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**ARISTOTELIANISM AND ALFONSO DE CARTAGENA
(CA. 1385-1456). ETHICAL AND POLITICAL THEORY
FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF A KINGDOM:
LIBERALITY, MAGNIFICENCE
AND MAGNANIMITY**

María Díez Yáñez

Universidad Complutense de Madrid & Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

En el siglo XV, Castilla, igual que el resto de Europa, está viviendo un cambio que también se refleja en la recepción de la *Ética* aristotélica. El presente artículo se basa en parte de la obra de Alfonso de Cartagena, quien fue uno de los representantes más prominentes de la cultura política hispánica en favor de la monarquía. Cartagena fue también un signo de la progresiva secularización en los discursos políticos. En este sentido, aunque Cartagena era gran admirador de Séneca, en no pocas ocasiones tomó a Aristóteles como autoridad para fomentar el proyecto ideológico monárquico.

Palabras clave: Alfonso de Cartagena; Aristóteles; Ética.

In fifteenth century Castile, as in the rest of Europe, a change will come about in the development of the ethical Aristotle, focusing on the moral ground and reflected in the transmission of translations, paraphrases, compendiums and commentaries. I structure this article on part of the work of Alfonso de Cartagena, who was one of the most prominent representatives of the Spanish political culture in favor of monarchy. He was also a sign of the progressive secularization of the political discourses. Cartagena was too great devoted to Seneca. However, contrary what we should expect, he took much more often Aristotle into account in order to build the political discourses.

Keywords: Alfonso de Cartagena; Aristotle; Ethics.

If we are to understand the birth and development of Europe, Aristotle is an indispensable leading figure. Our continent has its roots in Greece, in Rome and in Jerusalem.¹ Aristotelian philosophy has had many followers throughout European history (Dante, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Bartolus de Saxoferrato, Lorenzo Valla, etc...) and no shortage of enemies (Machiavelli in the 16th century, Galileo and Descartes in the 17th century are some examples). This only confirms the fact that few figures in the History of European thought have been able to remain indifferent to Aristotle.

1. What we understand by Aristotelianism

A quick look at the relevant literature makes it clear that Aristotelianism is a complex concept; in fact it lends itself to three different interpretations. In the first place, Aristotelianism could be understood as the group of writers who quote Aristotle in their own works. Here, it is also clear that quoting Aristotle does not mean *per se* that one adheres to all his philosophical ideas, but rather, that Aristotle is considered an indispensable authority. Some medieval authors turn to his philosophy in order to back up political ideas with different ideological bases. For example, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) drew on Aristotle in defending the positive role of the monarchy, as the best of political regimes. Aristotle was also an authority for Engelbert of Admont (1250-1331), an advocate of empire, in developing different models of kingdoms (just and unjust, large and small), for which task he drew on Aristotelian and Ciceronian doctrine of the *polis* and of world government as it was in Roman times. In line with Aristotelianism and Christianity, Dante (1265-1321) was of the opinion that the emperor was the only one capable of saving Italy from division, and from the endless internal and external battles to which it was being subjected due to the injustice of tyrannical governments that only contributed to its disunity. The writings of Juan de París (†1306),²

* Dirección para correspondencia: Dña. María Díez Yáñez, calle Príncipe de Vergara, 210, Esc. A, 5ªA. 28002. Madrid. Dirección de correo electrónico: mariadie@ucm.es

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¹ In reference to this, I highly recommend reading George Steiner's useful and also delightful little work *La idea de Europa*, trad. de M. Condor (Madrid: Siruela, 2008).

² In his *De potestate regia et papali* he moves from employing Thomist assertions to concluding that the 'will of the people' voiced at the Council has the power and the right to depose the Pope in the event of heresy or scandal, that is, a defence of Conciliarism (E. Gilson, *La filosofía en la Edad Media: desde los orígenes patristicos hasta el fin del siglo XIV*, trad. de Arsenio Palacios y Salvador Caballero [Madrid: Gredos, 2007]).

Jacobo de Viterbo (*ca.*1260-1307),³ Egidio Romano (1243-1316), between others, should also be taken into account, whereas those in favour of the primacy of democracy are to be found alongside those who defend the superiority of the Pope's decision. Marsilio de Padua (1275/80-1342/43)⁴ based his arguments on Aristotelian assumptions in order to defend the vision of an autonomous State and its supremacy over the papacy, while William of Ockham (1300-1347) was in favour of the independence of the State against the pontificate, emphasising the view that man is capable of making his own moral decisions.⁵ Both these men present their ideas as belonging to the so called political Averroism, which in the early days was identified with strict Aristotelianism.⁶

Secondly, the term Aristotelianism can be also to mean the group of writers who defend the contents Aristotelian philosophy, and who work hard to keep it 'intact' over time.

³ In his *De regimine christiano* (1301/2) he expresses the supremacy of the pontiff's (divinely inherited) spiritual wisdom which bestows him with the capacity to judge earthly matters fairly and truthfully.

⁴ With regards to the so called Aristotelianism that Black attributes to Marsilio de Padua (Anthony Black, *Political Thought in Europe. 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Nederman indicates that this treatise writer employs Aristotelian language in order to 'attract' an audience, but that he is not really an Aristotelian. He justifies this claim by saying that while he does cite Aristotle in the *Defensor Pacis*, he barely does so at all in the *Defensor minor* and that it is absurd that in this short interval he should cease to be Aristotelian. He concludes that it makes more sense to say that he never was (Cary J. Nederman "The Meaning of 'Aristotelianism' in Medieval Moral and Political Thought", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 57-4 (Oct., 1996), 563-585, pp. 572 y 583-84).

⁵ Marsilio de Padua also advocates an autonomous State on Aristotelian grounds, and he is in favour of separating legislative power and executive power, where the former is represented by a commission –representing the people– that enact laws that the king is then obliged to issue and enforce. Society is made up of individuals who are responsible for their own status as citizens, and judicial and executive authority derive from the decisions made by those individuals. William of Ockham emphasizes trust in the individual and the use of his right reason, just as Aristotle indicates in Book II of the *Ethics*, while at the same time putting the individual in charge of choosing a ruler. Ockham makes it clear that this kind of autonomy is for those who have not received divine revelation, since according to his moral theology; supreme authority is the Divine Will and Omnipotence.

⁶ A still useful work that points out the important periods in Aristotelian tradition is the one by F. Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West. The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trad. by Leonard Johnston (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1955). B. G. Dod, "Aristoteles latinus", in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 45-79 as well as the work by Gilson, 2007, already quoted above.

Thirdly, Aristotelianism can be also identified with a specific gnoseological logic or method, which refers to a particular way of approaching the reality around us.

Therefore, with Charles Schmitt, we must speak about Aristotelianisms, in plural, rather than about Aristotelianism, since it is a phenomenon encompassing different ideological, philosophical and political facets according to contexts, intentions and ways of life.⁷

In order to understand the phenomenon of Aristotelianism, however, we must remember too that since the Middle Ages, Aristotle has not walked alone, that is to say, his philosophy has been blended with other philosophical traditions: principally with Platonism, Stoicism and Averroism. Furthermore, Christian doctrine also accepted, adapted and rejected Aristotelian philosophy in various ways. In fact, one of the central question on which the present work is based concerns what type of Aristotelian sources were consulted in each case, when and how they were acquired and how they were regarded and employed. In this sense, we should keep in mind that the Renaissance humanists claimed that they alone knew how to access the most faithful renderings of the original manuscripts and how to approach them in a more scientific (or philological) manner, while they accused the Medievals of philological ignorance and of having stifled the classics within the walls of a rigid scholastic method and of misinterpreting them. But let us not forget that many of the manuscripts that reached Renaissance hands had come from the hands of the Medievals. We must not, therefore, exaggerate the claims made by some Renaissance humanists.⁸

What is certain is that none of the Philosopher's fellow companions (Platonists, Stoics, Christians...) was in possession of such a strongly founded theoretical and practical philosophical framework as that which Aristotle managed to build. In fact, many of the other philosophies were interpreted

⁷ Ch. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (León: University of León, 2004). It is also essential the work by Cary J. Nederman, *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits. Classical Tradition in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12th-15th Centuries* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997).

⁸ Several authors have insisted on the true historicity of periodization. There is no clear-cut distinction or insurmountable barrier between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and their differences are not irreconcilable. Criticisms regarding the Middle Ages come from a few Renaissance humanists who wanted to separate themselves from medieval methodology, but that does not mean that they ceased to be heirs of their Medieval ancestors (cf. P. O. Kristeller, "Los antecedentes medievales del humanismo renacentista", in *Ocho filósofos del Renacimiento italiano*, [1964], trad. M. Martínez Peñaloza, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970) or, from among the most recent works, I want to cite here A. Gómez Moreno, "Los clásicos en el umbral del siglo xiv allende y aquende los Pirineos", *Príncipe de Viana*, Año 61, anejo 18 (2000: *Homenaje a Francisco Ynduráin*), 153-163.

according to Aristotelian rubrics. Aristotelianism could, therefore, be considered the system with which the Philosopher contributed to western European thought. It turned out to be highly effective due to its practical nature (both rational and universal), a feature that also led to its being employed as a basis for the construction of other philosophical systems. In other words, many of the different traditions used Aristotle's system as a framework for their ideas, but the framework was, after all, Aristotelian.

2. Ethical Aristotle

I have chosen the person, work and influence of the quintessential Philosopher, and from among all his philosophical output, I have chosen the ethical aspect. The first reason of this selection is the fact that Aristotelian ethics is a system that depends on politics. This is an issue that makes Aristotle's practical philosophy unique and also means that it is an essential tool for understanding how the European socio-political code of ethics came about. Secondly, the fact that it is a moral system that was successfully adapted to the different European social and cultural contexts (it was not an ethical code that could be applied only to Greece in the 4th century B.C.) can largely be explained by its realistic nature and by the philosopher's trust in free men's reasoning. I am interested in seeing how it is applied in Spain so that, focusing on a particular place, we can appreciate Aristotle's influence in the development of what we call modern states, since political theorist both of Castile and of the rest of Europe turn to Aristotle as an authority. In the present article –which is part of a wider research project– I want to expound the Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian elements found in the different responses to the ethical works of the Greek Philosopher, and to explain how the 15th century Castilian theorists carried out this selection process. In concrete, I bring here one aspect of the Alfonso de Cartagena's production.

We already find a reference to Aristotle in the 13th century by Alfonso X (1221-1284), whose aim was to codify social hierarchy and place the king at the base and head of the socio-political system.⁹ In the 14th century, Juan

⁹ Let us recall the work of The School of Translators of Toledo and also the influence of Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*, as well as the cites from the philosopher in his legal-political work *Siete Partidas* (cf. J. Ferreiro Alemparte, "Recepción de las Éticas y de la Política de Aristóteles en las *Siete Partidas* del Rey Sabio", *Glossae: Revista de Historia del Derecho Europeo*, 1 [1988], 97-133). And C. Heusch, "Les fondements juridiques de l'amitié à travers les *Partidas* d'Alphonse X et le droit médiéval", *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale*, 18-19 (1993), 5-48. As well as J. Bolton Holloway, "Diplomacy and Literature: Alfonso el Sabio's Influence on Brunetto Latino, *Maestro di Dante Alighieri*", in *La città e il libro. Il manoscritto, la miniatura. Firenze e la Spagna* (Firenze: Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, 2002).

García de Castrojeriz translated and glossed into Castilian Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* (an obligatory reference work in the education of princes), a work based on Aristotelian authority.¹⁰ In the 15th century we find a significant Aristotelian hub at the University of Salamanca, personified by authors of political discourse such as Alfonso de Cartagena (ca. 1385-1456), Alfonso Fernández de Madrigal, el Tostado (ca. 1400-1455), Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (1404/1405 – Rome, 1470), Pedro Martínez de Osma (ca. 1420/30) and Fernando de Roa (ca. 1433).¹¹

We must keep in mind that the universities and the court are not independent spheres at all. Court Aristotelianism is exemplified by the Marquis of Santillana (1398-1458) who we know had a paraphrased Castilian

¹⁰ Cf. Ch. F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine principum. Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275-c. 1525* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990).

¹¹ There are many works that study the Aristotelian influence in the Medieval and Renaissance universities. I would like to highlight the following: Ch. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* [1927] (New York, Meridian Books, 1955); A. Grafton and L. Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities. Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1986); C. Heusch, "Entre didacticismo y heterodoxia. Vicisitudes de la *Ética* aristotélica en la España escolástica (siglos XIII-XIV)", *La Corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*, 19/2 (1990-1991), 89-99. J. Krayer, "Renaissance Commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*", in *The Vocabulary of Teaching and Research between Middle Ages and Renaissance (Proceedings of the Colloquium London, Warburg Institute, 11-12 March, 1994)*, ed. de Olga Weijers (Turnhout: CIVICIMA: Études sur le vocabulaire du moyen âge, 1995), pp. 96-117; D. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300-1650)* (Leiden; Boston: E.J.Brill, 2002) and D. A. Lines, "Moral Philosophy in the Universities of Medieval and Renaissance Europe", *History of Universities*, 20/1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 38-80. Specifically focused in Spain is the works of A.R.D. Pagden, "The Diffusion of Aristotle's Moral Philosophy in Spain, ca. 1440-ca. 1600", *Traditio*, 31 (1975) 287-313; of L. Robles, *El Estudio de la Ética en España (del siglo XIII al XX)* (Salamanca, 1979); as well as there are other important works such as the one by J. Lawrance "The Universities in Spain at the end of the Middle Ages", *Atalaya: Revue française d'études médiévales hispaniques*, 6 (1995), 21-40. Finally, I would like to mention works specially focused on the School of Salamanca such as the one by J. Labajos Alonso, "Pedro de Osma y Fernando de Roa: significación histórica", en *La primera escuela de Salamanca (1406-1516)*, coord. by C. Flórez Miguel, M. Hernández Marcos y Roberto Albares Albares (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2012), pp. 143-162; J. Belda Plans, *La Escuela de Salamanca* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2000); J. Luis, Martín Martín, "Ambiente científico en la universidad de Salamanca", en *Universidad, cultura y sociedad en la Edad Media*, coord. por S. Aguadé Nieto (Alcalá: Universidad, 1994), pp. 85-103. C. Salinas Espinosa, "Dos obras del siglo XV: humanismo versus retraso cultural", in *Humanismo y Pervivencia del Mundo Clásico. Actas del I Simposio sobre humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico*, coord. J. M. Maestre Maestre y J. Pascual Barea, Vol. 2 (Cádiz, Instituto de Estudios Turolenses y Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz, 1992), pp. 993-1002.

translation of *Ethics* by Nuño de Guzmán (ca. 1410-1467) in his library¹² or, even outside the Castilian realm, by the political project and intellectual work of Charles, Prince of Viana (1421-1461).

This leads us to point out, yet again, the endemic phenomenon of the vernacular in the Iberian Peninsula, a phenomenon that is such a symptomatic indication of diffusive interest in the classical writers. Aristotle features prominently among them, not only in doctrinal-political works, but also in literature,¹³ as well as the closely related phenomenon, and therefore no less symptomatic, of noble bibliophile.¹⁴ As we know, from the late 14th century

¹² Dedicated to his brother Juan de Guzmán y Torres, it is an Italian *compendium* on Stagirate morals and a translation of the *Economics* (cf. M. Schiff, *The Marquis de Santillan's library* [Paris: Émile Bouillon Library, 1905]; P.E. Russell y A.R.D. Pagden, "Nueva luz sobre una versión española cuatrocenrista de la *Ética a Nicómaco*: Bodelian Library MS Span. D. 1", in *Homenaje a Guillermo Guastavino* [Madrid: Asociación Nacional de Bibliotecarios, Archiveros y Arqueólogos, 1974], pp.125-146; S. Cuenca Almenar, "L'*Ética nicomaquea* d'Aristòtil en un compendi català del segle XV", in *Anuari de la Societat Catalana de Filosofia*, XXIII [2012], 7-119).

¹³ J. Lawrance, "The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62 (1985) 79-94; J. Lawrance, "On Fifteenth-Century Spanish Vernacular Humanism", in I. Michael – R. Cardwell (ed.), *Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of Robert Brian Tate* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 63-79.

¹⁴ Here, we bring only a few examples from some Castilian libraries. J. Lawrence's study tells us, "Nueva luz sobre la biblioteca del Conde de Haro: Inventario de 1455", *El Crotalón. Anuario de Filología Española*, 1 (1984), 1073-1111: "we know that in Pedro Fernández de Velasco's library, First Count of Haro (1399-1470), we can find in the catalogue of 1553 in entry number 99 *Las Aethicas de Aristóteles, de molde, en romance*; In el 120 *Libros de Aristóteles a Alexandro, en que por su mandado le escribe cómo ha de ordenar su vida y cuerpo y como ha de conocer la naturaleza buena o mala de los hombres; en el qual hay otro del mismo Aristóteles sobre el Regimiento de reyes y príncipes, escrito de mano, y primero trasladado de arábigo en latín; encarece mucho en este libro el autor a Philipo. Y tiene una carta de San Bernardo*. I. Beceiro Pita in "Los libros que pertenecieron a los Condes de Benavente, entre 1434 y 1530", *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 43, N° 154 (1983), 237-280 picks up on how among the books that belonged to the Counts of Benavente between 1434 and 1530 (Alonso Fernández de Pimentel, Third Count of Benavente [works inventoried from 1443 until ca. 1447] four copies are found (three copies of the *Éthics* and one of the on the *Ethics* (Lefèbre d'Étaples editions and that of Buridan); and a Castilian compendium. Queen Isabel the Catholic also kept five versions of the *Ethics* and one of the *Politics* (Leonardo Aretino's version) in her library. Rodrigo de Mendoza, Marquis of Cenete (1468-1523) had within his library two commentaries. To confirm this information, we can also consult Ch. B. Faulhaber, *Libros y bibliotecas en la España medieval: una bibliografía de fuentes impresas* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1987). As we are focusing on Castile, it is a good idea to take a look at the work of A. Antelo Iglesias, "Las bibliotecas del otoño medieval. Con especial referencia a las de Castilla en el siglo XV", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, (Serie III-Edad Media), 4 (1991), 285-352. In order to study the context, the conditions, and the general and specific features, it is recommendable the work written by I. Beceiro Pita, *Libros y lectores en la España medieval* (Murcia: Nausicaä, 2007).

and in the 15th century, the latter displays a growing interest, with increasing clarity and necessity, in consolidating their role and hierarchy in society. In tune with the Renaissance influences traversing Europe at the time, they will base their reasoning on the classical *auctoritates*, among which Aristotle proves to be highly effective for their purposes.¹⁵

3. The virtues of liberality, magnificence and magnanimity

The three virtues I have chosen for this stage of the Castilian fifteenth century Aristotelianism present us with a fundamental issue: the justification of the superiority of certain social classes according to virtue and riches. Aristotle organises these virtues hierarchically, from lesser to greater thus: generosity, magnificence and magnanimity. The order is explained by: 1) *The amount of wealth*: a generous person is not necessarily rich, the magnificent has to be and the magnanimous is unquestionably so. 2) *The merits of the actions they carry out*: while the generous person shares out his goods in deeds of medium scope, the magnificent does so in deeds of great magnitude. In this regard, when texts refer to the magnificent, they identify him with the magnanimous because both undertake only great works; however, the magnanimous does not limit himself to using his wealth, but rather uses it as an instrument for achieving a greater good. 3) *The honour bestowed*: here lies magnanimity par excellence, that which aspires to the greatest of exterior gifts, honour. Only he who undertakes great deeds (for the common good and guided by virtue) can be worthy of honour. But only he who has sufficient material possessions can undertake deeds of such magnitude (hence the aforementioned affinity between magnificent and magnanimous). It is important to emphasize that the magnanimous is above riches because honour surpasses them in terms

¹⁵ For a comprehensive view of the historical, social and political context of the nobility of the Iberian Peninsula see M. Gerbet, *Las noblezas españolas en la Edad Media. Siglos XI-XV*, [1994], trad. M. J. García Vera (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1997). And from among the works of M. Concepción Quintanilla Raso, I cite here “Élites de poder, redes nobiliarias y monarquía en la Castilla de fines de la Edad Media”, *Anuario de Estudios Medievales (AEM)*, 37/2 (jul-dic 2007), 957-981. For the phenomenon of the diffusion of culture among the lay nobility: Lawrance’s, “Spread of Lay...”, 79-94. For the new readings of *Ethics* are also quite useful the works by J. Kraye, “Pagan Virtue in Pursuit of Christian Happiness: Renaissance Humanists and the Revival of Classical Ethics”, in *Zeichen-Rituale-Werte. Internationales Kolloquium des Sonderforschungsbereichs 496 an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster*, ed. by Gerd Althoff (Münster: Rhema, 2004), pp. 55-68, and the work by L. Bianchi “Renaissance Readings of the *Nicomachean Ethics*”, in *Rethinking Virtue, Reforming Society. New Directions in Renaissance Ethics, c.1350-c.1650*, ed. by D. A. Lines and Sabrina Ebbersmeyer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 131-167.

of goodness; therefore, magnanimity surpasses magnificence, although it implies it.

The object of these three virtues are exterior possessions. The first two refer to wealth and the last, to honour, which is the greatest of exterior possessions. In Book IV of *Nicomachean Ethics* 1119b21-1125b, Aristotle defines and explains the defects, due to excess and deficiency, of each of them.¹⁶

Firstly, the defects of *Liberality* are, due to excess, wastefulness and to deficiency, meanness. *Magnificence* differentiates itself from liberality in terms of proportion because it refers solely to spending. But both must always be directed towards the common good.¹⁷ The defects of magnificence are due to excess, vulgar ostentation and to deficiency, paltriness.

Finally, *magnanimity* is the virtue of great things, of which honour is the greatest. The actions of the magnanimous man are in accordance with one's dignity, with which one must be familiar. Therefore, he receives the corresponding honours virtuously. Aristotle deems magnanimity to be the ornament of all the virtues because "The magnanimous must be good in the highest degree; (...). Therefore, the truly magnanimous must be good" (*NE*, IV, 1123b27-28). Therefore, the first and final reason for his dignity resides in virtue, which reveals itself in external facts (great works and honor).¹⁸ Aristotle

¹⁶ I used the *bilingual edition* of *Ética a Nicómaco* [1959], ed. and trad. M. Araújo and Julián Marías, 8^a ed., Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2002. And for the English translation the edition by J. Barnes (ed.), *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 6^a ed. rev. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), the only word I have changed from this translation is the word "proud" that Barnes uses to translate "magnanimous", because it is essential in this research to distinguish between pride and magnanimity.

¹⁷ About the virtue of liberality, see *NE* 1120a33-1120b6: "(...) the liberal man take from wrong sources; for such taking is not characteristic of the man who sets no store by wealth. Nor will he be a ready asker; for it is not characteristic of a man who confers benefits to accept them lightly. But he will take from the right sources, e.g. from his own possession, not as something noble but as necessity, that he may have something to give. Nor will he neglect his own property, since he wishes by means of this to help others. And he will refrain from giving to anybody and everybody, that he may have something to give to the right people, at the right time, and where it is noble to do so. It is highly characteristic of a liberal man also to go to excess in giving, so that he leaves too little for himself; for it is the nature of a liberal man not to look to himself". And about magnificence, see *NE* 1123a4: "for the magnificent man spend not on himself but on public objects".

¹⁸ The consideration of what constitutes nobility is a debate that harks back to the Middle Ages, but that became particularly significant in Europe in the 15th century. Reinforcing the funds of the nobility is of vital importance for defining society's structure and for confirming

considers that the best, the most virtuous should govern the kingdom. The vices of this virtue are, due to excess, vainglory and to deficiency, pusillanimity (being small-souled).

a) Framework: some notes

I considered it pertinent to establish a general framework of the contexts in which the selected virtues appear and the denotations used to convey them. In this way, without losing sight of the overall picture, the response to Aristotelianism can be understood with improved insight. With this purpose, I have chosen the figure of Alfonso de Cartagena for this brief piece of my (still ongoing) research work.

Therefore, the findings drawn from the CORDE can be classified into two groups. (1) The nature of the sources where we find references to the virtues in question and (2) the characteristics of the virtues themselves.

(1) The type of sources that correspond to the search for these virtues in the CORDE are the following:¹⁹

and preserving the privileges of the nobles. Aristotle considers that nobility is rooted in virtue (the interior good), but he does not deny that exterior possessions are essential in order to put this virtue into practice (cf. *NE*, 1099a24-1099b). According to what the Philosopher says in Book VI of *Politics*, wealth and dignity are fruits of nobility. We can therefore come to the conclusion that as one who gathers together all the virtues within himself, the magnanimous must also possess all the necessary exterior goods so that he can manifest acts of greatness.

¹⁹ The required length for this piece of work means I cannot list the titles and dates of each of the works here. This information corresponds to my consultation in the CORDE: REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Banco de datos (CORDE) [accessible online]. *Corpus diacrónico del español*. <<http://www.rae.es>> [2nd April 2016].

Virtue	Type of source	Number
Liberality	Wisdom literature	7
	Treatises and essays	5
	Historiographical	6
	Notarial deeds	2
	Letters and reports	2
	Literary works Prose Poetry:	3 -Songbook: 6 -Marquis of Santillana, <i>Coplas al muy exçellente e muy virtuoso señor don Alfonso, rey de Portugal</i>
	Religious	3
	Lexicographical	3
	Magnificence	Treatises and essays
Historiographical		9
Notarial deeds		1
Letters and reports		3
Literary works Prose Poetry		5 -Songbook: 3 -Fray Íñigo de Mendoza, <i>Coplas de Vita Christi</i>
Religious		2
Lexicographical		1
Magnanimity	Wisdom literature	1
	Treatises and essays	2
	Historiographical	5
	Literary works Prose	1

As we can see, the sources coincide in most cases. If we classify them into three groups, we could speak, on the one hand, of didactic literature: wisdom literature, political and military treatises and historiography; on the other

hand, of administrative documents (notarial deeds); and finally, of literary works where in the works of prose, the setting is chivalrous and noble and in poetry the object and addressees of the poems are kings, princes or nobles. It could not be otherwise if these three virtues are political and refer to the administration of the kingdom's goods. This explains why, in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, they are only attributed to princes, kings or society's rulers.

Let us continue with the characteristics of the virtues that can be gathered from the sources. Firstly, for the *virtue of liberality* we observe the following connotations: **(i)** liberality as referring to the condition (and therefore, activities and studies) of a free man;²⁰ **(ii)** the need for possessing wealth in order to be able to share it; **(iii)** a generous man's capacity to grant forgiveness; **(iv)** the condition of those with whom wealth should be shared: gentlemen, loyal servants, faithful men, the needy, the good, the wise, servants and captives and the poor, where, therefore, "political friendship" is insisted upon with the connotations of a fiscal policy with a characteristically Aristotelian legacy; **(v)** the nature of the generous man: he must give without delay, in moderation and in an organized fashion; **(vi)** who are they who can give goods: kings, lords, princes, nobles and captains.

However, there are different traditions in this collection of data, which are not only Aristotelian. Sometimes, authors name the authority that nourishes them, such as Seneca, who is quoted in order to explain the characteristic of the generous man as munificent with the poor. As well as the virtue of benevolence related with liberality has much in common with Cicero's work. Biblical sources are also indispensable for understanding the condition of generous benevolence and a certain adaptation (above all Ciceronian) of the message concerning our duty to give to the poor. The appreciation of poverty is also directly linked to the reproach of avarice levelled at rulers (both secular and ecclesiastical), which becomes more intense in the 14th century and has its counterpart in the development and growth of one of the most influential orders in this respect: Franciscanism.

Secondly, in the case of *the virtue of magnificence*, we can identify a huge number of cases among the sources in which this virtue is identified with liberality, when Aristotle distinguished them, because the Philosopher ascribed liberality to any man, not necessarily to a rich man. This identification can be explained by the fact that these virtues are attributed to kings, princes and nobles who inherently possessed great wealth.

²⁰ Sense found in four of the sources.

Thirdly, *the virtue of magnanimity* it is defined as the virtue of those who know themselves to be worthy of undertaking big enterprises. The best of these is guiding society (thanks to which man can live happily while at the same being virtuous), undoubtedly an Aristotelian legacy. However, from the findings, we observed special emphasis. First, **(i)** the emphasis on warlike actions as a reflection of magnanimity. Aristotle specifies that magnanimous only confronts danger when certain actions deserve it and the supremacy of a kingdom depends, therefore, to a large extent on territorial defence and also on expansion of territory (conquest). In the case of the Castilian sources, there is reference to the Reconquest (a great mission, not only humanly speaking, but also in the divine sense since it constitutes a service to the Catholic faith resulting in human and heavenly rewards). In addition, all the historical figures featured in the CORDE with the epithet ‘great’ are characterized by warlike qualities (whether they are emperors, kings or generals), except for two of them: Albertus Magnus, who is considered great due to his wisdom, and Saint Basil the Great, who earned the epithet through his influence in the Church as doctor and bishop. Secondly, **(ii)** the sources show the positive value of earthly honour. In the information gathered, importance is given to honour as an exterior sign of virtue, inasmuch as the virtue itself being fundamental but also requiring of reputation. For Aristotle, exterior signs are dependent on interior signs, while in the Stoic tradition, on the contrary, honour is held in contempt and one strives for interior virtue only. Thirdly, **(iii)** it is pointed out the compatibility between magnanimity and the virtue of humility.

b) Alfonso de Cartagena (1385-1456)

After this quick overview that can serve as a general framework, we now turn to some examples taken from two works written by Alfonso de Cartagena: *Memoriale virtutum* (ca. 1432)²¹ and *Duodenarium* (ca. 1442),²² in order to

²¹ This work has edited in the Doctoral Dissertation recently defended by C. Martín Gómez, *Estudio, edición crítica y traducción del Memoriale virtutum de Alonso de Cartagena*, supervised by A. López Fonseca, Universidad Complutense, June 2015. The quotes in Spanish that appear in this piece of work are taken from M. Campos Souto’s edition of the anonymous Fifteenth century translation into Spanish of *Memoriale virtutum* (M. Campos Souto (ed.), *Memorial de virtudes de Alfonso de Cartagena*, Burgos: Instituto Municipal de Cultura, 2004).

²² The quotes of this work, in Latin as well as its translation into Spanish, are taken from the recently published edition of *Duodenarium*, by L. Fernández Gallardo and T. Jiménez Calvente (Córdoba: Almuzara, 2015).

show the pre-eminence of the response to Aristotelianism in transmitting liberality, magnificence and magnanimity.²³

I do not think that Alfonso de Cartagena is a precursor of the Spanish Renaissance, but rather, I consider him a Renaissance figure himself. Let us list here some of the aspects that bring this reality to light: his education in Salamanca (not only a hub of response, but also a breeding ground for humanist schools of thought during the Renaissance); his interest in politics, towards which he directs all his activity, both in the written word and in public office in the Castilian court; his skill for rhetoric, demonstrated through his discourse, which he puts at the service of the crown; his knowledge and employment of the classics as well as his exchanges with prominent Italian humanists (Piccolomini, Decembrio and Bruni); and we must not forget to mention his contribution to Renaissance philology in the form of the discussion he had with Leonardo Bruni about the translation of Aristotelian *Ethics*.²⁴

²³ Fernández Gallardo analysed these virtues in the works of Alfonso de Cartagena; cf. L. Fernández Gallardo, “Legitimación monárquica y nobiliaria en *Memoriale virtutum* de Alonso de Cartagena (ca.1425)”, *Historia Instituciones Documentos*, 28 (2001), 91-128; “Las ideas políticas de Alonso de Cartagena”, *Res publica*, 18 (2007), 413-426, and in his book *Alonso de Cartagena (1385-1456): una biografía política del siglo XV* (Valladolid: Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 2002), see specifically the pages 332-344. Here it is also indispensable to bring the work of T. González Rolán and P. Saquero, *Humanismo y Teoría de la Traducción en España e Italia en la primera mitad del siglo XV. Edición y estudio de la “Controversia Alphonsiana” (Alfonso de Cartagena vs L. Bruni y P. Candido Decembrio)* (Madrid, Ediciones Clásicas, 2000). I have also analysed this aspect deeply in my doctoral thesis: *El noble virtuoso: la recepción de la Ética aristotélica en la Castilla tardomedieval y renacentista* (May 2015).

²⁴ There is no time here to address this issue, which is nevertheless so interesting. I will only stop to note that the confrontation was based on Bruni’s attacks of the medieval translation, describing it as incorrect due to being scholastic. This, for him, meant a falsification of Aristotelian style and the blame lay with ignorance of the original language, Greek, which he, Bruni, knew to perfection. Alfonso de Cartagena defends Grosseteste’s translation appealing to translation according to meaning, not word for word translation, and advised Bruni that Grosseteste understood Aristotle better and for that reason translated his work into Latin. This episode could give the impression that Cartagena was scholastic and therefore, medieval, causing him to challenge the humanist method, but what Cartagena is defending in the Aristotelian meaning (the essence) over and above rhetoric (the form or outward appearance). That is, he is defending the more faithful translation (a question of vital importance for every humanist). In fact, it is revealing that Bruni and Cartagena ended up becoming friends, so far from being a discussion between a superior humanist (Bruni) and an inferior, backwards, scholastic medieval (Cartagena), it was, rather, a controversy between equals.

Let us now analyse the three virtues selected in the works of Alfonso de Cartagena. First of all, we must recall that *Memoriale virtutum* can be considered in part as a paraphrase of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁵ In this work he turns to the Aristotelian source and uses the commentaries of Saint Thomas Aquinas and his knowledge of Seneca based on the work *De clemencia*, which Cartagena himself translated. *Duodenarium* comprises the response to twelve questions posed by his friend, the nobleman Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (ca. 1378-1460). However the project finished as four questions instead of twelve. It is the third question that is of particular interest to us here: “3) Which of the princes that came before us surpassed all the others in kindness, integrity and virtue, so that he should be regarded as the best of all princes?”²⁶

On reading these works, and always regarding the three virtues selected, we can observe the following. First of all, with respect to the virtues of *liberality* and *magnificence*: (i) the constant dependence of the virtues on the virtue of justice, where the virtues of liberality and magnificence are related to the distributive justice of the individual.²⁷ Secondly, (ii) in *Memoriale virtutum* he dedicates a chapter to liberality, and he defines it according to Aristotle. Thirdly, (iii) following Aristotle’s reasoning, Alfonso de Cartagena lists five qualities of a generous king. Of the five, I want to highlight the fifth:

entre los virtuosos son muy amados los francos, non de aquella *amistad* que es por honestidad, mas de aquella que es por provecho, porque son provechosos a los hombres. Enpero, el provecho d’ ellos esta en el dar.²⁸

Aristotle explains the different types of friendship in Book VIII of the *Ethics*, and he points out that perfect friendship is that which arises between good men of equal virtue, that is, a relationship of equality. At the same time though, the Philosopher admits that this kind of friendship is rare (*NE*, VIII,

²⁵ I say “in part” because it would take more time to classify the genre of this work, in which Alfonso de Cartagena does not merely paraphrase or compile Aristotelian ethical doctrine.

²⁶ 1) Are the titles of emperor and King identical or does one come before the other according to the actual value of the term? 2) Given that the languages of different peoples were divided, does an authentic writing actually be said to exist? How many languages have existed and which are they? 3) Which of the princes that came before us surpassed all the others in kindness, integrity and virtue, so that he should be regard as the best of all princes? 4) Who should be considered most worth of praise, more admirable and better: a most favourable man or a most favourable woman?

²⁷ In the chapter dedicated to justice in Book I, he appoints out that “distributive justice should equate the quantity of things to the quality of the person” (Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes...*, p. 232).

²⁸ Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes*, pp. 337-338.

1156b27), and he develops the kind of friendship called political friendship. Aristotle describes this kind of friendship as that between those who

journey together with a view to some particular advantage, and to provide something that they need for the purposes of life; and it is for the sake of advantage that the political community too seems both to have come together originally and to endure (*NE*, 1160a10-11).

If based on the common good, this relationship of convenience is virtuous, but if it seeks only self-interest, it is opposed to virtue. First in line is the kind of friendship that serves to identify itself with the monarch's political regime, which is based on the superiority of the king with respect to his subjects (*NE*, VIII, 1161a11).²⁹ This is demonstrated through the superiority of benefits bestowed by the king and, also, of those that are his due. Lastly, (iv) the latter explains to a great extent that both liberality and magnificence form part of the ethical system of the kingdom's fiscal politics, where the king is considered the administrator of the public treasury.³⁰

Alfonso de Cartagena also emphasizes in *Duodenarium* the virtue of justice. The king is society's legislator and he justly distributes goods. He exercises distributive justice starting with his own person and continuing with his subordinates, rewarding them according to their merits, which are acts of obedience and loyalty, and performing the associated task of carefully selecting good men both for the court tribunals and for prominent cities and villages so that the kingdom will be administered without irrational loss. Basing his reasoning on Aristotle, Cartagena warns that it is important the king does not squander his goods by giving them to causes or people that do not deserve them.

Es conveniente que el príncipe liberal haga regalos con mano complaciente a los hombres virtuosos y que se lo merecen a partir de aquello que a él le viene de forma justa, pero no que en su avidez por otorgar amase bienes de donde no es oportuno para después malgastarlos bajo la apariencia de liberalidad. Así, es un gran error considerar liberal a alguien sólo en función del derroche munífico de dinero y de otros bienes temporales a no ser que indagemos de dónde los ha

²⁹ Aristotle's preference for a discourse in favour of the monarchy was conveyed as a result of the interpretation deduced from the Aristotelian statement that the worst evil is tyranny and, therefore, the conclusion was reached that most noble good must be the monarchy (although this is not exactly what Aristotle said).

³⁰ Cf. Fernández Gallardo, "Legitimación monárquica", pp. 107-109 and Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, p. 337.

cogido. Pues el que toma algo injustamente para malgastarlo con prodigalidad es un avaro en parte; en parte, un derrochador.³¹

So, the royal coffers should be kept full because war expenses are contingent upon them (an extremely important issue in Castile at the time). Also with recourse to justice, he warns that a generous king should not force his subjects to pay excessive taxes; we must not forget that a king also receives his due and takes only what is his to take.

De ese modo, el príncipe que distribuye en los platillos de la balanza, en la proporción debida y según la cualidad de las personas y de sus méritos, los honores y premios justos, que no permite gravar a los súbditos por encima de lo debido con exacciones y con pesados tributos, controla a todos cuantos tiene lazos de vasallaje entre sí con justa vara y cuida de que nadie dañe a otro en su persona o en sus bienes con el diligente remedio de su jurisdicción, éste en verdad será considerado un príncipe justo.³²

Nothing is as useful as this in defending Cartagena's theory in favour of a monarchy where the benefit conferred by the king on his subjects consolidates the authority of the former while ensuring steadfast loyalty on the part of the latter.³³ It is the king who makes for a just society and its government. The subject is subordinate to the king and the king distributes goods because he

³¹ "Set liberalem principem ex illis que ad eum ex iustis causis veniunt [fol. 20 v^ob] virtuosis ac bene meritis viris Graciosa manu donare oportet, non autem auiditate donandi, vnde non expedit, congregare vt post sub specie liberalitatis dispergat. Magni enim errores est ex sola pecuniarum aliarumue temporalium rerum munifica dispersione liberalem quemquam putare, nisi unde acceperit inquiramus. Iniuste enim accipiens ut habundanter dispergat partim auarus, partim prodigus est." (*Duodenarium*, Tertia Questio: Capitulum octavum, p. 304) Here it is also evident how Cartagena follows the Aristotelian discourse about the virtuous middle point between two extreme vices.

³² "Principans igitur ille qui iuxta qualitatem personarum et meritorum honores et premia equa secundum debitam proporcione[m] lance distribuit, subditos ultra condignum [fol. 19 v^oa] exactionibus et tributorum honore grauare non sinit omnesque subiectos adinuicem inter se iusta virga constringit et, ne alter alteri in persona aut rebus noceat, iurisdictionis prompto remedio curat, iustus utique princeps habebitur." (*Duodenarium*, Tertia Questio: Capitulum quintum, p. 296).

³³ Could there be echoes of this in the Machiavelli's political theory. In *The prince* the Florentine said "permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does it utmost to support him; and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way." It may be very daring to say that Alfonso de Cartagena was Machiavellian, but this allusion does reiterate the realistic nature of Alfonso de Cartagena's realistic politics.

himself is virtuous, just and generous and is the one capable of carrying out a proper administration in the interests of the common good, which translates as service to the crown on the part of subjects and service to the kingdom on the part of the monarch.

Finally, in reference to the virtue of *magnanimity*, we observe, in the first place, **(i)** the relationship between magnanimity and wealth. Riches are also useful for exercising and displaying superiority. Highlighting this usefulness and the interdependence of exterior possessions and virtue is characteristic of Aristotle. In contrast to the Stoics, who foster contempt for material possessions while laying emphasis on the intention and ultimate aim of detachment from material things in order to attain the true good, Aristotle accepts that riches are goods, inferior to intellectual goods, but at the same time necessary for acquiring the greatest good. Alfonso de Cartagena joins Aristotle in this last idea.

E de aquí, que non curan los grandes bienes [se está refiriendo a los pusilánimes], fázense peores, porque el ejercicio de los grandes bienes faze a los onbres mejores (...) porque por esta opinión se apartan algunos de los bienes de fuera, así commo dignidades, o honrras, o riquezas, que instrumentalmente, así commo algunos instrumentos, sirven muchas veces a las obras de las virtudes.³⁴

Just as Aristotle, he implicitly states that the magnanimous man does not exert himself in pursuit of wealth, but rather, that he is magnanimous by virtue. That is, he confirms that the magnanimous person works for the greater good (the virtues).³⁵

Secondly, **(ii)** there is a strong relationship between magnanimity and warlike actions. As far as it constitutes a service to the kingdom, as we have seen,³⁶ war is considered an action pertaining to the magnanimous. In war, the virtue of fortitude is revealed and therefore the connection between the kind-hearted (the magnanimous) and the strong-hearted can be perceived. In *Memoriale virtutum* we read:

³⁴ Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes*, p. 391.

³⁵ “al magnánimo se le honra por virtud y no por riquezas. Hay quien tiene riquezas pero no es magnánimo, querra actuar como magnánimo pero no podrá sin virtud. Menospreciara a los demás, pero no será virtuoso. Hara grandes obras –magnificencia– que si que es virtud que exige las riquezas. “opinión de los hombres vulgares” pero la honra es propio galardón de la virtud” (Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes*, pp. 377-378.

³⁶ As we saw above, in all the examples of great men, (except for two saints), we find examples of strategists and warriors.

Pertenece ciertamente al magnánimo obrar grande cosa en qualquier virtud, asi como en la fortaleza muy grande acto de virtud fazer, ca, como sea dicho de muy grande honrra, siguese que faga muy grandes fechos de virtudes.³⁷

And in *Duodenarium*

el príncipe esforzado es el que libra guerras justas con ánimo audaz y diligente cuidado.³⁸

He clarifies, however, that he is not defending war itself, but war for a just cause.

Consider, pues, el príncipe que toda la república se presenta ligada a él, de modo que es ilícito y deshonesto ponerla en peligro para solaz propio. Pero cuando la justicia apremia, el honor y la utilidad de la república lo piden, corresponde a la fortaleza regia dejar en un segundo lugar la vida y los sufrimientos.³⁹

Among these just wars it is only natural that Cartagena is referring to the Reconquest, because nothing can be considered more just than to fight for a divine cause, and let us not forget that the Reconquest also means the recovery and enlargement of the kingdom's territory. In *Duodenarium* he mentions war as a solution to cases in which the king fails to justly distribute favours and in order to affirm this idea, he turns to Aristotle:

En efecto, si no son iguales, no tendrán partes iguales, de lo contrario vienen las disputas y reclamaciones. (Cf. *NE*, 1131a25)

In this sense, this is a discourse that can be used in defense of the nobles against Álvaro de Luna (1390-1453). Let us recall that the addressee of *Duodenarium* was Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, a nobleman who was opposed to the policy of the king's favourite. (iii) Lastly, Alfonso de Cartagena makes the Christian virtue of humility and the virtue of magnanimity compatible.⁴⁰ In *Memoriale virtutum* he explains the misunderstanding that may arise as a

³⁷ Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes*, p. 373.

³⁸ “set fortem principem dicam illum qui audaci animo et solerti cura bella iusta prosequitur.” (*Duodenarium*, Tertia Questio: Capitulum septimum, p. 302).

³⁹ Existimet igitur princeps totam rem [fol. 20 v^oa] publicam in se complicatam representari ut propter solacium suum illam discrimini subicere inhonestum ac illicitum sit. Set cum iusticia vrget, honor et vtilitas rei publice poscunt, vitam et labores postponere regie fortitudinis est. (*Duodenarium*, Tertia Questio: Capitulum septimum, p. 302).

⁴⁰ Cf. Fernández Gallardo, “Legitimación monárquica”, p. 126. We must keep in mind that this constitutes a commentary added to Aristotle's *Ethics*, but one that is absent from the Thomistic *Commentaries*.

result of the contemptuous attitude of the magnanimous man before wealth and the subordinate (and the subordinates) saying:

E de aquí es que los magnánimos son juzgados de ser menospreçiadores e sobervios, porque los bienes exteriores menospreçian, mas el verdadero magnánimo non faze esto de soberbia o presunpçión, segund abaxo se dirá, mas de virtud, porque solos los bienes de la virtud de dentro apresçia.⁴¹

He refers to biblical authorities (*The Book of Proverbs*) in order to explain this but he justifies the difference between the magnanimous and the proud, saying that although both aspire to praise, repute and glory, they do so for different motives. The magnanimous does not consider himself dignified as a divine creature in himself alone, the magnanimous loves himself as part of the universe, of society, and that is why he loves others and is not envious. The magnanimous spurns the advice and opinions that estrange him from the truth, and he remains steadfast in the truth in spite of the false judgements of others. The magnanimous longs to do good deeds due to his benevolence and his virtue, not due to vanity. Moreover, he seeks the glory of God. Let us recall how in the Renaissance man's divine condition will serve to establish human superiority.⁴² In *Duodenarium* Cartagena follows the same line, specifying that the magnanimous should treat his subordinates with simplicity

Sin duda, fueron magnánimos quienes eran humildes con Dios, benignos con sus súbditos y de ánimo generoso con los soberbios y poderosos, pues es un indicio de magnanimidad tratar a los inferiores de manera sencilla y humilde, pero a los arrogantes con mano ancha. Además, no le faltaron ni benevolencia ni afabilidad, toda vez que nunca oí qu emovidos por la ira dañaran a nadie ni que despreciaran el conversar honestamente con sus súbditos.⁴³

⁴¹ Campos Souto, *Memorial de virtudes*, p. 377. The magnanimous man esteems the material goods only as far as they are signs of the interior virtue.

⁴² For Religion and Renaissance, I recommend reading Ch. E. Trinkaus, *In our image and likeness: humanity and divinity in Italian humanist thought* [1970] (University of Notre Dame Press, 1995)

⁴³ Magnanimi eciam indubie fuerunt qui humiles ad Deum, benigni ad subditos, magno animo ad superbos et potentes errant, hoc enim magnanimitatis indicium est, inferiores humiliter et plane, arrogantes uero alta manu tractare. Sed mansuetudo et affabilitas non defuere cum nunquam illos iracundia motos aliis nocuisse audiuerim nec subditorum honesta colloquia[fol. 31 r^ob] dedignari. (*Duodenarium*, Tertia Questio: Capitulum vicesimum septimum, p.376).

4. Conclusion

The virtues of liberality, magnificence and magnanimity are characteristic of kings and rulers of a kingdom. The first two refer to the administering of goods, which implies an empowerment of those who possess such goods, and the magnanimity refers to the kind of honourable deeds and also the degree and type of honour owed to those who are superior in terms of virtue.

The Platonic and Stoic philosophical traditions contemplate these virtues, but it has to be acknowledged that the Aristotelian discourse is more useful to use them in order to justify a social hierarchy connected to possession of material goods.⁴⁴

Alfonso de Cartagena employs Aristotelian philosophy (not misinterpreting it but using it) to enhance the figure of the king as society's legislator and as such, as upright administrator. He, therefore, defends the idea that political power originates within the king, arises from the king and is directed towards the king, and in order to do so he uses the rational Aristotelian argument that states that intervention in society must be based on virtue. The king is therefore worthy of being king due to his virtuous deeds.

Cartagena complements Aristotelian doctrine with Thomistic commentary and he also adds his own contributions. One of them is, following the previous tradition, the explanation regarding the compatibility of magnanimity and the Christian virtue of humility, but he also focuses specially in the civic meaning of liberality, magnificence and magnanimity, by highlighting the specific secular duties kings and nobles must fulfil. He writes these treatises in response to the request of the Condestable of Portugal and the nobleman Fernán Pérez de Guzmán. The intention is therefore clearly didactic in the sense of moralising but it is also political. He is a bishop and a learned man that is playing an essential role in a Spanish court that is embarking on Modernity.

Alfonso de Cartagena does not wish merely to put forth an education manual for princes or a guide of conduct. Rather, he uses these treatises to transmit and spread his political theory, a theory that seeks to strengthen royal authority, basing it on an extremely efficacious and lay *auctoritas* such as

⁴⁴ In this sense, it is also significant to note that in the Middle Ages the education manual for princes were many of them based on Franciscan sources. However, through the late XIV century and during XV century, the civic classical sources were increasingly used and these educational treatises were not only addressed to princes or kings, but also to nobles and officers in the court. Something similar was happening in Italy by that period. Therefore, Castile and Italy were going through a Civic Renaissance, although according their specific idiosyncrasy.

that of Aristotle, while never losing sight of Christian doctrine and his own cultural context. This is an extremely effective combination for Castile and for Cartagena's own advancement.

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ÍNDICE

	Págs.
LIMINAR	
José M. ^a Maestre Maestre, <i>Homenaje póstumo al profesor José Guillermo Montes Cala</i>	7
Ángel Urbán Fernández – Joaquín Salinas D'Anglada, <i>Fotografía del Prof. Dr. D. José Guillermo Montes Cala</i>	13
Rafael J. Gallé Cejudo – M. ^a de la Paz Fernández Montañez, <i>Curriculum científico del profesor José Guillermo Montes Cala</i>	15
Jesús Fernández Palacios, <i>Para Guillermo</i>	37
ARTÍCULOS	
AYUSO GARCÍA, MANUEL: La forma textual de las ediciones incunables de Marciano Capela: modelos, relaciones e influencia en la tradición impresa del inicio del s. XVI	41
BAEZA-ANGULO, EULOGIO: El <i>exordium</i> del <i>Ibis</i> ovidiano en la traducción al castellano de Diego Mexía de Fernangil	81
DÍEZ YÁÑEZ, MARÍA: Aristotelianism and Alfonso de Cartagena (<i>ca.</i> 1385-1456). Ethical and Political Theory for the Administration of a Kingdom: Liberality, Magnificence and Magnanimity	95
FALQUE, EMMA: Los prólogos en la historiografía latina medieval: la <i>Historia Compostelana</i> y el <i>Liber Eliensis</i>	121
FLORISTÁN, JOSÉ M.: Dos memoriales inéditos de Manuel Glinzunio (1582)	137
GIL FERNÁNDEZ, LUIS: Tres cartas de Roberto Sherley	153
JIMÉNEZ DEL CASTILLO, JUAN CARLOS: El tópico del <i>concilium deorum</i> en la <i>Austriaca siue Naumachia</i> de Francisco de Pedrosa....	171

	Págs.
LÓPEZ FONSECA, ANTONIO: Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, un humanista pionero en educación	193
LÓPEZ-MUÑOZ, MANUEL: Bartolomé de Alcázar (1648-1721) y la retórica	207
PASCUAL BAREA, JOAQUÍN: El epigrama de Fernando Bravo a Santa Helena en la justa hispalense de junio de 1555	229
PINO CAMPOS, LUIS MIGUEL: Telégono y Edipo en la obra sobre el parricidio de Juan de Solórzano	243
RODRÍGUEZ HERRERA, GREGORIO: Las <i>Gnomai</i> en las <i>In Hesiodum Annotationes</i> de Georg Henisch: entre el <i>progymnasma</i> y el florilegio	257
RUIZ ARZALLUZ, IÑIGO: La <i>Vita Terrentii</i> de Petrarca en el <i>Fons memorabilium universi</i> de Bandini	279
SALAS SALGADO, FRANCISCO: Presencia clásica en la biblioteca de la familia Martínez de Escobar: una primera aproximación	299
SÁNCHEZ SALOR, EUSTAQUIO: Estructura binaria de la oración. De Platón al siglo XVIII	327