Pedro de Valencia, while still living in Zafra, was requested by Philip III’s chaplain, Diego de Mardones, to write a treatise on the Moriscos. As mentioned already, he had for some years been in touch with various chaplains: he had sent his treatises on the tribute paid on wine and oil and on astrological predictions to Fray Gaspar de Córdoba in 1603 and then wrote again on astrology in 1604; he wrote to Diego de Mardones on the price of bread in 1605 and responded to some of the replies to his tract later in the same year. Thus, in 1605, when ‘el problema morisco’ was receiving much attention, Fray Diego requested him to review the various solutions that had been put forward. The request illustrates the high regard that the chaplain had for him, a regard that as time went by was shared by many, including the pope. Valencia argued against expulsion and advocated better evangelisation policies and the full integration of Moriscos into society by intermarriage with cristianos viejos. He also warned strongly against any solution that was taken for reasons of political expediency: Divine Providence will punish any action that has not the good of the people at heart. Valencia makes this point at length, giving examples from the Old Testament of God’s punishment of wicked kings.

As Valencia’s arguments imply a complete change of mind and heart in society as a whole, we shall first look at the convictions as a Christian humanist that inspired them and that are the source for all his work. His primordial influences were St (Maestro) Juan de Ávila, Erasmus (perhaps indirectly) and Benito Arias Montano and we shall look at relevant writings of the three men. Then, as his arguments in favour of mixed marriages imply a rejection of the Purity of Blood Statutes, we shall look at his biblical commentary on the Epistle to the Galations and the Acts of the Apostles, which rejects implicitly any ‘caste system’ within the Church. We shall then analyse perceptions of
Divine Providence in Spain from the time of the Catholic Monarchs. Finally, we shall examine his *Tratado acerca de los moriscos* and show how Valencia’s beliefs as a Christian Humanist underlie his arguments as does his awareness of the status quo at the court of Philip III.

Before analysing his commentary on *Galatians*, against the background of the existence in seventeenth-century Spain of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Christians, we shall look at an early influence on Valencia, that of Maestro Juan de Ávila, who came from a New Christian family himself, and also wrote a commentary on this Epistle.² He was subsequently beatified and canonised. The influence on Valencia of Desiderius Erasmus and of Benito Arias Montano will be considered afterwards.

Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Galatians

*Part I: formative influences*

Pedro de Valencia finished writing his *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Galatians*³ after his appointment as *cronista del reino* (for Castile) on 22 May 1607. He had been thinking about it for some time, as he mentions it in a letter to Fray José de Sigüenza, Prior of el Escorial, which he sent from Zafra on 20 October 1604.⁴ The commentary is dedicated to the primate of Spain and Inquisitor General, Don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, uncle of Philip III’s *privado*, the Duke of Lerma. Dated 1 February 1608, the *Commentary* is the only work that Valencia desired to be published, although he requested that it be translated into Latin first.⁵ Apparently

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² These *Lecciones sobre la epístola a los Gálatas* are not included in the original *Obras* of Ávila. Ávila’s commentary was found by Fr. Camilo Mª Abad SJ in the library of the Escorial. They were at the beginning of a MS containing the *Memorial segundo para Trento* of Juan de Ávila, fols 1r–94v, with a shelf mark of & III, 21. In his article, Fr. Abad argues, persuasively, that the commentary was the work of Ávila: C. Mª Abad, “Lecciones sobre la Epístola a los Gálatas”, *Miscelánea de Comillas*, XIII (1950), pp. 197–229. The *Lecciones* are in the 1970 *Complete Works* of Ávila, in volume IV, pp. 25–122.

³ P. de Valencia, *Para declaracion de vna gran parte de la Estoria Apostolica en los Actos, y en la epistola ad Galatas advertencias de Pedro de Valencia varon doctissimo, y en todo genero de letras muy eminente*, MS 464, BNE, fols 1r–96v, 1 February 1608.


⁵ His *Academica sive de ivdicio erga verum ex ipsis primis fontibus* (*The Academica* [of Cicero] or *Considered Judgements on Reality from the Primary Sources Themselves*) had previously been published in Antwerp by the Plantin-Moretus press in 1596.