

ABSTRACT

“Nebuchadnezzar’s Jewish Legions: Spain as a Second Promised Land in Renaissance Historiography”

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In his 1571 *Compendium* of Spanish history, the humanist historian Esteban de Garibay proposed to add a new figure to the pantheon of Spain’s legendary founders. Alongside mythical kings like Hispan, present in Castilian chronicles since the Middle Ages, Garibay proposed to install Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians and conqueror of Jerusalem. According to Garibay, Nebuchadnezzar had also conquered Spain, leaving behind his Jewish prisoners from the siege of Jerusalem. This *translatio* had converted Spain into a second Promised Land, just as the Spanish conquest of the Americas was soon to produce a third. In this paper, I trace the origins of the Nebuchadnezzar legend in Sephardic and Renaissance historiography. I then examine how Garibay and subsequent writers tried to prove Spain’s status as a Promised Land, reflecting on what their manipulation of Hebraic texts and visual evidence can tell us about history writing in the Spanish Renaissance.