

«¡ESPAÑA VIVA!»: PERSONIFICATIONS OF SPAIN IN LOPE DE VEGA  
*COMEDIAS DE SANTOS*

ROY NORTON (Christ Church, University of Oxford)

CITA RECOMENDADA: Roy Norton, «¡España viva!»: Personifications of Spain in Lope de Vega *Comedias de santos*, *Anuario Lope de Vega. Texto, literatura, cultura*, XXIII (2017), pp. 528-548.

DOI: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5565/rev/anuariolopedevega.204>>

Fecha de recepción: 17 de abril de 2016

Fecha de aceptación: 31 de mayo de 2016

ABSTRACT

This study concerns the personification España as she appears, briefly, in four saints' plays by Lope de Vega. It presents an analysis of her function, character, and likely appearance. It argues that Lope deploys España—in the majority of cases in commissioned plays forming part of public festivals of national significance—to advocate the hispanicization of the lives of non-Spanish saints and of universal Catholic dogma. The essay argues further that, influenced by the iconographic and emblematic traditions, España is characterized by Lope as courteous and genteel at home, but feisty and belligerent when faced with foreign adversaries, her appearance on stage probably reflecting aspects of that character.

KEYWORDS: Lope de Vega; saints' plays; Spain; personification; allegory; hispanicization.

RESUMEN

Este estudio trata de la personificación de España, que interviene brevemente en cuatro comedias de santos de Lope de Vega. Ofrece un análisis de su función, carácter y probable aspecto físico. Sostiene que Lope hace uso de España—en la mayoría de los casos en comedias de encargo que formaban parte de fiestas públicas de importancia nacional— a fin de abogar por la hispanización de las vidas de santos no españoles y del dogma católico universal. El artículo sostiene, además, que, bajo la influencia de las tradiciones iconográfica y emblemática, Lope caracteriza a España como mujer, en casa, cortés y gentil, pero pendenciera y belicosa cuando se enfrenta a adversarios extranjeros, caracterización que probablemente se vería reflejada hasta cierto punto en la apariencia dada al personaje sobre el tablado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lope de Vega; comedias de santos; España; personificación; alegoría; hispanización.

The frequent deployment of non-human characters is a distinctive feature of Golden-Age hagiographic drama. Non-human characters intervene in every one of the twenty-five *comedias* by Lope de Vega that can, according to the criteria applied by Robert Morrison [2000:97], legitimately be considered saints' plays.<sup>1</sup> Lope's non-human characters fall into three broad categories, although there is often some overlap.

The first category includes obviously supernatural figures: God the Father, the ascended Christ, a host of angels, and the saints in heaven, opposed by the devil and an army of demons, including named ones such as Lucifer, Satanás, and Astarot (all or several of these named demons sometimes appearing simultaneously). Their dramatic functions within Lope's religious theatre are usually predictable and conventional: depending on their allegiance, they either guide and protect the protagonist or they hinder and harm him. The second major group includes characters often—I think unhelpfully—described as allegorical figures. Many of these do bear the names of abstract ideas, of the virtues and vices, La Misericordia and La Avaricia, for instance. But these characters typically exist at the same diegetic level as the human characters and function in manners virtually indistinguishable from the angels and demons of the first category. Sometimes the spectator will comprehend that the physical presence of the figures belonging to these first two groups is to be understood literally. In Act 3 of *San Nicolás de Tolentino*, for example, Demonio, accompanied by La Inobediencia and La Ira, physically assaults the future saint, leaving him lame. (See chapter 5 of my critical edition of *San Nicolás*—forthcoming in Reichenberger—for a full discussion of the nature of the supernatural characters in that play). On other occasions it is clear that Lope intends his audience to understand the physical presence of such figures as symbolic, making visible on stage the *bellum intestinum*, the hard-fought internal struggle in which the saints are regularly caught up, the result of the devil's temptations. So, in Act I of *El cardenal de Belén*, a conversation between Demonio and his side-kick, Mun-

---

1. Morrison identifies the saints' plays from among the *comedias* judged by Morley and Bruerton [1940] to be authentic works by Lope de Vega.

do, clarifies that the temptation scene physically enacted before St Jerome on the stage should be understood as a «desafío / con su *imaginación*» (Lope de Vega, *El cardenal de Belén*, II, vv. 629-630, with emphasis added).<sup>2</sup>

This study is not concerned with either of those two categories of non-human characters. Besides those there is a third category of miscellaneous allegories, allegories properly so-called. It tends to be overlooked in published discussions of Lope's saints' plays, which focus more often than not on the supernatural figures familiar from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This miscellaneous category includes allegorical figures that are qualitatively different from the types that I have already mentioned. They are qualitatively different in that they cannot easily be considered as supernatural characters with either a literal or a symbolic physical presence, or even as secular psychological externalizations of the human characters on stage. The figures belonging to this third category exist, typically, at a diegetic level distinct from that of the unmistakably human characters.<sup>3</sup> Most numerous among them are personifications of nation or city states. The characters Francia, Italia, Alemania, Roma and even la India and Etiopía all make appearances on Lope's saint's play stage.<sup>4</sup> Unsurprisingly, the most common allegorical figu-

2. Quotations from the four Lope plays here considered are taken from the editions listed at the end of this essay. For *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* and *La juventud de san Isidro* page numbers and column (a or b) are given after the quotations. With *La limpieza no manchada* page numbers only are given. Finally, quotations from *El cardenal de Belén* are followed by line numbers.

3. These true allegorical figures do sometimes appear alongside supernatural ones. And in *La limpieza no manchada* they interact, bizarrely, with Santa Brígida; but this play is quite anomalous. It is an extended allegory in the style of the *auto sacramental* rather than the more realistically inclined *comedia*. For Howe [1986:45] the play is «a jumbled attempt that bespeaks haste and carelessness of composition» and I would not demur. The time and place of the action is quite intangible; the play is a pell-mell of scenes which together give it a dream-like quality. The failure to confine allegories and human figures to separate diegetic levels does not reduce this play's verisimilitude. It has none to begin with.

4. India and Etiopía both appear at the very end of Lope's *La limpieza no manchada*. They take part in a curious scene during which, after Portugal, each enters with, respectively, «un baile de indios» and «un baile de negros». India (signifying the Spanish Americas in the context of this scene) expresses gratitude to España, seated upon her throne, for having shared *her* faith («tu fe»). But India is in fact revealed to be Castilla in disguise, and Etiopía, Andalucía (Lope de Vega, *La limpieza no manchada*, pp. 95-99). Interestingly, allegories named «un indio», «un portugués» and «un negro etíope» are known to have taken part in the *máscara* that took place in Segovia in 1615 to welcome Isabel de Borbón, bride of the future Philip IV (Alenda 1903:I, 180-181). The fact that actors were often engaged to participate in such *máscaras* suggests that the national allegories included in Lope's plays might have been performed by the same actors. As Ferrer Valls confirms [2003:36] «el teatro [...] aparece durante el Siglo de Oro estrechamente vinculado a la fiesta». Besides these national personifications, this miscellaneous category could include personified rivers (Jarama and

re of this kind is Spain. The personification «España», as she appears in Lope's *comedias de santos*, is the subject of this essay. My aim will be to describe how Lope characterizes España, what her principal dramatic functions are, and how she might have looked on stage in four of Lope's *comedias de santos*.

The personification of Spain appears in four of Lope's saints' plays: *El cardenal de Belén*, *La limpieza no manchada*, *La juventud de san Isidro* and *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*.<sup>5</sup> The last three of these plays immediately stand out. They are, precisely, the three saints' plays about whose composition we have relatively full accounts (alongside *La niñez de san Isidro* that was composed for performance in tandem with *La juventud*). We know that Lope was commissioned to write these three plays as part of important, elaborate *fiestas* marking events of especial religious significance in Spain. The San Isidro and San Pedro Nolasco plays were written to be performed, in 1622 and 1629, respectively, as a climax to the festivities organized to celebrate the canonizations of those two saints named in the play titles. The third play, *La limpieza no manchada*, has as its heroine Santa Brígida of Sweden, but its primary subject is the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. That *comedia* was commissioned by the University of Salamanca in 1618, to mark the adoption of the university statute prescribing that no student would be allowed to graduate without first swearing an oath to defend the belief in Mary's eternal purity. Of the circumstances surrounding the genesis of *El cardenal de Belén*, nothing is known, as far as I am aware, except that the autograph manuscript (dated 27 August 1610) contains various licences for performance with dates beginning in September 1610 and that the play was first staged, in Madrid, by Domingo Balbín's company, probably at some point between 9 September and 11 November 1610, with subsequent performances in other Spanish cities over the following five years.<sup>6</sup>

---

Manzanares appear in Lope's *San Isidro, labrador de Madrid*) and pure mental abstractions such as Cuidado, Duda, and Quietud, all of which appear in *La limpieza no manchada*.

5. Guinart [2013:162] considers briefly all nine appearances of España that he identifies in Lope's drama, the four analysed in this study plus five in works classifiable as «dramas históricos profanos de hechos famosos públicos». His essay seeks to assess whether the appearance of España in Lope's plays provides evidence for the existence of a sense of nationhood in seventeenth-century Spain and he debates whether it supports any of the competing theories developed by ethnographers and historians regarding the emergence of the idea of the nation. My focus here will be literary rather than ideological or socio-political.

6. See the helpful CATCOM database for further details: <http://catcom.uv.es/>. Consulted 23 March 2016. See also Appendix 2 to Fernández Rodríguez's Prolope edition of *El cardenal de Belén*, from which quotations from that play are taken.

Lope wrote at least three of the four saints' plays in which the personification of Spain appears, then, aware of the very special circumstances in which they were to be performed. This correlation might suggest that Lope chose to include España in his saints' plays when these plays were to form part of prestigious public festivities, festivities of national importance (and with an element of national self-congratulation) of a kind that grew in frequency, scale, and splendour towards the end of the sixteenth century and the start of the seventeenth,<sup>7</sup> the kind of *fiestas* that prompted the composition and publication of the *relaciones* to which we owe detailed knowledge of their nature and content.

Before turning to some of the detail of the four Lope saints' plays in which España appears and before I explain why, as it seems to me, the playwright chooses to deploy the character when he does, it must be conceded from the outset that Lope's decision to include España might have been influenced, at least in part, by practical, relatively prosaic considerations.

The role of España, we can speculate, might have been considered quite a prize for a leading actress of the age, keen to embody the nation whose *grandes* often assembled for the performance of such *comedias*. In the case of the 1622 *fiestas* we know that the king, the royal family and the members of the various *consejos* were all present at the staging of Lope's plays. If this actress happened to be the wife of the *autor*, or his mistress, say, Lope, never inclined to disappoint a lady, might conceivably have been persuaded to write in such a choice part for her.

Costume might also have been a relevant consideration. Allegories of Spain featured off-stage as well as on during the 1622 celebrations and if an appropriately lavish costume had been crafted for a *fiesta* procession of the kind that formed a «[p]arte habitual de la fiesta pública», for one of the «personas disfrazadas» present on a *carro*, or for a *máscara* whose disguised participants often included «las naciones del mundo» (Ferrer 2003:34), Lope might have been tempted to make use of it for his play too.<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, the men organizing the celebrations, and so paying

7. García Reidy [2013:160] notes that «[e]l enorme desarrollo durante las décadas finales del siglo XVI y principios del siglo XVII de festividades públicas, sufragadas en gran medida por los ayuntamientos de las ciudades y por órdenes religiosas, expandió la potencial demanda de comedias para fiestas».

8. The *acotación* directing the first entry of España in *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* does not specify how the character should appear but does detail that she should be dressed «ricamente» (Lope de Vega, *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, p. 6b).

for the requisite yards of silk and brocade, could plausibly have insisted that the costume be used in Lope's commissioned play as well, determined to get their money's worth, to have their beneficence displayed prominently and repeatedly.

Lastly, I suppose, the embodiment of Spain could have been intended merely as a mouthpiece of conventional flattery. The more powerful and influential the notables in the audience were, the more closely involved they were in the government of Spain, the more they are likely to have identified themselves with their nation-state, and clearly none more so than the king himself. The lines written for España certainly do include an element of encomium in all four of the plays with which we are here concerned. In *La limpieza no manchada*, for example, España concludes her appearance with an extended passage of lavish praise for the University of Salamanca, whose leaders would certainly have numbered among the audience. Indeed, Lope has España preside over a scene in which the figures of Cuidado and Duda —by this stage no longer concerned or doubtful— pay tribute to certain notables by name, presumably men who were instrumental in choosing Lope for their commission. These scenes of encomium would certainly not have harmed Lope's chances of securing repeat business, and the scholars to have written about Lope's professional practices have emphasized just how effective a means of publicity these commissioned plays were. García Reidy [2013:165], for example, remarks in relation to works that Lope was commissioned to write for religious festivals that:

[l]a proyección que ello suponía para el poeta entre los cortesanos y la posibilidad de alabar directamente al monarca a través de los versos de la comedia era algo que no tenía precio para un dramaturgo con aspiraciones de mecenazgo como Lope.

Naturally, the commissioning party anticipated some benefit too and, writing astutely about *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, Florit Durán [2008:209] insists that «de lo que, efectivamente, se trataba era de alcanzar el objetivo propagandístico de difundir entre los fieles la vida y milagros del fundador de la Orden de la Merced». And drawing on evidence pertaining to the commissioning of *autos*, García Reidy [2013:133] confirms that «lo importante [era] que la obra quedara a gusto de quienes encargaban la pieza».

So, there are at least those three practical reasons why Lope might have cho-



sen to include this figure of España in his more prestigious saints' plays and I am sure there are several other plausible reasons of that kind. Any of them could provide a satisfactory explanation for this character's presence on stage if her role were in fact limited to that of mouthpiece for the *loa*-like speeches of praise and patriotic self-congratulation that are indeed a feature. But España's interventions in these four *comedias* go further and they appear in several cases to have a definite objective. España plays an important part in what might be described as the overt hispanicization of the more broadly Catholic material that the plays develop. A close reading of these four texts shows that the character España acts as the nation's advocate, charged with putting forward arguments to justify why the merits of the saintly protagonists ought properly to redound to the glory of Spain in particular among the world's Christian nations. And there is certainly an argument to be had in a couple of these cases at least: Peter Nolasco was French and St Jerome, the hero of *El cardenal de Belén*, was born in Stridon, in Dalmatia. But perhaps a saint's country of birth is not the clinching factor that it might appear to be. That is España's case when she squares up to Francia in *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, a play first performed by Roque de Figueroa's company between the 8 and 10 May 1629, on one occasion in the presence of the king and queen and the Conde-Duque de Olivares (García Reidy 2013:161).

By the time Francia and España enter, part way through the first act, the spectator has learned of the future saint's devotion to the Virgin Mary and his opposition to the French Albigensian heretics, led by his uncle the Count of Toulouse. Dressed, according to the stage directions, as a «soldado francés», Pedro has just taken part in the successful military crusade against the Albigensians. The hostilities are extended onto a distinct diegetic level—quite apart from the human characters<sup>9</sup> as Francia and España begin their dialogue *in medias res*, sounding much like two *galanes* embroiled in a typical *pendencia* from one of Lope's *comedias de*

---

9. Towards the end of this scene King Jaime and Raimundo de Peñafort enter on stage. España and Francia do not interact with them, however, but remain apart, spectators to the conversation between the human characters (pp. 6b-8a). Later, in the brief scene in which España appears alongside Italia, Pedro Nolasco is on stage, in prayer (p. 24a-b). The allegorical figures address him, calling upon him to take action, but he does not respond (a point confused in the RAE edition, which ascribes some of Italia's lines to Pedro). There is no real interaction with a human character; rather, the spectator will understand that two separate diegetic levels are present together on stage. Pedro is unaware of the presence of España and Italia.

*capa y espada*. «¿Pensarás, Francia, salir / Con tu intento?» (Lope de Vega, *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, p. 6a), España challenges her neighbour. Francia then alludes to the subject of their quarrel: «Advierte, España, / Que es Pedro mi hijo, y tiene / Sangre de Reyes de Francia» (p. 7a). Although the *exact* point that is in dispute is not expressly revealed, it is clear that the two personifications are squabbling over Pedro, who is set to leave for Spain. Each proceeds to assert her right to have Pedro active within her borders. Francia —characterized, I think, as emotional and unreasonable— is apparently attempting to keep this holy man to herself, denying España any share in his glory. Francia's claims to her entitlement are not without force, but they are sentimental and they are based on historical accident. She rests her case on Pedro's French blood: «tiene sangre de Reyes de Francia.» It is just not right, she objects petulantly, that Pedro should leave his own homeland «por honrar la tierra extraña» (p. 7a). Were he to do so, it would be a sign of the most hurtful filial ingratitude: «dar en otra tierra el fruto, / condición parece ingrata, / pues donde nace le debe» (p. 7a). All of Francia's smouldering resentment is concentrated into the dental plosive alliteration of her unfortunate question to España: «¿Quítote yo a ti los tuyos?» (p. 7a). It is an unfortunate question because it undermines Francia's case: España's answer is, to translate and paraphrase, «Well, now you mention it, yes». Hinting at Francia's hypocrisy, España reminds her that:

Por vuestras ciudades anda  
fray Domingo de Guzmán,  
que con celo santo trata  
limpiar del trigo de Cristo  
esta pertinaz cizaña. (p. 7a)

This response adds insult to injury. Not only has France benefited from the presence on her soil of Spanish Saint Dominic, but that presence was made necessary by France's ignominious infection by «esta pertinaz cizaña», in other words by the Albigensian heresy that the historical Saint Dominic did play a part in uprooting. France should not feel slighted by Pedro's crossing into Spain, España reassures her. There are numerous precedents for saints having shared their gifts in lands beyond the borders of their countries of birth. España offers Francia the example of St Francis: he is known to have travelled to Spain, and Italy did not lose



out because of it. And of course, España reminds us, the apostles travelled to the four corners of the known world to spread the Gospel; St James journeyed to Spain too «Y no por eso su patria / Está quejosa de mí» (p. 7a), she says. Francia, then, is implicitly accused of selfishness in trying to brand French-born Pedro with the stamp of her *exclusive* ownership. Francia's reason, España suggests dismissively, has been clouded by the «Amor de madre» she feels for her native son.

To clinch the argument, España paints herself as the nation through which Providence has ordained that Pedro should glorify God. She warns Francia not to defy heaven. Developing the tree metaphor that Francia used earlier when she insisted that a tree's fruit ought, by rights, to nourish the land that supports it, España challenges Francia's interpretation. España, the voice here of calm, concerned reason, explains to Francia that:

Más debe el árbol al agua  
que a la tierra, porque el cielo  
es quien le sustenta y baña.  
Y así, pues el cielo quiere  
sustentarle en mí, no hagas  
resistencia a sus intentos. (p. 7a)

France is here associated with base earth and Spain with water, an element that perhaps more than any other has strongly positive connotations in Christian imagery; there is the water of baptism, the water of life, and, closer to the precise metaphor España employs here, the rain from heaven to which Santa Teresa likens mystical union with God in her allegory of the *hortolano* (in chapters 11 to 21 of the *Libro de la vida*). Faced with the reality of a Spain favoured by God, Francia accepts defeat. Referring to the Mercedarian Order that Pedro will found in Spain as an *edificio*, she concedes:

Si las aguas de su gracia  
le favorecen, y él quiere  
que en ti se comience, España,  
edificio que se extienda  
por cuanto el sol se dilata,  
yo dejo la competencia. (p. 7b)

España has convinced Francia that she must relinquish her claim to exclusive rights to Pedro. God has ordained that Spain should be the site of Pedro's acts of charity and of his miracles. The argument won, España reassures Francia of the «fama» she too will enjoy because of her connection with Pedro and then switches to the role of internal commentator of the play's principal action, notifying us of the symbolic change of setting, symbolic in that it cements her victory over Francia. The scene has moved on from southern France and España declares «ya estamos en Barcelona» (p. 7b).<sup>10</sup> In *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, then, Lope uses España to justify why Spain is entitled to consider French-born Pedro Nolasco at least partially one of her own. España is characterized as being an insistent but shrewd advocate whose calm logic and reassuring placation of Francia win one more trophy for the nation she embodies, partially hispanicizing Pierre Nolasque, presumably to the approval of the audience.

There are several similarities between España's intervention in *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* and her appearance in the brief, final scene of Lope's St Jerome play, *El cardenal de Belén* (Lope de Vega, *El cardenal de Belén*, vv. 2829-2876). The similarities relate both to the firm manner in which España interacts with her interlocutor, in this case Roma, and in the subject-matter of the conflict presented. When España enters with Roma, as before, the meeting has the feel of a *pendencia* from a *comedia de capa y espada*. Roma, puffing herself up proudly, one imagines, demands «¿Conmigo, España, te pones?» (v. 2829). At stake in this contest is not the right to host St Jerome in life, but the right to guard his bones in death. España bases her claim to the saint, this time, on the renaissance the Hieronymite Order will enjoy within her borders long after it is extinguished in the site of Jerome's demise, in Bethlehem. «¿[N]o merezco yo esta gloria?» (v. 2847) España asks expectantly. No, is Roma's response, for the time will come when Rome will recognize Jerome's greatness, when Rome will consider Jerome her «gran tesoro». On this occasion, Archangel Raphael, mediating this dispute, rules in favour of Roma. This is an inevitable conclusion to the specific point of controversy, given that it was generally accepted

---

10. Interestingly, the justification of the geographical move of the dramatic action, from the Old World to the New—a move in breach of neo-classical unity of place—is one of the functions of the allegorical figure Comedia in Cervantes's *El rufián dichoso*. See Thacker [2009] and especially [2008] for a discussion of the roles played by Comedia and her interlocutor, Curiosidad, in that *comedia divina*.

that Jerome's relics were in fact housed in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in the Eternal City. So, whilst this time España's audacious advocacy is not successful, she still advances a coherent claim to at least some part of St Jerome's reflected glory. España has given Roma, the acknowledged centre of Christendom, a run for her money and Spanish pride need not feel deflated. España's status as a Christian nation on a par with Rome —*la cabeza del mundo* in much literature of the Golden Age— is conceded by the devil who is open in his hostility to both:

No hay naciones que aborrezca  
como estas dos, Rafael:  
Roma, porque vive en ella  
el gran sucesor de Pedro,  
y España, porque profesa  
tanta lealtad a la fe. (vv. 2832-2837)

Indeed, the devil's words can be interpreted as more flattering for Spain. Rome's glory is said to be founded upon an historical decision (the choice of that city as the papal seat), whereas Spain's results from her active, present-day loyalty to the Catholic faith, more deserving of recognition. Moreover, none other than the Archangel Raphael confirms flatteringly that España will never waiver in her loyalty (v. 2838).

The personification of España is not the only element included by Lope in *El cardenal de Belén* whose effect is to hispanicize the dramatization of this non-Spanish saint's biography. At the start of Act 2, much is made of the election of *Spanish* Pope Damasus, Dámaso de Madrid, «a Spaniard by descent, but [...] probably born in Rome» (Morrison 2000:202). Rather incongruously, the first question about the new pope that occurs to the character Marino concerns Dámaso's geographical origins «¿De dónde hay Papa?» (v. 1049, emphasis added). The answer is a deafening «De España, / y de España, del famoso / reino de Toledo» (vv. 1049-1051). Marino expresses his delight for Spain: after a long line of great kings, soldiers, and thinkers that have cast «los pasados» into oblivion —as is typical, Spain is compared favourably to Ancient Greece and Rome, then— «Solo un Papa le faltaba» (vv. 1053-1058). This leads into a gratuitous discussion concerning the existence of an earlier Spanish pope, Milcíades (Melosiades en el texto), and the grossly exaggerated assertion

that Spain «ha sido, / en producirlos, famosa» (vv. 1064-1065).<sup>11</sup> All this culminates in the assembled *Roman* crowd implausibly crying out «¡España viva!» (v. 1067). Similarly, Lope squeezes into his plot the historical figure Paulus Orosius (this time a man who, it is thought, was in fact born in Spain). He enters half way through Act 3 and functions as a messenger between Saints Augustine and Jerome, a service that he hopes will result in clarification of the doubts he has regarding the nature of the human soul. The stage direction detailing his entry again focuses on his Spanish birth: «entre [...] Orosio, español, en hábito de estudiante» (stage direction before v. 2333). And, in case his nation were not clear from his costume, Orosio explains to Augustine that he has travelled to Hippo «de España, y desde Córdoba» (v. 2339), keen to find an answer to that «cuestión del alma, que al más claro / tiene en España tímido y dudoso» (vv. 2351-2352). Following his planned visit to Jerome, Augustine assures Orosio that he will take back «a tu España gran consuelo / y reliquias también de haberle visto» (vv. 2385-2386).<sup>12</sup> Both of the scenes just analysed could quite easily be dispensed with, since neither contributes to the story of Jerome, in my view. It seems obvious to me that Lope's sole purpose in including them was the hispanicization of this non-Hispanic *vida de santo*.<sup>13</sup>

11. In the case of Pope Melchiades, Aragone Terni [1957:75] notes that «no era español, sino africano». The assertion is not just exaggerated. It is also inconsistent with the earlier statement that a pope was all that «le faltaba [a España]». In her edition of *El cardenal*, Fernández Rodríguez traces the assertion that Melchiades was Spanish back to Flavius Lucius Dexter's *Chronicon Omnimodae Historiae* (see the note to v. 1060 on p. 925).

12. If one assumes that Lope was commissioned to compose *El cardenal* by the Spanish Hieronymite Order, then this might be a reference to some relics of Jerome in the custody of one of the Spanish monasteries. A seventeenth-century inventory of the relics held at El Escorial confirms that that important Hieronymite foundation held several, including a whole foot «cum parte pellis cruris divi Hieronymi ecclesiae Doctoris Catholicae» and even the relic of his head, covered with golden silk and received from Cologne in 1593 (Rodríguez Luna 2008:937). The Spanish branch of the Order certainly features heavily towards the end of *El cardenal*, in a way that makes one suspect that Lope—for whatever reason, but quite possibly a commission—deliberately wrote them into the *comedia*. Before España enters to vie with Roma for Jerome's body in the scene we have discussed, an angel riles the devil with a sixty-nine line *romance* account of the many, many Hieronymite foundations that would emerge in «la venturosa España» from the reign of Alfonso XI (vv. 2677-2745), amongst which, it is suggested, San Lorenzo el Real is the greatest. Aragone Terni [1957:124-125] has indicated how closely Lope's list follows the order in which the foundations are discussed in Sigüenza's *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo* (Imprenta Real, Madrid, 1600-1605) and, in some cases, borrows the author's wording.

13. The same rather crude hispanicization is unnecessary in the case of *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, since the French hero soon finds himself in Spain, fraternizing with the likes of King Jaime I of Aragon and Raimundo de Peñafort.

Despite the short length of her intervention —she speaks but nine lines— the España of *El cardenal de Belén* shares certain characteristics with the España of *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*: she is *pendenciera* and she is keen to press her claim of entitlement to some part in Jerome's glory (because of the Hieronymites' flourishing in Spain) despite the saint's foreign birth and burial. Her function is essentially the same in both plays. España fights with pluck to increase Spain's religious capital.

Lope's characterization of España as feisty and spirited could well have been influenced by the iconographic and emblematic traditions. The former tradition has included a personification of Spain since the first century A.D. (at the latest) and the Augustus of Prima Porta statue on which there appears a personification that is usually taken to be Hispania. On Augustus's breastplate the Roman Province of Hispania is shown as a matron or a goddess and she is bearing arms, which, as interpreted by Hernández Miñano, «pone[n] de relieve el carácter aguerrido de los pueblos de Hispania, tal como lo expresa gran parte de los historiadores romanos» [2015:488]. The same national stereotype seems to inform the impression of Spaniards gleaned by the Florentine statesman and historian Francesco Guicciardini in the early sixteenth century. For him «los españoles son inclinados a las armas quizá más que ninguna nación cristiana» (quoted by Hernández Miñano 2015:488). And the iconography present on the Augustus statue is replicated widely in the Golden Age, with or without further embellishment. In Covarrubias's *Emblemas morales* of 1610, for example, Emblem III, 12 —bearing the *mote* «En mi ausencia son leones»— presents an allegory of Spain that shows the influence of the Roman prototype. She is depicted as the Greek goddess Pallas Athena or Bellona, the Roman goddess of war, leaning against an oak, which symbolizes moral uprightness. In her left hand she carries a shield bearing the arms of Castile and Leon, and, in her right, she clasps a lance. She is surrounded by rabbits, a meek animal closely associated with Hispania in Antiquity. The poem that accompanies the Covarrubias emblem explicitly links the image to Spain and, interestingly, it highlights a duality in her character that, as I shall proceed to explain, seems to me to be present in some of Lope's dramatic personifications of España. The Covarrubias poem begins with a reference to «la fuerte y belicosa España» and, essentially, makes the point that whilst, at home, Spain is gentle and loving, «saliendo fuera de su tierra» —so, when confronted with foreign adversaries— «Minerva es en la paz, Marte en

la guerra» (Covarrubias *Emblemas morales*, f. 212r-v). In his gloss, Covarrubias reiterates this duality: «[los] españoles [son] generosos y valientes, que en cuanto tratan unos con otros en su tierra, el más bravo es más cortés, reportado y sufrido, pero saliendo a la guerra [...] la nación [e]spañola es más arriscada y valerosa de cuantas hay en el orbe.» In *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* and *El cardenal de Belén*—in both cases she is «fuera de su tierra»— España behaves in a manner consistent with the emblematic tradition: she is pugnacious and shrewd. Her more genteel side is developed in the other two *comedias*, to which I shall turn shortly.

In the absence of detailed stage directions the iconographic tradition can assist us in imagining the appearance of Lope's Españas. Arellano [2000:86] has pointed out that the «atributos vestimentarios» of allegorical characters deployed in the Golden-Age theatre were often «orientados por la emblemática». Similarly, discussing allegorical figures in the context of Cervantine theatre, Cantalapiedra [1994:388] notes that «para que la recepción espectacular de la obra cervantina fuera lo más óptima posible, el autor debió respetar la imagen figurativa que el público de su época tenía de las [...] alegorías». The Covarrubias emblem, then, would suggest a suit of armour, a helmet, a shield and a lance. The evidence provided by the stage directions is, however, extremely scant in all four of the plays that concern us here and neither confirms nor denies this hypothesis. Virtually nothing is said in the plays' *acotaciones* regarding España's physical appearance. This fact itself might, I suppose, suggest that Lope expected the *autor* to know how to depict España (perhaps drawing on the established iconography), though Golden-Age stage directions in general provide little guidance in matters of costume. In fact, rather than describing España's basic appearance, when our four texts do provide wardrobe prompts, these seem to reflect the need to adapt this basic appearance to the relevant scene's specific circumstances. So, in *La limpieza no manchada*, Francia refers to España as a «dama / coronada de flores la cabeza» (Lope de Vega, *La limpieza no manchada*, pp. 78-79). This addition adapts España's basic costume in a manner fitting for the *fiesta* that the allegorical characters are about to enjoy on stage. Likewise, when it is actually specified that España should appear «armada» in *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* (p. 24a), this anticipates, specifically, a scene in which the personification is responding to the Goths' military incursion into Italy.

Perhaps more useful is the description of the figure of Castile contained in the account of the *justa poética* that was part of the 1622 quadruple canonization cele-



brations. A personified Castilla it is who issues the challenge of the ninth poetic *combate* and the account explains that she is to be imagined «con espléndidas armas, desde la gola a la escarcela, en cuyo pecho resplandecía la imagen de la Concepción, que le dio el invictísimo Carlos Quinto, y un morrión coronado de algunas torres de oro, entre diversas plumas de colores, partidas por la mitad, con trenzas de trémulas argenterías» (Lope de Vega, *Relación*, f. 39v). This description of Castile is useful for our purposes because it is written by Lope himself and in the context of the public festivities as part of which the *España* of *La juventud de san Isidro* was first performed. The description does indeed emphasize Castile's belligerent character and, for many at the time, Castile and Spain would have seemed largely synonymous.<sup>14</sup> As Guinart [2013:164] comments (in his discussion of *El mejor mozo de España*), «[la] oscilación entre España y Castilla es sin duda reveladora de una idea de unidad peninsular construida en torno al papel hegemónico del centro castellano».

The two plays considered so far have presented the belligerent, Mars-like *España* (with touches of Minerva-like astuteness). In *La limpieza no manchada* and *La juventud de san Isidro* —plays in which *España* is arguably on home ground, «en su tierra», as Covarrubias has it— she strikes a tone that is, I think, *más cortés*, reflecting the nation's stereotypical *caballerosidad*, the other side to her character as presented in the emblematic tradition.

The *España* who appears in *La limpieza no manchada* has, seemingly, a far easier case to prosecute than her counterparts in the Pedro Nolasco and Jerome plays (Lope de Vega, *La limpieza no manchada*, pp. 72-82). Her competitors, Francia and Alemania, do not even attempt to contest her self-proclaimed status as the Virgin Mary's most faithful, most devoted servant, as they congregate to celebrate Santa Brígida's newly confirmed confidence in the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Despite the absence, here, of an active challenge by Alemania or Fran-

14. The detail of the *imagen* suggests an updating of the basic iconography to incorporate some sense of the intimate link between Spain and the Catholic religion, an aspect of Spain's identity that clearly would not have been a feature of the earliest examples of this allegorical figure. Another development seen in some personifications of the period reflects Spain's growing sense of herself as an imperial power. So, for instance, *España* is depicted seated upon «dos mundos, cuya pintura mostraba el nuestro y el antártico» when she appears as a *figura* atop a *pirámide* erected in Madrid's Plaza de la Villa as part of the 1622 celebrations (Lope de Vega, *Relación*, f. ¶¶ 6v). The *España* figure that appears in Lope's *El Brasil restituido* is to be depicted «con un mundo a los pies» (quoted by Guinart 2013:163).

cia, I think it is arguable that, through the scene involving España, Lope hints in a veiled manner at why these two lands do not deserve the accolade that is at stake. Alemania is the first to enter, *un hombre vestido de alemán*, come in search of the *fiesta* (a *fiesta* within a *fiesta* for the metatheatrically minded).

On his way to the *fiesta* Alemania meets Pecado, another personification, who plays the role of the devil in this *comedia*. Alemania shares the news of Mary's Immaculate Conception with Pecado, who is predictably distressed to hear it. Alemania asks the devil for directions to the city where the *fiesta* will take place and Pecado offers the following by way of an answer:

No pienso que está muy lejos;  
echad a la mano izquierda  
hasta la cruz de un repecho;  
pero no vais por allí;  
pues avisaros pretendo  
que está la ciudad de Augusta,  
con las fiestas que se han hecho,  
llena de varias naciones. (p. 75)

That rather cryptic response by Pecado can be interpreted literally, certainly, but there seems to me to be a case for a figurative interpretation too, in light of the foothold established in Germany by the Protestant Reformers, notorious for Spanish audiences in the 1610s. In the above quotation, the devil invites Alemania to turn to the left, to the sinister side, the right side long seen as the pre-eminent one in Western culture.<sup>15</sup> Alemania will then approach, the devil says, «la cruz de un repecho», a cross upon a hillside—a reference to Golgotha, I think—but he should turn away from it. The point is not developed, and Pecado is being deliberately enigmatic, trying to bamboozle Alemania; but Lope, through Pecado, might already have said enough to raise the spectre of German heresy in the spectator's mind. We have even less to go on in the case of Francia, but I do wonder whether the rhetorical question she asks might have raised the odd eyebrow in 1618, the year that the Thirty Years War broke out. Francia's question is: «¿Qué católica nación / De cuan-

---

15. According to Hall [2008:15], left-right distinctions were first systematized by the Ancient Greeks. In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle aligned the left with female, darkness, and evil, *inter alia*.

tas el mundo encierra / No hará fiestas este día?» (p. 77). How could any Catholic country fail to celebrate with the rest of orthodox Christendom? The question is not an idle one; by the end of that war France was providing not only moral but military support to Catholicism's enemies.

Whether or not a typical spectator would read between the lines here, as I do, Francia and Alemania are, unequivocally, cast awestruck from the limelight when España enters, «con corona» according to the stage directions. Even if Lope does not intend Francia and Alemania to be denigrated, España's primacy among the nations who defend the Virgin Mary's purity is declared emphatically in *La limpieza no manchada*.

There is a palpable change of dramatic gear as the *romance* and *redondillas* that made up the exchanges between Francia, Alemania and Pecado give way to España's *lira* lines. España launches straight into her apostrophe to the Virgin Mary when she enters on stage. A curious mixture of arrogance and humility, she initially overlooks, perhaps ignores, the presence of the other personifications. The impression of haughty superiority is compounded in her speech, where she refers to herself in the third person —indicative of her self-regard— as «España belicosa» (p. 78), a description that ties in with the personification's presentation as *pendenciera* in the first two plays discussed (and also the Covarrubias emblem, whose poem began «Cría la fuerte y belicosa España [...]»). To Mary she offers, «humildemente», she says, the victor's crown, but then she insists, proudly, that «a nadie importa tanto / La estimación de vuestro nombre santo» and that «No habrá nación ninguna / Que a mis fiestas iguale». Francia and Alemania are enthralled by this «dama [...] / Digna de eterna fama» (p. 79) and they present themselves to España almost as her suitors or even her servants: «Aquí, dichosa España, / tienes a Francia»; «Aquí a Alemania tienes». Germany goes on to explain that he has come to celebrate, «a celebrar de tu valor los bienes» (emphasis added). So he, at least, attributes the victory won for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to España's doing, they are *bienes de tu valor*, he says to España. España accepts the credit without batting an eyelid: «España soy», she bellows, «que quiere a su grandeza / Añadir este día», «Más rica me ha de hacer y más hermosa» (p. 79). Finally she dismisses these «provincias bellas» (p. 80), sending them back to their lands to celebrate the happy day in their own, clearly inferior, ways. Thanks to España's intervention, Francia, Alemania and Lope's audience would leave the performance of *La limpieza no mancha-*

*da* with the distinct impression that Spain is to be identified before all others with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. España is, again, shown to be a little overweening when facing down other nations, and to desire the extension of her religious patrimony. On this occasion, there is no contest, no other nation contradicts her primacy among the defenders of the Immaculate Conception, so her belligerence and shrewd advocacy is not exhibited. España is haughty, presuming supremacy over her neighbours, but she is simultaneously humble before the Virgin Mary: «Esclava soy del nombre de María» (p. 79), she confesses. Later this duality is displayed again. España welcomes India and Etiopía onto the stage seated proudly «en un trono» (90), but as the play ends with the unveiling of a painting of *la Inmaculada*, she subordinates herself willingly. The stage direction specifies «Bájese España del trono, toquen chirimías e hínquense [todos] de rodillas» (p. 98). España bows to none, then, but God and his saints, with whom she seems to consider herself on home turf, *en famille*, provoking her extreme «cortesía».

España's appearance in *La juventud de san Isidro*, the fourth of Lope's *comedias de santos* in which she features, is the least interesting. She remains largely passive in her only scene, towards the end of this two-act play, a scene meant to be understood to constitute a dream-vision experienced by Isidro's master, Iván de Vargas. (Here the allegorical figures remain quarantined on a separate narrative plane.) There is clearly no need for España to advance a case in support of her entitlement to identification with the incontrovertibly Spanish San Isidro and so she does not: the personification's intervention in the last (in order of composition) of Lope's three San Isidro plays is, therefore, relatively brief. It consists in a scene where the allegorical figure of Profecía, sitting on a cloud with España on another (and speaking, we are to understand, in the twelfth century) foretells Spain's future greatness as a wellspring of saints, a greatness that Profecía insists will redouble Luther's torments. España's speech is limited to an expression of thanks for and trust in the prophecy. In this play the character's impact might well have been visual in the main. Lope himself, in the *Relación* pertaining to the *fiestas* celebrating Isidro's canonization in 1622, insists that «la riqueza de los vestidos fue la mayor que hasta aquel día se vio en teatro» (Lope de Vega, *Relación*, f. qqqq4r). The embodiment of the nation must have looked splendid as she lapped up Profecía's praise, praise by which each spectator present in Madrid's Plaza de Palacio might have felt in some small way personally flattered, as a single cell, perhaps, of Spain's body

politic. The audience of *La juventud* is invited from the start to identify itself squarely with Spain, «*nuestra España*» (Lope de Vega, *La juventud de san Isidro*, p. 532a), in the words of the *loa*. This is tub-thumping stuff.

España's interventions in *La limpieza no manchada* and *La juventud de San Isidro* are a little different from the Pedro Nolasco and Jerome plays, then, in that there is no overt contest between the personification of Spain and her rivals (though in the former case it might be said that España pre-empts conflict by staring her potential opponents down). Apparently Lope assumed that Spain's claim to be identified as the nation most enthusiastically supportive of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, on the one hand, and with San Isidro, on the other, was utterly beyond doubt. And he was probably right in that assumption. Despite the superficial differences, however, the effect of España's appearances is the same: she ensures the spectator leaves the performances of all four *comedias* absolutely certain, notwithstanding the foreign origins of two of the saints and the universality of Catholic dogma, that Spain in particular was to be credited with a full measure of the resultant glory and triumph. España is a character that Lope charges with disseminating the message—well understood by the public—that «el triunfo del cristianismo [es] el triunfo de España» (Sirera 1991:300). The propagation of that message was an important function of the great religious celebrations of seventeenth-century Spain, important to the political elite and, so, important to Lope, who wanted their patronage. España's character too is reasonably consistent, though it is not carefully developed in any of these four plays. Although it is an abstraction, the figure does seem to have certain human characteristics, the ones testified to by the period's iconographic tradition. She is «*arriscada y valerosa*» when confronted by foreign competitors, but «*cortés*» and «*reportad[a]*» when she feels herself to be among friends.

## WORKS CITED

- ALENDAY MIRA, Jenaro, *Relaciones de solemnidades y fiestas públicas de España*, Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, Madrid, 1903.
- ARAGONE TERNI, Elisa, ed., *Lope de Vega: El cardenal de Belén*, Ebro, Zaragoza, 1957.
- ARELLANO, Ignacio, «El vestuario en los autos sacramentales (el ejemplo de Calderón)», in *El vestuario en el teatro español del siglo de oro*, ed. M. de los Reyes Peña, *Cuadernos de Teatro Clásico*, XII-XIV (2000), pp. 85-108.
- CANTALAPIEDRA, Fernando, «Las figuras alegóricas en el teatro cervantino», in *Cervantes. Estudios sobre Cervantes en la víspera de su centenario*, eds. K. and R. Reichenberger, Reichenberger, Kassel, 1994, vol. II, pp. 381-400.
- COVARRUBIAS Y OROZCO, Sebastián de, *Emblemas morales*, facsimile ed. C. Bravo-Villasante, Fundación Universitaria Española, Madrid, 1978.
- FERRER VALLS, Teresa, «La fiesta en el Siglo de Oro: en los márgenes de la ilusión teatral», in *Teatro del Siglo de Oro en tierras europeas de los Austrias*, eds. J.M. Díez Borque and Z. Królewski, SEACEX, Madrid, 2003, pp. 27-37.
- FLORIT DURÁN, Francisco, «Una comedia de encargo: *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco* (1629) de Lope de Vega», in *La comedia de santos: Coloquio internacional, Almagro, 1, 2 y 3 de diciembre de 2006*, eds. F.B. Pedraza Jiménez and A. García González, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Almagro, 2008, pp. 201-217.
- GARCÍA REIDY, Alejandro, *Las musas ramera. Oficio dramático y conciencia profesional en Lope de Vega*, Iberoamericana / Vervuert, Madrid / Frankfurt-am-Main, 2013.
- GUINART PALOMARES, David, «Las alegorías de España en la comedia lopesca», *Teatro de palabras: Revista sobre teatro áureo*, VII (2013), pp. 159-172.
- HALL, James, *The Sinister Side: How left-right Symbolism shaped Western Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.
- HERNÁNDEZ MIÑANO, Juan de Dios, *Emblemas morales de Sebastián de Covarrubias: Iconografía y doctrina de la contrarreforma*, Universidad de Murcia, Murcia, 2015.
- HOWE, Elizabeth Teresa, «Lope de Vega and the Immaculate Conception», *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, XXXVIII 1 (Summer 1986), pp. 39-53.



- MORLEY, Sylvanus Griswold, and Courtney BRUERTON, *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's Comedias*, Modern Language Association, New York, 1940 [Spanish translation by M.R. Cartes as *Cronología de las comedias de Lope de Vega*, Gredos, Madrid, 1968].
- MORRISON, Robert R., *Lope de Vega and the «comedia de santos»*, Peter Lang, New York, 2000.
- RODRÍGUEZ LUNA, David, «Ermitas dedicadas a San Jerónimo en España. Ayer y hoy de una devoción en el corazón de la Iglesia», in *El culto de los santos: cofradías, devoción, fiestas y arte*, Ediciones Escorialenses–Real Centro Universitario-María Cristina, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, 2008, pp. 936-950.
- SIRERA, Josep, «Los santos en sus comedias. Hacia una tipología de los protagonistas del teatro hagiográfico», in *Comedias y comediantes: estudios sobre el teatro clásico español*, eds. M.V. Diago and T. Ferrer Valls, Universitat de València, Valencia, 1991, pp. 55-76.
- THACKER, Jonathan, «La figura de la Comedia en *El rufián dichoso* de Cervantes», in *La comedia de santos: Coloquio internacional, Almagro, 1, 2 y 3 de diciembre de 2006*, eds. F.B. Pedraza Jiménez and A. García González, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Almagro, 2008, pp. 121-134.
- THACKER, Jonathan, «“Véote, y no te conozco”: the unrecognizable form of Cervantes's *El rufián dichoso*», *Hispanic Research Journal*, X (2009), pp. 206-226.
- VEGA CARPIO, Lope de, *El cardenal de Belén*, ed. N. Fernández Rodríguez, in *Comedias de Lope de Vega. Parte XIII*, coord. N. Fernández Rodríguez, Gredos, Madrid, 2014, I, pp. 843-1010.
- VEGA CARPIO, Lope de, *La juventud de san Isidro*, in *Obras de Lope de Vega publicadas por la Real Academia Española*, ed. Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, Madrid, 1894, vol. IV, pp. cxx-cxxv and 531-553.
- VEGA CARPIO, Lope de, *La limpieza no manchada*, Librería Cervantes, Salamanca, 1972.
- VEGA CARPIO, Lope de, *La vida de san Pedro Nolasco*, in *Obras de Lope de Vega publicadas por la Real Academia Española*, ed. M. Menéndez Pelayo, Real Academia Española, Madrid, 1895, vol. V, pp. ix-xii and 3-31.
- VEGA CARPIO, Lope de, *Relación de las fiestas que la insigne villa de Madrid hizo en la canonización de su bienaventurado hijo y patrón san Isidro, con las comedias que se representaron y los versos que en la justa poética se escribieron, dirigida a la misma insigne villa*, Viuda de Alonso Martín, Madrid, 1622.