

Manuel Martínez-Ortega

Juan de Valdés (c. 1490-1541) in Light of his Religious Background



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Preface

This book is essentially a doctoral dissertation completed in co-operation with the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam, a collaborative partner of the Faculty of Theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The investigation focuses on the background and writings of Juan de Valdés. Valdesian research has steadily clarified key aspects of his biography and writings. The gradually-uncovered complexity of Valdés' background and writings has demonstrated the necessity to recognize an eclecticism in his thought. Valdés' eclecticism, however, has not yet been analyzed in depth in light of the different religious currents in which he participated and the different sources that he quoted. In addition to this need, previous research has often focused on Valdés' theological affiliation rather than on his personal message and emphasis. This research evaluates his personal thought and contribution to his Christian environment. Accordingly, the task of this research is twofold. Part I analyzes the religious currents of Valdés's background in order to discard inaccurate associations. Parts II and III explore Valdés' writings, considering his concepts, terms, emphases and omissions, in order to evaluate his relation to the influences received and his personal message and contribution to Christian thought. Part II focuses on the immediate Spanish background of Valdés' *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine* and its teachings, with particular attention to his own thought and his use of Erasmus' and Luther's writings. Part III considers Valdés' literary production in Naples, analyzing his teachings in light of his background. The conclusion of this research is that Valdés adopted influences and borrowed terms from his background and environment as long as they served his own message and emphasis. He redefined what he adopted, and he explicitly disagreed with the influences that he received and the sources he used. As to his thought and personal contribution, the axis of Valdés' message was the experience of entering the kingdom of God. His spiritual advice, his theological reflection, and his biblical hermeneutics were structured according to his own experience of being brought to God. Marked by Pedro R. Alcaraz, influenced by Spanish Erasmianism, and adopting a Lutheran soteriology, Valdés defended a sovereign God-intervention that changed man's disposition and brought him into a committed love-relationship with God.

As to the elaborating process of this investigation, I must acknowledge the encouragement and patience of my wife and children, who have made possible these years of research. I must also express a deep gratitude to Tentmakers Bible Mission Inc., its first Director Rev. Richard Manion, Rocky Mount Bible Church and Rev. Bruce Miles, a dear pastor today with the Lord, along with

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other churches and individuals who made it possible for us to dedicate the time that a project like this requires. Academically, I desire to express also my deep gratitude to Dr. Wim Janse, Dr. Ivana Noble, and Dr. Tim Noble, whose inspiration, guidance, and supervision has been invaluable.

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Abbreviations

- DCB Explicit abbreviation for: Juan de Valdés, «*Diálogo de Doctrina Cristiana*», *reproduction en fac-similé de l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque nationale de Lisbonne (édition d'Alcala de Henares, 1529)*. Intr. et notes par Marcel Bataillon. Coimbra: Impr. da Universidade, 1925.
- DCC Juan de Valdés. “*Dialogue on Christian Doctrine*.” Abbreviation used for all editions of this *Dialogue* except Bataillon’s.
- OC Juan de Valdés, *Obras completas*. Ed. by Angel Alcalá. Vol. I. Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 1997.
- AHN Archivo Histórico Nacional de España.
- WA Luthers Werke, Weimar ed. 1883–1929 (Weimarer Ausgabe).

Introduction

The Complexity of Juan de Valdés

Juan de Valdés¹ (c.1490–1541) was a Christian reformer and diplomat whose religious influence and writings left a considerable impact on sixteenth-century Spanish and Italian Christianity. Although neither a theologian nor a priest, his thought and piety transcended the brevity of his life and the pressures of Spanish and Italian religious intolerance. His appearance was thin and fragile,² devoid of the outgoing personality that could be expected from a religious leader; however, his gentleness, kind speech, tolerance, and personal teaching made him “admirably appropriate to produce a favorable impression” among noble men and women with spiritual interests.³ Even though he provided the first Bible commentaries in Spanish and one of the first treatises on the Spanish language, Valdés, as a historical character, was quickly immersed in the ignominy of heretics until the second half of the nineteenth century. Since then, his biography developed from regrettable inaccuracies to considerable clarity around the turn of the twenty-first century. With the exception of his first work, his writings were left in manuscript form to his closest friends. Nevertheless, his thought rose above geographical, confessional, and historical boundaries.

Juan de Valdés’ contemporaries spoke of him as “Doctor and Pastor of illustrious and noble people”⁴ and as “a rare man of Europe.”⁵ During the twentieth century, he was praised as “the greatest of Spanish Reformers,” comparable to Ramon Lull, Ignatius of Loyola, or Saint Teresa of Avila.⁶ Valdés has been con-

1 Also called *Johannes Valdésius*; in Italian *Giovanni Valdésio*; in French *Jan de Val d’Esso*; In English *John Valdésio* (Benjamin B. Wiffen, *Life and Writings of Juan de Valdés*, 1865, xii).

2 Francisco de Enzinas, “Notice Bibliographique sur Juan de Valdés,” in *Mémoires de Francisco de Enzinas*, notice et annotations par Ch.-Al. Campan, Tome 2 (Bruxelles : Société de l’histoire de Belgique, 1862), 451.

3 Thomas McCrie, *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy in the Sixteenth Century* (London: William Blackwood, 1833), 134.

4 Juan de Valdés, *Ziento i Diez Consideraciones. Ahora publicadas por primera vez en Castellano*, ed. B. B Wiffen (Madrid, 1862), iii–xix.

5 Letter of Giacomo Bonfadio a Carnesecci, xx quoted in, Juan de Valdés, *Diàleg de Doctrina Cristiana*, intr. Ignacio Tellechea, (Proa, 1994), 11. Significantly, however, Theodore de Beza spoke of him as a horrible monster, akin to Miguel Servet or Ignatius Loyola.

6 George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers: Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), 297. Also D. Riccart speaks of Valdés as one of the “great Spanish contributions to the intellectual and religious

sidered an “authentic religious genius,”⁷ “one of the central characters of those tumultuous and decisive decades in the history of European Christianity,”⁸ and “the most well-balanced and sensitive spirit of our sixteenth century.”⁹ Interestingly, these eulogies and religious significance attributed to Valdés have not impeded a “changing image”¹⁰ by different authors, becoming “one of the most controversial figures of Spanish Renaissance.”¹¹

Valdés’ *evolving* and *conflicting* image has been the result of documentary difficulties and confessional sensibilities concerning events and movements that shaped Spain’s Pre-Tridentine Christianity. Objectively, the appraisal of this period requires reference to “the social, cultural, and religious history” of the fifteenth century, a “very difficult and extensive” task for any researcher.¹² Crucial documents, furthermore, often include life-threatening pressures from social and religious conflicts. Valdés’ thought and writings, in particular, emerge from a complex background of religious currents whose individual definitions are also debated. The pastoral nature of Valdés’ teaching and the subsequent theological diversity of his followers also seem to blur the portrait of Valdés. Generalizations and exclusive labels – such as *Alumbrado*, Erasmian, Mystic, and Lutheran – have needed to bend or undermine evidence in order to fit Valdés into their particular theological classification. The sensitivity towards heresy, the legitimacy of the Inquisition, the inroads of Lutheranism in Spain, and the capacity for Spain to develop its own heresy has ruled and polarized the debate over the interpretation of Valdés. Eventually, these classifications end up prevailing over the actual assessment of Valdés’ personal message.

Considering the long list of authors and studies that have discussed Juan de Valdés since the nineteenth century, the central question of this book arises

European life of the sixteenth century” along with Miguel Servet and Ignatius of Loyola (*Juan de Valdés y el Renacimiento Hispano*, 1962, 9).

7 Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España: Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), 421. Cf. 212, 345.

8 Massimo Firpo, *Entre Alumbrados y «Espirituales»: estudios sobre Juan de Valdés y el Valdésianismo en la crisis religiosa del ‘500 italiano*, trad. Daniela Bergonzi, (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española : Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 2000), 11.

9 Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de la Lengua*, intr. José Fernández Montesinos (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964), xlvi.

10 José C. Nieto, “La Imagen Cambiante de Juan de Valdés,” *Los Valdés: Pensamiento Y Literatura: Actas del seminario celebrado en Cuenca, Universidad Menéndez Pelayo, del 2 al 4 de diciembre de 1991* (Cuenca: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Cuenca. Instituto Juan de Valdés, 1997), 7.

11 Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de la Lengua*, ed. Cristina Barbolani (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), 11.

12 José Carlos Gomez-Menor, “Linaje Judío de Escritores Religiosos y Místicos Españoles del Siglo XVI”, en *Judíos, Sefarditas, Conversos: la expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias*, ed. Angel Alcalá (Valladolid: Ambito, 1995), 587.

from an article written by José C. Nieto, a key scholar on Valdés.¹³ The article's title, "*The Changing Image of Juan de Valdés*," is indicative of how various discoveries and decades of study have directly affected the growing understanding of Valdés. Nieto's article provides an update of historical and theological contributions to research on Valdés. In reference to these contributions, Nieto justifies his own perspectives with more or less success. One of Nieto's arguments, nevertheless, reveals a crucial task to be done in Valdessian research. Namely, unless suggested parallels between Valdés and other writings are considered in light of the content and emphasis of the particular author and text, Nieto rejects their relevance for establishing a relationship of dependence. This literary connection is very obvious in light of the fact that Christian authors handle common morals, prayers, sacred texts, and even clichés. Our basic question, therefore, focuses on the understanding of Valdés' thought in view of his background, accounting for elements that directly affect a conceptual or textual comparison. The question is: Considering Juan de Valdés' distinctive teachings, characteristics, and emphases, how do the analyses of his background and the comparisons of his writings with previous or contemporary texts affect understanding Valdés' thought? And consequently, how do such analyses and comparisons of Valdés relate to past and present interpretations of him?

Biographical Sketch

Spain's Pre-Tridentine Religious Energies

Juan de Valdés' religious formation took place during the first half of the sixteenth century in Castile, Spain: a time and place of religious fervency. Theology, biblical exegesis, and spirituality strained amidst strong ritualism, institutional decay, and alternative voices. Giordano has well defined that momentum as "a great spiritual laboratory, expression of energies and creativity."¹⁴ Nieto refers to the environment as experiencing "a political-religious effervescence."¹⁵ Melquiades Andrés speaks of it as "a decisive period in the development of our [Spanish] culture and our spirituality."¹⁶ Andrés identifies the period as beginning with Pedro Martínez de Osma, known for his exegetical efforts and attacks

13 Nieto, "La Imagen Cambiante de Juan de Valdés."

14 María Laura Giordano, *Apologetas de la Fe: Élités conversas entre inquisición y patronazgo en España (siglos XV y XVI)* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2004), 27.

15 Nieto, *Img. Cambiante*, 24.

16 Melquiades Andrés Martín, *La Teología Española en el Siglo XVI I*. Vol. 1. (Madrid: BAC, 1976–1977), 26.

against Scholasticism (c.1470), and with the reforms of the monastic orders. According to Andrés, the period ended with Melchor Cano's *De Locis Theologicis* (1562), the biblical methodology of Martin Martínez Cantalapiedra (1565), and the Index of Fernando de Valdés in 1559.¹⁷

The thought of Juan de Valdés belongs much more to a “spiritual laboratory” than to the development of Catholic theology. It can be included within that “most valuable originality of sixteenth-century religious Spain [that] originates in the mysterious interpenetration of movements, [which were] totally diverse in appearance.”¹⁸ Valdés participated in the deep religious quest which emerged from various noblemen's courts and which sought to expand into other sections of society. Associated with those courts was the transformation and growing complexity of the *Converso*¹⁹ conflict in Spain, which began with the Edict of Blood Purity (1449), and continued after the death of Hernando de Talavera (1507). Significantly, Humanism made its first inroads into the Iberian Peninsula around 1420 through noblemen's courts in which *Conversos* were present, and important traces of what would later be called *Devotio Moderna* were evident in the writings of eminent *Conversos*.

At the time of Valdés' religious formation, Castile experienced an important convergence of diverse religious currents: the fruit of Cardinal Cisneros' reforms among Franciscans, the last decades of aristocratic centers of spirituality, the considerable confluence of *Conversos* in Franciscan “houses of prayer”²⁰ and in noblemen's houses, the impact of Erasmus' *Enchiridion* in Spain, and the threat of Luther through the circulation of his works. These currents existed in the midst of moral and educational decay and an institutional Christianity which all too often seemed to endorse a vulgarized, performance-based religion.²¹ This was the environment in which Juan de Valdés developed his own understanding of the Christian experience of God.

17 Ibid, xi. Interestingly, Fernando de Valdés, General Inquisitor, was a distant relative of Juan de Valdés (Mártir Rizo, *Historia de la muy Noble y Leal Ciudad de Cuenca*, 1629, 284).

18 José Manuel Carrete Parrondo, *Movimiento Alumbrado y Renacimiento Español: Proceso inquisitorial contra Luis de Beteta*. (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Judeo-Cristianos, 1980), 26.

19 *Converso* is an English accepted term, a noun or adjective designating Jewish individuals converted to Christianity.

20 “House of prayer” was a technical term, identifying convents specially dedicated to spiritual exercises, more clearly defined in Chapter 2 of this thesis under “Cisneros' Reforms.”

21 E.g. Melquiades Andrés, *La Teología Española en el Siglo XVI*, vol.i (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1976), 258; José García Oro, *Cisneros y la Reforma del Clero Español en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: CSIC, 1971), 2–28.

Origins, Youth, and Education in Spain (c. 1490–1530)

Juan de Valdés was born in Cuenca, Spain, capital of a Castilian province and one of the four richest Episcopal sees of Spain. The see of Cuenca was under that of Toledo and had its own Inquisitorial Court.²² Valdés' family, linked with the nobility and high clergy of the time, descended from Jewish converts to Christianity.²³ Valdés' family came from the Kingdom of León, Occidental Asturias,²⁴ and spread into Seville and Cuenca as a "noble cast" with individuals like Fernando de Valdés (Archbishop of Seville and General Inquisitor of Spain²⁵), as well as archbishops, bishops, captains, and counselors. By the second half of the fifteenth century, Juan de Valdés' father, Fernando de Valdés, established his family in Cuenca with magnificent houses, a chapel, and entailed estates. The family had a particular ability "to introduce themselves in the houses of great nobles and high politics, to procure perpetual governing positions,²⁶ or to associate themselves to Courts, looking for powerful patrons and intermarrying with most high nobility."²⁷ Juan de Valdés and Alfonso, his brother, became the Pope's Chamberlain and the Secretary of His Majesty Charles V, respectively.²⁸ Juan grew up under the pious influence of his father and Pedro Martyr d'Anghiera, a famous tutor of Castilian nobility. Juan grew up amidst the convergence of the "Commoners' Revolt" in Castile, a Christian Humanism that encouraged church reform, and other religious currents which often challenged orthodoxy.

The date of Juan's birth has been a debated issue for some time, particularly, whether or not Juan and Alfonso were twin brothers. The implications of this debate affect whether Juan was mature enough to write *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine* and participate in the different religious currents reflected in that work. Erasmus and Ginés de Sepulveda, as personal witnesses, spoke of Alfonso

22 Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés.*, ed. Facsimil, Intr. Miguel Jiménez Monteserín, 1875 (Madrid: Oficina tipográfica del hospicio, 1995), 86.

23 Unquestionably documented and summarized in: Dorothy Donald y Elena Lázaro, *Alfonso de Valdés y su Época* (Cuenca: Excma. Diputación Provincial, 1983), 55–61.

24 José Luis González Novalín, *El Inquisidor General Fernando de Valdés (1483–1568)* ([Oviedo]: Universidad de Oviedo, 1971), 4–6.

25 Author of the *Index* of 1559.

26 Sp. "Regidorías," which refers to governing positions in the city hall.

27 Miguel Martínez Millán, "Fernando Valdés, Valeroso Capitán, Regidor de Cuenca" *In Diario de Cuenca*, Aug. 5 (1972): 4.

28 Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo, *Historia de la Muy Noble y Leal Ciudad de Cuenca: Dirigida al alma inmortal de don García Hurtado de Mendoza, Marqués de Cañete*, ed. Jean de Courbes (En Madrid: Por los herederos de la Viuda de Po. de Madrigal, 1629), 284.

and Juan in terms of *gemelli*,²⁹ and having an “outstanding resemblance.”³⁰ In Cuenca, there was no registry of population prior to 1509.³¹ Considering the apparent “elder brother” attitude of Alfonso, Alfonso’s role as Imperial Secretary, and Juan being indirectly identified as a *boy*,³² the matter seemed inconclusive. Recently, however, Manuel Amores discovered the inquisitorial declaration of Sancho Muñoz from June 16, 1513.³³ Sancho was a citizen of Cuenca who heard Juan’s father say that he had kept his children’s placentas,³⁴ Juan and Alfonso’s, and that they were born at the same time.³⁵ This declaration, therefore, presents Juan and Alfonso as bi-ovular twins. Furthermore, a letter written by Juan’s father on June 8, 1506 mentions his son Juan as a representative from the city of Cuenca at the court of Benavente. This letter suggests that Juan’s birth could have been around 1490, making Juan at least 16–years-old when at the court of Benavente.³⁶ At the time of writing his *Dialogue*, therefore, Valdés was probably in his early thirties.

Around 1520, Valdés must have experienced a religious crisis, a conversion.³⁷ In his *Commentary on Matthew*, Valdés referred to his conversion as an event that happened twenty years earlier. If he wrote this *Commentary* about 1540, Valdés’ conversion happened around his departure to the palace of Escalona or at the beginning of his stay there. Valdés confessed that he had spent “ten years, the best of his life,” in palaces and courts, giving himself to “no more virtuous exercise than to read (...) lies [chivalric romances].”³⁸ This fondness for reading

29 “*Ego vos tam gemellos pro unico habeo, non pro duobus.*” Erasmus’ letter to Juan de Valdés from Basel, March 21, 1529. Repr. in: Caballero, *Alonso y Juan*, 429.

30 “... When I see him, it certainly seems that I am seeing you, whether he stands, or walks, ... speaking, ...” Letter of Ginés de Sepúlveda to Alfonso de Valdés from Rome 26th August, ca. 1531. repr. in: Caballero, *Alonso y Juan*, 450.

31 Caballero, *Alonso y Juan*, 46.

32 Witness Francisco de Acevedo derided Alcaraz’s meetings as attended by “women and boys” (Sp. *muchachos*). He gives a list of the attendees that including clergy and married couples. Cf. Inquisición, *Proceso de Fe de Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, Isabel de la Cruz y Gaspar de Bedoya*, AHN, Leg. 106, Exp.5, fol. 80.

33 Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Sección Inquisición, legajo 780, expediente 2.180, folio 11. Cited in, Manuel Amores, “Los Hermanos Alfonso y Juan de Valdés: Fueron Gemelos,” *Papeles del Huecar*, n. 15, Abril-Mayo (2004): 28.

34 Sp. “camisicas.”

35 Sp. “ventregada.”

36 Dorothy Donald and Elena Lázaro, *Alfonso de Valdés*.

37 José C. Nieto, «Juan de Valdés de Cuenca», en *Contemporaries of Erasmus A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 3, ed. Peter G Bietenholz and Thomas Brian Deutscher (Toronto, Ont.; Buffalo, N.Y.: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 368.

38 Juan de Valdés, “Dialogo de la Lengua,” OC, ed. Angel Alcalá, vol. I (Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 1997), 253.

most likely refers to a period prior to Escalona, most probably to the time one referred to in his father's letter of 1506. Valdés' expression that, "I would eat my hands after them," [chivalric romances], would not harmonize with a later period, when his religious pursuits were evident.

In 1523, Valdés resided in the household of Don Diego López Pacheco, second Marquis of Villena and an open "protector of *Conversos*."³⁹ Scholars can only speculate on Valdés' motivation for serving under López Pacheco. The Marquis was a pious nobleman who had retired to his palace at Escalona in order to give himself "to spiritual exercises and conversation with spiritual men."⁴⁰ The significance of this scenario is that after pogroms, false conversions, and suspicions toward Jewish converted individuals and their offspring, these religious centers, like the Marquis' palace, became a shelter for *Conversos*. Noblemen's houses like Pacheco's promoted an intense spirituality that could include some alternative traits, a religion somewhat independent from the institutional church, which at that time was affected by a significant ignorance and decay.

Within Pacheco's household was a key person in the life of Juan de Valdés: Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz. Pedro was a lay preacher hired by López Pacheco. Alcaraz's teaching eventually caused a polemical controversy among the preachers and religious individuals of Pacheco's household, a controversy that eventually reached even surrounding towns. Alcaraz attracted followers, spectators, and enemies. He was eventually arrested and tried by the Inquisition as a representative of the *Alumbrados* of Toledo. Valdés is mentioned several times in Alcaraz's trial, certifying his stay in Escalona (1523–1524), his awareness of Alcaraz's teachings, and the related controversy.

The religious commotion of those days, ending with the Inquisition's intervention, did not belong solely to Pedro Alcaraz. The threat of Lutheranism, the presence of alternative expressions of spirituality, and the accusations of both informants and "offended" individuals converged into a situation of alarm which eventually caused several arrests and the Edict against the *Alumbrados* of Toledo (1525). The Edict and inquisitorial proceedings, Alcaraz's trial among them, was the institutional reaction against diverse initiatives of religious fervency and supernatural spirituality directly or indirectly promoted by Cisneros' reforms among Franciscans and clergy.⁴¹

In November 1526, approximately two undocumented years after his stay in Escalona, Valdés is studying in the University of Alcalá de Henares (Novem-

39 Caballero, *Alfonso y Juan*, p. xxi.

40 M. Serrano y Sanz, "Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, Iluminado Alcarreño del s. XVI" en *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, t.vii (1903): 6.

41 To be discussed later in "Converso-Prophetic Alumbradism ..."

ber 18, 1526). The founder of the University, Cardinal Cisneros, had been an austere and deeply religious confessor of Queen Isabel, who had promoted important religious reforms, even favoring radical expressions like raptures and prophesying. The University of Alcalá taught the “three ways,” which, beyond Thomism, included Scotism and Ockhamism.⁴² Alcalá became a unique centre of Humanism and biblical erudition. According to Erasmus, Alcalá’s University was the place where “the most signal accomplishments of European scholarship were being made.”⁴³

While Juan de Valdés was in Alcalá, the antagonism between Spanish traditional monasticism and Erasmian circles reached a climactic point. From the same university of Alcalá, Diego López de Zúñiga had spearheaded vehement opposition against Erasmus since 1520, an opposition that increased as Erasmus’ writings were gaining influence in Spain. General Inquisitor Alonso Manrique, an ardent reader of Erasmus, convened a Conference in Valladolid to finally settle the question of Erasmus’ orthodoxy or heresy (1527). The assembly, however, was forced to end without a final conclusion, and the belligerence against Erasmus, however, continued. As a token of the anti-Erasmian advancement, in 1528 Diego de Uceda in Toledo, a well reputed “old Christian,” was tried by the Inquisition. His appreciation for Erasmus’ writings was for the first time associated with Lutheranism.⁴⁴

During his time in Alcalá, Juan de Valdés corresponded with Erasmus.⁴⁵ One of the Rotterdammer’s letters referred to Valdés’ ability to couple *elegantia litterarum* with *pietatis christianae sinceritatem*, something that, in Erasmus’ opinion, very few Italians had accomplished.⁴⁶ Valdés participated also in the circle of those who favored Erasmus’ *Philosophia Christi* and his writings. Valdés’ period in Alcalá and in Spain ended shortly after the publication of his *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine* at the university’s press, run by Miguel de Eguía (January 14, 1529). At first, eminent men approved Valdés’ work – men such as Mateo Pascual (director of San Ildefonso School), Chancellor Pedro de Lerma, Pedro Ciruelo, Hernán Vázquez, Juan de Vergara, and Luis Nuñez Coronel (secretary of

42 José C Nieto, *Juan de Valdés and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation*. (Genève: Droz, 1970), 54.

43 Cited in: George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 11–12.

44 John Edward Longhurst, *Luther’s Ghost in Spain (1517–1546)*. ([Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1969), 117–134.

45 Three extant letters from Erasmus: (1) from Basel March 1, 1528, confirming Valdés as a student in Alcalá (n.1961 repr. in Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, 1875, 352), (2) from Basel March 21, 1529, (n. 2127 repr. Ibid., 429), and (3) from Freiburg January 13, 1530, expressing his complaint that Valdés did not answer his letters (n.2251, repr. Ibid., 440).

46 Erasmus from Basel March 21, 1529. (n. 2127 repr. Ibid., 429).

General Inquisitor Alonso Manrique).⁴⁷ Sancho Carranza de Miranda, just previously named Inquisitor of Navarra, bought several copies, distributing them among the clergy of his jurisdiction. After some reading, the *Dialogue's* critiques against tithes, offerings, and auricular confession convinced Carranza of some needed modifications. He eventually prohibited its reading. On June 29, 1529, Carranza sent a letter to the Inquisition in Cuenca to go after its “fugitive” author, whom he said should be punished.⁴⁸ The first Index of 1547 registered the formal and public prohibition of Valdés’ book.⁴⁹

Not long before the publication of the *Dialogue*, tensions between traditionalism and Erasmianism (accentuated by accusations of *Alumbradism* and Lutheranism) increased, and Valdés went to Salamanca. From there, he escaped⁵⁰ to Rome, where his brother Alfonso was Imperial Secretary. Despite Pope Clement VII’s brief, which at the request of Alfonso, absolved Alfonso and his family of any accusation,⁵¹ Juan had no protection in Spain. The publication of his *Dialogue* must have sparked a second cause against Valdés; his implications in the trial of Alcaraz would have been the first. The situation forced his flight to Rome.⁵²

Years in Rome (1530–1535)

Valdés’ flight was shared with other Erasmians under suspicion. Mateo Pascual, rector of the Trilingual College of Alcalá, fled with Valdés to Rome. Miona, Mi-

47 Ángel Alcalá ed., OC, p. xviii–xix.

48 Letter extant in the Inquisitorial archive of Cuenca, reproduced in Monteserin, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, liv; also Cf. Alcalá (ed.), OC, p.xix.

49 Juan de Valdés, «*Diálogo de Doctrina Cristiana*», *reproduction en fac-similé de l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque nationale de Lisbonne* (édition d’Alcalá de Henares, 1529), intr. et ed. Marcel Bataillon, (Coimbra: Impr. da Universidade, 1925), 76.

50 At the beginning of 1529 he is found in Salamanca. His name appears in a power of attorney to receive a debt for Alonso Beltran, his niece’s husband (Caballero, 1995, lii). This explains Erasmus’ complaint that his letters to Juan were not answered (Ep. n. 2251). On Sept., 9, 1529, in the notary of the *Converso* Juan del Castillo, Valdés signed a grant in favor of his brother Andrés as “administrator of the charity house and Hospital of Saint Lazarus of the city of Cuenca “ (Alcalá, OC., xxi).

51 Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 303.

52 Marcel Bataillon found a copy of the trial of Juan de Vergara with the heading “taken from Valdés’. This ratified Llorente’s former undocumented assertion of an actual prosecution of Valdés (Juan Antonio Llorente, *Historia Crítica de la Inquisición en España*, Vol V. Madrid: In the Censor’s Press, 1822, 227–228).

guel de Torres, and Juan del Castillo, fled to Paris.⁵³ According to Juan de Vergara, Valdés' flight damaged his reputation.⁵⁴ In Rome, however, Alfonso had provided a safer situation through Juan Ginés de Sepulveda.⁵⁵ A safe-conduct issued by Pope Clement VII revealed Alfonso's influence and care for Juan; Juan appeared as "the Chamberlain to the Pope" and "Secretary" to the Emperor Charles V in Rome.⁵⁶ The occasion of that safe-conduct was that the Imperial Court returned from the Diet of Regensburg, and the document was issued for Juan to go to see Alfonso. Sadly, in 1532, the plague snatched Alfonso's life from him before Juan could see him.

Juan met the Court at Mantua and lived for some time there and in Bologna, returning afterwards to Rome. Alfonso's death deprived Juan of comfort and financial support. Two of Juan's letters from Bologna early in 1533 reveal that the city of Naples had offered Alfonso a post as archivist. The post was transferred to Juan, who travelled to Naples, only to return when the post ceased by imperial order (December 1533). Juan was significantly compensated, however, with a thousand ducats.⁵⁷ His short stay in Naples became very important, as it provided valuable contacts with the nobility to whom he would return years later. While in Rome, Juan corresponded with them in letters full of wit and style.⁵⁸

On the positive side, in Rome and Bologna, Juan encountered friends like the Pope's Protonotary, Pier Paolo Carnesecchi, a good humanist, orator, and poet, whose secular relationship with Juan in Rome⁵⁹ developed into a very close spiritual relationship in Naples. In Bologna, Juan also met Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, with whom he maintained a relationship of both diplomacy and personal

53 Arthur Gordon Kinder, "Juan de Valdés," col. *Bibliotheca Dissidentium: Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles*, ed. André Seguenny et al. Vol. IX. Baden Baden: Editions Valentin Koerner, 1994, 10; Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, II, 58.

54 Letter of Juan de Vergara to Juan de Valdés. reproduced in: M. Serrano y Sanz "Juan de Vergara", en *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, VI, (1902): 36–37.

55 Sepulveda's response to Alfonso (7/9/1530 or 1531) certified Juan's presence in Italy and the friendly reception received (Repr. in Caballero, *Alonso y Juan*, 446).

56 The document speaks of Juan as "*Dilectum filium Joannem Valdésium Camerarium nostrum et Cesareae Maiestatis secretarium ad eandem Maestatem proficentem*." "Secretary" denotes a kind of representative of Alfonso in Rome. B. Fontana, *Renata di Francia, Fuchessa di Ferrara*, Roma, Forzani: 1889–1894, p. 476. Cited in: Barbolani, *Dial. Lengua*, 22–23.

57 Alcalá (ed.), OC, xxiv.

58 Juan de Valdés, *Dialogo de la Lengua*, OC, 154.

59 Carnesecchi speaks of Valdés in Rome as "a gentilhuomo di spada et capa" — a man of cape and sword, that is, a layman [O.Ortolani, *Pietro Carnesecchi: Per la storia de la vita religiosa italiana nel Cinquecento*, F. Le Monnier, 1963, 172, cited in Barbolani (ed.), *Dial. Lengua*, 24]. Carnesecchi did not suspect that Valdés was at that time committed to deep theological studies [Alcalá (ed.), OC, xxiv].

interest. Nevertheless, despite Alfonso's care and provision,⁶⁰ Juan's stay in Rome and Bologna included some uncomfortable elements. In particular, Erasmus had just condemned Italian humanists for their Ciceronianism, while Bembo and Sadoleto, secretaries to Leo X, constituted emblems of Ciceronian style.⁶¹ Pietro Corsi was probably preparing his *Defensio pro Italia ad Erasmum Roterodamum*, later printed in 1535.⁶² The Erasmian polarization worsened after the death of Alfonso; some posts returned to conservative positions. In Rome, during the spring of 1532, while the court was in Regensburg, the Erasmian Miguel Mai was terminated as the Emperor's ambassador, installing in his place the conservative Count of Cifuentes.⁶³ On a personal level, Juan de Valdés had to assume the task of a *private negotiator* in favor of Benedetto Accolti, for whom he felt no sympathy.⁶⁴

Clement VII died in 1534, and the papal court changed as a consequence. Paul III succeeded Clement VII. The new Pope's subsequent return to more traditional tenets forced Valdés in 1535 to move to Naples, a territory still under the dominion of the Spanish Emperor. As a departing gift, Juan received the revenues of the church of St. Clement in the diocese of Cuenca (*in absentia*).⁶⁵ Gonzaga and Carnesecchi also abandoned Rome,⁶⁶ and together with Juan, their negative reports to Charles V about the new Papal Court revealed that the move was a "bitter and resentful" experience.⁶⁷

Apart from the secular portrait of Valdés in Rome, his departure to Naples involved considerable frustration. Erasmus' followers from the Court and the "Erasmian circle" of Alcalá had forged an ideal in which Spain and Charles V, as instruments of reform and peace for the world, were to restore the shortcom-

60 Juan's brother, Diego, had died by the end of 1533, and on Jan. 16, 1534, Clement VII conferred on Valdés the revenues of his church in the Spanish diocese of Cartagena. On December 12, 1529, Clement had already extended spiritual concessions and ecclesiastical benefits to the Valdés family and to Juan himself.

61 Erasmus wrote *Ciceronianus* in 1528.

62 Barbolani, *Dial. Lingua*, 26.

63 E.g. Alcalá (ed.), OC, xxvi.

64 Juan de Valdés, *Cartas inéditas de Juan de Valdés al cardenal Gonzaga. Introducción y notas por José F. Montesinos*. (Madrid: impr. de S. Aguirre, 1931), x.

65 We do not know how long he enjoyed such revenues; they are not mentioned in his last will. Cf. Juan de Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano: dialogo con Giulia Gonzaga. Introduzione, note e appendici di B. Croce.*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Gius. Laterza & figli, 1938), 173–178. Concerning the suggestion that Valdés was an ordained priest (Cf. Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy. An anatomy of Apostasy* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967], 50), we simply refer to Nieto's answer, which we support (Cf. José C. Nieto, "Was J.V an ordained priest?" *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 32 [1970]: 603–606).

66 Montesinos (ed), *Cartas a Gonzaga*, x.

67 *Ibid.*, lix.

ings of Christianity through the summoning of a General Council.⁶⁸ That was the expectation when, in 1520, Charles travelled to Aachen, where many Holy Roman Emperors had been crowned. Alfonso had clearly expressed in his letters the common yearning for a General Council. In 1527 the sack of Rome by Charles' troops somewhat confirmed that vision, so expressed in Alfonso's dialogues.⁶⁹ Regardless, Paul III's ascension to the papacy became a setback for that hope, which Valdés had also shared.⁷⁰ Deprived of support and unable to return to Spain, he directed his steps to Naples, where Pedro de Toledo, the younger son of the Duke of Alba and close acquainted of Alfonso, was viceroy.

Years in Naples (1535–1541)

It was particularly in Naples that Valdés' pastoral labors and writings carved his imprint into sixteenth-century Christianity. Juan moved in 1535 to the elegant villa of Riaggia, where much of the nobility resided. There he served the Viceroy, Pedro de Toledo, as inspector of fortifications. Forty-one extant letters from Naples to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga (September 1535 – January 1537) depict some of the particulars of Juan's previous years in Rome.⁷¹ They reveal Juan's relationship with Gonzaga, a man who shared "the religious desires of the most noble spirits in Italy," but without conviction.⁷² Juan's friendship benefitted Gonzaga's imperial dealings, while Gonzaga's correspondence gave Juan favor and credit with others.⁷³ A more awkward relationship appears with Cardinal Accolti. Valdés had to defend him when Paul III deposed him on August 27, 1534, imprisoning him in the castle of Sant'Angelo. Although able to gain sympathies from humanists of laxer morals and worldly prelates, like Gonzaga, Acolti was also capable of heinous crimes.⁷⁴ The letters to Ercole manifest the "tyranny" and pain from the Farnese's rise to the Papacy. Under such conditions, Juan's temper certainly became a danger,⁷⁵ and Naples was a safer place. His residence in Naples also allowed him to be in touch with the Imperial Court.

68 Ibid, cxi.

69 Alfonso de Valdés, *Diálogo de las cosas ocurridas en Roma* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1956).

70 Valdés letter Sept. 18, 1535, repr. in : Juan de Valdés, *Cartas a Gonzaga*, 3.

71 Juan de Valdés, *Cartas a Gonzaga*.

72 Ibid, xli.

73 Ibid, letter XI, 9.

74 Ibid., xvii.

75 E.g. "I wrote him how choleric and unsatisfied I was for that which His Most Reverend was doing with me." Ibid, Letter XXX, p.70, lines 19, 20.

The letters to Gonzaga raise the question concerning the relationship between Juan's politics and religion. In his letter from April 11, 1540, as he dealt with a lawsuit in favor of Giulia Gonzaga, he writes of his spiritual advice: "apparently only for this I am of any value, being useless for all other things."⁷⁶ The question which results is: Was his increasing religious dedication a direct result of his frustration with the General Council and Imperial ideals? While such a cause-effect relationship is unnecessary, it can be safely inferred that there was an important degree of frustration. Nevertheless, Valdés' interaction in the religious realm revived his spiritual pursuits. Followers and friends received his teachings eagerly, which gave rise to his intense and prolific literary production. Regarding his diplomatic labors, there is another extant group of letters from Juan's period in Naples to the Secretary of State, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina. These letters prove that Juan's political activities continued nearly till the end of his life.⁷⁷ Unlike some of his followers who fled or were executed, Valdés' death in 1541 saved him from the Inquisition in Italy.

The "Valdessian Circle;" His Final Years

Naples constituted the environment of Juan's pastoral work and writings. In Rome, his devotion was present;⁷⁸ but in Naples "it seemed that God had destined him to be Doctor and Pastor of noble and illustrious people." In Naples he allegedly trained "some of the most famous preachers of Italy."⁷⁹ Pacheco, a character of Valdés' *Dialogue on Language*, describes him as "a veritable Saint John the Evangelist (...) I think he writes at night that which he does during the day, and during the day [he writes] that which he dreams by night."⁸⁰ His influence gave him recognition as a key voice for the Italian Reformation.⁸¹

Valdés' teaching created what has been called the "Valdessian Circle," a group to which some authors attribute a notorious expansion.⁸² They were "spi-

76 Ibid., 166.

77 Letters repr. in: Juan de Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, ed. B. Croce.

78 Three references in his *Dialogo de la Lengua* testify of his religious dedication even in Rome (Juan de Valdés, *DL*, OC, 162; Barbolani ed., 129, 224, 263).

79 Celio Secondo Curione in his "Epistola Preliminar" in: Juan de Valdés, *Le cento e dieci divine considerazioni del s. Giovanni Valdésso: nelle quali si ragiona delle cose piu utili, piu necessarie, e piu perfette, della christiana professione* (Basilea, 1550).

80 Juan de Valdés, *Dialogo de la Lengua*, OC, 162.

81 So recognized by Pedro Bayle, Miravel, McCrie, the Neapolitan historian Botta, P. Ribadeneyra and many others. Cf. Caballero, *Alonso y Juan*, 188.

82 Cione has numbered 40 individuals, Cf. Edmondo Cione, *Juan de Valdés; la sua vita e il suo pensiero religioso. Con una completa bibliografia delle opere del Valdés e degli scritti intorno a lui*. (Bari: G. Laterza & figli, 1938), 111–112; Antonio Caracciolo (1519–1571), author of a biography