

## Converts to Catholicism

To see if the conversos (converts to Catholicism) in the family lines of New Mexicans were secretly passing the Jewish religion on to their children through over 21 generations, and over 500 years of weekly Mass, Catholic Weddings, and Baptisms: let us look at the best known NM converso lineage that of Juan de Oñate b. 1552.

Juan de Oñate 7<sup>th</sup> generation, son of Catalina de Salazar y de la Cadena, daughter of Catalina de la Cadena Malvenda, daughter of Pedro de Malvenda, son of Hernando de Maluenda, son of Alvaro Rodriguez de Maluenda b. Abt 1415, son of María Núñez ha-Levi d.1413, 1<sup>st</sup> generation who converted to Catholicism on July 21 1390 with her mother María and two brothers;

1. Alvar Garcia de Santa María; María's brother and the official chronicler of Juan II from 1426- 1435, (BN p391)- But Alvar Garcia was a converso and one who belonged to and, in a way, represented the family of Paul of Burgos. Total detachment from their Judaic past and complete integration into Christian life marked the behavior of this family, and we have no reason to assume that Alvar Garcia was in this respect a dissenting member.

2. Paul of Burgos, also known as Salomon ha-Levi, Pablo de Santa María, or Pablo de Cartagena.

None of Spain's converts had made such great efforts to bring about the Christianization of all of Spain's Jews and none had attained such success in his endeavors as María's brother Solomon ha-Levi, chief rabbi of Burgos, who went over to Christianity during the riots of 1391 (1390). He was known thereafter by his various Christian names, Pablo de Santa María, or Pablo de Cartagena, or the Bishop of Burgos, but he is also referred to in the Spanish sources as Pablo de Burgos-the designation we shall use here in English form.

He was born in Burgos about 1352 to a rich and well-connected family, apparently of Aragonese descent. His education followed the pattern then common among the wealthy Jewish families of the peninsula, comprising all branches of traditional Jewish learning, the philosophies of the Middle Ages, and some of the sciences. From the Jewish philosophers, primarily Maimonides and his disciples in the 13th and 14th centuries, a short road led to the Christian scholastics, who were notable for their rationalistic bent. As followers of Aristotle in one measure or another and as bearers of "philosophical truth," their views, though saturated with Christian ideas, could be partly accepted by Jewish students of philosophy, just as the works of Averroes could be admired by them all despite their Moslem veneer. Tradition has it that Paul became infatuated with the works of **Thomas Aquinas**. There is no need to doubt this tradition.+

His vast acquaintance with Jewish literature and his mastery of the Jewish sources of law were at least partly responsible for his appointment as chief rabbi of Burgos. But his mastery of Latin brought him also in touch with the *anti Jewish* Christian authors (from the **Church Fathers** on), and aware of their arguments against the Jews and Judaism, he could devise counterarguments to refute them. In the second half of the 14th century, theological disputations between Jews and Christians abounded in Spain, especially in Castile. Paul used his wide learning, keen mind and debating skill to defend the Jewish faith against its critics. He became known among both Jews and Christians as a formidable advocate of the Jewish cases

B. Netanyahu's book ORIGINS OF THE INQUISITION IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPAIN 1995 ed The New York Review of Books 2001

Don Pablo de Santa María (1350-1435), bishop of Burgos and former head rabbi of Burgos. After his conversion to Christianity in 1390, don Pablo studied at the universities of Salamanca and Paris and achieved such facility in the method and substance of scholastic theory that he was privileged to argue before the popes of Avignon. In 1412, don Pablo wrote a summary of the medieval chronicles of Spain, and in 1418 he completed an extended and versified version of his summary. In this work, the "Edades del mundo," don Pablo adapted early Spanish history to Old Testament names and chronology. He retained the tradition that Hercules was the first Spanish king, but he changed the name of Geryon to Gideon, claimed that Gideon had ruled the Castilian

nation rather than a province that later formed part of the Roman Empire, and treated the Carthaginian and Roman periods very briefly in order to devote more attention to the Goths and the Reconquest. This shift of emphases from classical myth to Old Testament history, from the Romans to the Goths, and from Roman province to Castilian nation became one of the distinguishing characteristics of the letrado (lawyer-bureaucrat) treatment of Spanish history.

Helen Nader: The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550

2a. Alonso de Cartagena

The spiritual leader of the conversos of Castile and their most famous spokesman was unquestionably Alonso de Cartagena, bishop of Burgos and second son of the convert Pablo de Santa María (Paul of Burgos, Bishop of Cartagena, later of Burgos). Jurist, historian, philosopher and theologian, Alonso de Cartagena was also a great orator, a skillful diplomat and a Church leader of international renown. The excellence of his achievements was such that leading representatives in all these fields sang his praises in superlative terms. Some of these laudatory statements were often quoted by his biographers.' Others can be added to the same effect.

Alonso de Cartagena was born in Burgos in 1385 and was converted to Christianity by his father, Paul of Burgos, in 1391. From then on his upbringing resembled that of other young converts who belonged to distinguished and well-to-do families. Unlike Jews who turned Christian in their maturity—as was the case with his father, Don Pablo-Alonso, like so many converts of his age, did not have to undergo a religious "crisis," a moral and intellectual transformation, to adjust himself to the life of a Christian. He was accustomed to that life from the tender age of six, with his memories of Jewish customs soon to be submerged by a flood of new impressions from his Christian experience. He saw himself as a Christian and was one through and through—in culture and religion.

From the age of fourteen to his twentieth year, he was educated at the University of Salamanca, studying philosophy, theology and jurisprudence, and working toward the degree of doctor, which he attained about 1406. This education gave him the tools to pursue his literary interests, and also prepared him for service in the administration of either Church or state. In fact, after leaving Salamanca, he tried his hand in three fields—literature, politics and ecclesiastical affairs—and for some time it was unclear which of the three would win him over. As it turned out, he entered simultaneously the service of both Church and state, and at the age of twenty-nine, in 1415, he became auditor of King Juan II and also Dean of Compostela." Similarly, in 1419 he became a titular member of the Royal Council and also papal nuncio of Castile." By 1428 he was known, on the one hand, as auditor, member of the Royal Council, and referendario del rey and, on the other hand, as referendario of the pope, dean of the churches of Compostela and Segovia, Canon of Burgos and the king's chaplain." By that time he was also well known as an author, with several important works to his credit. By 1439 he became the bishop of Burgos an office his father Paul of Burgos had held.

Lucena in his De Vita Beata, makes the marquis of Santillana (Íñigo Lopez de Mendoza), another known admirer of Don Alonso, address the latter in the following words: "Philosophy was born in Greece. Socrates called it from Heaven.... Pythagoras sowed it in Italy; you [i.e., Alonso de Cartagena] have now transplanted it to Spain ... Blessed is she, happy Castile! It is for her, not only for yourself, that you were born when you were!"

The poet Gómez Manrique, in assessing Don Alonso as a teacher of Catholic doctrine, defines him as "another St. Paul," and says that "it is well known that, as far as learning is concerned, no one could be found equal to him since the days of St. Gregory."

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In the 4th century the Jewish community of Burgos was one of the three leading communities of Castile, not only because of its size and wealth but also because of its political influence, Burgos then being a major base of power of the Castilian kingdom. (BN)

This also shows the conversion to Catholicism from the times of the apostles onward was most often made by reasoned judgment.