

## FROM TUBAL TO ABIDIS: MYTHICAL KINGS IN EARLY MODERN SPANISH CHRONICLES

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El presente estudio investiga la presencia de los reyes míticos en las crónicas de la España moderna. Esta dinastía mítica (basada en la figura bíblica de Tubal) fue inventada por el italiano Giovanni Nanni al final del siglo XV y se asentó en la historiografía española. Tras describir el propósito que tenían estos reyes míticos, veremos cómo los cronistas de los distintos reinos españoles de aquella época los usaban de forma diferente. Los resultados muestran diferencias significativas entre textos castellanos, catalanes y portugueses principalmente. Mientras los autores castellanos tratan de incorporar estos reyes en la historia general de España, dominada por Castilla, cronistas catalanes y portugueses intentan conectar estas figuras míticas más bien con su propio reino. Su propósito es ennoblecer a su reino frente a los demás territorios españoles.

**Palabras claves:** Historia de España, Historia de Portugal, Historia moderna, crónicas, mitología.

This study investigates the presence of the mythical kings in early modern Spanish chronicles. This mythical dynasty (based on the biblical figure of Tubal) was invented by the Italian Giovanni Nanni at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it made its way into Spanish historiography. After describing what the general purpose of such mythical kings was, we will see how different they were used by the chroniclers of the several Spanish kingdoms existing at that time. Results show significant differences between Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese texts mainly. While Castilian authors try to embody these kings into a general Spanish history dominated by Castile, Catalan and Portuguese chroniclers try to connect these mythical figures rather with their own particular kingdom. Their purpose is to make their kingdom appear nobler in comparison with the other Spanish territories.

**Keywords:** Spanish history, Portuguese history, Early Modern history, Chronicles, Mythology.

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## Introduction

**W**hen a chronicler attempts to write the complete history of a territory, a city, a kingdom or even the entire world, he usually arrives at some point of the past, where he has very few facts to rely on or even none at all. He then is left with two choices: he can admit that he does not know what happened or he can invent the past or repeat a past already invented by others. The idea of inventing a past was nothing new in Early Modern Times. The historians of the Ancient Rome were already searching for their origins and since these could not be determined precisely, they were invented. According to Roman mythology, the city of Rome was founded 753 B.C., or rather 21 April 753, by the brothers Romulus and Remus. During the first century B.C. this created fact became canonical, especially thanks to Marcus Terentius Varro and the influence of his work.

In the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times the construction of mythical origins changed. In the Christian world there was a book that explained the beginnings of world history and became a frame for chroniclers, who wanted to reconstruct a past they did not know anything about: the Bible. In fact, the Bible became omnipresent in nearly any erudite kind of writing. In a very recent study

Antoni Simon i Tarrés demonstrated the strong biblical influence in political texts in Early Modern Spain, on subjects such as the monarchical government, the hereditary monarchy or the concept of the just war theory<sup>1</sup>. In his conclusions he states the following:

*Indubtablement, a l'època de la raó d'estat la Bíblia fou, juntament amb els referents del món clàssic (especialment el romà), una font i una eina fonamental per a l'elaboració dels discursos polítics català i hispànic. Un nombre apreciable de tractats polítics foren vertebrats a partir de les vides de personatges bíblics o de determinades "parts" o llibres del Text Sagrat, textos que hem anomenat "guies biblicopolítiques"*<sup>2</sup>.

The reference to the Bible as well as to the classical world is typical for Renaissance Europe, where the ancient world became a guideline for nearly all aspects of life. The classic Greek and Roman heritages were to be incorporated into the Christian one to create a fusion instead of an opposition between the pagan ancient world and Christianity<sup>3</sup>. In fact, among Spanish historians it was Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo who was the first who used ancient Latin and Greek sources<sup>4</sup>.

The biblical presence in all kind of writing is no surprise especially in the Spanish monarchy. The monarchy had no official name, but among the most often used terms was the *Monarquía Católica* (Catholic monarchy), first used in 1494 in a papal bull by Pope Alexander VI. It was the Catholic faith that gave legitimacy to the monarchy and it was the key element that all the territories of the monarchy had in common (it gave them some kind of common identity), except the Netherlands, which is why the monarchy was fighting against a rebellion there for decades. The same Pope Alexander also granted the title *Reyes Católicos* (Catholic Kings) to Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon, whose dynastic union by marriage could be considered the founding moment of the Spanish (Catholic) monarchy. Although it was Ferdinand and Isabella who entered into the history books as the Catholic Kings, their successors Charles V and Philip II, III and IV were also granted the same title.

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<sup>1</sup> Simon i Tarrés, Antoni, *La Bíblia en el pensament polític català i hispànic de l'època de la raó d'estat*, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 501.

<sup>3</sup> For the Renaissance in general see Burke, Peter, *The European Renaissance: Centers and Peripheries*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 1998. For the Spanish case see Bataillon, Marcel, *Érasme et l'Espagne, Recherches sur l'histoire spirituelle du XVI siècle*, Doz, Geneva, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Caballero López, José Antonio, «El mito en las historias de la España primitiva», *Excerpta Philologica*, vol. 7-8, 1997-1998 (pp. 83-100), p. 92. Available at <https://rodin.uca.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10498/10476/17212698.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

This very same biblical influence is also to be found in Early Modern chronicles, especially in the ones which are not limited to one single King, and when authors wanted to record the whole history of a territory, the so called *crónicas generales* (general chronicles). The biblical influence on historiography is nevertheless nothing new in Early Modern Times, but rather a continuity of medieval chronicles, which were also very much influenced by the Bible<sup>5</sup>.

In general, most Early Modern Spanish historians maintained the theory of the Six Ages of the World, firstly used by Saint Augustine around 400, which were very closely orientated to the Bible<sup>6</sup>. The first age went from the world's creation until the time of Noah and the Deluge, the second until Abraham, the third to King David, the fourth until the Babylonian exile, the fifth until the birth of Christ, which is when the sixth would start. The seventh would be the eternal rest after the Final Judgement. This division of time and history had been maintained through the previous centuries and gained special importance at least from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on<sup>7</sup>.

### Mythical Kings of Spain

As a general rule, for chronicles that started with the creation of the world, the content of the first age used to be very closely to the biblical text itself. The most prominent example in Early Modern Spain would be the *Monarchia Ecclesiastica, o Historia Universal del Mundo*, published in 1588 by Juan de Pineda<sup>8</sup>. The first half of the first book (from a collection of 30) is completely taken from the Bible, beginning with the creation of the world. But he also believes it is necessary to add information on the biblical content. For example, he claims to have calculated the exact date the world was created: «el mundo fue criado a diez y ocho de Abril, y a veynte y uno el Sol y la Luna, en conjunction: y que dende este miercoles contavan

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<sup>5</sup> For medieval historiography and perception of the past see Chastang, Pierre (ed.), *Le passé à l'épreuve du présent. Appropriations et usages du passé du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance*, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, Paris, 2008 and recently published Bassi, Rafael and Teixeira, Igor (eds.), *A escritura da história na Idade Média*, Editora Oikos, São Leopoldo, 2015. More specifically for the Spanish case see Tischler, Matthias, «Bible and Historiography in Transcultural Iberian Societies Eight to Twelfth Century», *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies*, vol. 2, 2, 2015 (pp. 303-314), available at [https://www.academia.edu/17043202/Bible\\_and\\_Historiography\\_in\\_Transcultural\\_Iberian\\_Societies\\_Eighth\\_to\\_Twelfth\\_Centuries](https://www.academia.edu/17043202/Bible_and_Historiography_in_Transcultural_Iberian_Societies_Eighth_to_Twelfth_Centuries) and Lobrichon, Guy, *La Bible au Moyen Âge*, Editions Picard, Paris, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> de Ferdinandy, Michael, *Die hispanischen Königsgesta. Portugiesische und spanische Geschichtsschreibung im Zeitalter der Renaissance*, Peter Lang, Bern, 1984, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Villa Prieto, Josué, «Periodizaciones de la historia en las crónicas italianas y españolas de la Edad Media (siglos XIII-XIV)», *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, vol. 10, 2015 (pp. 63-96). Available at <https://www.unioviado.es/reunido/index.php/TSP/article/view/11199/10509>. For the previous centuries, see Werner Goetz, Hans, «The concept of time in the historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries», eds. Althoff, Gerd, Fried, Johannes and Geary, Patrick, *Medieval concept of the past: ritual, memory and historiography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002 (pp. 139-166).

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed analysis see Chaparro, Sandra, «Mito y razón: religión y política en una historia del mundo del siglo XVI», *Foro Interno*, 3, 2003, (pp. 67-86). Available at <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/FOIN/article/view/FOIN0303110067A/8146>

los Judios el primer año del Mundo»<sup>9</sup>. Later on he focusses more on Spain, but keeps telling Bible based history on Israel in parallel chapters and Ancient Greek history based on Greek mythology in others, which again shows the fusion of Christianity with Classical ancient knowledge.

It was mainly assumed that Spain was not populated before the Deluge, which is why most Spanish chroniclers ignore human history before this event. In any case, as the Bible states, every connection between Spanish origins and the presence of Spain had to have its origins after the Deluge. Therefore most Spanish historians start their chronicles from immediately after this biblical episode. There are very few exceptions, like Bernardo de Brito, who dedicates the first chapter of his book to the creation of the world, a very short chapter basically orientated around the Bible without a mention of Spain at all. Given that the Bible does not mention any Spanish population before the Deluge, authors generally seemed to accept that these actually did not exist. Francesc Martí i Viladamor in his *Noticia Universal de Cataluña* explains that it was God's will that Catalonia was not to be populated before the Deluge, «para que una vez poblada nunca experimentara fatales ruynas, hasta el ultimo fin del mundo»<sup>10</sup>. Only Gaspar Escolano seems to have a different opinion:

*Siempre tuve por cierto, que todo el mundo estuvo poblado, antes que Dios le acabara con el diluvio; y que en este extremo bellissimo del, que agora llamamos España, hubo poblados, y pobladores con sus nombres, como despues del diluvio los tuvieron las demas Provincias, y sus moradores dellas; bien que diferentes de los que antes havian tenido. Con el diluvio quedaron ahogados ellos y ellas, y la memoria de todas; no quedandonos biva mas noticia de las cosas que antes del diluvio passaron, que aquella que quiso dar Dios por medio de su gran Proheta y Cronista Moyses<sup>11</sup>.*

Most authors did not believe in a pre-Deluge population of Spain, so their history usually started after this event and the population of Spain by Noah and his offspring. In most European kingdoms, chroniclers tried to trace back their own origins as far as possible in the past. A more ancient past meant more dignity for a territory. Given that according to the Bible all human populations were erased by the flood, the most ancient possible origin of a civilization could only start after the

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<sup>9</sup> de Pineda, Juan, *Monarchia Ecclesiastica, o Historia Universal del Mundo*, Juan Fernández, Salamanca, 1588, 3v.

<sup>10</sup> Martí i Viladamor, Francesc, *Noticia Universal de Cataluña*, Consejo de Ciento de la Ciudad de Barcelona, Barcelona, 1641, pp. 26-27.

<sup>11</sup> Escolano, Gaspar, *Decada Primera de la Historia de la Insigne y Coronada Ciudad y Reyno de Valencia*, Pedro Patricio Mey, Valencia, 1610, p. 3.

Deluge and the lack of sources or any evidence for such a remote origin, the historians filled these gaps with a mythical past inspired by the Bible itself. Genesis 10 provides us with a list of Noah's children and grandchildren and the last sentence of this biblical chapter is which gave birth to the possibility to link the origins of Early Modern people to the Bible: «these were the families of the sons of Noah according to their family lines and their nations. From these the nations were spread across the earth after the Flood»<sup>12</sup>.

According to the interpretation made of these passages, the continents were divided amongst Noah's sons and later subdivided amongst the grandchildren<sup>13</sup>. Within this repartition, Tubal, son of Japhet and grandson of Noah (Genesis 10, 2), was supposed to be in charge of the population of Spain. As Julio Caro Baroja stated, Tubal would be the origins of the name *theobeles*, which in time would become *Iberos* (Iberians)<sup>14</sup>. The first to interpret these passages was the Jewish-Roman scholar Flavius Josephus in the first century. Saint Jerome in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and Isidore the Seville provide evidence of the continuation through the centuries of this Bible based myth. «Tubal, from whom came the Iberians, who are also the Spaniards» is the affirmation Isidore makes in his *Etymologiae*<sup>15</sup>. After very little continuation in the early Middle Ages it is Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (1170-1247), Archbishop of Toledo, with his *Historia de rebus hispaniae*, who relaunches the Tubal myth and who would become the main figure responsible for the canonisation of this figure canonical among Iberian chroniclers over time<sup>16</sup>.

Until the end of the fifteenth century it was Tubal alone who represented the mythical origins of the Spanish population. The Italian Giovanni Nanni or Annio of Viterbo created a whole mythical dynasty of Kings starting with Tubal. In his *Antigüedades* (1498) he includes a document, which he claims was written in the third century B.C. by the Babylonian writer Berossus. The influence of Annio over Early Modern Spanish historiography would become very important<sup>17</sup>. Annio tells

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<sup>12</sup> Genesis 10. 32.

<sup>13</sup> There are a considerable number of studies on Noah and his offspring, standing out the classic work of Allen, Don Cameron, *The legend of Noah: renaissance rationalism in art, science and letters*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1949 and the more recent contribution by Bizzocchi, Roberto, *Genealogie incredibili: scritti di storia nell'Europa moderna*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1995. See furthermore the chapter *Descendants de Noè. Els remots "origens" nacionals* in Simon i Tarrés, *La Bíblia en...*, op.cit, pp. 154-162.

<sup>14</sup> Caro Baroja, Julio, *Las falsificaciones de la historia (en relación con la de España)*, Seix Barral, Barcelona, 1992, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etimologies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 193.

<sup>16</sup> For Rada in general, see the recent bibliography by Crespo López, Mario, *Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada*, Fundación Ignacio Larramendi, Madrid, 2015. For his influence on Castilian historiography, see Martin, Georges, «La invención de Castilla (Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia de rebus hispaniae*, V). Identidad, patria y mentalidades políticas», *HAL archives-ouvertes*, 1, 2006 (pp. 1-16). Available at <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00113284/document>

<sup>17</sup> On this matter see Caballero López, José Antonio, «Anio de Viterbio y la historiografía española del siglo XVI», ed. Nieto Ibáñez, Jesús María, *Humanismo y tradición clásica en España y América*, Universidad de León, León, 2002, pp. 101-120.

us of 25 Kings who would have succeeded each other over a period of almost 1.000 years. The names of these Kings can be seen in the following list:

<b>King</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Tubal	First Spanish King, 143 years after the Deluge
Ibero	Son of Tubal, becomes King 299 years after the Deluge
Idubeda	Son of Ibero, becomes King 336 years after the Deluge
Brigo	Son of Idubeda, becomes King 400 years after the Deluge
Tago	Son of Brigo, becomes King 450 years after the Deluge
Beto	Son of Tago, becomes King 482 years after the Deluge, has no children
Gerion	Came from Mauritania, a tyrant, becomes King 514 years after the Deluge
The Gerions	The three sons of Gerion, counted as one King, become King 549 years after the Deluge, the Libyan Hercules removes them from power
Hispalo	Son of Hercules, appointed heir to the throne, becomes King 590 years after the Deluge
Hispan	Son of Hispalo, becomes King 607 years after the Deluge, has no children
Hercules	Grandfather of Hispan, becomes King 639 years after the Deluge
Espero	Son of Hispalo, grandson of Hercules, becomes King 658 years after the Deluge
Atlante	Brother of Espero, becomes King 669 years after the Deluge
Sicaro	Son of Atlante, becomes King 682 years after the Deluge
Sicano	Son of Sicaro, becomes King 728 years after the Deluge
Siceleo	Son of Sicano, becomes King 757 years after the Deluge
Luso	Son of Siceleo , becomes King 801 years after the Deluge
Siculo	Son of Luso, becomes King 832 years after the Deluge, his son Siculo Junior does not become King.
Testa	Comes from Libya to Spain, becomes King 893 years after the Deluge
Romo	Son of Testa, becomes King 968 years after the Deluge
Palatuo	Son of Romo, becomes King 1001 years after the Deluge
Licinio (Caco)	Apparently not related to Palatuo, becomes King 1019 years after the Deluge

Eritreo	Related to the dynasty of Hercules, becomes King 1061 years after the Deluge
Gargoris	Almost no information available on Gargoris
Abidis	Grandson of Gargoris, becomes King 1131 years after the Deluge

**Table elaborated by myself. The years are according to Annius.**

Annus has exact notions of time in this rather mythical period. As we see in the table, for each King he tells us the exact year after the Deluge their reign began. But the Deluge is not his only point of reference. He also dates the reigns in relation to the founding of Spain (Tubal's arrival), the founding of Troy (which lies in the future) and the founding of Rome (which also lies in the future) among others. Annus cannot provide much more information on most of these Kings, so the time references for their reign occupy half of the space dedicated to them in many cases. The whole 25 Kings, who reigned for approximately a whole millennium, do not fill more than 15 pages in Annus' work<sup>18</sup>. Most Spanish authors apply the preciseness of Annus concerning the establishment of exact time frames to when each of these Kings ruled. Some of them might differ from Annus in some details (for instance precise years), but the idea of a very concrete notion of time is repeated by many of these authors. Only Juan de Mariana admits that «dificultosa cosa sería querer puntualmente ajustar los tiempos en que florecieron los reyes de España que de suso quedan nombrados, los años que reinaron y vivieron, y en particular señalar el año de la creación del mundo»<sup>19</sup>.

So, Mariana is neither questioning the existence of these Kings (for the most part, as we will see later) nor the biblical fact that the world has been created, but he rejects the possibility of telling exactly when these things happened.

Going back to Annus, as he is a Renaissance writer, it is not too surprising that Greek mythology is also present in the construction of a mythical Spanish past, namely in the figures of Geryon (Gerion) and Hercules (Heracles). The ancient Greek farmer and poet Hesiod in his *Theogony* describes Geryon as a giant from the island of Erytheia, who had one body, but three heads (the bodies were joined at the hip). He is essentially characterized as a warrior, together with his two headed dog Orthrus.

This Geryon figure was later used in the famous twelve Labours of Hercules, which were put in order by Peisander in a now lost work. In the tenth of these Labours, Hercules must steel the cattle herd of Geryon, which he does by killing his

<sup>18</sup> Nanni, Giovanni, *Berosi sacerdotis chaldaici antiquitatum ac totius orbis libri quinque, Commentariis Ioannis Annii Viterbensis*, Ioan Steelsii, Antwerp, 1512, pp. 292-307.

<sup>19</sup> de Mariana, Juan, «Historia General de España», ed. Rivadeneyra, M., *Obras del Padre Juan de Mariana*, M. Rivadeneyra, Madrid, 1854, p. 13. On Mariana see Soons, Alan, *Juan de Mariana*, Twayne Publ., Boston, 1982.

dog. This in turn leads to a battle between the two of them and Hercules kills Geryon with an arrow. This Geryon from Greek mythology most likely represents Annius' King Gerion as well as his three sons (the three heads). Moreover, as an analogy to the mythology Hercules, this new figure appears, defeating the three Gerions, taking the Spanish kingdom from them and giving it to his son Hispalo<sup>20</sup>.

So, with Tubal we have a biblical origin of these 25 Kings, but none of the others are mentioned in the Bible. The question would be why Annius added these Kings to the already existing Tubal myth. The most simplistic and also most likely answer seems to be the filling of parts of the large temporal gaps between Tubal and the oldest documented history of Spain, which would be the arrival of several foreign populations, such as the Celts or the Carthaginians. Estevan de Corbera seems to involuntarily confirm this hypothesis. In his posthumous (he died in 1635) work *Cataluña Illustrata* (1678) he refers to some authors who doubt the existence of some of the Kings, namely those between the reign of Tubal and Gerion (Ibero, Ibudeba, Brigo, Tago and Beto) and justifies their existence: «Cerca de quatrocientos años passaron desde la entrada de Tubal hasta Gerion. Es gran distancia de tiempo esta para tener una Provincia tan grande como España sin Reyes, o cabeças, que con autoridad superior governassen a los demas. Parece imposible conservarse sin ellos tantos años»<sup>21</sup>.

This argument Corbera puts forward to justify the existence of these five Kings could easily be extended to the whole mythical dynasty from Ibero to Abidis. If a chronicler took the existence of Tubal and his population of Spain as certain fact, he would have then come up with some sort of explanation as to what happened afterwards. This need becomes even stronger considering that Tubal not only led the population of the peninsula (he could have left later or decided to abdicate and his offspring would no longer hold claim to the throne), but as he is claimed to be the first King of Spain, this newly started dynasty needed to have a continuation. In other words, if you create a mythological past based on the Bible, it has to be larger than a single founding myth without any sort of continuity.

Although with these mythical Kings the chroniclers could fill approximately a thousand years of remote past, there had to be a gap at some point, because it would be impossible for these Kings to be directly related to ancient Spanish history under Celts, Carthaginians or Romans. Firstly, because no possible connection between these events could not be established and secondly, because in these later times Spain would suddenly be left without Kings, a fact, that would also have to be explained.

Annus just let the theory of these mythical Kings come to an end with the

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<sup>20</sup> On Hercules and Geryon in Spanish and specially Portuguese mythology see Moreira Fernandes, José Sílvia, «Estrutura e função do mito de Hércules na Monarquia Lusitana de Bernardo de Brito», *Ágora. Estudos Clássicos em Debate*, vol. 9, 2007 (pp. 119-150). Available at <http://www2.dlc.ua.pt/classicos/hercules.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> de Corbera, Estevan, *Cataluña Illustrata*, Antonino Gramiñani, Naples, 1678, p. 141.

reign of Abidis, but he does not give any explanation as to why this era did end so suddenly. He only states that the Province was conserved until the Carthaginians and the Romans entered it<sup>22</sup>, without actually specifying how this happened. Authors from the different Spanish kingdoms, who decided to include this mythical past in their chronicles tried to be more specific on how exactly this first dynasty came to an end after a whole millennium.

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<sup>22</sup> Nanni, *Berosi sacerdotis chaldaici...*, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

Authors like the Catalan Jeroni Pujades established a connection between the end of the age of the mythical Kings and the Six Ages of the World we have already referred to. He matches the end of Abidis' reign with the change from the third to the fourth age:

*Acabada la vida de Abidis, apunta Garibay, acabaren los primers Reys de Espanya, que avian durat desde Tubal, per espay de 1902 anys: en 1234 del diluvi: 1071 abans de Christo. En lo qual any tambe acabada la tercera edat del Mon y comença la quarta en temps del Rey David: cosa digne de ser notada. Y axi acabant la tercera edat del Mon, y primera governacio dels Reys de Espanya*<sup>23</sup>.

There is also a consensus among most authors as to what happened to provoke the end of the rule of these Kings. Many authors describe a drought, which ended the reign of these monarchs and depopulated the whole peninsula. Many of them even define that this period lasted for 26 years. Pedro de Medina explains that the drought started after Spain had ran out of Kings, which could imply a certain connection between the fact that the dynasty ended and then their territory was depopulated<sup>24</sup>. Others like Garibay and Salazar de Mendoza (who actually refers to Garibay) established the beginning of the drought as taking place parallel to the end of Abidis' reign, which could imply that because of the drought there was no successor to Abidis in the end<sup>25</sup>.

All of them, nevertheless, established that this drought lasted 26 years. But there are also discrepancies among some authors, not on the drought itself, but on the duration. One of them is Juan de Mariana, who rejects arguments from foreign authors who claim the drought to be an invention, given that none of the ancient

<sup>23</sup> Pujades, Jeroni, *Coronica Universal del Principat de Cathalunya*, Hieronym Margarit, Barcelona, 1609, p. 32v.

<sup>24</sup> de Medina, Pedro, *Libro de grandezas y cosas memorables de España*, Pedro de Robles and Juan de Villanueva, Alcalá, 1566, p. 7. The work was first published in 1548. The title was probably inspired by the book *De las cosas memorables de España*, published in 1530 as a translation of *De rebus Hispaniae memorabilibus* by Lucio Marineo Siculo. On Medina, see the recent doctoral thesis by Sánchez Ferro, Pablo, *El tiempo mítico y la esencia de la nación en Pedro de Medina*, PhD thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2015, see especially pages 201-221. Available at [https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/672301/sanchez\\_ferro\\_pablo.pdf?sequence=4](https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/672301/sanchez_ferro_pablo.pdf?sequence=4)

<sup>25</sup> de Garibay, Esteban, *Los quarenta libros del compendio historial de las chronicas y universal historia de todos los Reynos de España. Tomo Primero*, Sebastian de Cormellas, Barcelona, 1628, p. 101 (the book was first published in 1570); de Salazar y Mendoza, Pedro, *Monarquía de España. Tomo I*, Joaquín Ibarra, Madrid, 1770, p. 36 (published a long time after the authors death in 1629). On Salazar de Mendoza see Gómez Vozmediano, Miguel and Sánchez, Ramón, «Pedro Salazar de Mendoza (1549-1629): cronista nobiliario y bruñidor de linajes», *Tiempos Modernos*, 31, 2015 (pp. 393-422). Available at <http://www.tiemposmodernos.org/tm3/index.php/tm/article/view/559/523>

Greek or Roman historians mention it, while they do mention a lot of happenings of minor importance. His answer to them is that it is «cosa averiguada que, no solo el intervalo del tiempo, sino la distancia de los lugares no muy grande altera a veces la memoria. Todo esto entedemos sucedió en el negocio presente; que ni la seca de aquel tiempo fue tan grande ni tan larga como refieren»<sup>26</sup>.

Two Portuguese chroniclers express the same opinion as Mariana. Manuel de Faria e Sousa believes that it lasted 26 months but because of ignorant exaggeration this was turned into 26 years: «Pensaron, parece, que no seria grande el daño si fuesse de menos tiempo»<sup>27</sup>. Bernardo de Brito refers to Laymundo de Ortega, a very doubtful source only known by him who would have written around the year 800 and who would have suggested the timescale of 28 months for the drought. Brito adds that certainly two years without rain would be enough to depopulate Spain completely and it would something possible within the order of nature<sup>28</sup>.

The drought itself in any case was generally taken for certainty, given that it could explain very well the sudden end of the approximate 1000 year dynasty of Kings. However, ties between these ancient Spaniards and the ones of their own time could not be cut completely. If a depopulated Spain meant the total disappearance of the people, the ancient origins of the current Spaniards would be sabotaged. Several authors were aware of this problem and came up with a solution. Gregorio López Madera explains that several natives, although not all of them, came back after the climatic situation got better. He admits, nevertheless, that several parts of Spain remained very sparsely populated, which would lead to the further immigration of other groups, such as the Carthaginians<sup>29</sup>.

Faria e Sousa describes some kind of Italian exile, to where, according to him, «no pocos Españoles» relocated during the period of drought. In this context Faria e Sousa connects once more the Spanish prehistory with ancient Greek mythology. He claims that when these Spaniards returned home they would have brought Homer with them, the author of the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, who would then write part of his work in Spain. On this occasion the author also refers to the myth surrounding the founding on Lisbon, according to which the city had been founded

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<sup>26</sup> Mariana, *Historia General de...*, op.cit., p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> de Faria e Sousa, Manuel, *Europa Portuguesa*. Tomo I, Antonio Craesbeek de Mello, Lisbon, 1678, pp. 73-74 (published almost three decades after the authors death in 1649). On Faria e Sousa see da Cruz Bonilha, Alexandre, *Manuel de Faria e Sousa, historiador*, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> de Brito, Bernardo, *Monarchia Lusytana. Parte Primeira*, Francisco de Santa Clara, Alcobaça, 1597, p. 73v. On Brito, see the recente study by Gloël, Matthias, «Bernardo de Brito: a misunderstood Portuguese chronicler», *E-Journal of Portuguese History*, vol. 15, 2, 2017 (pp. 30-44). Available at [https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese\\_Brazilian\\_Studies/ejph/html/issue30/html/v15n2a02.html](https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue30/html/v15n2a02.html)

<sup>29</sup> López Madera, Gregorio, *Excelencias de la Monarchia y Reyno de España*, Diego Fernández de Córdoba, Valladolid, 1597, p. 23v. On López Madera, see García Ballesteros, Enrique and Martínez Torres, José Antonio, «Gregorio López Madera (1562-1649), un jurista al servicio de la Corona», *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Económica Matritense de Amigos del País*, vol. 37, 1998 (pp. 163-178).

by Odysseus himself<sup>30</sup>.

Garibay even establishes a parallel to the later coming origins of the Principality of Asturias after the Arabic invasion in 711. He writes that many Spaniards went to Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia where the rainy climate was secured<sup>31</sup>. This origin of the repopulation of Spain is clearly linked to the myth of Don Pelayo who supposedly led the resistance movement after the Arab invasion from Asturias and Cantabria, where he would be victorious in the battle of Covadonga, the beginning of the Asturian/Leonese/Castilian reconquest of the peninsula.

### Regional particularities

As it is well known, in Early Modern Times a Kingdom of Spain did not exist and therefore neither did a King of Spain. Although amongst the elites existed a particular consciousness of constructing a Spanish identity different from non-Spaniards<sup>32</sup>, the term Spain had no political meaning<sup>33</sup>. Instead of a Kingdom of Spain we could instead speak of several Spanish kingdoms, kingdoms located within the Iberian Peninsula, which includes Portugal. In 1609 Francisco de Quevedo defines the political division of Spain this way: «Propiamente, España se divide en tres coronas: de Castilla, Aragón í Portugal (fierra los tirminos de Europa; iaze entre África i Franzia, i es geñida del estrecho del oceano i de los Pirineos) »<sup>34</sup>. The crown of Aragon was even more politically subdivided into the Kingdom of Aragon, the Kingdom of Valencia, the Principality of Catalonia and further dominions outside the peninsula.

All these territories belonging to one single composite monarchy were dynastically united by a single King<sup>35</sup>. The three crowns Quevedo mentions were united in two steps: first, the marriage of Queen Isabella of Castile with the future King of Aragon (the whole crown, not only the kingdom) in 1469 united these two crowns dynastically (which does not mean a political unification) and second, in 1580 Philipp II of Castile (at the same time Philip I held the crown of Aragon) became King of Portugal (he was grandson of the Portuguese King Manuel). In this way the whole peninsula, which means whole Spain, was ruled by the same King.

<sup>30</sup> Faria e Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa...*, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Garibay, *Los quarenta libros...*, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> See for example the recent study Ballester Rodríguez, Mateo, *La identidad española en le Edad Moderna (1556-1665). Discursos, símbolos y mitos*, Editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Dalmau Busquets, Joan, *La Catalunya del barroc vista des de Girona. La crònica de Jeroni de Real (1626 – 1683). Volum I*, Publicacions de la Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, 1994, p. 266. See especially Gloël, Matthias, «Los conceptos de España durante los reinados de los Austrias», *Revista de Humanidades*, vol. 38, 2018 (pp. 191-216). Available at <http://revistahumanidades.unab.cl/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Matthias-Gloel-Los-conceptos-de-Espala-durante-los-reinados-de-los-Austrias.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> de Quevedo y Villegas, Francisco, «España defendida y los tiempos de ahora», ed. Astrana Marin, Luis, *Obras completas de Don Francisco de Quevedo Villegas. Obras en prosa*, Aguilar, Madrid, 1941 (pp. 325-359), p. 327.

<sup>35</sup> Elliott, John H., «A Europe of composite monarchies», *Past and Present*, vol. 137, 1992 (pp. 48-71).

During the sixteenth century Castile gradually became the political centre of the Spanish monarchy, while the other Spanish kingdoms were relegated to a peripheral position, not only in a geographical sense, but also in regards to the execution of power. These differences are also visible in the chronicles written about the different kingdoms in general and also particularly in the mythical pre-history we are analysing.

The differences begin with the population of Spain by Tubal. The Tubal myth in the different Iberian chronicles in the sixteenth and seventeenth century has been recently studied, in a much more detailed way than it is possible in this occasion<sup>36</sup>. Castilian historians mainly refer to Tubal's arrival in Spain - they may differ in where exactly this occurred (Andalucía, Galicia, Asturias), but this is not of primary importance. Their goal is to point out the antiquity of Spain rather than of their own kingdom of Castile. For example, Florián de Ocampo tells us that Noah «enbió tambien en España un hombre muy aventajado y virtuoso que se dezia Tubal» and connecting to him modern day Spaniards he adds that this Tubal was the first man that lived in Spain and all Spaniards would descend from him<sup>37</sup>. This ties in with their general attitude towards Spanish history, where they attempt to converge Castilian and Spanish history by for example presenting the Castilian Kings as Kings of Spain. The titles of most Castilian authors such as Garibay, Medina, López Madera or Salazar y Mendoza make reference to Spain rather to Castile.

Catalan and Portuguese authors in particular have a different perspective on the arrival of Tubal. They adapt the Tubal myth turning it from a Spanish one into a particular myth with roots in their own territory. In this way Catalan and Portuguese authors place the first settlement in Spain explicitly in Catalonia or Portugal. By doing that, unlike in Castilian chronicles, the point of arrival gains importance in order to prove their point.

In the Catalan case this means that the chroniclers claim that Tubal arrived in Spain not by land, but through the Mediterranean, a route that would have lead

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<sup>36</sup> Gloël, Matthias, «The Tubal figure in early modern Iberian historiography, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century», *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, vol. 11, 2017 (pp. 27-51). Available at [https://repositori.udl.cat/bitstream/handle/10459.1/60557/imatem\\_a2017n11p27.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repositori.udl.cat/bitstream/handle/10459.1/60557/imatem_a2017n11p27.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). See also Ballester Rodríguez, Mateo, «La estirpe de Tubal: relato bíblico e identidad nacional en España», *Historia y Política*, vol. 29, 2013 (pp. 219-246). Available at <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/Hyp/article/view/17171/22162>. Ballester focusses basically on Castilian chronicles and ignores widely the ones from other kingdom. Simon i Tarres criticizes correctly that he seems to ignore the Catalan variety of the Tubal myth, Simon i Tarres, 154. To this critic could be added the also absence of the Portuguese variety, now taken in consideration in Gloël 2017. For the Catalan variety, see also the contribution by Ferrer, Daniel, «Els orígens mítics d'Hispania en el De Origine (1553) de Francesc Tarafa: el Túbal d'Annio de Viterbo», *Estudi General*, vol. 23-24, 2004 (pp. 361-378). Available at <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/EstudiGral/article/view/43838/56282>

<sup>37</sup> de Ocampo, Florián, *Los quatro libros primeros de la cronica general de España*, Zamora, Juan Pablo Colomer, 1543, p. 6v. On Ocampo see Caballero López, José Antonio, «Mito e historia en la *Crónica General de España* de Florián de Ocampo», *AISO. Actas*, vol. VI, 2002 (pp. 397-405). Available at [https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aiso/pdf/06/aiso\\_6\\_1\\_032.pdf](https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aiso/pdf/06/aiso_6_1_032.pdf)

him straight to the Catalan coast. One of the many Catalans authors to argue this point is Jeroni Pujades: «forçanme les rahons que dire a seguir la opinio, que Tubal fes sa primera posada restada, y poblacio en Cathalunya, y de ella en Tarragona. Perque resolt, que Tubal vingue per lo mar mediterraneo, com ho avem tingut per lo mes aparent a la veritat»<sup>38</sup>.

Pujades, and other Catalan chroniclers do the same thing, claiming that Tubal started his settlement in Spain within Catalan territory, which would make Catalonia the most ancient Spanish region, which is directly translated into greater nobility. Also the visit Noah paid his grandson Tubal several years later, which is generally referred to by all the authors who admit these mythical origins is modified by several Catalan chroniclers, such as Narcis Feliu de la Penya. Noah's visit to Tubal in Spain becomes Noah's visit to Tubal in Catalonia: «El Santo Patriarca Noè, cuidadoso de la salud, y gobierno de los suyos vino à Cataluña, el año 100 de la entrada de Tubal»<sup>39</sup>.

A similar (but Portugal focussed) view on Tubal is to be found within several Portuguese chronicles, such as the *Monarchia Lusitana* (1597) by Bernardo de Brito for example. He seems to agree with Pujades that Tubal came through the Mediterranean, but according to him he did not settle on its coast, but «chegarem ao estreito de Gibraltar, onde levados das correntes do mar, e impetto das ondas, sairão (como refere nosso Laymundo <sup>40</sup>) ao mar Oceano <sup>41</sup>». Along the coast, as Brito explains, he found a very good piece of land to settle on and after a few years he gave a name to his settlement on Spanish soil: Cethubala, which in time would turn into Setubal, which in time would become part of the Portuguese kingdom<sup>42</sup>.

These differences in the perception of these mythical Kings would carry on with Tubal's successors as well. Those kings have received much less attention from historiography. Although the book published by Antonio Ruiz Vega deals with the whole mythical dynasty of Spanish kings, his goal is to show somehow the existence of an eternal Spanish essence through these myths<sup>43</sup>. We argue that this conclusion is not sustainable, given that the mythical figures it is based on, is only invented at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Castilian authors chose to keep the Spanish perspective by presenting all of them as Kings of Spain without putting too much emphasis on their own Castilian kingdom or crown. Castilian chroniclers created in this way a unified past as a mirror to their own present where they wanted to see a

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<sup>38</sup> Pujades, *Coronica Universal del...* op.cit., pp. 8-8v.

<sup>39</sup> Feliu de la Penya, Narcis, *Anales de Cataluña*. Tomo Primero, Joseph Llopis, Barcelona, 1709, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> Laymundo was a source unknown until then and only quoted by Brito. It is very likely that Brito himself invented him to have a unique source to proof his points.

<sup>41</sup> Brito, *Monarchia Lusytana...*, op.cit., p. 6v.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> Ruiz Vega, Antonio, *Los hijos de Tubal. Mitología hispánica: dioses y héroes de la España antigua*, La Esfera de los Libros, Madrid, 2002.

unified Spain under a Castile leadership<sup>44</sup>. An exception would be King Brigo, the fourth of the list, whose name was generally seen as the origins of Castile itself, as Gerónimo de Castro y Castillo explains:

*que según ciertos autores no se llama Castilla la Vieja, sino Castilla Brigia, de Brigo, quarto rey los primeros de España: y Brigo en lengua Armenica significa Alcayde, y Brigia, la fortaleza: de donde se derivò, que la tierra donde reynava el Rey Brigo, se llamò Brigia, y las armas que siempre ha tenido Castilla, y Burgos, es un castillo*<sup>45</sup>.

Just as important is the double origin of two different mythical kings of Spain itself. First, we have Ibero, son of Tubal, who gave the region the name Iberia and later we have Hispan, from who we have the Latin term Hispania, which would turn into *España* (Spain). At least the etymological origin of Spain from Hispan seemed to be canonical among all the Spanish kingdoms, as found amongst authors from Aragon (for example Luys Lopes), Valencia (Pere Antoni Beuter), Catalonia (Jeroni Pujades) and Portugal (Bernardo de Brito). In fact, the figure of Hispan had appeared in several texts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards as the etymological origin of Spain<sup>46</sup>.

What the Castilian chroniclers mainly wanted to achieve with these Kings is to prove the ancient origins of the Spanish monarchy, which would have its origins rooted in Tubal and his successors. As Salazar y Mendoza explains:

*Desde ahora (Tubal) quedó introducido en España el Gobierno Monarquico Real que le duró siempre, menos el tiempo que estuvo en poder de Griegos, Cartagineses y Romanos, y de las otras naciones, que la vinieron à poblar, y conquistar despues de la gran sequedad que padeció. Segun esto España es la Region mas antigua del mundo, que ha tenido Reyes*<sup>47</sup>.

As José Javier Rodríguez Solís points out in his study on Salazar de Mendoza, the author aimed to emphasize that this introduction of monarchical government by Tubal gave Spain a preeminence among the European kingdoms because of its

<sup>44</sup> García, Facundo, «Representaciones históricas y bíblicas en la fabricación de la Monarquía de España. Discursos y teología a mediados del siglo XVI», *Anuario de la Escuela de Historia Virtual*, vol. 3, 2012 (pp. 21-38). Available at <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/anuariohistoria/article/view/4597/4400>

<sup>45</sup> de Castro y Castillo, Gerónimo, *Historia de los Reyes Godos que vinieron de la Scythia de Europa contra el Imperio Romano y a España*, Luis Sánchez, Madrid, 1624, p. 64.

<sup>46</sup> Estévez Sola, Juan Antonio, «Aproximación a los orígenes míticos de Hispania», *Habis*, vol. 21, 1990 (pp. 139-152), p. 149. Available at <https://idus.us.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11441/29533/aproximacion%20a%20los%20origenes%20míticos.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>47</sup> Salazar y Mendoza, *Monarquía de España...*, op.cit., p. 35.

antiquity<sup>48</sup>. López Madera also argues that Spain is the world's most ancient monarchy and adds that especially King Ibero and the derivation Iberia would prove this antiquity<sup>49</sup>. And despite the interruption of the monarchical government between Abidis and the Goths this means no monarchical rupture in his opinion. He talks about a restoration and that Spain recovered its ancient title, which leads him to the conclusion that Spain remains the most ancient kingdom in the world and that the many years without Kings would not have an overall effect on this<sup>50</sup>.

Aragonese and Valencian authors for the most part did not differ that much from their Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese colleagues often did. Lopes and Beuter, authors we already referred to, also mention the connection between King Brigo and the origins of Castile. Their titles refer completely to Spain in case of Lopes (*Tablas cronologicas de España*), as is also the case with Beuter (*Coronica General de toda España, y especialmente del Reyno de Valencia*)<sup>51</sup>.

In the case of Catalan and Portuguese chroniclers we see a difference, these writers focus a lot more on their own kingdoms, already related to this mythical past of Spain, too. Also, the appropriation of the term "Spain" by nearly all Castilian authors was not very appreciated in the other kingdoms, as expressed by Cristòfor Despuig in 1557: «I també casi tots los historiògrafos castellans estan en lo mateix de voler nomenar a Castella per tota Espanya» (And also almost all the Castilian historians do the same thing, waishing to call Castile for all Spain) and «aquesta província (Catalonia) no sols és Espanya, mas és la millor Espanya i, en tot temps i per totes les nacions que ací són arribades, per tal tinguda»<sup>52</sup>.

Authors like Feliu de la Penya and Pujades refer extensively to the Catalan towns which were founded in each of the King's reigns, like Badalona was founded by Beto, Barcelona by Hercules or Berga by Luso. Even in the case of Brigo, which was very important to the Castilian chroniclers as etymological origin of Castile, to Feliu de la Penya the most important thing of his reign would have been the foundation of Lleida<sup>53</sup>. In fact, the connection between Brigo and Castile is not usually mentioned at all by Catalan historians. Jeroni Pujades even neglects it explicitly. There couldn't be such connection, given that the origins of the Castilians arms are to be found in times of King Alfonso IX of León (1171-1230)<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Rodríguez Solís, José Javier, «La Monarquía de España desde Castilla. Identidad y reinos en la obra de Pedro Salazar de Mendoza», *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, vol. 30, 2017 (pp. 335-360), p. 340. Available at <http://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ETFIV/article/view/19229/17123>

<sup>49</sup> López Madera, *Excelencias de la...*, *op.cit.*, p. 17v.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24v.

<sup>51</sup> The original version of Beuters work in Catalan had been a more local orientation in the title (*Primera part de la Història de València*). In the Castilian translation, made by himself, he adopts a more general Spanish orientation.

<sup>52</sup> Despuig, Cristòfor, *Los col·loquis de la insigne ciutat de Tortosa*, Curial, Barcelona, 1996, pp. 92, 97.

<sup>53</sup> Feliu de la Penya, *Anales de Cataluña...*, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> Pujades, *Coronica Universal del...*, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

Without saying it openly Pujades is taking away its antiquity from Castile, which was so important in these times to measure the nobility of a territory. Pujades now has a Catalonia founded in very ancient times and a Castile, whose origins lie in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and this way Catalonia would be much more ancient and therefore much nobler than Castile. A similar vision is to be seen through the Portuguese chronicler Fernando Oliveira. After justifying the antiquity of the Portuguese Kingdom because of its foundation by Tubal he turns to Castile and its supposed relation to King Brigo:

*Um diz que se chamou Castela por interpretação desse nome Brigo, que quer dizer castelo; porque diz que naquela terra reinou um rei antigo chamado Brigo, donde se ela se chamou Brígia, que quer dizer Castela; e de Brígia diz que se corrompe o nome e se fez Vieja; e, por isso, diz que se chama Castilla la Vieja. Vergonhosa interpretação é esta para homem letrado escrever da sua terra natural<sup>55</sup>.*

Many of the other mythical Kings are used to establish already very ancient divisions of Spain in several kingdoms, especially the later ones. Brito explains that neither Testa nor Romo ruled Lusitania. The name of the ancient Roman province was still used very often as a synonym of Portugal, although the territory was not exactly the same. For Romos' reign, which according to Brito was limited to Andalusia, he even suggests the existence of an antiking called Lysias who would have been King of Lusitania in this time<sup>56</sup>. Also Romos' successor is presented as King of only Andalusia. The last three mythical Kings, on the contrary, are kings of all Spain and it is after Abidis' death that Brito sets the beginning of the 26 year drought<sup>57</sup>. Oliveira establishes an even earlier division of the peninsula, which has its origins in times of Tubal himself:

*E não ainda tanto depois de Tubal, mas também em sua vida, podemos crer que já havia na Hespanha diversos reis e reinos, porque não há dúvida, senão que em sua vida mandou ele alguns seus filhos e netos e outros homens a povoar as terras que estavam despovoadas. E as que estavam longe donde ele tinha seu assento e não podiam ser bem governadas por ele ausente, necessariamente lhes havia de dar governadores que as governassen, ora se chamassen reis, ora capitães, ou como*

<sup>55</sup> Oliveira, Fernando «Livro da Antiguidade, Nobreza, Liberdade e Imunidade do Reino de Portugal», ed. Franco, José Eduardo, *O mito de Portugal. A Primeira História de Portugal e a sua função política*, Roma Editora, Lisbon, 2000 (pp. 495-522), p. 501. See the extended introductory study by Franco.

<sup>56</sup> Brito, *Monarchia Lusytana...*, op.cit. pp. 50v.-52v.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 73.

*ele quisessem, conforme ao costume daquele tempo*<sup>58</sup>.

Such early divisions of the peninsula are rarely found in Catalan chronicles, but neither are they completely absent. The most remarkable case is Jeroni Pujades, who does not go as far back as Oliveira (to the time of Tubal), but who places the division of Spain after the reign of Abidis, therefore when the mythical dynasty ends. This is when, according to him, Spain splits up into different nations: «lo govern, y senyoria de Espanya se vaja mudant, y del que era un govern, un Regne, y un cap, se façan moltes divisions, en diverses senyories, y governs»<sup>59</sup>.

### **Neglection of the mythical kings**

Only a minority of chroniclers opposed the existence of some of the mythical kings and an even smaller minority opposed the whole dynasty, including Tubal. First of all we have to clarify that the omission of one or several kings not necessarily implies that the author in question denies their existence. For example, the Catalan Viladamor only mentions Tubal and his arrival in Catalonia without mentioning any other of the following kings<sup>60</sup>. The explanation in his case lies in the purpose behind writing his work in middle of the Catalan Revolt (*Guerra dels Segadors*). He uses Tubal to justify the ancient origins of the Catalan liberties, supposedly violated by the crown. The existence of these liberties granted by Tubal would justify the rebellion against the tyrannical government of the Count Duke of Olivares, favourite of King Philip IV.

Salazar de Mendoza and Pedro de Mariz only mention Tubal (the first king) and Abidis (the last one) in their chronicles. Mariz even explains that «depois que o Patriarcha Tubal povoou Espanha, que reynarão nella 24 Reis». After this he speaks directly about Abidis as the last of these kings<sup>61</sup>. This means that he is essentially interested in two things: firstly in proving the antiquity of Spain with Tubal and secondly, explaining why these long lasting dynasties ended so suddenly with Abidis and the drought. The kings who ruled for nearly a thousand years in between do not seem to be of major importance to him, but as they connect these two key moments of Spanish history he has to acknowledge them somehow, which he does by mentioning that there were 24 of them.

As we already mentioned, some authors question the five kings after Tubal and before the arrival of Gerion. Faria e Sousa writes, that he finds himself «con ganas de callar en esta imagen de Historias todo lo que se refiere de los Primeros Reyes de España desde Tubal asta Gerion». He also doubts the existing of the Kings

<sup>58</sup> Oliveira, Fernando, «História de Portugal», ed. José Eduardo Franco, *O mito de Portugal. A Primeira História de Portugal e a sua função política*, Roma Editora, Lisbon, 2000 (pp. 349-494), p. 367.

<sup>59</sup> Pujades, *Coronica Universal del...*, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>60</sup> Viladamor, *Noticia Universal de...*, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>61</sup> de Mariz, Pedro, *Diálogos de vária história*, António de Mariz, Coimbra, 1594, p. 34v. See also Salazar y Mendoza, *Monarquía de España...*, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

from Atlante to Gargoris. To emphasise, he only wants to bring up one argument that all these names would come from provinces, rivers and mountains<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, he seems unable to reject to common knowledge canon and he decides to refer anyway to these kings and their main accomplishments. Furthermore he does seem to believe that the other ones, including Abidis, are certain to have existed.

Juan Mariana would not be so gentle in his treatment of the kings he does not believe in. After confirming Tubal by saying that it is a «averiguada cosa y cierta», that Tubal came to Spain he starts to speak about the «reyes fabulosos de España». With this expression he is referring to those between Tubal and Gerion, just like Faria e Sousa. Mariana claims that neither these kings nor their reigns are mentioned by any serious author, which is why he cannot accept this theory. As for the Kings from Gerion onwards his view is different. Gerion is, according to Mariana, the first one to be included as King of Spain. He acknowledges that the existence of him, along with the following ones until Abidis is certain<sup>63</sup>.

Some chroniclers even neglect the whole mythical generation of kings, including Tubal himself. The Catalan Pere Miquel Carbonell obviously does not deny the existence of Tubal as son of Japhet and grandson of Noah, as it is to be read in Genesis. But he does not see any proof that he came to Spain: «com nunca ajam legit ne podem creure se puga trobar en algun aprovat autor que home de tal nom poblas Hespunya»<sup>64</sup>. In the following chapter Carbonell explains that he also does not believe in the existence of the following kings and after this he records Spanish history following the Celtic invasion<sup>65</sup>.

Gaspar Escolano from Valencia does not believe in these kings either. He tracks the mythical dynasty down to its origins, the *Antigüedades* from Giovanni Nanni we initially referred to. He dedicates a whole chapter to it with the title «Capítulo IX en que se prueba que los libros que Anio Viterbiense sacò a luz con nombre de Beroso, y Methastenes, son fingidos»<sup>66</sup>. He describes Nanni as the «padre que engendró los Reyes nunca vistos en España» and, similar to Faria e Sousa's argument, he adds that while writing the book, «apenas le venia a la memoria nombre de rio, o monte, o pueblo de España, que no se aprovechasse del, para formar un Rey»<sup>67</sup>.

Even Jerónimo de Zurita, one of the most famous and well known early modern Spanish chroniclers completely rejects Tubal and all of his successors. According to him, these are nothing more than «cosas inciertas y fabulosas». Later

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<sup>62</sup> Faria e Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa...*, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> Mariana, *Historia General de...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>64</sup> Carbonell, Pere Miquel, *Chròniques de Espanya fins ací no divulgades*, Carles Amoros, Barcelona, 1547, p. 2v. The work was probably composed between 1495 and 1513.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Escolano, *Decada Primera de...*, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

he cites an example of the fairy tales of King Gargoris and his grandson Abidis<sup>68</sup>. But despite the fact that such an important historian, also in his own time, opposed these myths; the vast majority of the following generations of chroniclers would not agree with him.

### Conclusions

As a first conclusion we can state that the Middle Age myth of Tubal, which is based on the Bible, evolves in Early Modern Times into a long dynasty of mythical kings, who would rule the Spanish peninsula for nearly a thousand years. This change is due to the Italian Giovanni Nanni, who is the first to mention all these following kings for the first time, supposedly based on the ancient Babylonian writer Berossus. Most Spanish chroniclers would adopt the theory of these mythical kings and create a new canon of historical knowledge concerning the origins of Spain. To explain their end they added (in many cases) a 26 year long Drought to Nanni's work, which did not offer any explanation as to why there are no more kings after Abidis.

The purpose of this mythical dynasty was to give Spain a remote ancient past, which would have begun right after the Deluge. Antiquity was a very important criterion to determine the nobility of a territory or kingdom in comparison with another. This is why in a lot of European kingdoms, similar mythical post Deluge origins were found, often based upon one of the descendants of Noah, such as Tubal in the Iberian case. He represents the origins of the Spanish monarchy, which supposedly would continue until the Habsburg Kings, who were ruling during the lifespan of most authors.

Secondly, although a few chroniclers do not accept the veracity of these kings, their rejection has had no influence on following historians, given that they were unable to create a counter canon, despite the fact that amongst them we find famous and very respected chroniclers such as Jerónimo de Zurita. Some others do not question the dynasty overall, but rather some of their kings, leaving a gap between Tubal and Gerion.

Finally, Castilian historians used to write Spanish rather than Castilian history. In this context they also used these mythical kings to give Spain a remote past, without emphasizing one region in particular. The Castilian effort to connect their own history with Spanish history is reflected as well in this mythical pre-history. The only particular Castilian aspect of importance is King Brigo, who is presented as the origin and namesake to Castile. Aragonese and Valencian authors do not present substantial differences to the Castilian point of view with regards to this part of history.

The Catalan and the Portuguese cases are different. Although their chroniclers refer to the same mythical kings in their works, they use them for

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<sup>68</sup> de Zurita, Jerónimo, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*. Volumen 1, Institución Fernando el Católico, Saragossa, 1967, p. 3.

completely different purposes. This begins with the arrival of Tubal in Spain. Catalan historians point out that he reached Catalonia first, where he also founded the first Spanish city, Tarragona, according to most Catalan authors. This is similar to what can be read in Portuguese chronicles, that it was the Portuguese coast where Tubal first arrived and that his first foundation would have been Setubal.

The history of the kings is also very much linked to their own region; they refer to which cities each king founded in Catalonia or Portugal. Oliveira even presents some of the kings as only Kings of Portugal (Lusitania), while others would only have reigned in certain parts of Spain. The case of Brigo is particularly interesting. Most Catalan and Portuguese authors do not establish any connection to Castile or even deny it explicitly.

What Catalan and Portuguese authors have in common with Castilians ones is that they use the mythical dynasty to prove antiquity, the difference lies in which antiquity should be proven. Unlike Castilian chroniclers they do not seek to show the antiquity of Spain, but rather the one of their particular kingdom in comparison with the other Spanish territories. This is why on the one hand they claim their own territory to hold the first population of Spain and on the other hand why they deny the ancient origin of the Kingdom of Castile, which was the most powerful one of the monarchy and also the one in which the royal court had its permanent residence. In this context it seemed to be important to show greater dignity to the region, especially in comparison to Castile and a bigger antiquity was a useful way of doing so.

For these mythical reigns the most important thing to Catalan and Portuguese authors is to put their own region in the centre of history and portraying that these kings were dealing mostly with Catalan or Portuguese matters, which implies that these were the most important ones. Some of the authors, from Catalonia and from Portugal, use the end of the dynasty to divide the Spaniards into several different nations under different rulers, which clearly shows the already developed medieval political situation in a very remote past. The emphasizing of this diversity also very much contradicts the Castilian attempts to portray the unity of Spain not only in the past but also in the present day.

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