

## Historiographic and Iconographic Crypto-Narratives in Lope de Vega's *El niño inocente de la Guardia* (1598-1603)

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When considering the representation of Judaism in the *comedias* of Lope de Vega, one play often cited is *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* given the perceptible Anti-Semitism pervading the work. Generally speaking, critical discussion about this play can be divided into three broad camps. The first classic argument about the play comes from María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, who observes how Judaism and Christianity serve as polar opposites dramatically concluding: “El niño, total inocencia, por una parte, y los judíos, total culpa, por otra, llenan a la perfección los requisitos que no permiten la existencia de un héroe trágico. (Malkiel 1972, 98). Even though critics such as Lida de Malkiel highlight the fervent anti-Semitism of the play, Catherine Swietlicki and Andrew Herskovits provide more nuanced arguments about the representation of Jews. On the one hand, Herskovits demonstrates how Lope appropriates conventions of the *comedia costumbrista* to create more burlesque representations of Jews. Secondly, Swietlicki explores the dialogical vision existing in a series of Lope's *comedias* among them: *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* and *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, in an effort to analyze other characteristics of Lope's *comedia*, Anthony J. Herrell, explores certain artistic devices present in the play. In addition, Christophe Leclerc and Jacques Lezra have analyzed the magical elements of the play, the first from a religious point of view and the second from psychoanalytic and philosophical perspectives.<sup>2</sup>

Other critics have examined the source material of Lope's play. For example, according to Fernando Baños Vallejo, the play commemorates the crimes committed by the *converso* Benito García, who after assassinating a Christian child in 1490, was burned at the stake as part of an *auto de fe* in Ávila on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1491.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this possible historical source, critics have also highlighted a number of literary precursors. For instance, Edward Glaser underscores Jerónimo Ramírez's *La memoria muy verdadera de la pasión y martirio que el glorioso mártir, inocente niño, llamado Cristóbal padeció* (1544) and Cristóbal Yepes' *La historia de la muerte y glorioso martyrio del Sancto Inocente* (1585) as possible sources. Contradicting Glaser, Luis de Cañigal Cortes showed that indeed Lope did not use these sources directly but rather utilized a summary of these works prepared by Yepes published in 1594. More recently, Abraham Madroñal has demonstrated how a variety of chronicles also influenced Lope's drama namely Sebastián de Horozco, who describes a version of the Toledan festival celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in his *Relaciones históricas toledanas* (1548-1572) and Jerónimo Román de la Higuera's *Historia eclesiástica de la ciudad de Toledo* (1600).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information, consult Herskovits 251-282 or Swietlicki 205-226.

<sup>2</sup> More specifically, Leclerc explores the relationship between *El Niño inocente de la Guardia* and the *auto sacramental* genre while Lezra, attempts, without much success, to study how phantasmagorical elements present in both *El niño inocente* and *Macbeth* lead to similar ethical judgments. For more information, see Lezra 153-180.

<sup>3</sup> The veracity of this event is also actually hotly debated among critics. On one extreme stands Mercliano Menéndez y Pelayo who believes in the historical veracity of the events. On the other extreme we have Lida de Malkiel 1972 sustaining that the ritual murder is merely a myth, among many, propagated in order to justify the expulsion of the Jews in 1492.

<sup>4</sup> Madroñal mentions specifically *El Hamete de Toledo* and *El último godo* as being inspired by Román de la Higuera's *Historia eclesiástica de Toledo* (1601-1700).

In addition to its themes being controversial for Siglo de Oro critics, scholars have also intensely debated when exactly this play was first represented. Jacques Lezra has proposed that Lope wrote the *comedia* between 1603 and 1618. Elaine Canning, following the chronology established by S. Grinwold Morley and Courtney Bruerton, dates the *comedia* between 1598 and 1608 but also adds it was probably represented around 1603. Given all of these arguments, for the purposes of this dissertation, I accept the position offered by Madroñal, who in a 2015 article on *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* proposes that the drama was written in 1596 and formed a part of Toledo's efforts to convince the Vatican to canonize many of the city's patron saints, among them being El Niño de la Guardia.

Taking these studies as my point of departure, I will suggest in this article that critics have ignored two crucial elements when studying *El Niño inocente de la Guardia* as a whole and the Jewish question in particular: first, how Toledo is represented as the ideal Christian city and second how this representation impacts both Old Christians and *conversos*. Toward this end, I propose that in *El Niño inocente de la Guardia* the conflict between Judaism and Christianity transforms from being a purely historiographical and exegetical debate in the first act to an iconographic one in Acts II and III. More specifically, in Act I, spectators witness how Saint Dominic and Queen Isabella justify the arrival of the Inquisition in Toledo by alluding to historical, social, iconographic and exegetical debates surrounding the purity of blood and the status of the *converso* within Early Modern Spanish society and Toledo in particular. Later on in Act I, these forces are challenged by two Jews, Hernando and Quintanar, who justify their capture of the Christian child Juanico Pasamontes by constructing their own historiography for the *conversos* and possible Crypto-Jews in the audience, alluding to histories written by expelled Jews after the 1492 expulsion. As the play moves to the second and third acts, the *comedia* emphasizes the aesthetic stakes of the conflict between Judaism and Christianity employing the discourses of Jewish blindness and the magical cave to theorize about the nature of conversion in iconographic terms. To prove these arguments, I examine to what degree certain characters Judaize or perform Judaism on stage. In the process of Judaizing, certain "crypto-narratives," or readings only perceptible to certain spectators depending on their religious frame of reference can be seen. By looking at the plays of Lope de Vega through this lens, this study introduces a new methodology with which we can examine how Judaism and Christianity as performed phenomena in Early Modern Spain.

*El niño inocente de la Guardia* begins with Isabella's arrival in Toledo accompanied by the Spanish Inquisition. Due to their presence in Toledo and in La Guardia, two Jewish characters, Hernando and Quintanar, take it upon themselves to take revenge for this act by planning the kidnapping and ritual murder of the Christian child Juanico Pasamontes, which the play represents typologically as a Christ figure. The second act begins with the capture of Juanico during a Toledan festival celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, a space where Juanico's parents ask the Virgin Mary to descend to find their son. During the third act, Hernando and Quintanar murder the Christian child in a ceremony imitating the *Ecce Homo* ceremony narrated in the Gospel of John. The work concludes with Juanico's miraculous arrival into Heaven as the Saintly Child of La Guardia. Two allegorical characters, Reason and Understanding, then offer Toledan audiences a theological justification for the miracle they just witnessed on stage.

### **The Deification of Isabella: The Presence of Purity of Blood Debates in the First Act**

*El Niño inocente de la Guardia* conceives of the theological and religious conflict between Judaism and Christianity in light of important debates surrounding the two religions. On the one hand, we see configured first in the character of Isabella a historiographical position emphasizing

above all else the Christian purity of Spain, emblemized through the metaphor of blood. On the other hand, through the Jewish character Hernando, spectators see dramatized certain devices present in histories compiled by Jews outside of Spain after they were expelled in 1492. At the same time, each monologue analyzed in this section includes crypto-narratives alluding to both the Christian and Jewish mythological presence in Toledo.

We see the presence of this Christianized historiography when Isabella appears for the first time on stage and declares:

No puede la religión,  
 Deste contagio tocada,  
 Crecer con limpia intención,  
 Que desta mancha infamada  
 Iba tomando ocasión [...]  
 Estaba España ofendida  
 Desta gente mal nacida,  
 Grande señal de pobreza,  
 Remiendos en su limpieza. (I, v. 26-30, 36-39)<sup>5</sup>

If we consider this representation in light of the *converso* condition in Spain, one can see how Lope's Isabella distinguishes herself from other representations of the Catholic Queen found in the fifteenth and sixteenth century historiographies. For example, Nicasio Salvador Miguel, Raphael Dominguez, and David Gitlitz explain how the chronicles represent her as a patron of the "converso arts", supporting various *converso* authors such as Diego de San Pedro and Fernando de Rojas since many *conversos* participated in the court culture of the late fifteenth century. However, despite these distinct representations, the most common literary depiction of Isabella is that of the Catholic Queen that we see in this opening monologue. Maria Y. Caba explains:

*El niño inocente de la Guardia*, por su parte, se centra en Isabel y Fernando, en su protagonismo en la puesta en acción de la Inquisición y en la expulsión del pueblo judío. Al reconocer la importancia de Isabel en la mitología fundacional del imperio español, Lope intenta someter a la Reina a un proceso de domesticación y divinización cuyo efecto es suprimir o justificar aquellas acciones que considera contraproducentes para la eficacia y perenidad del mito. (Caba 25)

I agree with Caba insofar as this monologue represents Isabella as a divinely inspired Catholic queen. This representation is best seen through the expression "limpia intención" which recalls for spectators the debates surrounding the purity of blood. Initially, the *limpieza de sangre* laws developed out of a need to distinguish socially between Old Christians and new believers or *conversos*. Old Christian church officials such as Juan Benito de Guardiola in Madrid, Bartólome Ximenez Patón in Salamanca and Juan Martínez Saliceo of the Toledo Cathedral painted the *converso* as a threat to the social structure if they were permitted the same social flexibility as Old Christians.<sup>6</sup> These debates were also waged on the doctrinal level as Old Christian noblemen used scripture to develop a theory that the *converso* represented a "mancha étnica" to the purity of Old Christian blood. Therefore, the expression "limpia intención" could refer to this social desire by

<sup>5</sup> The quotations from *El niño inocente de la Guardia* are cited from Fernando Baños Vallejo's edition of the play.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Guardiola, Chapters 6-7.

Old Christians to rid the body politic of this social and doctrinal stain. In fact, critics such as José Antonio Maravall in *Teatro y literatura en la sociedad barroca* has famously postulated that playwrights such as Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca participated in this effort to propagate purity of blood by transmitting these doctrines through their plays. *El Niño inocente de la Guardia* can be read as one of the prime examples of Maravall's theory especially as it relates to the history of Toledo and its relationship to these debates.

Toledo, ever since the 1440 Old Christian attack on the Jewish quarter of the city resulting in the first purity of blood laws, was the epicenter of this fear. Fernando Martínez Gil develops the idea that even though Toledo was a multi-cultural city insofar as many important figures possessed Jewish and Moorish roots, there also existed an uneasy co-existence between Old Christians, *conversos* and *moriscos*. Take for example a 1566 edict passed by the City Council asking that the “ocupantes del primer banco [ser] caballeros hijosdalgo de sangre”, sin matrícula de “oficio mecánico ni vil”; el banco de ciudadanos se reservaba también a los hidalgos, “o a lo menos cristianos viejos, limpios, sin raza de moro ni judío” (Martínez Gil 344-345). Philip II later reaffirmed this statute on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1567, thus making it fully enforced and influential during Lope's stay in the city. One of the central spaces where this law gained prominence was the Toledo Cathedral, which staged various debates about the purity of blood. Indeed, church officials such as Diego Simancas and Baltasar Porreño would use myths to condemn the *conversos* and one of the central myths used was the crucifixion of the Christian child of La Guardia. In this sense, one could say that Lope, by dramatizing this *comedia* in and around the Toledo Cathedral is participating in these ecclesiastical debates surrounding the purity of Christian blood.

In addition to the power the play concedes to Isabella, the drama also adds a prophetic quality to her character when she sees Saint Dominic in a vision later on in the first act where he declares:

Esclarecida Isabel,  
 católica y noble rama  
 de los reyes de Castilla  
 Y de los godos de España:  
 Yo soy Domingo, no solo  
 de tu misma tierra y patria,  
 pero de tu sangre misma [...]  
 los ladrinos que después  
 di en España, Italia y Francia,  
 fueron sermones, consejos  
 y evangélicas palabras;  
 hecha el fuego, con quien  
 después abrase tan varias  
 sectas como otro Sansón  
 de campos heresiarcas  
 Fui el primer inquisidor. (I, v. 85-93, 110-117)

In this monologue, as we saw in Isabella's first appearance, the play favors a Christian metanarrative over a Jewish one. However, it is important to see here how Saint Dominic appropriates Old Testament tropes in order to justify the Queen's power. This argument is apparent if we consider the multiple ways the lines “otro Sansón de campos heresiarcas” can be

read. This allusion to Samson and the destruction of Philistine lands in Judges 15 is important for the development of Isabella's character given that Samson in the Bible is often depicted as an ideal for masculinity. By giving masculine characteristics to Isabella, Lope legitimizes her for an Old Christian audience who would conceptualize the role of men and women using these Renaissance conceptions. Furthermore, with Saint Dominic's reference to the destruction of Philistine lands, spectators could relate this Biblical act analogically with the elimination of the Jews by the Inquisition as of 1490.

In addition to granting a certain masculine power to Isabel's character, the fact that it is St. Dominic making the prophecy also opens the door for certain iconographic readings of the passage and the play as a whole. In order to understand the impact that these images would have on an audience, it is useful to step back and consider the symbiotic relationship that existed between the plastic and the dramatic arts in Early Modern Toledo.<sup>7</sup> As Javier Portus Pérez has suggested, it was often the case that the plastic arts –retables in churches, sculptures and paintings – would often form a part of public city festivals. Based on the theory of the utility and functionality of the image in a public forum popularized by such artists as Francisco Pacheco in his three-volume *Arte de la pintura* of 1638, these paintings would be used to teach illiterate audiences the lessons of Catholic doctrine (Portus Pérez 22). In fact, as Antonio Sánchez Jiménez suggests, artistic treatises distinguished between a type of painting (called in the Siglo de Oro *historias pintadas*) and sculpture (or *historias reveladas*) and argued that they were more direct than literature and thus more effective to relay religious teachings to lay audiences (Sánchez Jiménez 146).

One of the major proponents of this instrumental theory of art was El Greco, who not only lived in Toledo during Lope's Toledan period, but was also a student of Pacheco (who visited the artist in Toledo in 1611). In fact, according to Gregorio Marañón, both Lope de Vega and El Greco were considered key intellectuals in the city and could have coincided on a variety of occasions, although Sánchez Jiménez mentions that there is no documentary proof that El Greco and Lope maintained any sort of relationship. The first arena in which they may have coincided was during meetings of the literary and artistic academies. Similar to the salons taking place in Madrid around the same time, these literary academies would convene in aristocratic houses to debate issues and stage competitions and thus were the primary method for poets and artists to be recognized by their peers. Marañón highlights how those attending the meetings called El Greco the "Pintor académico", thus proving his participation in these events. (Marañón 97). Additionally, according to Madroñal and Julio Velez Sainz, Lope de Vega was also admitted and participated actively in many academies, participating in Madrid's *ciclo de Heliconia*, and in the Toledan salons as well, taking advantage of his relationship with Baltasar Elisio de Medinilla to gain entry and ultimately becoming according to Medinilla, "el vega de la Poesía" (Marañón 98, Velez Sainz 107-109).

Additionally, another avenue in which Lope de Vega and El Greco could have coincided was during the *Justas poéticas*, which often formed the centerpiece of many city festivals held throughout the year. For example, Toledo held elaborate festivals in 1583 (to celebrate the return of Santa Leocadia's remains to the city), in 1606, (to commemorate the birth of Philip IV the previous year), and in 1613 to celebrate the beatification of Santa Teresa de Ávila. For this reason, Sánchez Jiménez has previously explored how some of Lope's poetry might have been inspired by El Greco's religious art. To prove this argument, the scholar discusses the ekphrastic relationship between El Greco's *El Plano de Toledo* and Lope's *A la descendición de nuestra señora*, works that were produced for the festivals honoring the birth of Philip IV in 1605.

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<sup>7</sup> The bibliography on painting and drama being sister arts is extensive. For an excellent critical review, consult Sánchez Jiménez 16-146.

Taking this context about the didactic uses of visual art into account, by prophesying about St. Dominic in particular, Isabella introduces two models of religious obedience and piety that audience members would recognize through allusions to iconographic traditions that include St. Dominic as its central figure. The first is St. Dominic as the “primer inquisidor,” since as we know, in addition to founding the Dominican order, St. Dominic was also known as the religious official who presided over the first auto de fe in Toledo in 1495, an event depicted by Pedro Berruete most famously in his *St. Dominic presiding over an auto de fe* (Figure 1). Additionally, and more contemporaneously, El Greco also contributes to this tradition but instead of depicting him as the “primer inquisidor,” for El Greco, St. Dominic is the exemplar of the penitent worshipper as we see in his *St. Dominic in prayer* (Figure 2). In fact, according to José Álvarez Lopera, El Greco was commissioned to create a series of representations of St. Dominic for the Toledo Cathedral around 1600. As such, since this play was produced inside the Toledo Cathedral, it would be entirely possible to presume that audience members would see St. Dominic speaking to Isabella alongside El Greco’s depiction of St. Dominic praying. In this way, both Lope and El Greco reinforce not only the importance of the arrival of the Inquisition within the play but also the importance of devout religious piety, teachings that the saint configures both dramatically and iconographically.

### **A Marranist Discourse: Hernando’s Historiographic Response in the First Act**

With this Christian historiography established, we can now concentrate on how Jewish characters in the play, Hernando, Benito and Quintanar who live in the outskirts of Toledo in La Guardia, take revenge for the arrival of the Inquisition by capturing Juanico Pasamontes. In the process, these characters introduce another vision opposing the one introduced by Isabella and Saint Dominic. In order to understand more precisely the goals of the Jews in the play, it is useful to recall the distinction made by Paul Ricoeur between the agents of a narrative who control it and the victims of the narrative who experience the story more passively. At first glance, one could argue that Isabella functions as the agent of her own story, while the Jews are the passive victims. If we explore the consequences of the distinction made by the French philosopher, we see how historiography created by victims is distinct from the stories fostered by agents. Ricoeur elaborates:

Fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator. Eyes to see and to weep. The present state of the literature on the Holocaust provides ample proof of this. Either one counts the cadavers or one tells the story of the victims. Between those two options lies the historical explanation, one that is difficult if not impossible to write [...] This almost negative epic preserves the history of suffering, on the scale of peoples, as epic and history in its beginnings transformed the ephemeral glory of heroes into a lasting fame. Fiction is placed in the service of the unforgettable. (Ricoeur 188-189)

Although Ricoeur is thinking of the Holocaust when constructing his argument, one could claim the Jews in *El Niño inocente de la Guardia* possess similar characteristics of the “horrified narrator” postulated by Ricoeur. Rafael Carrasco has proposed that due to the mass conversions of Jews beginning in 1391 and their subsequent expulsion in 1492, Jews wrote their own historiographies to understand their new status more broadly. Carrasco argues that these “marrano” historiographies (such as the stories of expelled Jews written by Josef ha Cohen) responded explicitly to Counter-Reformation discourses representing Jews as the mortal enemies

of Spain and as the Anti-Christ. Taking this information into account, we will analyze in this section how Hernando functions as a victimized narrator who uses devices from Jewish historiographies written after the Expulsion to justify the capture of Juanico Pasamontes and narrate a history which takes into account the victims as the well as the conquerors.

Hernando begins with the following observations:

[...]  
 Perdimos nuestro imperio y sacerdocio  
 el templo santo, la divina exedra  
 de Solomón quedó por tierra en ocio,  
 cubrió su trono ebúrneo inútil hiedra,  
 al pórtico de todo su negocio  
 aun lo le queda piedra sobre piedra,  
 ni la ciudad del rey, que a todo su suelo  
 juráis hacer de vuestro Christo abuelo  
 [...]  
 Ya nueva Inquisición nos busca y daña,  
 y penetra el secreto más incierto;  
 pensábamos por esta tierra extraña  
 que, de Domingo el perro negro muerto,  
 no hubiera quien ladra, mas ya ladra  
 por uno que faltó, toda la escuadra. (I, v. 330-337, 340-345)

In my view, we can interpret this monologue as a *converso* response to the historiographical vision offered by Isabella and Santo Domingo's subsequent prophesy. This point is seen most clearly if we relate Hernando's observation about "esta tierra extraña" to the *conversos* and the crypto-Jews who live in a land who does not recognize them. Secondly, with the lines "Ya nueva Inquisición nos busca y daña", Hernando describes the process whereby the Inquisition established earlier in the play pursues Jews in order to eliminate them. Thirdly, the clause "y penetra el secreto más incierto," Hernando could be describing the condition of Crypto-Jews viewing the production. Fourthly, when Hernando describes Saint Dominic as a "perro negro muerto," he could be alluding to the common stereotype describing Jews as dogs, but in this case using the stereotype to describe Christians.

At the same time, if we focus on the lines "el templo santo, la divina exedra de Solomon," we can perhaps perceive a potential Jewish reading. On the one hand, according to Baños Vallejo in his edition of the play, these lines hearkens us back to the portal of Solomon described in 1 Kings 7. Carrasco, on the other hand, illustrates how certain Jewish authors such as Isaac Abravael, Solomon Ben Varga and Solomon Usque compared the expulsion of the Jews to the destruction of the Temple of Solomon. Given this, we can claim that this allusion helps Hernando contextualize the suffering of the *conversos* in the play within the context of other western metanarratives, as the seventeenth century Jewish historians did.

Furthermore, as Josef Chayim Yerushalmi observes, in the Jewish historiographies written outside of the Iberian Peninsula, the Temple of Solomon served as a point of departure for an analysis of how Jewish historiographies dialogued with western metanarratives as Yerushalmi elaborates:

A final novelty is the renewed interest in the history of the nations, especially that of contemporary nations, in which a desire to know various aspects of non-Jewish history combines with an incipient recognition that Jewish destinies are affected by the interplay between certain of the great powers. (Yerushalmi 62-63)

A similar dialogue I would argue, takes place in this speech. With that said, in this monologue Hernando changes the Jewish perspective about exile that prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah offer. Instead of interpreting the exile of the Israelites as part of God's effort to punish the Jews, Hernando blames Christians when he conceptualizes the construction and destruction of the Temple in Christological terms, when he says at the beginning "perdimos nuestro imperio y sacerdocio".

When finishing his justification the capture of Juanico Pasamontes, Hernando once again recalls another element common in Baroque Jewish historiographies: the Messianic characteristics of his revenge. This argument is best revealed when Hernando declares:

El qué libró Jezabel y Elias,  
 A Daniel en el profundo lago,  
 a Israel del Gitano y sus porfías,  
 de Nabuc a Ananias y a Abdenago,  
 el que alargó los años de Ezequias,  
 y a Judic y Betulia del estragon  
 del ejercito fiero de Holofernes,  
 te de luz con que en todo te gobiernes  
 [...]  
 En tanto que las armas en las manos,  
 No hemos de hacer venganza conocida;  
 Aunque nos cubran elefantes feos,  
 Imitemos los fuertes macabeos. (I, v. 378-384, 390-393)

Through this catalogue of prophets, we can see how Hernando searches for the allegorical clue for the salvation of his people. More specifically, he alludes to prophets or historical figures that have been saved by Yahweh (the interlocutor of this monologue). He alludes first to Elias who had been liberated by Jezebel in Kings 18-19. He then refers to Daniel, who God saved from the lion's den in Daniel 6:16 and finally to Moses, who liberated the Jews from Egypt. From a figurative perspective, it is interesting to note how Hernando decides to end with an allusion to Moses, because if we were to assume that there was a prefigurative hermeneutic driving this monologue, Hernando would have begun with Moses. In my opinion, Hernando alludes to Exodus at the end because he wants to represent himself as a New Moses; in other words, a prophet who can liberate the Jews from their imposed exile and impose a new kind of law.

Nevertheless, if we interpret this catalog of prophets from a Christian perspective, we see how Hernando's prophetic project goes against the divine representation of Isabella that we saw earlier. In contrast to Isabella, Hernando wishes to present to Toledan audiences a different kind of historical vision, which emphasizes both the deplorable state of the Spanish Jews and his own messianic mission to liberate them.

### Iconographies of the Suffering Christ: Judaism as a Problem of Aesthetic Interpretation

With this plan presented by Hernando, the Jewish characters in the second act are successful in capturing Juanico Pasamontes. After Juanico's capture, Lope returns the play to Toledo and presents three separate laments in front of the Toledo Cathedral. In this section, we will analyze how the laments of Juanico's mother and a Blind Woman fulfill two objectives. First, in both pleas the play presents spectators with a Catholic model of reading the Bible, emphasizing a historical hermeneutics championed by the Gospel of Luke. Secondly, through the Blind Woman's laments, Lope presents the polemic between Judaism and Christianity as both a hermeneutical and iconographic conflict, allowing Christian exegesis to supersede Jewish readings of Scripture and of religious imagery.

When Juana Guindera, the mother of Juanico Pasamontes, appears in front of the *Puerta del Perdón* (Figure 3) we see how the play begins to fulfill this first goal:

Hermosa reina del cielo,  
 Que sobre esa reja estáis,  
 Como paloma, que dais  
 Oliva de gracia al suelo,  
 Por el dolor que sentistes  
 En Jerusalén el día  
 Que a vuestro Jesús perdistes,  
 y por el placer, María,  
 que con hallarle tuvistes,  
 que pues el dolor sentí,  
 sienta el placer, pues por verso  
 mi querido Juan perdí,  
 que quiero hallazgo ofreceros  
 si hay cosa de precio en mí. (II, v. 1344-1357)

One could say that through this passage Lope continues to represent Juanico as a Christ figure; in this case, recalling the doctrinal reading of Jesus and Jerusalem offered by the Gospel of Luke. Charles Homer Giblin offers us a way of interpreting Luke's doctrinal vision:

The doctrinal mode is many faceted, but tends to set in relief Jesus' work as prophet and savior, or more, specifically, as the just man who suffers unjustly and by his prayer- especially his prayerful death- brings forgiveness to sins. This latter mode of interpretation goes quite far in elucidating the messianic imperative as Luke develops it: the Messiah must suffer and die in order to achieve his mission, for such is the role of the prophetic Messiah. (Giblin 7)

With this context in mind, we can now examine how Juana Guindera justifies her asking for the Virgin's aid relating her situation to the parents of Jesus as told in Luke. Through the words "por el dolor que sentistes en Jerúsalen el día que a vuestro Jesús perdistes," the mother analogically relates herself to the Virgin Mary who cries out after Jesus dies and who laments after losing her child to the Jews. In a similar way, with this emphasis on the mother's pain, it is clear that the play depicts Juanico Pasamontes, the innocent child of La Guardia, as a Christ figure who suffers due to the sinful ways of Christians.

After the *planctus* of Juanico's parents a Blind Woman appears on stage and offers two monologues. In the first, she is both exegetically and aesthetically blind. However, in her second monologue, spectators can see that the play offers a path for Jews to gain spiritual illumination, through the correct interpretation of images and Scripture. The Blind Woman begins with the following:

La decimacuarta luna  
 del primer mes celebraban  
 los hebreos la gran fiesta  
 que se llamaba la Pascua,  
 por memoria de aquel día  
 en que pasaron las aguas  
 y salieron de cautivos  
 de Egipto y de penas tantas.  
 No obligaba a las mujeres;  
 Los varones obligaba,  
 En cumpliendo doce años,  
 Sin excusa, a no ser causa  
 Peligrosa enfermedad. (II, v. 1398-1410)

In this first speech, we see a shift from a purely exegetical conflict brewing between Judaism and Christianity in this play to a war waged not only theologically but also aesthetically. This claim is best seen if we examine the lines the references to Exodus in light of Medieval and Early Modern debates about the usefulness of art in interpreting Scripture. According to Robert Kessler, one of the ways in which Christians justified their rejection of Mosaic Law is by contending that Jewish iconoclasm, mandated by the Second Commandment, was not consistent throughout the Hebrew Bible. In fact, in an effort to justify the existence of their own art, Christian theologians such as John Italos and Leontus of Naples claimed that it was only through the materiality of certain objects, what they called "Moses icons," could Mosaic Law be established. They mention particularly the Tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, the Burning Bush and the Ark of the Covenant itself as prime examples of these "Moses Icons." Kessler in particular mentions that during the Middle Ages, for example, the Ark of the Covenant was depicted as a prefiguration of Christ, as both were treasures offered by God (Kessler 86-87). In this way, Christian theologians not only justified their own use of images in depicting Jesus but also used them to demonstrate the eventual supremacy of the Christian faith over Judaism and of the Law of Grace over Mosaic Law.

Taking this information into account, three readings of this monologue arise depending on the degree to which the Blind Woman truly believes in the words she utters. On the one hand, by alluding to Exodus, she could be a Christian who is aesthetically blind, engaging in a subtle defense of Christian art by alluding to Mosaic images such as the Parting of the Red Sea and the Passover. In this sense, the character is laying the allegorical groundwork for her monologue to come and also prefiguring the victory of the Spirit of Juanico Pasamontes over the Flesh emblemized by the Jews. In another way, we can interpret the Blind Woman as a Judaizing Christian. In this case, she would be a Christian who mentions the Old Testament figures in an effort to perform Judaism on stage for Toledan audiences. Following this reading, the Blind Woman could reflect the fears of Old Christian playgoers by dramatizing the question of how devoutly Old Christians believe

and appreciate Jesus' sacrifice (following Lucan hermeneutics). Lastly, if we claim that this character is indeed a flesh and blood Jew (like Hernando, Benito and Quintanar earlier in the play), she could be potentially offering a Jewish reading, which takes into account only Old Testament references. For example, instead of using the Christian Gregorian calendar, by referring to the "decimacuarta luna del primer mes" the Blind Woman marks Easter utilizing the Jewish lunar calendar; in other words, alluding to the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the festival day of Passover in the Hebrew tradition. Additionally, instead of reading Easter and Passover in the context of the Last Supper as a Christian would, this character emphasizes how Passover celebrates the liberation of the Jews from Egypt, recalling specifically how the Jews "pasaron las aguas". Lastly, if we interpret this first monologue as a lament or a petition to the Virgin, same as the others, one could conclude that the Blind Woman is pleading for liberation from Catholic Spain, reflecting the condition of the Crypto-Jews viewing the performance.

The importance of these options is further compounded if we examine the importance of the fact that the woman initially appears blind on stage. If she is indeed a Jewish character appearing in Toledo, she would be inherently blind because Jews, by their very nature in Early Modern Spain, would not be able to decipher the exegetical or iconographic signs correctly as they have not been saved by Jesus. By saying that the Blind Woman is Jewish demonstrates how the play designates Toledo as the city fit for Christians only, a trope that we see in other plays written during Lope's Toledan period such as *El Hamete de Toledo*. With that said, if the play thinks of her as a Judaizing Christian, then her blindness could be punishment for Judaizing within the Toledo city limits (whether that be the Toledo of the play or the Toledo where the play was performed). Furthermore, if she is Christian, then the Woman's blindness could be read metaphorically. In other words, this trope would connote that this is a Christian character that has not yet learned how to read Scripture through "the mind's eye."

Fortunately for the Blind Woman, her vision is restored and as a result, she is able to pronounce this second monologue.

Pero después de tres días  
 Le hallo en el templo, en que estaba  
 Enseñando los doctores,  
 Y díjole estas palabras:  
 "Hijo, por qué así lo hiciste?  
 [...]  
 No lo entendieron entonces,  
 mas la Virgen soberana  
 en su corazón divino  
 estas palabras guardaba.  
 Volviéronse a Nazaren  
 En el centro de su alma,  
 Con el Cordero perdido,  
 Que el cielo a los hombres gana. (II, v. 1438-1442, 1448-1455)

With this speech, we can see how the Blind Woman receives a certain amount of divine illumination both exegetically and iconographically by alluding to a series of Catholic references following the Gospel of Luke instead of embracing an Old Testament literalist hermeneutic. First, instead of representing the Jews as the Chosen People who received their liberation from Egypt,

she relates the Jews to the doctors in Luke who deceived Jesus. Second, instead of referring to the Passover as it occurred in Exodus, she alludes to an iconographic tradition depicting Jesus as a lost lamb. Take for example, Francisco de Zurbarán's *Agnus Dei* (1648), a painting vividly depicting Christ as a suffering lamb (Figure 4). By the end of this monologue, the play offers a model for divine illumination for those who need it. Kessler calls this process "supersession" which

[...] underlay Christian art not only because it demonstrated that Christianity has fully replaced Judaism (which itself generally opposed typological readings) that is, Christianity has made it a dead witness- but also because it embodied the very process by which a literal reading was transmuted into something spiritual. (Kessler 82)

Under this rubric, Toledo, represented allegorically in this passage by the Virgin Mary, protects and guides the believer toward divine illumination if the believer interprets the visions and the holy texts correctly using a Lucan Christian hermeneutic instead of a Jewish one. Also, exegetically speaking, the curing of the Blind Woman is also a recurring theme within the Synoptic Gospels appearing in Mark (10 46-52) as well as in the Gospel of Luke (18, 35-43). Both of these scenes, according to Alvarez Lópera intertextually allude to the prophecy of Isaiah 35 5-6: "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy?" (Álvarez Lopera 58) Thinking about divine illumination in this way, I would propose that by including the scene with the Blind Woman, Lope comments about the nature of theater, a genre that is emphasizes sight and hearing, and its potential to teach doctrine to the masses but also convert those who cannot see through their mind's eye.

### **Creating another Cave of Hercules: Christians and Jews as Victimized Readers**

With these historiographical and aesthetic conflicts in mind, in this section we will see Hernando and Quintanar and Benito take revenge for the arrival of the Inquisition in Toledo when they ritually murder Juanico Pasamontes. Similar to the first act when the play manipulates the myth of the Inquisition in order to represent Isabella as the Christian queen par excellence, in the third act Hernando and Quintanar create their own Cave of Hercules, manipulating in the process another foundational myth of Toledo both exegetically and iconographically.

Hernando explains the goal of the Cave at the beginning of the third act:

Esta cueva es oscura y solitaria  
 Otro tiempo majada de pastores,  
 Sitio que nos promete igual secreto;  
 La sagrada ciudad edificada  
 Del gran Melquisedec nos representa;  
 Esto será lo bajo, aquello sea  
 De David el alcázar soberano,  
 Santa Sion, y aquellos los jardines,  
 Entre los cuales ha de estar el huerto  
 Adonde tuvo Cristo sepultura;  
 Parezca el templo aquel peñasco fuerte,  
 De las olivas esto imite el monte,  
 Y esto sea el Cedrón, arroyo fiebre. (III, v. 1957-1969)

In contrast to the cave found in other plays in Lope's Toledan period, in the case of the cave appearing in *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia*, I believe the Jews in the play utilize the space to achieve distinct ends.<sup>8</sup> Similar to other moments, they create their own vision of Toledo engaging with the historiographical debates surrounding the Cave of Toledo as a foundational space but also utilize its magical qualities in order to create their own blood portrait of the Innocent Child. Additionally, instead of being one of the key homes of the Inquisition as seen in the first act, it is now the Jerusalem of the *Ecce Homo*, the city where Jews killed Jesus. This point is best proven if we considered the series of references to Jerusalem in this passage such as the references to "La Santa Sión" and to "David, el alcázar soberano." However, the most interesting allusion appears when Hernando refers to the "sagrada ciudad del gran Melquisedec," lines which recall Salem or the Jerusalem encountered in Genesis 14. As we know, Genesis 14 tells the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah occurring due to the Sodomite's lack of faith in God. Taking into account this intertextuality, from the perspective of the Jewish characters, this reference to Sodom and Gomorrah underlines the role of the Christians as sinners and the Jews as "Gods" who take revenge against those who do not have faith.

Our reading would be similar if we look at the passage from a Christian perspective, but would add a far more historical bent to our discussion following the ideas of Origen and Eusebius. Lida de Malkiel explores various interpretations of the destruction of Jerusalem told in the Old Testament and later retold by the Roman Jewish historian Josephus in his chronicles: *The Jewish War* and *The Antiquities of the Jews*. Lida de Malkiel concludes that these Christian apologists interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem in the following way:

En la concepción histórica de Eusebio (que pertenece al círculo de Orígenes) y particularmente en su *Historia eclesiástica*, la idea de la ruina de Jerusalén como retribución o venganza divina es básica en su calidad de ejemplo por excelencia del fin desastroso que aguarda sobre la Tierra a los enemigos de la Iglesia. (Lida de Malkiel 1973, 21)

In other words, instead of interpreting Melquisedec as a divine justification for the assassination of Juanico, at first glance, Christians would interpret it as retribution for his infidelity, or at the very least an example of what could happen if Christians are not loyal to Jesus' teachings.

In addition to alluding to Jerusalem, the lines "esta cueva es oscura y solitaria" the Jews also appropriate various representations of the cave which are present in Medieval and Early Modern texts chronicling the history of Toledo. The first is the cave as a demonic space which according to Robert Lima contrasts with Jerusalem as the city on the hill: "The monte elevado rises towards Heaven, the place of salvation, as the "cueva oscura" is sited towards the opposite polarity, the place of death and damnation" (Lima 73). While Lima alludes to this reading in his discussion of Calderón's *El mágico prodigioso*, I believe that we can see the same utilization of the cave as a demonic space. By marking the cave as a cueva oscura, in other words, Hernando marks himself as a Jewish devil for Old Christian audiences trying to conquer the Heavenly Jerusalem.

In addition to marking the cave as a demonic space, these lines also can be contextualized within debates about how Toledo was established in ancient times. Many of the Medieval Moorish and Christian sources (namely the *Crónica de Moro Rasis* and the chronicles of Alfonso el Sabio) employ the figure of Hercules as the hero who originally founded the city before the Muslim conquest, constructing a tower to commemorate his achievement (Lima 73-74). This tower, later

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<sup>8</sup> Consider *El postrer godo de España* where the cave possesses certain prophetic and magical qualities.

called the Turpiana Tower, is the same location where the Lead Books of Sacromonte would be discovered as well in 1598. Furthermore, as part of their efforts to Christianize Spain, according to David R. Castillo, Alfonso X el Sabio and The Toledano would later utilize the figure of Hercules to create a mythic genealogy relating the history of Medieval Spain, and Toledo in particular to its Greco-Roman heritage, thus giving the city historical legitimacy. During the reign of the Catholic Kings, the myth changed meanings in the chronicles, portraying Hercules as an invader now instead of as part of a divine line of kings. Castillo mentions as an example the histories developed by Antonio de Nebrija: “In Nebrija’s work, as in Anniius’ *Commentaries*, the classical Hercules of the twelve labors is an antagonistic figure, a piratical aggressor who makes his unwelcome appearance at the end of a long chain of ancient monarchs (Castillo 140). The critic also adds that in the sixteenth century historians such as Cristóbal Lozano portrayed Hercules as a magician, employing as their primary source *Las crónicas del rey Don Rodrigo* of Miguel de Luna. Castillo describes the transformation in the following way: “Lozano’s refurbishing of the legends associated with Hercules, don Rodrigo, the enchanted cave of Toledo and the fall of Spain in *David perseguido* and especially in *Los reyes nuevos de Toledo* contributes to the consolidation of the myth of a reemerging Spanish nation in the face of its presumed assassins” (Castillo 140). Finally, while we are uncertain that Lope would have come into contact directly with the *Crónica General*, this tale is also recounted in the opening books of Román de la Higuera’s *Historia eclesiástica de Toledo* and Francisco de Pisa’s *Descripción de la Imperial Ciudad de Toledo* as one of the central foundational myths of the city. In fact, Pisa, in Book I, highlights two different Hercules figures in his description of how the city was founded. The first is the “famoso Hércules,” a figure that is employed to prove Toledo’s relationship with Greece and Rome claiming:

Los que escriben y tienen por opinión, ser Toledo fundación de Griegos, y en particular, los que dan su primera fundación al famoso Hércules, alega en su favor entre otras pruebas o conjeturas, la que resulta de la muy nombrada cueva, vulgarmente llamada del mesmo Hércules, que se ve en esta ciudad, que ve en esta ciudad, y dizen auer sido por la Gentilidad dedicada antiquísimamente en su honor, a quien contaban y veneraban en el número de los dioses, como habemos referido en los dos capítulos antes deste. (Pisa 14)

Pisa then continues claiming that the cave used by Hercules is distinct from the demonic cave mentioned by other historiographers since that demonic cave, according to Pisa, resides approximately one mile outside the city (Pisa 15).

With this context in mind, we can then assume that since Hernando, Benito and Quintanar bring Juanico Pasamontes to a cueva oscura outside of Toledo, the cave utilized by the Jews is actually the demonic cave alluded to by Pisa and not the Herculean cave which grants Toledo fame and prestige. This would be appropriate since the Herculean cave, would be considered a Christian space and as such, Jews would have no influence in such spaces, as we saw earlier in the second act. In fact, in contrast to the first act, when Hernando narrates a history of the Jews from the victim’s perspective, now, given the magic that the cave possesses, the roles are reversed; now the Jews are the agents and the Christians the victims of this particular narrative. Additionally, by giving the Christian characters the role of victims in this tale, it forces the audience to reflect on the validity of their own faith and consider to what degree they are actually devout Christians.

Furthermore, if we examine the depiction of *Ecce Homo* happening inside the cave from an iconographic perspective, we can see how these Jewish characters also manipulate Christian aesthetic fears. This point is best seen if we consider the iconographic tradition surrounding

depictions of the *Ecce Homo*. Take for example Figure 5, which is Titian's *Ecce Homo* (1570-1576). What is significant about this representation is both the theatrical nature of the painting and also the emphasis on Christ's flesh. In a sense, one could claim that the Jewish characters are ekphrastically performing this version of *Ecce Homo* presenting Juanico to Toledan audiences as a broken Christ. But at the same time, Titian's representation of the *Ecce Homo* emphasizes the aesthetic positions that Hernando, Quintanar and Benito are presenting to the people of Toledo. As Kessler explains, a cultural marker of Judaism was not only the materiality of their faith, but also the carnality of their belief in God: "Jews were considered [by Christians] to be these carnal viewers par excellence. Just as they had refused to find God in the person of Christ, they could not discover the spirit that imbued material images" (Kessler 2011, 95). By having the ritual murder of Juanico Pasamontes emphasize the carnality of Jewish vision, one could say that in exegetical terms, the play condemns the Jews just as the Gospel of John does. But at the same time, spectators are left fearful that Jews could possess the artistic power to not only destroy Christian images and bodies (in this case the image of Christ embodied in Juanico Pasamontes) but also mock Christian aesthetics, since as we know, the role of the Pharisees in the episode of the *Ecce Homo* was to mock the condemned Jesus who was being displayed for all to see.

In addition to mocking the Christ figure exegetically and aesthetically, the dramatic ekphrasis of *Ecce Homo* also permits the Jews to create their own blood portrait, in essence offering a satirized definition of the purity of blood statutes. When I use the term "blood portrait" in this way, I am hearkening back to Laura Bass' study of the prevalence of portraits in Early Modern Spain and the spirit of collectionism in both the Habsburg court, in churches and cathedrals, and in the private homes of nobles. One of the central uses of the portrait, according to Bass, is to prove the genealogy of a particular noble family. The most famous of these portraits is Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* where the portrait of the royal family is fashioned to depict multiple generations of the Habsburg royal family. With that said, by alluding to *Ecce Homo* and dramatically performing it for Toledan audiences, Benito and Hernando turn the metaphor of the "blood portrait" on its head, demonstrating its artificiality. In other words, instead of emphasizing lineage and purity of blood, they satirize it and create their own portrait in blood by emphasizing the physical blood spilt while destroying the body of the Christian child.

While the play certainly inserts this fear of Judaism in the spectators' minds, it also quickly assuages those fears by having two allegorical characters, Reason and Understanding, come to Juanico's rescue and bring him to heaven:

Cristóbal, Dios te concede  
 Que sientas como en la edad  
 de razón, que sentir puede,  
 para que su voluntad  
 cumplida en tus obras quede.  
 A los niños inocentes  
 Dio el uso de la razón,  
 para que de aquellas gentes  
 conociesen la intención,  
 como tu agora la sientes.  
 Ya pide licencia el sol  
 Para eclipsarse en tu muerte.  
 Ya niño, ilustre español

De otra Numancia más fuerte,  
 Te está aguardando el cresol  
 Donde hoy forja tu pasión  
 un Cristo nuevo en el suelo,  
 que el pecho de los que son  
 grandes de Cristo en el suelo  
 ha de servir de tusón.  
 Cifrando cuando hemos visto,  
 En tu círculo se halla  
 Y así en el reino en que asisto  
 Has de servir de medalla  
 Como retrato de Cristo. (III, v. 2056-2080)

Madroñal, in his 2014 articles on *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* and Lope's lost comedia *San Tirso de Toledo* (c.1595), relates this scene to efforts made by Lope and other Toledan historians (namely the poet José de Valdivielso and the aforementioned Francisco de Pisa) to convince the Pope to canonize certain religious figures central to the history of Toledo namely San Tirso, Santa Leocadia and el Niño Inocente de la Guardia. Julio Milego explains how often elaborate festivals would take both in the Cathedral and in the Plaza de Zocodover where the remains of certain saints would be put on display. As part of these festivals, *comedias de milagro*, would often be included. Madroñal has claimed that *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* is one of the centerpieces of this effort since it dramatizes the miracle taking place after the death of Juanico Pasamontes. In this sense, given that the comedia was represented inside the Toledo Cathedral, it is probable that Lope was dramatizing the salvation of Juanico Pasamontes to enter into the debate regarding whether to canonize the Santo Niño, taking into account that various Church officials were probably viewing the performance.

From an exegetical perspective, we have the completion of the figures presented in the second act. Juanico, instead of being the child stolen by Jews, is now a new Christ rising into heaven. Additionally, similar to the festival, spectators are able to perceive from these lines how Juanico serves as a model Christian for them. Instead of reading Scripture purely from a materialistic perspective, the play shuns Jewish practices encouraging Christians to return to Luke and examine how Juanico like Jesus died for Christian sins.

At the same time, from an iconographic point of view, as Reason is the character painting this new "retrato de Cristo," the play essentially forces audience members to use their mind's eye and imagine their own vision of Jesus and how they relate to the Biblical stories. Furthermore, if *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia* were represented as part of the festival commemorating the death of Juanico Pasamontes, then Lope would be presenting audience members with a sort of visual relic to ponder. In that sense, I believe that would be the function of a play such as *El Niño Inocente de la Guardia*: to provide models or *medallas* for Old Christians to witness and interpret. While Jews in this play may represent the exegetical, historical and iconographic fears that Old Christians have about Judaism, at least at this stage of Lope's Toledan period, the Jewish voice is vanquished leaving in its wake the various portraits of Christianity that Lope depicts on stage.



Figure 1: Berruguete, Pedro (c.1450-1504) St. Dominic Presiding over the Burning of Heretics (oil on panel), / Prado, Madrid, Spain / The Bridgeman Art Library



Figure 2: El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), Greek (active in Spain), 1541–1614 *Saint Dominic in Prayer*, about 1605 Oil on canvas 104.7 x 82.9 cm (41 1/4 x 32 5/8 in.) Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

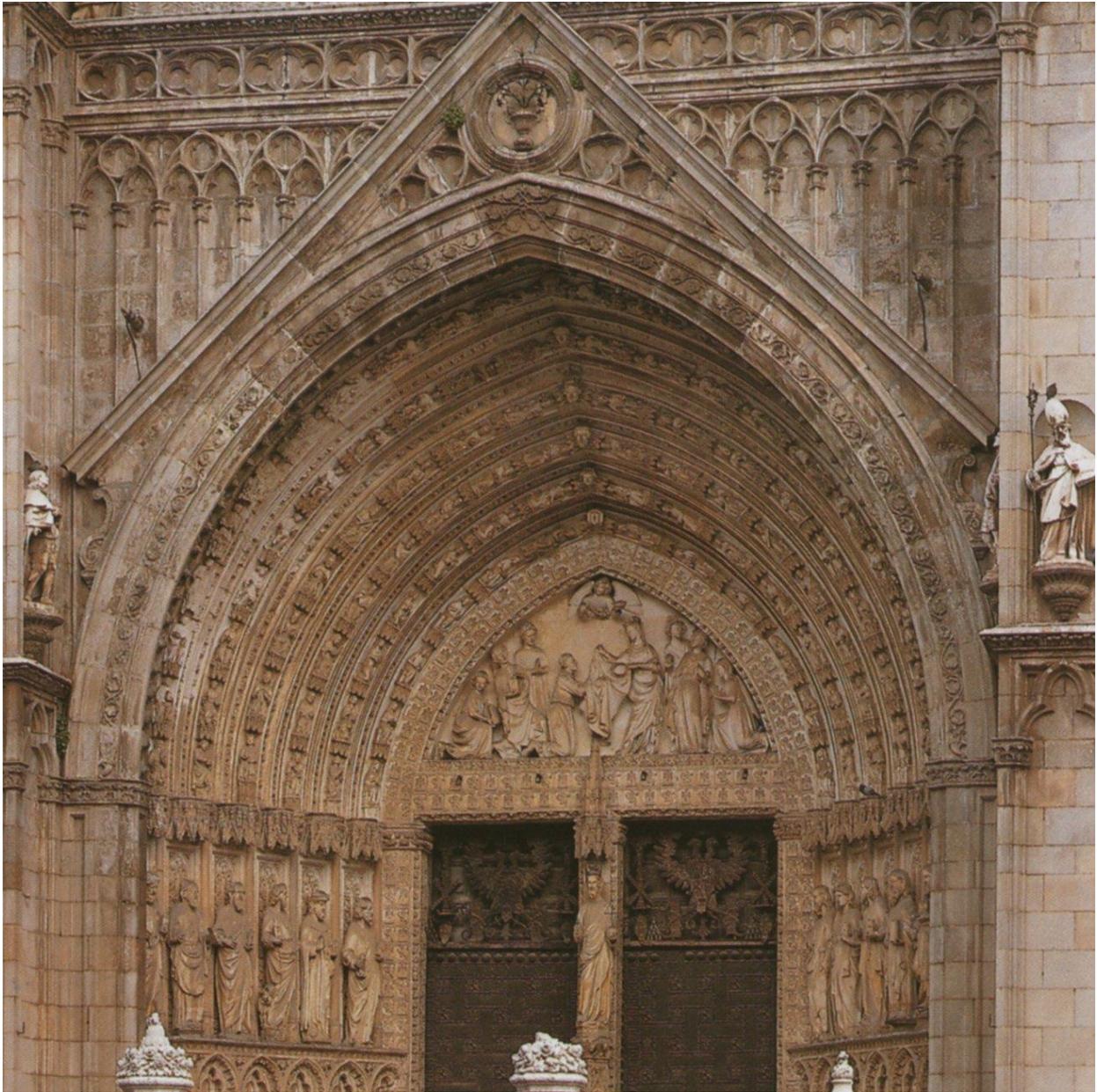


Figure 3: (Unknown Architect) *Puerta del Perdón*, Toledo Cathedral. c. 1222-1223. Source: University of Chicago Art History Department Image Collection



Figure 4: Francisco de Zurburán: *Agnus Dei* (1635-1640) Oil on Canvas. 373 x 62 cm. Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain/ARTSTOR



Figure 5: Titian: *Ecce Homo* (1543) Oil on Canvas 242 x 361 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna/Bridgeman Art Library

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