply reason and political virtue to government, but first of all to his own life, since "if he desires to subject all things to himself, he should subject himself to reason first."⁷⁷⁸ According to Patón, Mercurius can be used as one exemplar historical figure, such as those whom Lipsius uses in his treatises (in fact, Lipsius uses Trimegistus as an ancient authority many times). One of the most prominent features of Lipsius style is his use of ancient historians as evidence of his doctrines. None of the 'official' Roman historians quoted by Lipsius, namely Tacitus, expanded on Trimegistus. Fortunately, Patón could turn to other sources for historical data about Trimegistus, among them, the humanist chronologists—whose importance I explained in the previous chapter. Patón first brings up Nauclerus,⁷⁷⁹ who helps fulfill his need of historical information about Mercurius as a wise (and proto-Christian) ruler

Nauclerus satisfies us with this very well in his *Chronology* by saying: *Mercurius Trimegistus was the first discoverer of the stars among the Egyptians. It is said that when he went out of Egypt he founded one hundred cities, also that he taught men to worship the true god.*⁷⁸⁰ Not only does he say that he worshipped the true God but that he taught the men who inhabited those cities to worship the true God, a trinity in persons and one in essence (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).⁷⁸¹

As Patón emphasizes, Mercurius in Nauclerus' book is presented as the discoverer (in Latin *inventor*) of astrology among the Egyptians (thus, a diligent observer of nature), and as a civic

ejemplos de obra, porque le dieron este nombre de Trimegisto (según los más) que quiere decir *Termaximus*" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).

⁷⁷⁸ <https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/win2009/entries/justus-lipsius/#3>

⁷⁷⁹ The Swabian humanist Giovanni Nauclerus (1425-1510) under the suggestion of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, grandfather of Charles I, wrote his *World Chronicle* (*Memorabilium omnis aetatis et omnium gentium chronici commentarii*, 1516), printed posthumously, with its foreword written by Johann Reuchlin (a famous French expert in Hermes Trimegistus). He followed the later polemical historiographical method of Viterbus and narrates facts from the creation to the year 1500, using Biblical, Greco-Roman and contemporary sources.

⁷⁸⁰ I have translated and contrasted this quotation in Latin from a 1564 edition of Nauclerus book.

⁷⁸¹ "A esto nos satisface y muy bien en su *Cronología* Nauclero, diciendo: *Mercurius Trimegistus primus stellarum apud Aegyptios inventor. Qui ex Aegypto digressus centum civitates condidisse fertur, ibidem verum deum colere homines docuisse*. No solo dice que adoró al verdadero Dios, más que enseñó a los hombres que poblaron aquellas ciudades lo adorasen al verdadero Dios trino en personas y uno en esencia" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 594).

founder and governor of cities too. Both aspects, observation of nature and physical phenomena and his capacity as ruler, were essential for Lipsius's Neostoic sage. Mercurius as a *sapiens* was also a teacher, who taught the citizens to worship God and the Trinity that he knew. Indeed, this connection between knowledge of nature and God is fundamental to Lipsius's insight into Stoic philosophy. The Flemish had the perception that Stoics' ethics and physics were inseparable: "it was not possible to live one's life in accordance with nature, as Stoic ethics demanded, without a full knowledge of the physical workings of nature."⁷⁸² Since the world was the principal creation of God, in Lipsius the natural philosophy of the Stoics is closely related to ethics and theology. Patón provides another author of chronologies to corroborate these dimensions of Mercurius

Raphael Volaterranus⁷⁸³ in his *Anthropology*, after having talked about his virtue and science, and that he prospered after Moses' times, and that in his time that gypsy⁷⁸⁴ province (because it had such a good master) started to flourish in the good arts, disciplines and sciences, regarding this, says: *Hermes Trimegistus completely believed in one only God, creator of everything, he acknowledged the mistake of his forefathers, who invented the superstitions of idols.* And saint Augustine agrees with that in his books of *The City of God (Mercurius Trimegistus 594)*.⁷⁸⁵

As Grafton (1975 159) points out, Nauclerus had a real interest in Near Eastern studies; so, it is not surprising that he tried to contextualize Hermes in the classical sources about Egypt. Opportunely for Patón's depiction of Mercurius as a Stoic sage, Volaterranus first attributes virtue and piety to the Egyptian, and then he emphasizes his good arts, disciplines and sciences. Finally, Volaterranus, specifies Hermes's monotheism and fight against idolatry (which seems a consequence of Mercurius' knowledge of nature), and adduces the authority of Augustine to corroborate it. Thus, in both Nauclerus and Volaterranus—used by Patón in the same way as

⁷⁸² <https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/win2009/entries/justus-lipsius/#3>

⁷⁸³ Raffaello Maffei (1451-1522), called Volaterranus because he was from Volterra, Italy, was a famous humanist historian, theologian and chronologist, his most famous work was the *Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII* (Rome 1506). The first part of this work is called *Geography*, and the second *Anthropology*, from which Patón takes the title he is using here. I am translating and contrasting Patón's quote from a 1526 edition (f.clix. r.) <https://books.google.com/books?id=EcdjAAAACAAJ&dq=Suidas+vero+dicit+vocatam+trimegistum&q=mercurius#v=snippet&q=hermes&f=false>.

⁷⁸⁴ Patón is calling the Egypt "provincia gitana" following a common assumption developed in the early modern period. In fact, both the English gypsy and the Spanish 'gitano,' come from the Egyptian country, because gypsies were supposed to come from Egypt.

⁷⁸⁵ "Rafaele Volaterraneo en su *Antropologia* después de haber dicho de su virtud y ciencia, y que floreció después de los tiempos de Moises, y que en su tiempo comenzó aquella provincia gitana (por tener el tan gran maestro) a florecer en las buenas artes, disciplinas y ciencias a este propósito dice: *Hermes Trimegistus Deum omnino unum opinatur omnium conditorem, erroremque fatetur parentum suorum, qui superstitiones idolorum invenerint.* Y conforma con esto san Agustín en sus libros de *La ciudad de Dios*" (*Mercurius Trimegistus 594*).

Lipsius uses Tacitus and other ancient historians—Mercurius seemed to be devoted to serve mankind, as a Neostoic sage, who led his people to God.

Furthermore, for an academic with strong religious faith and Neostoic influences like Patón, Trimegistus was not only a sage and a ruler, but also a priest and even a university professor (like Lipsius had been in Jena, Leiden and Leuven): “Because due to his virtue, letters and good government they ordered him priest, and voted for him as professor and regent of their University and colleges, as it is certain from all those who write about him (*Mercurius* 596).⁷⁸⁶ As we can appreciate, the academic organization of pre-Mosaic Egypt, in Universities and colleges, turned out to be, according to Patón, suspiciously similar to that of seventeenth century Spain in which Patón and Fray Esteban were immersed.

To extol even more the extraordinary academic achievements of Trimegistus, and to corroborate his humanistic sources, Patón can bring up the testimony of a Lactantius (c.250–c. 325) who, as we saw before, was the most fervent defendant of Trimegistus among the Church Fathers.⁷⁸⁷ The doctor of the Church not only included Mercurius among the divine pagans along with the Sibyls (in *Divine Institutions* II, 6), as we saw before, but also, as Patón recounts:

repeating a lot about his doctrine (Lactantius) says about him: *notwithstanding that he was only a man, he was very ancient and very learned in all kinds of disciplines. So much that because of his science in many things and arts they gave him the surname of Trimegistus. He wrote books and indeed many of them about divine things, in which he established the omnipotence of the only God. And he calls him, as we do, with the names of God and Father. And below talking about his doctrine and authority (Lactantius) says that (Trimegistus) said: God, on the contrary, because he always was one, has the proper name of God (Mercurius Trimegistus 596-597).*⁷⁸⁸

As it happened with the Neostoic wise men, knowledge of the physical sciences of nature were for Trimegistus the path to virtue. Again, we can corroborate that Trimegistus *was very ancient and very learned in all kinds of disciplines* and even takes his name *because of his science in many*

⁷⁸⁶ “Porque por su virtud, letras y buen gobierno le eligieron rey, le ordenaron sacerdote, y votaron por catedrático y regente de su universidad, y escuelas, como de todos los que escriben consta” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596).

⁷⁸⁷ Moreschini affirms that Lactantius “marks a moment of capital importance in the history of Christian Hermetism. He was more convinced than anyone of the affinity between Hermetic doctrines (which he systematically sought out) and Christian ones, and his interpretation enjoyed wide diffusion in the Middle Ages” (2011, 33).

⁷⁸⁸ “y repitiendo mucho de su doctrina, dice así del. *Qui tametsi homo fuerit antiquissimus, tamen et instructissimus omni genere doctrinae, adeo ut ei multarum rerum et artium scientia Trimegisto cognomen imponerit. Hic scripsit libros, et quidem multos ad cognitionem divinarum rerum pertinentes, in quibus maiestatem singularis Dei asserit, iisdemque nominibus appellat, quibus nos, Deum et patrem. Ac ne quis nomen eius requireret, sine nomine esse dixit. Y más abajo hablando de su doctrina y autoridad, dice que dijo Deo autem quia Semper unus est proprium nomen est Deus*” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 596-597)

things and arts, including the divine ones (which included Christian dogmas). In the same way, Lipsius required the sage to study the physical phenomena and their causes, he should learn the laws of nature and their relationship to the rules of conduct with the aim of discovering the nature of good and evil. The perfect Neostoic ruler, as Lipsius set out to describe in his *Politica* (Book IV), enjoyed the two types of civil prudence, the first concerned with divine matters, and the second with human affairs. Thus, according to Patón's quote from Lactantius, Trimegistus, who was king, philosopher, teacher, prophet and theologian, wrote books both about all kinds of human sciences and about divine matters as well. Lipsius, who includes Trimegistus among his authorities in most of his books,⁷⁸⁹ also relates Lactantius' doctrine with Hermes about the *imitatio Christi* in the annotations to chapter III of the *Politica*.⁷⁹⁰

To praise Mercurius' magisterium, and to cast away from him the shadows of idolatry and polytheism, Patón also has testimonies about Trimegistus from another book by Lactantius: *De Ira Dei* (About the Anger of God)⁷⁹¹. Paradoxically, Lactantius wrote that book against the doctrines of the Stoics and the Epicureans, but in the seventeenth century it is used to prove that Mercurius was closest to a Stoic sage:

But Lactantius himself in the book *About the Anger of God*, teaching how he (God) is one, repeats again the authorities of Trimegistus and his praises, saying that he was more ancient than Plato and other sages and that he was master of all of them: some listened to him in his own voice, and others studied what they got to know from his writings, which were many (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597).⁷⁹²

Another 'weighty' authority which Patón used in this part to talk about Mercurius' virtues and achievements was one of the most important counter-reformation theologians and Biblical experts,

⁷⁸⁹ For instance, Trimegistus appears among the list of Greek authorities that Lipsius used in the *Politica*. Like it happens the quotation I included, Lipsius quotes the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* and then translates it into Latin (*Politica* 727).

⁷⁹⁰ *Breviter hoc ipsum et acute Lactantius: religiosissimus est cultus imitari. Etiam Hermes Aegyptius (...): Unicus (certe praecipuus) dei cultus est non esse malum (Politica 727)*. My translation: "Lactantius also said briefly and accurately this: it is a very religious thing of the (divine) worship, to imitate. Also Hermes the Egyptian: it is unique (certainly special) of the worship of God not to be bad."

⁷⁹¹ I still have to find that exact part in Lactantius' book Lipsius is quoting (Mercurius appears several times)

⁷⁹² "Mas el mismo Latancio en el libro *De la Ira de Dios*, enseñando como es uno, vuelve a repetir las autoridades de Trimegisto, y sus alabanzas, diciendo que fue más antiguo que Platón y otros sabios, y que fue maestro de todos, parte, que le oyeron en voz viva, parte, que estudiaron lo que supieron por sus escritos, que fueron muchos" (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 597).

the Dominican Sixtus Senensis, or Sixtus of Siena (1520–1569).⁷⁹³ As Patón underlines, he seemed to resume everything Patón has attested before from other authorities about Mercurius:

Sixtus Senensis, very learned man from the religion of the preachers in his *Bibliotheca Sancta* tells about this philosopher very great things which encompass and include the proof of our attempt with these words: *Fourth or last part examines the part of Egyptian Wisdom about death, and of living according to political reason, about which laws and institutions Laertius refers to Mercurius, whom the Greeks called Trimegistus, that is, three times great, because he was supreme philosopher, supreme priest and supreme king; under his name remain two dialogues: Pimander and Asclepius, in which he brought forth, with worthy admiration, so many prophecies about God, about the Trinity, about the coming of Christ, and about the Last Judgement; so that he seems not only philosopher, but foreknowing prophet of the future things.*⁷⁹⁴ And he (Sixtus) goes forth telling other praises from the ancient Iamblichus, Seleucus, Manetho, and other ancient authors (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).⁷⁹⁵

Therefore, one of the greatest authorities in Biblical studies not only in the baroque, but in the history of Catholicism, corroborates that Trimegistus could be suitably Christianized, because he had all the knowledge about Christian dogma necessary for that, and that he held all the skills and qualities that a model wise man for the seventeenth century needed (represented in Spain and Catholic Europe by the Neostoic sage). As we can observe in Sixtus Senensis, Mercurius lived according to nature, overcame with constancy difficulties, as the pertinacious idolatry of his citizens, and taught them all kinds of disciplines and arts in books that have been in part preserved (in the *Pimander*, the *Asclepius*, and fragments from other authors' testimonies). According to Sixtus Senensis, Trimegistus created laws and institutions which favored *living according to political reason*. This allusion perfectly matches with the Neostoic requirement for governors of reason (*ratio*), as opposed to false opinions (like idolatry here). For Neostoic philosophers, reason, including political reason, is the true judgment concerning things both human and divine. Living

⁷⁹³ Sixtus Senensis was a converted Jew who became a significant specialist in the *Bible*. He coined such important terms in the history of Biblical studies as deuterocanonical, protocanonical, and apocryphal.

⁷⁹⁴ We can find Patón's quotation in *Bibliotheca Sancta*, 1993, 40

⁷⁹⁵ "Sisto Senense varón doctísimo de la Religión de los predicadores en su Biblioteca dice desde Filosofo muy grandes cosas, que comprehenden, y abarcan la prueba de nuestro intento por estas palabras. *Quarta, ac postrema Aegyptiacae sapientiae pars spectat ad mortes, ac politicam vivendi rationem, cuius leges et instituta Loercius* (Laertius in Sixtus) in Mercurium refert, quem Graeci Trismegiston, hoc est ter maximum apellarunt, quoniam et philosophus maximus et sacerdos maximus et rex maximus fuerit, sub cuius nomine nunc extant dialigi (dialogi in Sisto) duo Pimander et Asclepius: in quibus tot admiratione digna de Deo et (*de in Sixtus) Trinitate, de Adventu Christi de ultimo iudicio oracula protulit, ut non philosophus tantum, sed propheta futurorum praescius videatur:* y pasa adelante diciendo del otras alabanzas de autoridad de los antiguos Iamblico, Seleuco, Meneto, y otros autores muy antiguos (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).

according to nature (a knowledge reserved for students of physical matters as Mercurius) is for the Neostoics living according to reason, since they equated reason (or *logos*) with God.

In this preference of sources which I explained before, Patón finally brings the authority of his contemporary the Jesuit Juan de Pineda (1513-1593), who was considered to be the most erudite men in early modern Spain (and maybe in Europe too). He wrote the famous *Ecclesiastic Monarchy or Universal History of the World* (*Monarquía eclesiástica o Historia universal del mundo*, Zaragoza 1576 and Salamanca 1588), in which he was acclaimed to have used every single one of the sources available in his time. In his books, he made many references to Mercurius Trimegistus following the *philosophia perennis* and *prisca theologia* theories. Probably because of his prestige, he is the last author Patón introduced before the conclusion of the first part of his *Answer*: “Fray Ioan de Pineda, a very erudite man, tells about Mercurius Trimegistus that he talked about creation, like Moses, and he praises him very much, and he calls him inventor of letters and sacred ceremonies, and says again many of his praises.” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).⁷⁹⁶ This etiological dimension of Hermes, especially popular due to Plato’s *Phaedrus*, serves Patón here to emphasize Mercurius as benefactor of humanity. Patón then refers to a fragment in Pineda’s *Christian Agriculture* (*Agricultura Christiana*), which shows Mercurius as a moderate and restrained wise man, who completely subdues human desire and excesses

In the *Agriculture* he says to praise number four, calling it familiar to Trimegistus, that in a banquet he introduced four friends, who were Trimegistus himself, Tacius, Asclepius and Ammon, who used to meet in such a way to deal with lofty matters about God and Religion; and after having dealt with these matters he turned to the body aliment to repair the vital substance, and not to get drunk; and in that meal they did not eat meat, but vegetables, and then the banquet was finished by giving thanks to God. In this way, along with many other virtues he had the temperance in drinking and eating, with gratitude to the creator for those things (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 599-600).⁷⁹⁷

All Mercurius’ virtues that Patón showed before are completed with these moderation and temperance in drinking and eating (including vegetarianism!) which really seems close to the ideal

⁷⁹⁶ “Fray Ioan de Pineda varón muy erudito dice del Mercurio Trimegisto habló de la creación como Moisés, y lo alaba mucho, y le llama inventor de letras y ceremonias sagradas, y vuelve a decir muchas de sus alabanzas” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 598).

⁷⁹⁷ “En la *Agricultura* [Pineda] dice en alabanza del número cuatro, llamando su familiar a Trimegisto, que en un combite introdujo cuatro amigos, que es el mismo Trimegisto, Tacio, Asclepio y Amnon, que se juntaban, así para tratar cosas subidas de Dios, y de Religión, y después de haber tratado destas cosas se convertían a tratar del alimento corporal para reparar la sustancia vital, y no para borrachear: Y que en aquel combite no se comía carne, sino legumbres de hortaliza, y luego se acabó el combite haciendo oración de gracias a Dios. De suerte que con otras muchas virtudes tubo la de templanza de comer y beber, y con reconocimiento al criador de aquellas cosas. (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 599-600).

ataraxia of the stoics. Those suppers which Mercurius had with his friends (in fact, the characters that show up in the *Hermetic Writings* and the *Asclepius*), were related to “lofty matters about God and Religion”—which seems to be a clear reference from Pineda to the content of the Hermetic Writings— and included a final thanksgiving to God. I suggest a clear similarity of Trimegistus’ agapes with seem to a Christian mass. From the mass reference, we can even evoke that Last Supper of Christ. This Christian consecration of Trimegistus seems to be the last proof Patón needed in the *Answer*, after proving virtues, knowledge and even a true Christian essence, to solve the problem of paganism applied to Mercurius and his own controversy with Fray Esteban.

Conclusion

As we can appreciate, Patón clearly demonstrates that Mercurius enjoyed essential Neostoic attributes like reason, freedom from the earthly desires, constancy, prudence, and subjection to God’s will. Moreover, Mercurius was not only a sage occupied in his own perfection, but also a ruler extremely concerned with the welfare of his citizens, which led him to fulfil his public duties.

By Christianizing Mercurius in the Neostoic method of his time, Patón is able to reinforce the sources he is using about Mercurius’ knowledge and virtues, and justify in a more indisputable way the affirmations he made in the *Prologue* of the Mercurius Trimegistus. Thus, Patón in the *Answer* affirms that: “These testimonies of such grave authors (and others who do not occur to me now) gave me license to presume, judge and conjecture the salvation of this philosopher who was so wise concerning the matters of our faith. And it seems that this license does not exceed the one that Christian theology gives” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).⁷⁹⁸ Therefore, Patón’s reasoning completely agrees with Theology’s precepts, and he shows himself as the winner of the duel with Fray Esteban, the doctor in Theology, whom he wanted to ruin. But Patón was not only addressing theologians; since he expected his treatise to be read by many more people, the proud erudite and teacher also wanted to appeal to the present and future cultural elites of Spain and Catholic Europe, seduced by Lipsius’s Neostoicism. As we saw in the previous chapter, Patón puts Trimegistus even ahead of the Stoic Seneca, model philosopher for Lipsius and himself. Seneca was the only one

⁷⁹⁸ “Estos testimonios de autores tan graves (y otros, que ahora no se me ocurren) me dieron licencia a presumir, opinar y conjeturar la salvación deste filósofo tan sabio en las cosas de nuestra fe. Y no parece escede esta licencia de la que da la teología cristiana” (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).

who could surpass Mercurius in Christianity, because he allegedly exchanged letters with Paul and maybe was even baptized. But Patón gives preference to Trimegistus' salvation because of his virtues, wisdom, and prophetic knowledge of God. Moreover, Trimegistus can equate Seneca in his own Stoic home because, as Seneca required for his ideal *sapiens*, Mercurius lived completely according to natural law, "in the righteousness that we have proved with such weighty and truthful authorities" (*Mercurius* 600).⁷⁹⁹ Lipsius understood that 'living in accordance with nature' was equivalent to living according to virtue, so that the goal was harmony with nature, with the universal law of the world and with the particular rational nature of man. In his Christianized reading of Stoic ethics, however, Lipsius adopted the more religious phrasing of Seneca and Epictetus, so that "living according to nature or virtue" became "living according to right reason," which the Stoics identified with Zeus or God, "the lord and ruler of everything" (*Manuductio* II.16, referring to Diogenes Laertius VII.88). Consequently, the wise man was the one who obeyed God;⁸⁰⁰ in keeping with Patón' *Answer*, the proved virtues and knowledge of Christ demonstrated that Hermes was subdued to God's designs as any other true Christian in history.

In brief, although Patón never quotes him, it is clear that in his *Answer* Trimegistus is presented as the perfect paradigm of Lipsius's Neostoic sage. The reasons are in Patón's background, since he was in the middle of an important Spanish Neostoic network, and both his master 'El Brocense' and his close friend 'Quevedo' are main representatives of the Spanish reception of Neostoicism, and sustained an intellectual correspondence with Lipsius. Therefore, as we saw in the previous chapter, Patón was able to validate Hermes according to the Spanish Academic Neo-Scholasticism, which had redefined the ancient problem of pagans' salvation and which Patón applied to Hermes. In addition to that, Patón was also demonstrating for all kinds of Spanish writers and intellectuals seduced by the new Neostoic trend that Trimegistus was as valued a philosopher as Seneca had been. By using Neostoic conceptualizations applied to Hermes, Patón was able to talk the Neostoic 'esperanto' of seventeenth century European elites,⁸⁰¹ to which he claimed to pertain. Furthermore, Neostoicism also gave Patón the necessary arguments which allowed him to Christianize Hermes and hence to close the problem of his salvation.

⁷⁹⁹ "[E]n la rectitud que habemos probado con tan graves y ciertas autoridades (*Mercurius Trimegistus* 600).

⁸⁰⁰ <https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/win2009/entries/justus-lipsius/#3>

⁸⁰¹ As Reinhardt (250) calls Neostoicism.

CONCLUSION

From the moment that the figure of Hermes Trimegistus arrived in the Iberian Peninsula at the end of Late Antiquity, the most learned men brought him into focus as a result of the growing interest in the sciences he allegedly developed, the ancient wisdom he promised, and the ideal learned man he personified. For these reasons, I have argued that Hermes was a mirror in which relevant figures of Spanish letters found a reflection of their most ambitious intellectual interests and a model of the sage they wanted to become. In turn, Hermes demonstrated his legendary or “mercurial” virtues of transformation, adapting himself to the new cultural, political, and social circumstances of each period.

To best illustrate these deep changes I have contended that the first traces of Hermetic sciences in the Iberian Peninsula are linked to the most visible heresy of its era: Priscillianism. Also, I have examined the first important mention of Hermes himself by none other than Isidore, who expressed for Hermes the same mixture of fascination and suspicion that would characterize many other thinkers later. Conversely, the last big defender of Hermes I have examined, Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, was a rigorous Catholic, deeply opposed to any heresy or deviation from the dogma. Between one and the other, and as I discussed in detail, Hermes’s doctrines were embraced by Muslims, Jewish, and Christians during the Middle Ages, all of them aware that the reward for Hermes’s wisdom made the effort of collaborating in cultural and interconfessional networks of erudite men worthwhile. For these learned scholars from the three monotheistic religions, Hermes embodied the pagan culture of Greek, Romans and even Eastern civilization that preceded them. As a result, the mere mention of the wise Egyptian in a book prompted them to overcome religious barriers and work together in recovering, translating, and adapting Hermes’s wisdom. As in any other place, the history of Hermes in Spain demonstrates, as Peter Kingsley points out, that the Hermetic tradition is, almost by definition, “a tradition of translation, the hermeneutical tradition par excellence, dedicated to upholding its originator’s name for continually inventing, re-assessing, and re-interpreting” (*Poimandres: The Etymology* 74).

But these cultural endeavors undertaken in the Iberian Peninsula under the auspices of Hermes not only remained there, but also extended their accomplishments to other countries and continents. The geographical and historical circumstances of Spain facilitated the reception of Hellenistic culture in which Hermes was embedded from the centuries-long contacts through the Mediterranean Sea, and later as an “Arabic Hermes” during the Middle Ages. However, once an unparalleled process of translation started in Spanish soil, its fruits soon extended all over Europe, and scholars from many countries turned to Castile and Aragon to participate in it. For this reason, Hermes’s presence in important medieval thinkers such as Abelard or Aquinas can only be explained through their knowledge of works which came from Spain. In addition, Hermetic developments in al-Andalus also extended to Muslim Africa and Asia, where relevant scholars such as Ibn Khaldun acknowledged that books written in al-Andalus such as the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and the *Rutbat al- Ḥakīm* were the most significant ones on magic, alchemy, and Hermetic sciences.

When Spain conquered the New World, conquerors, priests, and scholars not only spread Christianity there, but also the classical culture reinvigorated in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, including its pagan legacy and Hermes himself. Because of this, important figures like the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega or Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz used Hermetic doctrines in their works. In addition, Hermes was bounded to the theoretical and theological debates on the conquering and evangelization of native Americans--among his admirers was Bartolomé de las Casas himself, who exemplified with Hermes the achievements of pagan Antiquity in relation to the “new” pagan civilizations of America.

Therefore, in the medieval and early modern period of Spain, Hermes always found advocates, often in significant figures of each of the three monotheistic religions of the Peninsula (i.e Ibn Ezra, Ṣā’id al-Andalusī, Ibn Sab‘in, or Alfonso X) and many times in relevant representatives of Humanism throughout its different stages: medieval, classical or Italian, and late Humanism. In the medieval Humanism, Hermes represented the Arab ideal of the learned man represented by the *adab*, an educated courtier expert in the *trivium*, the *quadrivium*, and even the “extensions” developed by medieval scholars thanks to Arabic contributions—including physics but also magic and alchemy. I also discussed how Florentine Italian Humanism represented by Marsilio Ficino transmitted a new interest in Hermes through new translations. I have provided evidence that the medieval sources on Hermes were equally or even more important to understand

Hermes in Spain than the renaissance ones. I have examined this medieval presence through a close examination of Jiménez Patón and his *Answer*, the most spirited defense of Hermes we can find in the 17th century from a typical late humanist scholar. Therefore, the comparative study I provided between the medieval Humanism of Alfonso X and the late Humanism of Patón is a suitable tool to verify the changes of both Hermes and Humanism—including such phenomena as the transition from the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* to the *scientia humanitatis*, or from the *adab* courtier to the Neostoic sage.

Although we have seen how Jiménez Patón was related to a vast number of intellectual sources of his time related to Hermes, through the *Answer* we also verified how he carefully avoided the technical side of *Hermetica*, so paramount during the Middle Ages but also in figures like Ficino. I have also found echoes and topics of the *Answer* in the works of Patón's extended network of friends and collaborators, a very different network from the medieval ones I examined in the first chapter. However, both these medieval and early modern networks mirrored themselves in Hermes, tailored him to their own interests, and can be studied through the same evidence—such as paratexts in books.

Patón's *Answer* also demonstrates how Hermes was conflated with the renewal of the three classical schools that influenced the old *Hermetica*, which became the most important currents of thought of the early modern period: Neoplatonism, Neo-Scholasticism, and Neostoicism, and which participated (as an authority) in three important debates and controversies related to those schools: the existence of a *philosophia perennis*, the salvation of the pagans, and the definition of an ideal baroque learned man, related to the Neostoic sage.

In this way, we have seen how Patón defends the Christian salvation of Hermes through Neo-Scholastic philosophy, which was a successful Spanish adaptation of Aristotelian-Scholastic thought in the sixteenth century. Arguments and authorities that Patón used to “save” Hermes Trimegistus are thus closely connected with those used to criticize the forced conversion of the “new” pagans in the New World conquered by the Spanish Empire. Finally, we have also verified how Patón both “Christianizes” Hermes and transforms him into a Stoic sage through Neostoic philosophy. Specifically, I have examined Patón's links with the Neostoic thought of Justus Lipsius, which arrived in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century. My approach highlights the connections of Hermes with Neostoicism, a pervasive influence in prominent Spanish writers and theorists like Quevedo, Gracián, and Saavedra Fajardo. Although I succinctly explained the topic

throughout this work, I postponed for a future stage of my research a thorough analysis of the *philosophia perennis*, Hermes Trimegistus, and the beginning of the scientific revolution in Spain—including recent debates on the existence of such “scientific revolution” and the Spanish role in it, the duration of Hermes’s wisdom among scholars, and the coexistence of old and new knowledge.

In conclusion, I have revealed how pre-humanist and humanist translation movements and networks operated, and, more specifically, by what means several distinctive figures pertaining to those networks defended Hermes Trimegistus as representative of the ancient pagan wisdom that they all wanted to preserve. In this way, I have suggested that Mercurius Trimegistus continued exerting a function of cultural mediator between different religious and cultural traditions beyond the Middle Ages (but now only between the pagan and Christian worlds), thus underscoring the role of non-Christian culture—epitomized by Trimegistus—in the Christian literature and thought of medieval and early modern Spain

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