New Developments Challenging Long-Established Anti-Islamic Arguments: The Case of Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón

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Abstract

Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón was a Spanish humanist who, influenced by the *devotio moderna* and Juan Luis Vives, wrote two works to promote Muslim conversion in Valencia –as well as in Aragon and Granada. His arguments were not original given that they had been commonly used since the Middle Ages. However, Pérez de Chinchón's approach to the debate appears to be very different from the merely controversial tone of many previous authors. In fact, this paper argues that he presented the Muslims as neighbors to be persuaded by the implementation of a proposing catechesis. These requirements were supposed to be valid for the entire society. In this way, the call to Muslim conversion relates to the appeal for a general Church reform.

1. Introduction

The long process initiated in sixteenth-century Spain to promote Muslim conversion required the use of clear arguments and fine persuasiveness. This need focused the debate on how to carry out the mission campaigns in two concrete parts of rhetoric, namely *inventio* and *dispositio*. Actually, if ones takes into account that the arguments would have come down from postulations inherited from medieval anti-Islamic apologetics, it would not be an exaggeration to affirm that the singularity of sixteenth-century preaching addressed to Moriscos lies specifically in the way of arranging those long-established arguments. Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón is an outstanding example of this procedure, and he was fully aware of this fact, as will be demonstrated with his own words. Certainly, after aknowledging that his reasoning's main source had been Bishop Martín García Puyazuelo, he asserted that "cotejando lo que allí se trata con esto, creo haver dado, si no[1] más doctrina, alomenos mejor orden para persuadir a esta gente."[2]

This *mejor orden* might be justified by the prerequisites of a debate inspired by the idea that truth does not involve either gradations or nuances. On the contrary, the contention's starting point is to defend the existence of a unique and totally harmonized truth. Thus, one must not to confuse sixteenth-century religious discussions

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1. *Sino* in the used edition. Similar mistakes are corrected to improve the deficient punctuation.
2. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), *Antialcorano. Diálogos christianos. (Conversión y evangelización de moriscos)*. Estudio preliminar, transcripción y notas de F. Pons Fuster. Alicante, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, p. 81.

with current inter-religious dialogue and even less with any sort of multi-culturalism or of inter-faith cooperation. Multiculturalism seeks the coexistence of all kinds of religions turning them into a private subject; inter-faith cooperation strips religions of their proselytizing ambition. These two features were foreign to the European mindset in the Renaissance period.

Accordingly, if the purpose is to understand the Christian attempts to convert Muslims, there is no other choice but to assume that they dealt exclusively with mission and proselytizing deliberations. As a result, their explicit and unique objective was the conversion of the other by confronting completely contrastive soteriologies and by deploying arguments that might have been decisive for Christians but ultimately were unpersuasive for Muslims. Thus, the little success obtained in the numerous campaigns led to promote conversions might be related to the impossibility of an effective dialogue between Christians and Muslims since both considered the other either heretical, false, or mendacious.

2. The case of the Valencian Kingdom

The rationale for explaining all sorts of incomprehensions among social groups is never univocal. The failure of every missionary attempt can be elucidated by pondering a multiplicity of factors. In addition to the theological and philosophical aspects, social and political issues should be taken into account as well. In the case of Valencia, it is necessary to bear in mind the *Germanías*' revolt. The *agermanados* forced the conversion of Muslims in the entire central area of the Valencian Kingdom after having defeated the viceroy of Valencia's troops in 1521. Shortly thereafter, in 1525, when the revolt was crushed, many of the converts openly returned to the Islamic faith with the support of the nobility. Pons Fuster describes this episode as follows:

> Las razones que indujeron a los agermanados a bautizar coactivamente a los mudéjares hay que buscarlas tanto en el supuesto milenarismo que alentaría a la revuelta agermanada, como en el daño que tal medida podría provocar a la nobleza valenciana. Los agermanados pensaban que al bautizar a los mudéjares lanzaban un ataque directo contra la nobleza regnícola. Los vasallos mudéjares, ahora convertidos al cristianismo, verían equiparados sus derechos a los de los cristianos con la consiguiente merma que ello significaría para las haciendas señoriales. Finalizadas las Germanías con la derrota de los agermanados, los nuevos convertidos (moriscos) volvieron a la práctica de su fe islámica con el beneplácito de los señores. Y aunque su apostasía planteó algunos problemas doctrinales, éstos no se abordaron oficialmente hasta 1525, cuando se convocó una Asamblea para dilucidar la cuestión de la validez del bautismo coactivo y la apostasía de los moriscos. Esta convocatoria no fue bien recibida por la nobleza regnícola que trató por diversos medios de boicotearla.[3]

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3.   Pons Fuster, Francisco (2000), *Introducción* in Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón, (2000), p. 19. See also, Lea,

Pérez de Chinchón's proposals seem to be addressed precisely to those Moriscos who, at the end of the sixteenth century, were still Muslims, showing the fruitlessness of both violence and persuasion in religious matters. Yet in the first half of the sixteenth century, a group of Erasmus-inspired humanists maintained the hope that common arguments could change the *pertinacity* of the Moriscos, if they were properly adapted and adequately explained. Often times, as Pérez de Chinchón said, the problems with achieving the conversion of Muslim people were not theological, but purely educational and even cultural:

> […] porque ni allí (Gandía) ni por todo el reyno de Valencia les predicavan ni hablavan, ni por ninguna manera de cathecismo los aparejavan a la fe, sino sólo vía procurar que viniessen a la yglesia a oyr missa. Como quiera que de buena razón primero havían de passar meses y años que ellos entrassen a ver lo que no creen, como algunos dellos públicamente dizen, y empeçarlos a christianear por la missa es como empeçar la casa por el tejado, para que, sin fundamento, nunca se haga, siendo también menester para su información cada día o, a lo menos. las fiestas, hazerles pláticas y predicaciones. Y aun éstas con mucha maña para ganarles poco a poco la boca como a pollos; y mostrándoles los males y mentiras de su ley, enamorarlos a la nuestra, primero con las obras y, luego, con las palabras, pues Jesu Christo empeçó a obrar y a enseñar; primer dize obrar. Y este exercicio havía de durar tanto, que ellos mesmos, ya desseosos de la fe, pidiessen la missa y los otros sacramentos.[4]

Perez de Chinchón astutely moved the discussion to everyday life and highlighted that belonging to one or another religion was manifested principally in rites, customs, and practices. In the same vein, he emphasized the fact that it would be ineffective to force people to change their habits or to coerce them to attend mass without a previous catechesis. In his opinion, all such efforts would be useless without a rational proposal of stages in approaching Muslims. All those premises should be linked to the external elements of life, which have been traditionally regulated and timed by religion. Among them, the customs of eating, dressing, burying the dead, or getting married could be mentioned.[5]

In short, any process of changing religion involves an initial phase of acculturation. Scholars influenced by Erasmian religiosity had especially stressed this concern both because they adhered to a religion far removed from external practices and because they were completely conscious that religion was also a matter of civi-

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Henry Charles (2007), *Los moriscos españoles. Su conversión y expulsión*. Estudio preliminar y notas de Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco. Traducción de Jaime Lorenzo Miralles, Alicante, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante (2nd ed.), pp. 131-152.

4. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 80.
5. Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, Rafael (2000), «¿Cristianos o bautizados? La trayectoria inicial de los moriscos valencianos, 1521-1525» in *Estudis*, 26, p. 13. Martínez Sierra, María Teresa (2000), «La situación religiosa en la antigua morería de Valencia en 1522, según las denuncias de Juan Medina», *Estudis*, 26, pp. 113-136.

lization. As a result, their preaching usually led to relating the changing of religion to the changing of customs. Both religion and customs appeared to be purified by a set of moral rules that, in principle, would awaken the desire to immerse oneself in the authentic values of the society.

These interrelationships made it inevitable that the question of Muslim conversion would be affected by Christian sectarianism. In fact, the emergence of different Catholic reform movements, and especially the advent of Luther and other Protestant reformers, exerted considerable influence on the preaching methods used to convert Muslims. As a result, the political turbulence of those times deeply affected the Morisco debate. The Lutheran schism gave rise to a series of crossed alliances throughout Europe to destabilize the Spanish monarchy, which was the main bulwark of Catholicism. This subject was elucidated by L. Cardaillac, who studied certain documents of Valencian Moriscos offering submission to the King of France against Spain: "Nosotros, los de Valencia, sumamos setenta y seis mil casas, más bien más que menos, podemos reunir sesenta mil hombres sin despoblar las dichas somos casas, somos los amos y no queremos obedecer sino a la voluntad de S.M. el rey de Francia."[6]

Moriscos strove also to obtain the support of Lutheran and Reformed Protestants underlining that they were closer to the truth than Catholics. Hence, they tried to link certain Lutheran principles such as *sola fides* with the Islamic concept of submission to the Unitarian God and attempted to exploit to their advantage the mutual censorship between Catholics and Protestants on matters such as the sacraments or the criticism of the immoral behavior of certain clergy. In the process, all the contenders used these crossed alliances to defend their truth vis-à-vis the others. As a result of those clashes, almost a century later Quevedo placed Muḥammad and Luther together in hell as successors of Judas, the betrayer of Jesus: "Digo verdad que vi a Judas, Mahoma y Lutero tan cerca de atreverse a entrar en juicio."[7] Moreover, according to Quevedo, Muḥammad and Luther contended with each other for being considered Judas: "En esto que todo era ya acabado, quedaron descubiertos Judas, Lutero y Mahoma. Preguntó un ministro que quàl de los tres era Judas? Lutero y Mahoma dijo cada uno que él."[8] Identical were the proceedings of Protestants, such as Cipriano Valera, fighting against Catholicism and Islam, jointly accusing those religions of being two types of heresy in contrast with the pristine purity of their faith, which would be represented by Reformed Christianity:

> Los cuales (Muslims) hoy ha cien años fueron totalmente echados de nuestra España. El reino de Mahoma y el del Papa ya ha casi mil años que comenzaron. El papa comenzó como zorra, con astucia y con engaños, so color de santidad. (…) Mahoma

6. Cardaillac, Louis (2004), *Moriscos y cristianos. Un enfrentamiento polémico (1492-1640)*. Traducción de M. García Arenal. México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, [2nd Spanish Edition. 1st French edition 1977], p. 133.

7. Quevedo, Francisco de (1993), «Sueño del juicio final» in *Sueños y discursos*, James O. Crosby (Ed.), Madrid, Castalia, 2 vols, I, p. 137.

8. Quevedo, Francisco de (1993), I, p. 139.

casi en el mismo tiempo comenzó como león, con violencia. Y así ambos han entre-
tenido sus reinos, y perseguido el de Cristo: Mahoma con su Alcorán, y el Papa con
sus Decretales.[9]

In this context, missionary campaigns were practically destined to fail, because
neither the theological arguments, nor the social reality, nor the international situ-
ation favored any points of agreement. On the contrary, all the opposing interests
seemed to contribute to reinforcing confrontation. This failure became patent and
unambiguous in a fragment of the novel, *El curioso impertinente* inserted in *Don
Quijote*:

> Paréceme, ¡Oh Anselmo!, que tienes tú ahora el ingenio como el que siempre tienen
> los moros, a los cuales no se les puede dar a entender el error de su secta con las
> acotaciones de la Santa Escritura, ni con razones que consistan en especulación del
> entendimiento, ni que vayan fundadas en artículos de fe, sino que les han de traer
> ejemplos palpables, fáciles, inteligibles, demostrativos, indubitables, con demostra-
> ciones matemáticas que no se pueden negar, como cuando dicen: "si de dos partes
> iguales quitamos partes iguales, las que quedan también son iguales"; y cuando esto
> no entiendan de palabra, como en efecto no lo entienden, háseles de mostrar con las
> manos y ponérselo delante de los ojos, y aun con todo esto no basta nadie con ellos a
> persuadirles las verdades de nuestra sacra religión. Y este mesmo término y modo me
> convendrá usar contigo, porque el deseo que en ti ha nacido va tan descaminado y tan
> fuera de todo aquello que tenga sombra de razonable, que me parece ha de ser tiempo
> gastado el que ocupare en darte a entender tu simplicidad (que por ahora no le quiero
> dar otro nombre), y aun estoy por dejarte en tu desatino, en pena de tu mal deseo.[10]

It is certainly valuable not to overlook that Cervantes was comparing Muslims
to lovers by considering that both of them were unable to be convinced by rational
arguments. The acceptance of this assertion implied the complete impossibility of
convincing a Muslim to change their faith. In fact, the blindness of the Moors when
it came to their faith was equated to that of lovers and their passion. This comparison
was nothing less than a joke about the commonplace that compared the Moriscos
to animals for refusing to recognize the truth. At that point, Cervantes carefully
described the proposed way of preaching that had been carried out in Spain at least
from the end of the fourteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. What
makes this statement striking is the evidence that Cervantes' writing appears to be
an accurate and ironic depiction of Vives or Pérez de Chinchón's method to convert
Muslims. Once more, one should forget that the employment of biblical, philosoph-

9.   Valera, Cipriano de (2004), *Tratado para confirmar en la fe cristiana a los cautivos de Berbería*, in-
     troducción y edición de Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra y Beatriz Alonso Acero. Ediciones Espuela de
     Plata-Editorial Renacimiento, Sevilla, p. 178.
10. Cervantes, Miguel de (2004), *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, edición dirigida por F. Rico con la colaboración
     de J. Forradellas. Estudio Preliminar de F. Lázaro Carreter. Círculo de Lectores, Madrid, p. 418.

ical, and Christian dogmatic authority was forbidden since Muslims denied their authoritativeness. Consequently, *mathematical* explanations were the only applicable resource, namely, expositions, "palpables, fáciles, inteligibles, demostrativos, indubitables, con demostraciones matemáticas que no se pueden negar, como cuando dicen: *si de dos partes iguales quitamos partes iguales, las que quedan también son iguales.*"[11]

Cervantes could not be more sarcastic, because he was admitting that Muslims are *inconvertible* with logic, dialectics, or rhetoric. The only possible path to their acceptance of the Christian faith appeared to be through elementary demonstrations. But in the end, these reasons were going to be futile also, due to the fact that Muslims are said to be unable to understand even those easy statements. Accordingly, "háseles de mostrar con las manos y ponérselo delante de los ojos." But Cervantes had no hope in this simple method, seeing that, as in the case of a lover:

> […]. el deseo que en ti ha nacido va tan descaminado y tan fuera de todo aquello que tenga sombra de razonable, que me parece ha de ser tiempo malgastado el que ocupare en darte a entender tu simplicidad, que por ahora no le quiero dar otro nombre; y aún estoy por dejarte en tu desatino en pana de tu mal deseo.[12]

The main consequence of this *dejar en tu desatino* was the decree of expulsion.

3. Humanist preaching

Before arriving at the expulsion as a point of no return, there was a large stretch to traverse. In that journey, scholars such as Juan Luis Vives[13] or Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón occupied a prominent place, since they represented two of the most outstanding heirs of the proposing catechesis inherited from the fifteenth-century Spanish tradition. The distinctive and most visible feature of this movement was to

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11. Cervantes, Miguel de (2004), p. 418.
12. Cervantes, Miguel de (2004), p. 418.
13. Gómez, Jesús (1988), «El diálogo *Contra Iudaeos* de Vives y su tradición medieval» in *Criticón* 41, pp. 67-85. Cantarino, Vicente (1991), «La polémica de Luis Vives contra el Islam» in *Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo*, 67, pp. 5-34. Kohut, Karl (1995), «Anmerkungen zu *De veritate fidei Christianae*» in Strozetzki, Christoph (ed.), *Juan Luis Vives, sein Werk und seine Bedeutung für Spanien und Deutschland*, Frankfurt a/M, Vervuert Verlag, pp. 122-134. George, Edward (2007), «Rules of engagement: The humanist Apologetics of Vives' *De Veritate Fidei Christianae*» in *Erasmus Studie*s 27 pp. 1-36. George, Edward (2008), «Author, adversity, and reader: a view of *De Veritate Fidei Christianae*» in Fantazzi, Charles (Ed.), *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 315-158. Parello, Vincent (2008), «La apologética antijudía de Juan Luis Vives (1543)» in *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 38-2, pp. 171-187, [http://journals.openedition.org/mcv/3959]; Colish, Marcia (2009), «Juan Luis Vives on the Turks», in *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 35, pp. 1-14. Havu, Kaarlo Johannes (2018), «Dialogue and toleration in Juan Luis Vives's *De veritate fidei Christianae*: Vives on Muḥammad and Islam» in *Medieval Encounters* 24, pp. 649-665.

relate the church's reform to the preaching addressed to the Moriscos. This fact had consequently given prominence to the need to offer a deeper Christian teaching for everybody whether they were Moriscos or *cristianos viejos*. The Moriscos' conversion was clearly a reference within the broader catechetical field.

The first outcome of these conditions is the reluctance to praise religions. Indeed, praise existed, but the debates usually emphasized the pedagogical aspects over any sort of glorifying exaltation. Juan Luis Vives explained that with the following words: "*Nec sunt pauca in pietate nostra adeo congruentia cum hominis mente, atque ingenio, ut cognita illico amplectatur, ut sola illarum expositio sufficiat nuda, et quasi inermis.*"[14] As a matter of fact, panegyric and encomia would only extinguish any hope of dialogue. On the contrary, the recommended strategy had to be exclusively propositional and catechetical: "Plurimos arbitror non se nobis aggregare hac una de causa, quod de fide nostra vel nihil prorsus audierunt, vel perparum. De quibus Paulus ait: "*Quomodo credent ei, de quo non audierunt? Quomodo audient, sine docente?* (Rom 10, 14)."[15]

This attitude of Juan Luis Vives seems to be similar to Pérez de Chinchón's frame of mind, when the latter accentuated the lack of humanistic education among the Morisco population, instead of stressing the traditional topos of Muslim –and Morisco– depravity and inherent evil:

> […] pero todos los hijos de los ciudadanos y señores aprenden las sciencias y saben en que ley biven. Nada desto hallaréys entre los moros, porque, aunque tengan algún estudio, en muy poco y en pocas partes y falta de las más cosas déstas. Y si algunos moros ha havido sabios, es porque han ydo a estudiar a Grecia o a Egypto o a Ytalia, donde siempre ha havido estudios.[16]

As a consequence, the two central aims which characterized the Islamo-Christian polemic of authors like Vives and Pérez de Chinchón were (1) to have linked Muslim conversion to Church reform, and (2) to subordinate any apologetic attitude to a profound pedagogical intention. Both arguments cohere with the Catholic reformist tradition, which used to underscore the role of the clergy as responsible for the faith of believers. The clergy were said to have to lead the Church's missionary campaigns. This was the ultimate reason for Pérez de Chinchón to urge the clergy to respect their ministry:

> Mejor se emplearían en esto los buenos obispos que no en andar en cortes. Otra grangería de ánimas sería ésta que no atesorar ducados, que son tierra amarilla. Las disputas de París, los exercicios de Salamanca, los actos de Alcalá, la retórica de Italia,

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14. Vives, Juan Luis (1790), *De veritate Fidei Christianae*, in *J.L.V. Opera Omnia distributa et ordinata (…) a Gregorio Majansio*. Valentiae, In officina Benedicti Monfort, VIII, p. 23.

15. Vives, Juan Luis (1790), *De veritate Fidei Christianae*, p. 23.

16. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 375.

la eloquentia romana en esta empresa de deuría emplear. Mueren algunos por anotar a Plinio, sudan por declarar a Vergilio, trabajan por metrificar epigramas y versos de amores, y ninguno se exercita en estirpar este error de Mahoma que tanto cunde. ¡O gran mal! Antiguamente contra un Arrio huvo dozientos concilios, y no tenía sino una heregía, aunque grande, y nunca descansó la Yglesia hasta la estirpar y destruyr. Y contra esta seta que contiene todas las heregías del mundo, y la primera y principal la mesma de Arrio, todos duermen los que deurían velar.[17]

If these three perspectives – (1) the pedagogic attitude, (2) the relationship established between Muslim conversion and Church reform, and (3) the accent on clergy– are combined, all the other missionary conditions will be clarified, including the traditional corpus of motives handled in debates against Islam. The first of these conditions is to learn Arabic to be able to communicate directly with the Muslims. Speaking Arabic came to be considered a requisite to facilitate that approach and not only a means to know their scriptures in order to negate and combat them. Thus, the core purpose is neither erudition nor a sort of defensive fight, but a real persuasive approach to Muslim people. That was the goal *e.g.* of Hernando de Talavera, the first archbishop of Granada, who promoted making available various prayers of Christian piety in Arabic[18] and sponsored the first Arabic grammar in Spanish.[19] This requirement distinguished Vives' thought as well:

> […] quocirca vehementer cuperem ut in plerisque nostris civitatibus *gymnasia instituerentur linguarum*, non solum *illarum trium*, sed *Arabicae*, sed *earum etiam*, quae *essent Agarenis populis vernaculae*, quas addiscerent non otiosi homines ad gloriam inde captandam et plausum, sed ardentissimi zelo pietatis, parati vitam pro Christo impendere, ut eis instructi Christum illis gentibus annuntiarent, quae paucissima ac nihil paene de illo audiverunt.[20]

Pérez de Chinchón emulated Vives's thought in his *Diálogos christianos* by writing them in the spoken language of Valencian Muslims: "*Ceterum quod dialogi hispane loquuntur non latine, scias isthuc huic negotio huic regioni fuisse quam maxime necessarium, nam sarracenus, quibuscum est disserendum, hispane sciunt, latine nesciunt.*"[21] But going further and deeper, this instrumental conception of languages was obviously the reiteration of a topic firmly rooted in Greek philosophy, that is, the postulation that a human being should be defined as a speaking animal,

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17. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), pp. 399-400.

18. Iannuzzi, Isabella (2008), «Educar a los cristianos: Fray Hernando de Talavera y su labor catequética dentro de la estructura familiar para homogeneizar la sociedad de los Reyes Católicos» in *Nuevo Mundo. Mundos Nuevos,* [http://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/19122]. [Read 10/18/2018].

19. Alcalá, Pedro de (1506?), *Arte para ligeramente saber la lengua aráviga*, Granada, Juan Varela de Salamanca.

20. Vives, Juan Luis (1785), *De Disciplinis* in *J.L.V. Opera Omnia*, VI, p. 300.

21. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 391.

and that the spinal cord of this animal was the ability to debate and to confront opinions. This innermost human attribute became central in the anti-Islamic argumentation by enhancing the alleged lack of confidence of Muslims in the internal congruence of their religion:

> Y si me dizes que te manda tu ley que no la pongas en razón ni pruevas especialmente con el christiano, como lo dice tu alcorán, libro tercero, capítulo noveno, donde dize: *No queráys disputar con judíos ni christianos*. Item una çora hos manda que digáys: *tenéos vos vuestra ley que no me terné la mía*.[22] Mira que esse mandamiento es injusto por la razón que tengo ya dicha; que o tu ley es buena o mala: si mala, déxala; si buena, por qué no la pornás en razón, pues todo lo bueno se puede mostrar a todos.[23]

On account of this mindset, Vives' evident counter-argument emerges:

> Metuant hoc aliae religiones falsae, atque umbratiles, in quibus nihil est solidi, ideoque attingi se se non sinunt. Judaeus gravatur cum Christiano de lege sua conferre; Mahometus de secta sua disputari omnino vetuit: ne attingatis vitrum tenuissimum, falsum, inane; levissimo contactu statim friatur.[24]

Summing it up: "*Nostra religio intus etiam est, quam exterius formosior, solidior, firmior. Accedat quivis, tractet, agitet, scalpat, modo cum ingenio, et judicio; thesauros inveniet latentes sub specie egestatis, sapientiam in simplicitate, divinitatem in humanitat.*"[25] But the most relevant assertion within the rhetorical coherence of Vives or Pérez de Chinchón's preaching was to claim that the alleged animadversion of Muslims to debate about their religion was a sympton of irrationality as well as a sign of distrust in their internal congruence. Pérez de Chinchón pointed out that there was no human being without reason, no reason without debate, and no debate without rhetoric and dialectic:

> Pues luego, si soys hombre, holgad de poner en razón vuestra ley; holgad que se platique; holgad que se sepa. Mirad, hermanos, una de las cosas de que no debe haver verguença el hombre en este mundo es de publicar su ley. Si huys de publicar vuestra ley, si la escondéys por los rincones, señal es que no es buena; señal es que estáys engañados. (…) vete a los hombres sabios, a los que leen las sanctas scripturas y los prophetas de Dios, y pregúntales, platica con ellos, que ellos te enseñaran la buena ley.[26]

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22. See Q3:18-20. These assertions had been used e.gr. by Peter the Venerable (2016), *«Contra sectam Saracenorum*. Against the sect of the Saracens» in *Writings agaisnt the Saracens*, translated by Irven M. Resnick. The Fathers of the Church. Mediaeval Continuation. Volume 16. Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, pp. 81-86.
23. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 94.
24. Vives, Juan Luis (1790), *De veritate Fidei Christianae*, p. 16.
25. Vives, Juan Luis (1790), *De veritate Fidei Christianae*, pp. 16-7.
26. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 93.

In short, a given individual who does not debate and use reason is simply an animal. This attitude would mirror not only the recognition of Islam's weakness, but even worse, the disparagement of human uniqueness:

> La differencia del hombre a la bestia sólo está en la razón. (…) Y la razón se pierde quando el hombre no usa della, para lo que fue criado. El hombre, según la philosophía política, fue criado para común paz y concordia con otro hombre. Y por esto lo llaman animal razonal, amigable. Y, según la theología, fue criado el hombre, como dize sant Agustín, para entender, amar, posseer y gozar el summo bien. Luego quel hombre, ni como animal razonal político bive en paz y concordia, ni como animal divino busca la divinidad, sale de razón y se haze bestia.[27]

This anthropology led Vives and Perez de Chinchón to defend pacifism vividly by affirming that forced conversion should be considered another form of irrationality. That standpoint could explain the mood and tone of Pérez de Chinchón's preaching: "nuestro señor Dios a nadie quiere hazer fuerça. Muéstranos el camino derecho de nuestra salvación. Si no anduviéremos por él, nuestra será la culpa y no suya, que para esto nos dio entendimiento y razón, y nos hizo hombres y no bestias."[28] This mental disposition, which turned the precept of love into the password of rationality, defined and made singular the pacifism of the whole Vivesian movement identifiable in those Vives' words:

> Amandi sunt Turcae, nempe homines, amandi ab iis qui illi voci volunt parere: *Diligite inimicos vestros* (Mt. 5, 44), illis, ergo, quod veri est amoris, bene cupiemus, illudque optabimus unicum et maximum bonum, agnitionem veritatis, quod nunquam assequentur conviciis aut maledictis nostris, sed eo modo, quo nos ipsi ope ac beneficio sumus Apostolorum consecuti, rationibus naturae et humanis ingeniis congruentibus, integritate vitae, modestia, moderatione, inculpatis moribus, ut nos ipsi priores re ostendamus quae profitemur et jubemus, ne a fide nostrorum dictorum arceat eos tam discrepans vita.[29]

Perez de Chinchón glossed the words of Vives in the following way:

> […] que es mucha razón que todos los hombres quantos ay en el mundo tengamos paz y concordia y amistad y amor unos con otros, y que no hazerlo es yr contra razón natural y contra la voluntad y mandamiento de Dios, que nos manda en su ley que no nos tomemos unos con otros. Y porque veáys que esto es assí, mirad que los dos más principales mandamientos que Dios pone en su ley son éstos: el primero que amemos a Dios sobre todas las cosas, porque es padre y señor de todos; el segundo

27. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 398.
28. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 89.
29. Vives, Juan Luis (1784), *De concordia et discordia in humano genere* in *J.L.V. Opera Omnia*, V, p. 390.

mandamiento es que amemos a nuestros próximos como a nosotros mesmos (Mk. 12, 28-31).[30]

Hence, "[…] el christiano, para hazer lo que le manda su ley, no ha de querer mal al moro ni al judío ni al gentil en quanto son hombres. Antes ha de rogar a Dios por ellos, y rogar que Dios los trayga a buena ley y los ponga en el verdadero camino de salvación."[31] Without a doubt, this notion of love forced Pérez de Chinchón to mould the traditional anti-Islamic arguments into a new shape. As stated previously, this shape, outline and context were the scope of the Church's reform within the ethical and philosophical framework of Erasmian Catholicism. Some of these postulates seem to presage the current inter-confessional dialogues based upon the rule of mutual respect and pacific coexistence. Pérez de Chinchón recalled that "Fe y buenas obras son las armas del christiano."[32] These Christian weapons were interpreted as an especially valuable exigency for the clergy who were responsible for a general Church's reform:

> Y nosotros, señores, a quien la boca de Dios llama gente sancta, linage escogido, real sacerdocio (1P 2,9), sirvamos de lo que somos, que es ser pilotos, y guías desta armada spiritual. Acordaos de lo que al nombre de cada uno nos obliga, pues *epíscopo* quiere decir atalayador; *canónigo regular*, rector regidor; *vicario* como veedor; *cura* como el que tiene cuydado, para que cada uno de nosotros sea atalaya, regla, vista, cuydado, para guiar, regir, ver, procurar estas naos que están a nuestro cargo, que son las ánimas de los fieles christianos.[33]

The assumption of these postulations obliged Pérez de Chinchón to defend the so-called propositional preaching. The *recipe* was evident:

> […] como a plantas nuevas empeçar a regarlas y labrarlas con el agua y doctrina de las sanctas scripturas, enseñando la ley y fe de nuestro señor Jesu Christo, muy particularmente quién la dio, cómo extendió, qué cosas manda, y qué cosas promete, y qué milagros ha tenido, y qué orden llevan los libros della, y si es honesta, verdadera, justa, spiritual, ygual, clara, alta, misteriosa y digna para ser llamada ley de Dios.[34]

As a result, the preaching had to be focused on knowledge of Scriptures, on absolute faith in Christ, and obviously on Christ's imitation. These three pilars run through and form the essence of Erasmian Catholicism. They might be carefully applied to the whole of Christianity formed by *moriscos*, *conversos*, and *cristianos*

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30. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 100.
31. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 101.
32. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 400.
33. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), pp. 76-77.
34. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 369.

viejos. As we have seen, the testimonies of those goals are Pérez de Chinchón's *Antialcorano*[35] and *Diálogos Christianos*.[36]

4. Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón

Pérez de Chinchón's catechetical works appear to be a preaching manual providing tactics and topics rather than sermons or dialogues actually pronounced or performed. As Pons Fuster affirms, Pérez de Chinchón "pretendía suministrar material doctrinal a todos los rectores y a las personas eclesiásticas que se encargaban de la conversión y de la evangelización de los moriscos."[37] That *material doctrinal* was not different from the concerns usually raised against Islam since the Middle Ages. Pérez de Chinchón's particularity, as demonstrated above, lay in his way of arranging them in conformance with the anthropological, political and theological postulations of Spanish Vivesianism. The convergence of those principles determined a deductive method according to Erasmian postulates and to the following passage from Cervantes:

> […] les entro por razón natural, la qual no pueden negar, y, quando la autoridad concierta y viene bien con la razón natural, entonces se la traygo. Las materias por donde empieço son comunes a todas gentes, para que, como de principios naturales, vengamos a lo particular y, concediendo lo primero que es general, quando vengo a lo particular, que es la falsedad de su ley, ya los tengo presos, de manera que, o han de yr contra la razón natural que concedieron, o han de conoscer la falsedad de su ley.[38]

The requirement of beginning with general and universal arguments to try to reach an agreement later –followed by a step by step conversion– represents Cervantes' mathematical method, whose ostensible purpose may be summarized by urging Muslims to accept moral universals. In a second phase, those universals would be identified with the Christian faith, so Muslims could become constrained apparently either to agree with Christians or to risk being compared to irrational animals.

It is not necessary to clarify that the logic of this syllogism is valid only from the perspective of a Christian preacher who, trusting in a supposed universality of logic, assumes that the adherence of Muslims to their faith could be undermined intellectually through charitable example or simply by emphasizing faith in a miraculous and divine Christ. It is not my goal to criticize Pérez de Chinchón for his naïve

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35. *Libro llamado Antialcorano, que quiere decir contra el Alcorán de Mahoma, repartido en XXVI sermones*. Valencia, Juan Joffré (?), 1532. 2nd edition Salamanca, Andrés y Juan Renaut, 1595.

36. *Diálogos christianos contra la secta mahomética y contra la pertinacia de los judíos: compuestos por el maestro Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón canónigo de Gandía: obra nuevamente compuesta muy útil y provechosa*, Valencia, Francisco Díaz Romano, 1536.

37. Pons Fuster, Francisco (2000), *Introducción*, in Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 23.

38. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 82.

procedure, because such an anachronistic approach would impede the inquiry into the content of his books. This paper's objective is simpler and attempts to unveil the reasons underlying Pérez de Chinchón choice of sermon settings.

In this regard, this scholar established his two chief convictions in the first two sermons of the *Antialcorano*. These primary bases are (1) the classical definition of a human being as a rational animal, and (2) the premise that society only lives in harmony and peace when ruled by reason. Reason and social peace are aknowledged as gifts from God in the third sermon. Once this notion has been established, the next question will be how human beings could act rationally and build social peace. Pérez de Chinchón's answer referred to the concept of wisdom in the fourth sermon. In fact, he described wisdom as being the ultimate goal of humankind. Shortly afterwards, in the fifth sermon, he posited that wisdom was necessary to make human salvation possible. Finally, in the sixth sermon, after having defended Christian wisdom, he underscored that this was a sort of faith.

In this way, he conjoined reason with faith through a wisdom manifested in social peace. As is evident, he slowly strove to bring Muslims to conversion by convincing them that he had verified that the Christian faith was based upon natural and rational principles. In addition to this, he asserted that only this faith could build a peaceful society. The relationship between rationality, wisdom, and faith is explicit in another essential notion of Pérez de Chinchón's mindset, namely his concept of the law, which he developed in the seventh sermon.

Underscoring the concept of law would allow Pérez de Chinchón to start confronting Christian and Islamic beliefs in detail. Indeed, by considering religion as law, he could emphasize the principles, rituals, and customs of each religion and determine the rational degree of each one. Subequently, he subjected Muslim law to a strict –and certainly biased analysis– in the eighth sermon with the sole aim of comparing it to Christian law. The next *logical* step was to scrutinize the Christian faith in the ninth sermon following the guide of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. This comprehensive confrontation between Christianity and Islam was only the beginning of another debate, namely, the usual opposing arguments, such as the validity of circumcision and baptism as visible signs of each law. He developed this subject in the tenth and eleventh sermons.

With the same intention of contrasting the rationality of Christianity and Islam, the Gospel and the Qu'ran were juxtaposed in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth sermons, and, in fifteenth and sixteenth ones, the personality of Jesus and Muḥammad, in order to resolve the question about the authority that Christian and Islamic sacred books merited. Yet this confrontation between Jesus and Muḥammad did not suffice, and so Perez de Chinchón continued to raise a series of traditional issues, whose only function was to discredit Islam.

To conclude, the most relevant matter cannot be the arguments themselves, but the fact that the Valencian author resorted to them after having constructed a logical edifice to discern between rational and irrational religious behaviors. It is not realistic to look for a modern conception of tolerance within Pérez de Chinchón's books. That would not be the best way to understand the humanist strategy of dealing with

the Muslims. This paper considers that it is more appropiate to highlight the specific moments in which these anti-Islamic prejudices appear within the textual coherence of Pérez de Chinchón's writings. Furthermore, the author's mood and tone must be also considered.

Attending to these two factors and notwithstanding previous occurrences of the traditional anti-Islamic polemic, Pérez de Chinchón postponed this crucial debate and these common overgeneralisations about dogmatics and moral matters to the final sections of his sermons. At that point, among the dogmatic topics, he reproduced the standard dissensions over the Trinity, Christ's dual nature, his miracles, or his passion and resurrection; among moral subjects, the leitmotifs of Muslim polygamy and holy war carried a huge weight. The closing reference to all those issues could only aim to highlight the absolute rationality of Christianity. In this sense, he presented the call to conversion together with an intellectual recognition of Christian philosophical superiority, under which supposedly lay a theological and soteriological superiority.

As a result, every evaluation of Pérez de Chinchón's preaching should derive from its contemporary and personal coordinates. Furthemore, it is indisputable that his way of thinking responded to Erasmian Christian principles, whose first premise was the need for a comprehensive Church reform. Without this reform, Christianity would fail as a religion, as an ethical corpus, and even as a force to construct Europe's nations. For that reason, this paper concludes that Pérez de Chinchón and Juan Luis Vives' books should be characterized principally for their pedagogical value. The apologetic issues and the anti-Islamic prejudices are clearly subordinated to the effort to create a peaceful society. Although it would be impossible not to find the traditional preconceived bias against Islam in a sixteenth-century Christian preaching text, the most outstanding feature of the Erasmian humanists is the assumption that these prejudices were strongly connected to a sort of human weakness and to the lack of education. Those premises turned every single debate about Muslims into a debate on humankind. This particular circumstance led the Valencian author to end to his sermons addressing the entire human race:

> Peccador es el hombre que ama más reyno, imperio, fama, riqueza, deleytes, hermosura, alabança, muger, hijos, padres, parientes, amigos, salud, descanso, delicadez, ygnorancia, passatiempos, vanquetes y murmuraciones, crueldad, lisonja, mentira, discordia y guerram que a Dios y a su ley, por la qual todo lo deuría dexar. Y como no lo hazen ni christianos ni moros, por esso ay guerras y discordias en el mundo.[39]

Thus, if Pérez de Chinchón began his work seeking human universals and making explicit that rationality, peace, wisdom and faith were the real divine gifts to humankind, he concluded his *sermons* based on the reasons and evidence demonstrating that a peaceful society is impossible not only because individuals do not

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39. Pérez de Chinchón, Bernardo (2000), p. 351.

profess a certain faith, but also because they do not act in accordance with the most basic principles of rationality. And that reality affected *christianos* and *moros* alike. This statement embodies the most conspicuous singularity of humanist preaching which, as mentioned, locates the lack of rationality and morality at the heart of all wars, disputes and hatred. Thus, the call for Muslim conversion was also a call for everybody, Muslims and Christians, to convert to the universal reason and to act in accordance with the authentic values and the basic principles of ethics.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated, firstly, that Pérez de Chinchón adopted the Spanish tradition of proposing cathechesis, which emerged in the fourteeth century, and secondly, that he acted in accordance by sharing the postulates of his compatriot Juan Luis Vives and the general mindset of Spanish Erasmian movement. With that background, he enlivened the traditional anti-Islamic arguments by trying to overcome all kinds of apologetic tendencies. His ultimate purpose was to rebuild European society upon a bedrock of morality. To make this come true, he considered that the conversion of the Muslims was as essential as the Church's reform. The main purpose of this equation was to establish the humanist tenet and confidence both in human reason and in the rationality of Christian truth. These beliefs led him to think naïvely that Christian reason was persuasive enough to conquer the heart of the Muslims. Nevertheless, he failed as well as all the other attempts by persuasion or force failed. They forgot that faith is not only a question of reason or wisdom, but also a matter of culture and a feeling of belonging to a given community. In this context, all kinds of arguments, even those raised with the best pedagogical intentions, were doomed to end up sounding belligerent or blatantly apologetic.