

“Según es cristiana la gente”: The Quintanar of *Persiles y Sigismunda* and the Archival Record

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Llegaron todos juntos y el primero que habló fue Antonio, a su mismo padre:

—¿Hay, por ventura, señor, en este lugar hospital de peregrinos?

—Según es cristiana la gente que le habita —respondió su padre—, todas las casas dél son hospital de peregrinos; y, cuando otra no hubiera, ésta mía, según su capacidad, sirviera por todas.

Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda, III, 9;
519



Antonio de Villaseñor's return to his home town of Quintanar de la Orden marks a turning point in *Persiles y Sigismunda*. At this moment the Spaniard who has accompanied the protagonists from the beginning, and who thus serves as a stand-in for the reader, reaches the end of his journey. At least since Astrana Marín's biography, scholars have known that Villaseñor was in fact a leading local family of *hidalgos* in Quintanar, and it is taken for granted

that Cervantes knew some people in the town (Astrana 7: 437–40). Yet there has been no attempt to correlate the fictional representation with historical reality, despite the fact that this is one of the few instances in which Cervantes provides specific enough information to make such a comparison possible. Moreover, he chose to locate this pivotal episode of *Persiles y Sigismunda* in the same part of La Mancha as forms the principal setting of *Don Quijote*; Quintanar is only eight kilometers from El Toboso. Why did Cervantes' imagination return obsessively to this increasingly impoverished and depopulated area? In pursuit of an answer, this study first analyzes the fictional Quintanar and the importance of the episode within *Persiles y Sigismunda* as a whole, before going on to use the archival record to explore some of the ways fiction relates to historical reality. This exploration is based on original research in Spanish archives, as well as on the work of two historians who have closely studied Quintanar, Juan Martín de Nicolás Cabo and Charles Amiel.¹

Bringing together a fictional text and a series of historical documents referring to the same time and place poses the problem of the relative status of each type of representation. Despite the almost irresistible temptation to privilege the archival material as referring to "historical reality," one must keep in mind several factors limiting the truth-value of the documentary sources. First, they record the statements of individuals whose complex interests and motivations are difficult to reconstruct with any certainty. In the case of criminal trials and civil suits, these statements almost always include some that are mutually contradictory. Equally important is the selective nature of the information thus preserved; due to their very nature the documents emphasize conflict rather than "normal" social relations. They reflect a

¹ Juan Martín de Nicolás Cabo was from Quintanar, and patiently worked on the local history of his *patria chica* over several decades. I am grateful to Francisco Moreno and the Nicolás Cabo family for allowing me to consult his notes and transcriptions, still housed in his brother's house in Quintanar. Charles Amiel has worked on a very specific, but enormously significant aspect of the history of the town: the persecution of the local *conversos* by the Inquisition, which took place in the 1590s and eventually led to one hundred people, almost all of them from Quintanar, being put on trial for judaizing.

built-in bias; access to writing and to the institutional structures of power was unequal, favoring certain social groups, particularly the *hidalgos*. Further, not all of the documents generated have been preserved; some are in private hands; and the cataloguing of the public archives is extremely uneven. Due to both the distorting nature of its original contents and the incomplete and fragmentary state of the documentary record as it has reached us, the representation of reality it contains cannot be considered historical Truth. Like literary works, the archival documents are texts, themselves in need of interpretation.

At the same time, the comparatively coherent and relatively disinterested perspective of the fictional text gives it a validity of its own. Although it does not purport to be a factual account, *Persiles y Sigismunda* incorporates aspects of the worldview of its author, himself an Early Modern Spaniard with firsthand knowledge of the phenomena described in his book. It is surely the case that Cervantes knew things about Quintanar that we do not know. In some ways, fiction made it easier for him to write what he felt and thought without fear of reprisals. Ultimately it might be best to think of literature and documentary sources in terms of a mutual critique according to which each draws attention to the other's inadequacies. When they are confronted with one another, contingency is restored to the literary discourse while to historical documents is added the imaginary element of the desires, aspirations, and regrets of living subjects. The ground of their coming together is neither literary criticism nor historical inquiry conceived of as separate, positivist disciplines, but an interdisciplinary space of intersection or overlap, the border zone that has kept them, until recently, separate.²

²Of course historical knowledge has always been used to clarify the "context" in which a work was written, and traditional historians have employed literature as a source for illustrations. Nonetheless, New Historicism, to which Veese's anthologies, along with Gallagher and Greenblatt's more recent *Practicing New Historicism*, are still the most useful introductions, marks a turning point in the emergence of a truly interdisciplinary approach. Carroll Johnson's *Cervantes and the Material World* offers a somewhat similar model grounded in Spanish historiography. I have tried to follow his example here, taking the additional step of engaging in archival research of my own.

Antonio de Villaseñor's trajectory within Persiles y Sigismunda.

Nearly four hundred years after Cervantes' death, his posthumous masterpiece, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, a complex, innovative work exploring themes of cultural identity and social organization, is still widely read as a conventional expression of Counter Reformation orthodoxy. Beginning with Diana de Armas Wilson's *Allegories of Love*, however, a number of recent studies have demonstrated that Cervantes' text ironically undercuts such an ideologically closed reading.³ Nonetheless, irony alone does not explain the pervasiveness of religious themes in *Persiles y Sigismunda*, in particular the importance of the pilgrimage motif, one of the main structuring elements of the work's multiple plot lines. Still missing from recent studies is a conceptual framework for connecting the practice of sacred journeys to both its larger anthropological context and its deep roots in medieval Iberian popular culture.

The perspective taken here is that of the history of cultural practices, with Victor Turner's anthropological approach providing a basic theoretical framework. For Turner, pilgrimage is one equivalent in modern societies for the ritual process. Some members of a community, temporarily abandoning their habitual place of residence, also leave behind the structural categories that normally order their lives. This liminal condition opens them to a more immediate experience of solidarity with others, based on the underlying cohesiveness on which the social is built, which Turner termed "communitas." He was convinced that the temporary bracketing of the social structure in the ritual process could make liminality a vehicle for social change. As the liminal phase in a social drama, pilgrimage is a boundary-crossing phenome-

³ Wilson, Williamsen, Nerlich, and Castillo and Spadaccini have all pointed out elements which appear to undermine the thesis of strict orthodoxy, including the playful, ironic tone permeating much of the work, even where spiritual matters are treated; the absence of the clergy and of most orthodox religious practices from the work; the frequency of pre-Tridentine marriage; the use of sacred vows, such as the pilgrimage of the protagonists to Rome, as a mere pretext for secular purposes; and awareness of the pagan roots of popular Christian practices (such as the festival of la Monda de Talavera).

non through which individuals leave their familiar social world behind and participate in another world with the other members of the spontaneously formed pilgrim community. Pilgrimage bridges gaps between rich and poor, male and female, sacred and profane, nature and culture, healthy and sick. It need not replicate, and may even overturn the hierarchies in place in the world left behind, in the name of a higher unity than that represented in the system of social, political, and economic relations between individuals conceived as members of status groups.⁴

To serve as a model for pilgrimage in *Persiles y Sigismunda*, this approach must be contextualized in relation to the tension in Early Modern Spain between popular, localized forms of religious practice and the orthodoxy imposed by the Counter Reformation. Cultural historians such as William A. Christian and Sara T. Nalle have shown that the Counter Reformation threatened the social efficacy of local religion by imposing a theological structure that greatly reduced the potential for *communitas*. Even so, due to its spatiotemporal diffusion, pilgrimage was able to maintain something of its semi-institutional character despite pressures aimed at increasing the doctrinal purity of the individual pilgrim's experience. In my view, Cervantes intuitively grasped the meaning of these changes, and saw in pilgrimage a practice that continued to enjoy a relative autonomy from the forces restricting religious and secular life in the ever-narrower official culture known today as the Baroque. Out away from their parishes, wandering in the countryside, with no habitual routine to dictate their movements, pilgrims are harder to control than the same subjects in their usual environment. Devotional treatises could influence the way the faithful approached their experience, but could not dictate its content. Cervantes gravitated towards this zone that had not come fully under Church control, and he drew it into the realm of the written word, thereby borrowing for his fictional work something of the free-floating quality enjoyed by those who escape their everyday cares and take to the road.

⁴ Turner's general theory of the social efficacy of ritual liminality is presented in *The Ritual Process*. The book he wrote with his wife, Edith Turner, focuses on Christian pilgrimage as a "modern" example of this process.

The trajectory of Antonio de Villaseñor, the *bárbaro español*, displays the full anthropological significance of pilgrimage, even though he does not initially leave home intending to undertake a sacred journey. This sub-plot parallels the main plot of the work from its first episode, the Barbaric Isle, to its last page, which announces the marriages of Antonio's children, Antonio *el mozo* and Constanza, who travel with the protagonists all the way to Rome. The younger generation functions as a sort of placeholder, keeping open the connection to Antonio *el padre*, making it possible to map the entire trajectory of the protagonists from the Northern lands to Rome onto his wanderings (and those of his family). Antonio is the only Spaniard in this work who leaves Spain and later returns. He journeys to the exotic northern lands of mystery, of elevated characters like Persiles and Sigismunda, of extremely stylized realms like the Barbaric Isle, of kings and princesses like Policarpo, Leopoldio, Sinforosa, and Sulpicia: in short, to the land of romance. In many ways he serves as an implicit figuration of the reader within the fiction. Antonio returns from his journey to the world of fantasy enriched and capable of enriching others. Like the original intended reader of *Persiles*, he is a Spaniard who travels to the world of fantasy, accompanies Persiles and Sigismunda on their various adventures, and then goes back to the everyday world from which he set out. The pilgrimage process, with its power to transform both the individual and the society, is here a model of the reading process. The interpretation of his story is indeed of particular weight in understanding the work as a whole.

The people he meets while traveling, with whom he shares the joys and hardships of the journey, offer an alternative to the hierarchical social world Antonio leaves behind. What he learns about the possibilities of disinterested human companionship carries over on his return and has a transforming impact on his home in Castilla la Nueva. The initial impression the reader receives of this home is of a world dominated by social structure, in which human beings are reduced to their rank and status, and no intimacy is possible. The contrast between this and the utopian microcosm of his cave on the Barbaric Isle could not be greater.

Yet when Antonio returns to Quintanar, the representation of the place is markedly different in style, with an emphasis placed on Christian charity and mutual support. In effect, it is not the place he left behind, and this transformation, poetically speaking, is the result of his pilgrimage.

According to his life story as he tells it, he was a young man very strongly committed to upholding the honor due him according to his rank. This is hardly surprising, given the portrait, admittedly brief, that he sketches of life in his hometown. Antonio and his neighbors live in constant awareness of subtle differences in prestige, ready at any moment to draw their swords over some petty *pundonor*. Having dueled with a nobleman more powerful than himself, Antonio is obliged to flee. After a number of other misadventures, including a remarkable “conversion experience” on an island where he is nearly devoured by wolves, he washes ashore on another island, on which he finds a habitable cave. Antonio makes a thorough search for other human beings, but finds only one:

[L]a buena suerte y los piadosos cielos...me depararon una muchacha bárbara de hasta edad de quince años, que por entre las peñas, riscos y escollos de la marina, pintadas conchas y apetitoso marisco andaba buscando.

Pasmose viéndome, pegáronsele los pies en la arena, soltó las cogidas conchuelas, y derramósele el marisco, y cogiéndola entre mis brazos sin decirla palabra, ni ella a mí tampoco, me entré por la cueva adelante, y la traje a este mismo lugar donde agora estamos. Púsela en el suelo, besele las manos, halaguele el rostro con las mías, e hice todas las señales y demostraciones que pude para mostrarme blando y amoroso con ella. Ella, pasado aquel primer espanto, con atentísimos ojos me estuvo mirando, y con las manos me tocaba todo el cuerpo, y de cuando en cuando, ya perdido el miedo, se reía y me abrazaba, y sacando del seno una manera de pan...me lo puso en la boca, y en su lengua me habló, y a lo que después acá

he sabido, en lo que decía me rogaba que comiese. (I, 6; 164–65)

Antonio and Ricla discover one another in a space from which all status relations have been cleared away. Unlike the inhabitants of Antonio's birthplace, unlike the members of any human group during normal social interaction, these two are freed from the necessity to perform, to engage in theatrics, hiding some part of themselves behind a mask while letting some other aspect, some codified role, show itself. The emotions Ricla feels and shows on seeing Antonio are indicative of a radical break with everything previous. Astonishment is followed by curiosity mixed with caution, which gives way to joyful abandon: "de cuando en cuando, ya perdido el miedo, se reía y me abrazaba." Ricla's laughter reflects her giddy sense of freedom. There are no other eyes to judge their behavior, no prior expectations to limit or predetermine what these two human beings should be to one another. Cervantes has taken them as far outside any sociocultural context as he could imagine. In this extreme removal from scripted identities, Antonio and Ricla discover an intimacy and a mutual concern prior to any identification with a class or status group within a hierarchical structure of power. The discovery they make, which inspires Ricla's laughter, is that of the pure alterity of another human being, and of their own capacity to love independently of social obligations. This discovery of human solidarity is also an encounter with the sacred, as it may be celebrated in a natural shrine, without the need for any temple or official priesthood:

Es, pues, el caso—replicó la bárbara—que mis muchas entradas y salidas en este lugar le dieron bastante para que de mí y de mi esposo naciesen esta muchacha y este niño. Llamo esposo a este señor, porque, antes que me conociese del todo, me dio palabra de serlo, al modo que él dice que se usa entre verdaderos cristianos. Hame enseñado su lengua, y yo a él la mía, y en ella ansimismo me enseñó la ley católica cristiana. Diome agua de bautismo en aquel arroyo, aunque no con las ceremonias que él me ha dicho que en su tierra se acostum-

bran. Declarome su fe como él la sabe, la cual yo asenté en mi alma y en mi corazón donde le he dado el crédito que he podido darle. Creo en la Santísima Trinidad, Dios Padre, Dios Hijo, y Dios Espíritu Santo, tres personas distintas, y que todas son un solo Dios... (I, 6; 166–67)

Antonio's cave thus becomes a space for experiencing liminal *communitas*. At the farthest remove from his own community, he finds the opposite of the vertically-structured relations, generated and sustained by publicly-enacted rivalry, which prevailed in his birthplace. He learns Ricla's language and she learns his. He converts her to Christianity (though before his exile he never gave any indication of being the slightest bit devout) and they raise their children in the faith. They never see or meet anyone else on the island (which turns out to be the Barbaric Isle on which Periandro and Auristela are nearly killed) until the night when it is burned. They then escape with the protagonists, with whom they make several more narrow escapes before finally reaching Quintanar. When they arrive, they find Antonio's family has been reconciled with that of the Count, the brother of Antonio's antagonist in the duel. Now the Count is dying due to a confrontation between the townspeople and soldiers quartered there, in which he tried to intervene to make the peace and was shot. Just before he dies, he marries Antonio's daughter Constanza, definitively sealing the reconciliation between the two families. The pilgrimage process has thus opened a space for *communitas* within Quintanar, realigning the internal conflict that precipitated Antonio's flight as a confrontation between the townspeople and a common foe against which they are unified. The militarism Antonio had made the principle of his existence is now perceived as an external power, representing only the absolutist monarchy's oppression of local residents.

Though born in the heart of the leading nation of the Counter Reformation, in order to have a profound religious experience and experience authentic human solidarity, Antonio de Villaseñor has to journey to the distant edge of the North Sea. As Diana de Armas Wilson has shown, the inhabitants of the island, pre-

sumably including Ricla, were modeled by Cervantes on the Amerindians about whom he had read (109–29). The transformation in personal values Antonio has achieved as a result has made him a different man. It is he who has been converted and transformed by Ricla and the experience of helping her raise their child Iren. This new Spanish family, open to receiving cultural influences from other nations, rather than concerned with imposing religious orthodoxy on them, fits into a new, utopian Quintanar de la Orden which has been imagined to go along with it. But neither Antonio's *mestizo* family nor the imagined community into which it is inserted corresponds to the Spain of the first decades of the seventeenth century. Here Cervantes has fused his understanding of the popular practice of pilgrimage with the Erasmian ideals his generation inherited from their humanist teachers, to present a story which could hardly be more critical of the direction Spain had taken, culturally and socially as well as politically. As if in order to inscribe such a notion of resistance into their wandering trajectory, the pilgrims discuss visiting two key places, but decide not to, though in each case they are nearby: Madrid, the political center of Spain; and Toledo, its ecclesiastical center.⁵

Un lugar de la Mancha: Quintanar de la Orden, circa 1590.

The image of the towns of La Mancha that emerges when one begins to research their local history and to read the documents

⁵ This reading owes much to George Mariscal's first article on the subject, "Persiles and the Remaking of Spanish Culture," where he argued that the integration of Antonio's family into Early Modern Spain problematized "the traditional nexus of blood and caste" on which a restrictive sense of Spanish national identity had been based (100–01). Unfortunately, Mariscal later argued, however, in "The Crisis of Hispanism as Apocalyptic Myth," that the conversion of Ricla to Christianity and Antonio's decision to return to Spain with his family constitute their story as a vindication of Counter Reformation orthodoxy. The anthropology of pilgrimage helps to clarify the degree to which both Antonio and eventually the fictional Quintanar are transformed as a result of his meeting with Ricla, and thereby represent a challenge from within to the reactionary ideology dominant in Spain under Felipe II and his son. Mariscal's "conservative" reading also takes no account of the local history of Quintanar, the significance of which for Cervantes' choice of setting I examine below.

preserved in Spanish archives could not be farther from this utopian vision of harmony among different social classes and ethno-religious groups. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Quintanar was a town split by factionalism and class tensions, both between *hidalgos* and *labradores ricos*, and among different families within the local oligarchy. There was also a large *converso* minority living under constant suspicion of judaizing, and a substantial *morisco* minority of refugees from Granada. At the same time, taxation that was increasing at a much faster rate than productivity threatened to plunge the town, like others in the region, into a severe demographic and economic crisis (Nicolás Cabo, “La reconstrucción del Común de la Mancha”). The composite picture that emerges when one studies the available documentation confirms the conflictive nature of the local social order as depicted in Book I, Chapter 6, while contradicting the idealized picture of the Quintanar to which Antonio de Villaseñor returns. In the following pages, specific points from Cervantes’ text anchor a series of forays into the archives, in which these contradictions are explored.⁶

⁶ The principal archival sources for Quintanar in this period are: 1) the parish archive (baptisms, marriages, and deaths); 2) Inquisition documents housed in the Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca (=ADC) (as part of the Priorato de Uclés, Quintanar came under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal de Cuenca); 3) partial records of the meetings of the town council, housed today in the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Toledo (=AHTP) (Quintanar is in the modern province of Toledo); 4) a variety of administrative documents in the Órdenes Militares section (=OO.MM.) of the Archivo Histórico Nacional (=AHN), including the records of inspection visits, as well as civil and criminal suits appealed to the Consejo de Órdenes; and 5) the Real Chancillería de Granada, for both civil and criminal suits as well. (There is considerable jurisdictional overlap between the Consejo de Órdenes and the Chancillería de Granada. According to a personal communication from the historian Francisco Fernández Izquierdo, the problem posed by this overlap “está sin estudiar.”) In the sixteenth century the Ayuntamiento had an archive, but all the early modern documentation it held has been “lost.” Some documents from the period are in private hands, however. Nicolás Cabo based his *Quintanar de la Orden (1658–1663)* on a certain “Libro de acuerdos de la Villa del Quintanar” loaned to him anonymously by a private individual.

"Bravo estáis, señor Antonio."

Antonio de Villaseñor is forced into exile by a confrontation in the street with the second son of a local noble family. Antonio slashes his antagonist in the face and then stands before him with his sword drawn, in a dramatic scene in which, from Antonio's point of view, his status in his community is challenged and he defends it. His "enemy," who is never named, treats him too familiarly in public after his return from fighting in "la guerra que entonces la majestad del César Carlos Quinto hacía en Alemania contra algunos potentados de ella" (I, 6; 152–53).⁷ The whole scene takes place during a festival, when the principal *hidalgos* and *caballeros* of the town are gathered in the *plaza*:

[U]n caballero, hijo segundo de un titulado que junto a mi lugar el de su estado tenía...volviéndose a mí, me dijo: "Bravo estáis, señor Antonio; mucho le ha aprovechado la plática de Flandes y de Italia, porque en verdad que está bizarro; y sepa el buen Antonio que yo le quiero mucho" (I, 5, 154).

The patronizing tone, combined with the arrogant use of *vos* ("Bravo estáis") to exaggerate the class difference between the two, is a calculated move from within the *habitus*⁸ of Early Modern Spanish society, designed to put the "upstart" Antonio in his place before he has any chance to make a bid for higher status based on his travels and his experience as a soldier. At the same time, the local noble is clearly baiting Antonio by hinting specifically at the basis of that potential bid for changed status. According to the rules for representing status in this community, the speech is not one Antonio should simply ignore, and he responds

⁷ This war has been identified by Avalor-Arce (72 n. 36) with Mühlberg (1547), and by Romero (153 n. 12) with the repression of the rebellion of the Duke of Clèves (1543).

⁸ *Habitus* is Pierre Bourdieu's term for the native competence of members of a culture, which allows them to improvise responses to new social situations from within established categories. See his discussion of the sense of honor, as well as the chapter on the *habitus* in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (10–16, 72–95).

with an exaggeration of his own, addressing the *caballero* as “vuesa señoría” though he is not entitled to that term of address. When he is asked by one of those present why he does this, his rival offers him a chance to back down, suggesting that perhaps he is using *señoría* in place of *merced*, “in the Italian manner.” At this point a confrontation can no longer be avoided without loss of face:

Bien sé—dije yo—los usos y las ceremonias de cualquiera buena crianza; y el llamar a vuesa señoría no es al modo de Italia, sino porque entiendo que el que me ha de llamar vos ha de ser señoría a modo de España. Y yo por ser hijo de mis obras y de padres hidalgos, merezco el merced de cualquier señoría, y quien otra cosa dijere—y esto echando mano a mi espada—está muy lejos de ser bien criado.

Y diciendo y haciendo, le di dos cuchilladas en la cabeza muy bien dadas, con que le turbé de manera que no supo lo que le había acontecido, ni hizo cosa en su desagravio que fuese de provecho, y yo sustenté la ofensa, estándome quedo con mi espada desnuda en la mano. (I, 5, 155–56)

As Avale-Arce noted (73 n. 36), the specific phrasing of this confrontation derives from a passage in Huarte de San Juan’s *Examen de ingenios*, Chapter 15, where different concepts of nobility are being compared. The closeness of the wording of Cervantes’ text to Huarte’s, especially in the climactic moment, leaves little room for doubt:

A esto respondió el capitán diciendo: no me tenga vuestra señoría por hombre tan necio que no me sabré acomodar al lenguaje de Italia estando en Italia, y al de España estando en España. Pero quien a mí me ha de llamar vos en España, por lo menos ha de ser señoría en España, y se me hará muy de mal. (Huarte de San Juan, 480b)

Yet in Huarte’s version the confrontation ends here; it does not come to blows. In contextualizing the incident as part of a larger

narrative, Cervantes has added the element of street violence. Taking an anecdote originally used to illustrate an abstract theoretical distinction between noble lineage and noble actions, and incorporating it into the vital trajectory of an individual who is a member of a specific community, he raises the issue of the context in which such a confrontation might take place, the social implications it would have, and the possible consequences of such a scene. A philosophical debate about theories of nobility becomes a violent struggle for status within a society based on honor. In order to fully grasp the meaning of this duel, however, we must take a closer look at the nature of street violence in sixteenth-century Castile.

In recent years, research into the *régimen local* has shown the extent to which Spanish towns were the locus of struggles for control of local politics between different factions. Despite the Castilian tradition of dividing power equally between *hidalgos* and *pecheros*, the sixteenth century saw local governments become increasingly dominated by *hidalgos* through the sale of offices by the Crown, especially that of *regidor perpetuo*, which was not open to *pecheros*. In order to consolidate power, local oligarchies used a combination of symbolic public violence and manipulation of the legal system, aimed at discrediting the claim to *hidalgo* status of rival families, primarily through allegations of Jewish ancestry. Bullying, intimidation, and slander were the favorite approach; what decided the balance of power was who could get away with denying the *hidalgo* status of members of the other faction, backing it up with a combination of physical force and unending litigation. From this point of view, the much-discussed issues of honor, *limpieza de sangre*, and female chastity were tools in the struggle for position within local elites.¹³

¹³ This promising development opens up a whole new perspective on sixteenth-century Spain. Worth singling out is Jaime Contreras's pioneering book, *Sotos contra Riquelmes*, which demonstrates how the rival clans of Murcia attempted to turn the Inquisition to their own ends, with disastrous results. José Manuel de Bernardo Ares has made important theoretical contributions, as well as coordinating others' efforts. Also highly suggestive is Fernando Bouza's comment concerning the usefulness of libel cases for reconstructing local rivalries: "Así, gracias

In Quintanar, the Ludeña clan dominated local politics throughout the sixteenth century. Juan Manuel de Ludeña was the patriarch of this family during the middle decades of the century, functioning as the *de facto* chief of what was in effect the local Mafia. Dozens of *pleitos* in the Archivo Histórico Nacional attest to the Ludeñas' ruthless use of public humiliation of their enemies to protect their privileged status. One example that gave rise to an extensive court battle was the beating of Pedro Sánchez in the main square of Quintanar in November of 1567. According to witnesses, Sánchez, himself a *regidor perpetuo*, led a move from within the town council to deny *hidalgo* status to Juan Manuel de Ludeña, *el mozo*, forcing him to pay the *pechero* tax and making him ineligible for the post of *regidor*. Two days later, the youth, mounted on a horse and wearing a long cape to hide the club he was carrying, beat Sánchez severely as he was leaving mass, shouting out "puto villano" for all to hear, then fleeing to the neighboring town of Miguel Esteban with a cousin. When he was arrested he arrogantly proclaimed that he expected to pay a light fine, since he had only beaten a commoner ("con gran lacivia [sic] decía que era un putito villano y que no le podía costar doscientos ducados dar de palos a un villano" AHN, OO.MM. AHT 22.082 fol. 4^r).¹⁴

a las causas por libelos infamatorios, se podría reconstruir una parte de los bandos locales y, en algunos casos, concretas estrategias de la lucha por el poder comunitario" (118–19). Finally, for our purposes here, the articles by Jerónimo López-Salazar Pérez, a specialist in La Mancha, are useful, especially his study of the *régimen local* in towns belonging to the military orders.

¹⁴ Despite his *hidalgo* status, the *juex de comisión* sentenced Juan Manuel de Ludeña to be publicly shamed, and then to ten years as a galley slave (AHN, OO. MM. AJT 49.836). Of course those aspects of the sentence were revoked on appeal, but he still had to pay a fine of fifty thousand *maravedís* and was banished from all territories belonging to the Orden de Santiago (AHN, OO.MM., AJT 14.065). It is interesting to note that part of Juan Manuel de Ludeña's defense was that his opponent had said of him, "muchas y diversas veces sin haber causa ni razón para ello, así en la plaza pública y en las calles y dondequiera que le veía, muchas palabras injuriosas diciendo que era un judío quemado ensanbenitado" (AHN, OO.MM., AJT 14.065). Even so, the Ludeñas' power in Quintanar continued undiminished after this incident. These mutual accusations were part of a jockeying for position within the local oligarchy. They did not necessarily lead to longstanding feuds. A similar case in 1590 involved a public stabbing of a certain

Another conflict pitted a more unified *hidalgo* faction against the *pecheros*. In 1579 the *hidalgos* proposed a certain Dr. Arnao be named town physician, with a salary to be paid by levying a local tax.¹⁵ According to the *síndico* (a kind of public advocate) Antonio Lasso,¹⁶ the *hidalgos'* real motivation was to use public money to support a rival physician, thereby forcing Dr. Pablo de la Mota, evidently well liked among the *pecheros*, to leave the town. For speaking out against this proposal, the *síndico* was shouted down by Juan de Ludeña, who used "palabras de menosprecio...llamándole de vos y diciéndole 'Calla, que vos no habéis de votar y nosotros lo hemos de votar y vos no tenéis voto'" (AHN, OO.MM., AHT 51.409; emphasis added). When Lasso refused to sit down and remain silent, the governor poked him with the *vara de justicia* in the chest. The lack of respect towards him and his office so provoked Antonio Lasso that he went to get his sword, though his lawyer insists he was only putting it on to leave: "no hizo ademán ninguno de querer echar mano a la espada ni hizo otra cosa sino tomarla del rincón donde él y los demás las habían dejado como era costumbre y la tomó en la mano para se la ceñir." He was roughly ejected from the meeting and fined. The technique of provocation clearly resembles that used against Antonio de

Pedro Ortiz by two Ludeña brothers, again on the public square, again accompanied by imputations against his lineage ("habían dicho en presencia de muchas personas que su padre era un confeso ruin judío"). In the meantime, however, it would appear that the Sánchez family has made its peace with the Ludeñas. Ortiz's denunciation to the Chancillería de Granada, over 500 folios long, implicates, among others, Pedro Sánchez, who was serving as *alcalde* at that time, along with several members of the Ludeña family, for doing nothing to punish the perpetrators (ADC, Inq. 766/1315. I have not been able to discover why this document, which was actually produced by the Real Chancillería de Granada, was sent to the Inquisition in Cuenca, where it is now housed.)

¹⁵ The question of doctors' salaries was much debated in sixteenth century. Should they be paid through taxation, voluntary contribution, or through fees charged to individual patients? Numerous documents in the AJT attest to the frequency with which the Consejo de Órdenes was called on to resolve this issue.

¹⁶ The role of the *síndico* in voicing the *pecheros* complaints against abuse of power by *regidores perpetuos* became crucial during this period, due to the gradual oligarchization of the town councils. Ana Guerrero Mayllo has studied the *síndico* in towns of La Mancha, using documents from the AJT.

Villaseñor by his unnamed assailant. The main difference lies in the specificity of the context. In the archives, such scenes always turn out to be part of a larger intrigue, a ploy engaged in by a clan or other social group in a bid to keep or acquire power. They are never just a spontaneous encounter between two individuals.

We find the Ludeñas at the center of all such controversies in Quintanar. They appear to have the most material wealth, at least in the mid-sixteenth century, and definitely the most clout. Nothing happens in Quintanar that does not involve them. Their participation in local affairs gives a general impression of brazen arrogance. They act as if they thought of themselves as above the law, yet whenever it suits their purpose, they use the legal system to punish their opponents. Surely a *quintanareño* reading *Persiles y Sigismunda* would have thought of this family when he read of the confrontation between Antonio and his unnamed rival, whose contempt for those of lower rank was expressed in such a relaxed and self-assured fashion. The Villaseñores themselves, though present in Quintanar from the fifteenth century, kept a somewhat lower profile than the Ludeñas. At least one can say they were not involved in so much litigation. Their lineage was strongest in Miguel Esteban, as the various *pleitos de hidalguía* involving their surname attest.¹⁷ After the 1590s the double sur-

¹⁷ My thanks to Manuel Amores for his help with Villaseñor genealogy. I have thus far found only one Antonio, who does *happen* to be the son of a Diego de Villaseñor. They are mentioned in a *pleito de hidalguía* from the Real Chancillería de Granada dated 1574 (RCG, 301–181–418; I have consulted this document in a partial transcription by Nicolás Cabo). According to the plaintiff in the case, Ginés de Villaseñor, who is from Osuna, his grandfather Diego de Villaseñor was from Miguel Esteban and fought in “las guerras del Reino de Granada.” Diego’s son Antonio went with him to Andalucía, so he must have been born before 1492 (Conquest of Granada). Could this Antonio de Villaseñor be the real-life model for Cervantes’ fictional character? Our Antonio fought in Germany in the 1540s, no earlier than 1543 (see `7 above). It is difficult to imagine the dashing young *galán* of Book One, Chapter 5 as a gentleman in his early fifties and there is no indication that Ginés’ father ever lived in Quintanar. In the absence of more information, I have provisionally concluded that this Antonio de Villaseñor is not the Antonio de Villaseñor Cervantes knew, if in fact he knew anyone by that name. After all, he may have only been referring to the Villaseñor family, not to any individual in particular.

name Ludeña y Villaseñor appears with frequency, evidently the result of a new alliance between these two noble families around that time.¹⁸

Though it is tempting to identify the Ludeña family with that of Antonio's unnamed assailant, and to speculate about hypothetical events that Cervantes might have been fictionalizing, we neither have at this time sufficient evidence of any violent confrontation between Ludeñas and Villaseñores, nor do we know, ultimately, how much or how little Cervantes incorporated into the fiction from real life.¹⁹ Let us focus instead on what we do know. A fictional Antonio de Villaseñor flees his hometown of Quintanar de la Orden after a violent confrontation concerning status with an arrogant noble. Though "scripted," by the *habitus* of the honor code, the duel is not premeditated. When Antonio returns, he finds his family and his rival's have made amends, and are now united by bonds of friendship, mutual protection, and, by the end of the episode, matrimony. Conflict resolution is tied to the profoundly Christian, forgiving nature of both the Count himself and the collective identity of the town, as articulated by Antonio's father. The internal strife that had characterized Quintanar is displaced, and a new boundary is drawn between a cohesive, harmonious community and the interests and authority of the Crown. The real-life Quintanar de la Orden is also a place of frequent public confrontation and violence, through which, as in *Persiles y Sigismunda*, adjustments to individuals' status within the community are dramatized. But in the archival record these encounters take the form of premeditated

¹⁸ There was a marriage between these two families in the fifteenth century (referred to in the genealogy of Juan Manuel de Ludeña, *el viejo* given in the *Relaciones topográficas*, question 41). At least one instance of the later alliance is the marriage of Pedro Villaseñor and Doña Francisca Manuel de Lodeña on May 18, 1597 (APQ, *Matrimonios*, 1597).

¹⁹ The least we can say is that he used real proper names, perhaps only to lend credibility to a made-up story. The exactitude of the references convinces Astrana that the events are real, though slightly modified. Yet he describes those who try to pin down Dulcinea's identity as "esoteristas cervantómanos" (7: 439), not recognizing that his own approach could provoke a similar response. As, I am afraid, could mine.

acts of political maneuvering, through which a local oligarchy terrorizes rival claimants by planning and organizing scenes of violent confrontation and humiliation. Here it is difficult to see how a change of heart by the initial participants could bring about as complete a transformation as we see in Cervantes' text. At most, a reconciliation between the Ludeñas and a former rival family would lead to their teaming up in an alliance still directed against other local *hidalgos*, not to mention the *pecheros* as a class. Once we compare the fictional representation with the archival one, the former takes on the appearance of a utopian fantasy. Did Cervantes realize how much of a discrepancy existed between the image he had constructed of Quintanar and the real place? It would certainly be strange to deny to the author of *Don Quijote* the ability to recognize how an elevated, idealized stylization distorts the reality it represents.

“¿Hay, por ventura, señor, en este lugar hospital de peregrinos?”

Though the pilgrims in *Persiles y Sigismunda* often arrive at nightfall and have to look for lodging, only in Quintanar do they specifically ask if there is any *hospital de peregrinos*. This might be explained in terms of the pilgrimage process analyzed above. Given the lack of a concrete shrine as the goal of Antonio's journey, the question emphasizes pilgrimage as a frame of reference for his homecoming. Nonetheless, the specificity of Antonio's question, combined with his father's evasive answer—he never does say whether or not there is a hospital—leads one to pose the question: was there in fact any *hospital de peregrinos* in Quintanar? Strictly speaking, the answer would be, of course not, since Quintanar is not on any major pilgrimage route. For the question to make any sense, it must be taken to refer to any *hospital* in the usual sense the word had in the sixteenth century, a place where those too poor or too ill to live on their own can reside for an indefinite period of time. In that case, the answer is not only that there were, in fact, three *hospitales* in Quintanar at different times during the sixteenth century, but also that one of them, founded precisely by Dr. Pablo de la Mota, was the center of an on-going local controversy.

The *libros de visitas* for towns belonging to the military orders contain detailed documentation about hospitals. As Nicolás Cabo explains in *El común de la Mancha*, his study of the visits in the area, the town councils were obliged to maintain a hospital if there was no private citizen willing to endow one (112). The earliest record of a hospital in Quintanar was, “el hospital de la plaza,” founded in 1511, old and rundown by the second half of the sixteenth century. It had three beds, and no property or income of its own. A local resident, Juan Morcillo, gave money to start another, quite modest, when he died in 1573. Both of these are mentioned in the response to question 54 of the *Relaciones topográficas*, dated 1575. The town council voted to sell the old one on January 27, 1578 (AHPT, protocolos, V 13.342). Then, in February of 1591, Pablo de la Mota, the same local physician defended by the *síndico* in 1579, died, leaving a substantial portion of his estate to found a hospital in Quintanar, naming his own uncles, Dr. Francisco de Mota and Pedro Sánchez, as caretakers (AHN, OO. MM., Libro 9). From that moment forward this hospital is a source of scandal. Though the property is to be administered in perpetuity by members of the Mota family, the good doctor made provision in his will for the *ayuntamiento* and the Prior de Uclés to oversee their administration. Years go by and repairs are not done, accounts do not balance, and the discrepancy grows between the earnings of the property tied to the hospital and the pittance the caretakers actually spend keeping it up. Growing impatience can be felt in the comments in the *actas del ayuntamiento* concerning the negligence of those responsible.²⁰

²⁰ A brief comparison of the descriptions of the two hospitals in the *libro de visitas* from 1604 may help clarify the extent of the corruption. The modest one founded by Morcillo, “en la calle de Damián Gallardo,” appears to be in fairly good repair. It has six beds. Its income for 1601–1603, including donations, came to 27,715 maravedís. Its expenses totaled 26,609 maravedís. A humble place, but they are doing what they can with what they have. The “Hospital del Doctor Paulo Mota” is in a serious state of disrepair. It has just two beds. Its *corral* is taken up by a haystack and a broken down dovecote. It also has a *huerta*, so abandoned the *visitador* suggests it simply be sold. Over the last several years it has had an income of nearly half a million maravedís, from the properties tied to it, as well as money owed to Dr. Mota before his death. Nonetheless, even the most minimal repairs have not been made, nor has furniture been purchased (AHN, OO.MM.,

As noted above, even during Dr. Mota's lifetime there was controversy surrounding the position of town doctor. To judge from what the *síndico* says about him, Pablo de la Mota appears to have been a friend to the poor and *pecheros*, at least as compared with Dr. Arnao. He left most of his personal fortune for the creation of a well-endowed hospital for the poor and for travelers. Such generosity was rather unusual in Quintanar. More often those who could afford to would leave their money for *capillas*, whose greater visibility brought more prestige. Yet the end result of Dr. Mota's generous gesture was not an institution benefitting the poor, established on good financial footing, but an endless headache for the town council and a source of illicit income for Dr. Mota's living relatives. Some of these relatives appear to be members of the faction that had challenged the Ludeñas for power in the 1570s, but who now, in the 1590s, have apparently reconciled with them for convenience's sake. They show themselves consistently more concerned about their own wealth and prestige than about their relative's efforts to do good works.

Could Cervantes have known about this local controversy? If we assume he did, how should we interpret his oblique reference to it, which he could not assume most readers, even in his own day, would recognize? When Antonio asks "Is there by any chance a hospital for pilgrims in this town?" is this a leading question, *una pregunta con intención*? Cervantes leaves it unanswered: is there one or not? Clearly for anyone from Quintanar, for anyone who knew Pablo de la Mota, or perhaps for someone aware of some of the administrative issues surrounding towns of the Orden de Santiago, the question would be taken as a reference to this sore point. Certainly the neglect of their duties by

Libro 9). The *visitador* threatens Pedro Sánchez with excommunication if he does not come up with the missing funds, but he is able to get a reprieve until 1604. Ten years later, the problem persists, as attested by the report to the town council from Alonso Martínez, the *alcalde* charged with looking into the problem, according to which "en...espacio de diez años...no se la sigue renta al dicho patronazgo, antes mucho daño." The council decides to ask the Prior de Uclés to intervene: "visto el dicho requerimiento por este ayuntamiento decretaron que se nombre persona que acuda al señor prior a pedir lo que...convenga (AHPT, Protocolos, 13.170, 26.VI.1613, fols. 251^v-52^v).

Mota's heirs and everyone else concerned inflect ironically Diego de Villaseñor's answer, which says, in effect, "We are so devoted to Christian charity we have no need of a *hospital de peregrinos*, which is fortunate because due to the greed and irresponsibility of a few of us, we do not really have one."

"*Según es cristiana la gente...*"

When Diego de Villaseñor answers that all the houses of the town would be open to pilgrims, "*según es cristiana la gente*," he means, of course, that they are "good" Christians, that they live according to the ethical imperatives of Christianity, especially where charity is concerned. The previous examples of factionalism and corruption cast doubt on the applicability to the inhabitants of Quintanar of such an assumption. But surely they at least belong to the Christian faith in the most literal sense? At the time *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* was published, Judaism and Islam had been prohibited for over a hundred years in Castile. But as it turns out, a significant minority, numbering perhaps in the hundreds, was practicing or attempting to practice either Judaism or Islam in secret.

As Charles Amiel has shown, Quintanar was the center of a "homegrown" Manchegan variety of crypto-Judaism, kept alive from one generation to the next from the 1480s right up to the arrest and trial of one hundred members of the Mora and Villanueva families in the 1590s. His research in the Inquisitorial archives of Cuenca leaves no doubt that twelve branches of the Mora family proudly but secretly practiced Judaism, including the dietary laws, prayers, feast days, and ritual slaughter. They studied books of Christian devotion in order to learn about the Hebrew scriptures.²¹ Inquisition records demonstrate a regular pattern of harassment of the local *converso* community throughout the sixteenth century. Several members of each generation

²¹ Amiel has undertaken an extraordinary labor of reconstruction, piecing together all the testimony of the different trials, as well as tracking down the devotional Christian literature the Moras used to study the Hebrew Scriptures. The two articles published in 2001 in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* are part of a larger project in preparation.

were tried for relatively trivial matters, blasphemy or indecorous speech, always based solely on what the neighbors managed to observe or on indiscreet comments made in public. Several of these cases were like that of Mari Juárez, accused in 1562 of taking pride in her Jewish ancestry: “Por cierto que en decirme judía antes me huelgo yo y me ensalzan un palmo más de honra.”²² There was an attitude of suspicion directed toward them; their behavior was scrutinized in a way that of a *cristiano viejo* would not be.²³ But only when Juan de Buenaventura, a servant who had lived with the Moras, went to the Inquisitors with more damning evidence, did they begin to put together the case that would end up destroying the *converso* community in Quintanar.²⁴

²² ADC, 782/2594. The spat that gave rise to this accusation is comical enough. Mari Juárez’s hen kept getting over into her neighbor Alonso García’s house. “Tomó la gallina una moza del dicho Alonso García que se dice Mari Garrida y quemole los pies y entonces vino Mari Juárez y le dijo, ‘Quemadas tengas las entrañas.’ Y entonces dijo la moza: “Para ser yo nieta de Hernán Sánchez de [illegible] no era mucho más, empero yo soy cristiana vieja, no soy de casta de judíos como vos.’ Y entonces dijo Mari Juárez: “Por cierto en decirme judía antes me huelgo yo y me ensalzan un palmo más de honra” (ADC, 782/2594). Despite the amusement this *riña entre vecinas* provides today, it must give us pause to realize that this exchange was brought up as evidence against Mari Juárez and her family nearly thirty years later. It is included in the compilation of testimony against the Moras and their relatives titled “Memoria de los testigos que ha de tener cada uno de los procesos de la complicidad de los Moras del Quintanar” (ADC, 748B/99).

²³ A typical example is the accusation against Fernando de Villanueva for “palabras contra la fe.” One day in 1565, he strode into the home of the local *boticario*, where several *vecinos* were gambling. Their greetings had a bantering tone, as Villanueva explains: “en entrando dije a uno dellos que estaba jugando y otros que los miraban ‘Manténgaos Dios, señores.’ Y respondí uno dellos que se dice Pedro de Arousa, ‘Mantenidos estamos para hoy.’ Y respondí yo, ‘Mucho mejor, pues quien puede hoy más puede,’ y si alguna persona entendió otra cosa no me entendié bien por tener yo mala lengua y tartamuda” (ADC, Inq. 704/383). The case came to nothing, but it is plain from Villanueva’s words that as a *converso* he could only engage in casual joking with *cristianos viejos* at considerable personal risk.

²⁴ The seriousness of this breach in the *converso* wall of silence can perhaps be appreciated when we consider that Pedro and Hernando de Sauca, two brothers who were both married to accused *conversas*, went to Calatayud, Juan de Buenaventura’s hometown, where he had gone after testifying against them, posing as *comisarios* of the Inquisition. Their intention? To kidnap Buenaventura

When the scope of the affair became clear to him, the Inquisitor in Cuenca, Alonso Jiménez de Reinoso, was perplexed. From his point of view, these *conversos manchegos* were too poor to trouble with—but seeing that there were so many accused, and that the townspeople were lining up to tattle on their neighbors, he decided to go ahead with the arrests (AHN, Inq., 2545/125). They had to be made in increments because there was not enough room in the jail in Cuenca to hold them all. Reaction in the town itself was mixed. During a visit from September 10 to October 17, 1590, Francisco Velarde de la Concha took declarations from 93 *vecinos* responding to an *edicto de fe*.²⁵ Most came forward to add their grain of sand to the mountain of evidence against the Moras, Villanuevas, and their relatives. Almost all of this “evidence” was of the trivial, external sort against which they had successfully defended themselves for decades. (As I will explain shortly, many of the same witnesses also declared against local *moriscos*.) Of course the arrests were one of the main topics of discussion in Quintanar during this time, and there were also those, such as a certain Juan Hernández, who defended at least some of the accused. He was reported to have said that Juan López de Armenia, arrested by the Inquisition, was “the best Christian” in Quintanar. According to Francisco Sánchez Campanero, *labrador, vecino del Quintanar*, 26 years old in 1590, Juan Hernández

dijo que llevaban preso al dicho Juan López de Armenia que era el mejor cristiano que había en el Quintanar y este testigo y el dicho Francisco Maza y alguno de los que allí estaban le dijeron que no dijese aquello, que si fuera el mejor cristiano que había en el Quintanar el dicho Juan López de Armenia, que no le llevaran preso, que qué tales fueran los demás del

and either force him to retract his statements or kill him to take revenge for what he had revealed (ADC, Inq., 315/4560).

²⁵ These declarations, most of which did *not* lead to trials, are preserved in their entirety in a *Libro de testificaciones* of the Tribunal de Cuenca (L 326), an extremely rare and valuable document that has much to teach us about the interaction between the Inquisition and local populations. The 1590 visit to Quintanar corresponds to folios 166–248.

Quintanar, pues aquel era el más buen cristiano y lo llevaron preso a la Inquisición. Y el dicho Juan Hernández tornó a decir “Sí, juro a Dios que lo era,” y lo tornó a decir y que si iba preso sería por haber encubierto alguna cosa a los demás y replicándole que era tan malo encubrillo como hazello, en negocio del Santo Oficio, tornó a decir el susodicho que si a su padre o a su muger les obiera visto matar un hombre que los había de encubrir. Y diciéndole éste y los demás que en causas del Santo Oficio que no se podía encubrir, [177^r] tornó a decir que aunque fuera en cosas tocantes al Santo Oficio, encubriera a su padre y a su muger.²⁶

Clearly what it means to be a good Christian, and how Christian the population is, are matters of public discussion and debate in Quintanar in these years.

Yet another response was that of Alonso Hernández Morterón, *alcalde ordinario*, who confronted Alonso de Pobeda, the notario de sequestros [sic]²⁷ of the Inquisition who set up a stall in the main square, where he was selling some farm implements that had been confiscated from the goods belonging to the *conversos*:

Dijo [Alonso Hernández Morterón] en la plaza pública de la dicha villa, domingo veinte y siete deste presente mes [September 1592], estando la gente congregada para las almoneadas quen ella se hacían del Santo Oficio, que qué cosa era vender los trastos y menudencias en este lugar y llevarse los bienes mejores della. Y replicándose que aquello no tocaba a él y que si se hacía era porque en el lugar no había quien comprase cosa alguna y por utilidad de su magestad y que aun las menudencias como son esteras de vendimiar viejas y tenajas, que es lo que más en el pueblo es necesario por la mucha cosecha que hay este año, no hay quien las compre si no es que

²⁶ Juan Hernández was *reprendido* by the Inquisición de Cuenca as a *perturbador* (ADC, Inq., 326/4678).

²⁷ The “notario de sequestros” or “secuestros” was charged with keeping track of *bienes secuestrados*.

se las dan fiadas y por menos precio de lo que valen. (ADC, Inq. 332/4743, fol. 4^r.)

The hot-headed *alcalde* had the nerve to arrest the *notario*. This led to the trial of Alonso Hernández Morterón for *desacato al Santo Oficio*. The case reveals the local residents' envy of the *conversos*, their desire to get their hands on their property, and even a feeling of entitlement, as if they expected to be rewarded for all those years of vigilant spying. In the minds of some *cristianos viejos*, the essential quality that defines a Christian is that of not being a *converso*, and therefore of having the right to the confiscated property of *conversos* accused by the Inquisition.

Another group in Quintanar whose Christian status was at least ambiguous were the *moriscos*. In November of 1570 they arrived, refugees from the Guerra de las Alpujarras, provoking what we would nowadays call a humanitarian crisis. The initial concern was how to feed them.²⁸ But soon they were integrated into the local economy, at least, as a source of cheap labor. According to the list of their names prepared for the Inquisition in 1594 there were 219 *moriscos* in Quintanar, divided into 56 households (ADC, Inq, 338/4836, fols. 249–54).²⁹ During their four decades in the town, they were carefully watched and controlled by local clergy, the governor, the Inquisition, and the officials of the Consejo de Órdenes. They were required to carry “pasaportes” if they left the town.³⁰ Speaking or writing Arabic was strictly pro

²⁸ Thousands of *moriscos* were brought through Quintanar and neighboring towns on their way north, with smaller percentage being permanently assigned to the area. The minutes of town council meetings for November and December of 1570 show the emergency effort to get enough food for them, as well as the repeated insistence that more refugees not be sent “porque está [la villa] muy gastada y alcanzada de pan, y así mismo la villa del Toboso, por haber tenido allí, mil y seiscientos moriscos muchos días” (AHPT, Protocolos, 13.150, fols. 26–35. Transcribed by Nicolás Cabo).

²⁹ In contrast, in Esquivias, town of Cervantes' wife, there were 5 families of *moriscos* (McCroly 124).

³⁰ A number of *moriscos* who claimed they were unfairly arrested for violating this rule appealed to the Consejo de Órdenes in Madrid (AHN, OO.MM., AHT 38.347, 38.462, 38.583, 50.432, 51.706, 54.065, etc). The prosecuting attorneys' formal accusations describe the *pasaporte* as a document combining authorization from

hibited, as was Moorish dress. Attendance at mass was expected. The parish priest carefully noted in the record of baptisms the children of “cristianos nuevos.”

Accusations against them by their neighbors during Velarde de la Concha’s visit confirm that their degree of Christianization varied greatly, as did the attitude towards them on the part of the local residents. Like the *conversos*, their presence made religious identity an issue. An incident that clearly impressed the town, to judge from the number of times it appears in their testimony, was the death seven or eight years earlier of a *morisco* whose family, under the shroud, dressed his corpse according to their traditional practice, “con unos zaragüelles de lienzo hasta bajo puestos, que le llevaban cerca de los pies y con una escofieta [?] de lienzo en la cabeza” (ADC, L 326, fol. 201^v). Another recent event that had startled the town was the death of Miguel Bernal in 1586, who on his deathbed declared himself a Moslem, stubbornly refusing confession, even when taken to die in prison. His corpse was dumped on the outskirts of town for the children to throw rocks at it, and later burned along with a few tattered clothes, all he possessed in the world.³¹ On the more positive side, there was Matías Hernández del Corral, a weaver who sometimes played the guitar at *morisco* weddings. The inquisitor asked him which songs and what they were about. One is “*El Alhambra hanina* [sic]...y contiene una historia de unos moros presos.” His crossing of cultural borders arouses suspicion, but he insists he is “cristiano viejo natural desta villa y que las dichas letras las ha deprendido andando entre los moriscos que hay en

the *gobernador* to venture beyond the municipal boundaries with the following information: a physical description of the carrier, his or her surname and given name, age, employment, place of birth, and the town to which he or she is assigned. In one such instance, Mari Pérez, a *morisca* in her sixties, was arrested and held without bail for weeks for leaving Quintanar without a passport to visit a married daughter who lived 22 km away in Pedro Muñoz and had just had a baby. She appealed and won her release, the sentence being reduced to the time she had already spent in jail (AHN, OO.MM. AHT 50.433).

³¹ This event was duly reported by the *familiar* Damián Gallardo when it happened (ADC, Inq., 300/4297). All the same, several *vecinos* came forward to tell the story to Velarde de la Concha in 1590.

esta villa." (ADC, L 326, fols. 207–08). Crossing over in the opposite direction, at least one *morisca*, Isabel Hernández, married to a Christian, came forward to denounce the lack of piety of her friend Mari Díaz, *cristiana vieja*, who pointedly asked, after hearing a sermon about Joseph's initial reaction to the Virgin's being pregnant, "¿Pues no se acostaban juntos?" (ADC, L 326, fol. 169). Somewhat more typical of the way the dividing line between religions was interpreted is this example of an intimate revelation made by a *morisca* in a moment of candor. It so impressed the hearer that he came forward to communicate it to the Inquisitor eight or nine years later:

Juan Ortiz, labrador...de veinte y siete años...viene a manifestar que habrá ocho o nueve años [i.e. 1581 or 1582] a su parecer, que, segando un día en el término que dicen Palomares en haza de este testigo, este testigo y Miguel Pérez, morisco, vecino y listado en la dicha villa, y no había otra persona, este testigo le preguntó que si se hallaba mejor en esta tierra que en la suya. Y el dicho Miguel Pérez dijo que no, que vivían acá con mucho trabajo. Este testigo le tornó a decir que aunque acá vivían con trabajo como decía, era mejor estar acá porque acá le enseñarían a vivir en la ley de nuestro señor Jesucristo. Y como el susodicho parecía y daba a entender que mejor estuviera allá en su tierra el Reino de Granada, que no lo que éste le decía, le tornó a decir y preguntar: "Ven acá, Pérez. Después que venistes a esta tierra pareceos que estáis bien en la ley de Dios y guardáis sus mandamientos que los cristianos guardamos." Y el dicho Miguel Pérez respondió: "Mira, señor, no tenemos acá más que en nuestra tierra, pero para cumplir con las gentes decimos que sí," y que este testigo de la dicha respuesta entendió para sí que el susodicho quiso decir que tan moro se era acá como en su tierra, y que para cumplir acá con las gentes decía que vivía como cristiano. (ADC, Inq. Libro 326, fol. 239)

Whether we think of Miguel Pérez as consciously engaging in *taquiya* (the practice, sanctioned by Islamic law for self-protection,

of pretending outwardly to accept another faith) or as just reacting spontaneously to his new circumstances, his explanation reveals a double consciousness at work within the *morisco* minority. At least some of them paid lip service to Christianity, while continuing to think of themselves as Muslim, though this only manifested itself in private or on one's deathbed. Yet that Muslim identity was little more than a vestige, consisting mainly of the inner sense of refusal of the dominant religion, combined with a few fragmented memories of cultural practices whose meanings had been almost entirely forgotten.³²

"Christianity" in Quintanar, then, consisted mainly of a clustering of different forms of hypocrisy around a common nucleus of official beliefs to which many residents, including many *cristianos viejos*, paid only lip service. To be "Christian" in this context is to be a corrupt hypocrite, like Dr. Pablo de la Mota's uncles, or perhaps a childish "holier-than-thou" *beata*, like Dr. Arnau's daughter, who gives her father's *morisco* farm workers *tortilla de huevo* with pieces of *tocino* for lunch, then comes and hunts for the pork behind the trunk where they were sitting, to see if they are secret Muslims (ADC, L 326, fols. 223^v–24^r). In this social environment, it is hardly surprising that we find few examples like Pablo de la Mota, of unselfish Christian charity. And given the example the local *cristianos viejos* set for the *conversos* and *moriscos*, it is hardly surprising that they engage in a practice of dissimulation. The irony of Diego de Villaseñor's description of the townspeople opens up the question of the definition of what it meant to be Christian in Early Modern Spain: If the people of Quintanar—and of Castilla la Nueva generally—do not welcome all into their midst, but rather expel, punish, and persecute those who do

³² The general picture of the *convivencia* between *moriscos* and *cristianos viejos* that emerges in the *Libros de testificaciones* is consistent with that drawn by Mercedes García Arenal in her seminal study of trial records of *moriscos* in the ADC. The declarations allow us to fill in the broad outlines García Arenal sketched with richer detail, getting a more intimate view of day-to-day interaction between the different groups. As I mention above, most of these accusations did not lead to trials. This is especially the case for the *moriscos*, for the most part too poor to be of much interest to the Inquisitors, who always had to keep in mind how they would pay for the trials and imprisonment.

not share strict orthodoxy, what claim can they make to being called “Christians”? If for many in Quintanar, the primary value of being able to proclaim oneself *cristiano viejo* are the advantages this can bring one over those who can be accused of having Jewish ancestry, what does has their concept of Christianity to do with welcoming pilgrims into their homes? In the light of these ironies, the utopian outcome of Antonio’s return home makes Quintanar begin to emerge as a most unlikely scene for a multiracial, multiethnic fantasy in which Christian, Moor, Jew, and Amerindian could somehow be reconciled, despite the expulsions, despite the Inquisition, Tridentine orthodoxy, and Spanish imperialism.

Was this fantasy Cervantes’ dream of a *different* Spain, or had his indefatigable optimism deluded him to the extent that he himself believed it? How likely is it that Cervantes knew about the persecution of the *conversos* from Quintanar? How aware would he have been of the situation of the *morisco* refugees? These matters were cause for public scandal in Quintanar, and local residents would have talked about them when they went to other towns for business.³³ In the 1580s and 90s Cervantes basically lived between Esquivias and Seville. Rumors of events in Quintanar probably reached Toledo, the nearest major city, which Cervantes frequently visited during these years. In the course of his numerous crisscrossing journeys between Esquivias and Seville, he would sometimes have met travelers coming from further east, for example Cuenca or Ocaña, who had crossed la Mancha on their way. He may also have had direct acquaintance with someone from Quintanar, perhaps even a member of the Villaseñor family. Of course, Ricote’s self-definition in *Don Quijote* II, 54, suggests that Cervantes understood the existence of gradations of Christianization among the *moriscos* living in Castilla la Nueva:

³³ Diego Suárez de Navarra told the Inquisitors that on a trip to the nearby town of Alcázar de Consuegra on May 27, 1588, “le llamó un fulano Ruiz hijo de un tal Jabonero, nieto de Hernando de Mora y le preguntó que había de nuevo en el Quintanar y este testigo le respondió que habían prendido a Francisco de Mora el mozo...” (ADC, Inq., 748B/99, fol 9’).

[E]n resolución, Sancho, yo sé cierto que la Ricota mi hija y Francisca Ricota, mi mujer, son católicas cristianas, y, aunque yo no lo soy tanto, todavía tengo más de cristiano que de moro, y ruego siempre a Dios me abra los ojos del entendimiento y me dé a conocer cómo le tengo de servir. (II, 54; 1073–74)

Concerning the awareness of the trials for crypto-Judaism, it is interesting to note that Lope de Vega chose the name Quintanar for a character in *El niño inocente de la Guardia*, a *converso* who helps kidnap and crucify a Christian child. Could the town have been famous for its *convertos*, either before the cases of crypto-Judaism of the 1590s or perhaps because of them? On the other hand, Lope's play might have helped to strengthen such an association, if any existed. In any case, once we know what we now know about Quintanar, we cannot help but read the phrase "según es cristiana la gente" ironically. We can only escape from the realm of speculation by acknowledging the two possibilities concerning that irony: either it is authorial (intended by Cervantes) or historical (an unintended product of the historical circumstances in which he wrote). Today, reading *Persiles y Sigismunda* means taking into account both of these possibilities.

Conclusion: authorial irony vs. historical irony.

When the fictional image of the Quintanar to which Antonio de Villaseñor returns has been confronted with the image that emerges from the archives, the resulting contradiction between the idyllic depiction of local harmony and the harsh reality of seventeenth-century la Mancha is bitterly ironic. After over fifteen years of wandering, of longing for home, Antonio comes back to Spain, much as Cervantes himself might have, or any number of young men of his generation, hoping to find it as he had left it, if not changed for the better. In *Persiles y Sigismunda* Cervantes has incorporated a fantasy in which this dream comes true for the young man, whose trials, and patience in suffering them, are poetically linked to a change for the better in his town through the analogy with pilgrimage. But Quintanar at the end of the reign of Felipe II was the locus of intensified strife as com-

pared with the circumstances there during the reign of Carlos V. This deepening local crisis, which reflects the larger crisis in which much of Spain, and especially Castilla la Nueva, had been plunged, appears to be the ironic subtext of Antonio and his father's dialogue on his arrival. Was this irony part of Cervantes' intention when he created this scene, or is it only a fortuitous consequence of the juxtaposition of his text with certain events in local history, events of which he might not have had any knowledge? Ultimately this question is unanswerable, since it depends on pure surmise concerning what Cervantes did and did not know about local affairs in Quintanar.

What if we assume no such knowledge on his part? In some ways, the points of contact between Cervantes' depiction of Quintanar and the historical place that shares that proper name become all the more interesting if we think of them as unintended coincidences. What this would suggest is that without knowing it or meaning to do so, Cervantes contributed to the creation of a web of ironies, with Quintanar as the nucleus. References to everyday occurrences are bound to turn up something that will resonate with the historical records, once we sift through them. That resonance is bound to produce certain "irony effects" when we do so, given the nature of fictional representation and the profound social tensions at work in Early Modern Spain. In this reading, as soon as Cervantes begins to make reference to aspects of everyday life, he lays his fiction open to being compared with the daily reality of the places to which he refers. Parallels and overlaps whose specific content he could not have known will emerge as a result. This kind of historical irony surfaces when a more-or-less naively optimistic image is brought into contact with a more-or-less cynically degraded social reality—something like the poetics of *Don Quijote*, in fact. How is this irony related to the artistic intention of the author? We might argue that it touches it only at the infinitely small point of the proper names—Quintanar, Villaseñor—that Cervantes included in his text, perhaps only to give it a kind of "authentic flavor." But once that flavor is on our tongue, how can he, how can we, limit the ways in which it alters the taste of the whole? Whatever

Cervantes may have consciously “meant” by these references, he did intend to anchor his text in the stream of extra-literary reality, and in so doing, he made it a potential carrier for the kind of connections I am here attempting to establish.

If bringing the literary representation into contact with the archival record generates an ironic effect we can never definitively attribute to the author, bringing the historical “facts” into contact with their literary counterpart re-reflects their meaning as well. Contreras’s *Sotos contra Riquelmes* tells how members of the clans vying for power in Murcia fell into the hands of Inquisitors when they attempted to use the denunciation of their rivals as *conversos judaizantes* for political purposes. No such collapsing of categories took place in Quintanar. At no time did the accusation of Jewish ancestry as a strategy for undermining another clan’s prestige overlap with accusations of heresy against known *conversos*. In fact, the various strands of local history I have brought together here almost never seem to touch.³⁴ The historical agents whose actions and words are preserved in the archives evidently lived as if they did not share the same social world as the groups or individuals they excluded from their conception of legitimacy. In this sense, the image in Cervantes’ text, of a unified community whose differences can be reconciled, restores their unrecognized responsibility toward those whom they had cast off. It is a bridge between different aspects of local history that, viewed only in the context their actual participants constructed for them, seem to have nothing to do with each other. Yet their contrast

³⁴ The connections I have found are tenuous, though they suggest a complex role for the *Mora* family within the social life of the town. They were marginal and perhaps for that reason felt solidarity toward the *moriscos*; yet they were allied with the powerful, probably in continuation of a longstanding tradition. If we are to believe witnesses, they were frequently seen at *morisco* weddings (ADC, L 326). There is also a document that records the purchase of two *escribanías* by Juan de Lodeña in 1558, “la una de las cuales dio luego a Juan de Mora” (AHN, OO.MM., AHT 24.525, fol 2^o). There is thus some indication that the *Mora* family was protected by the *Lodeñas* while it was convenient for them to do so. I have not seen any seriously damning evidence given against them by any member of the *Ludeña* clan, but when the accusations began to heat up they clearly knew how to maintain their distance to avoid being scorched themselves.

with the idealized portrait Cervantes provides of the town gives meaning to all of these events. It is as if history and literature needed one another, in order to be able to give meaning, even if only a negative one, to the lives of past centuries—those of forgotten peasants as well as of great canonical authors.

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