

Debating Love: A Fifteenth-Century *Aljamiado Joc-Partit*

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On a single folio of a Hebrew *aljamiado* manuscript now housed in Parma, Italy someone –most probably a Judeo-Iberian intellectual of the fifteenth-century– jotted down a short poem.¹ This poem (photos and transcriptions of which are included in the appendix) has the form of a *pregunta-respuesta* debate or *joc partit* between three speakers who ponder what is the best way to “know” their beloved: simply gazing upon her, touching her, or rather, “knowing” her fully.

Demanda

Vos que tanto sabes
E vales
En la arte del amar
Acorde de preguntar
Por me avisar
A la que más queries
¿Cuál d’esto escogeres?
¿A vuestra guisa tratalla
E non fablalla
Nin sola mente miralla?
¿O bien veer e fablar
E nunca a ella llegar?

Respuesta

El saber vos lo tienes
E entendies
Queriesme preguntar
Por probar
El mi sentido cuál es--
Si yero enmendaries.
Que digo que quiero sin falla
Desealla
E fablalla
E non tocalla
E quiero ver e mirar
E nunca a ella llegar

¹ This poem is found in Parma 2666 (Richler 1343; De Rossi Hisp. 5) on folio 207 verso. For a description see Beit Arié, 370; BETA, MANID 4476, *Philobiblon*. On the *Danza de la muerte*, another *aljamiado* text in this manuscript, see Morrás and Hamilton, and Hamilton (“Text”).

Otro

Tan profundo tracender
 Que me traes
 En punto de placer²
 E por otra parte crees
 Y consolar
 De aquí non me traeres
 Nin me cansares
 De querella
 E alcançalla
 E luego presto enclavalla
 E sobre ella retemplar
 Fasta la vida apocar.

The poetic voice in the first strophe, the “demanda,” addresses himself to an authority on love (“vos que tanto sabes e vales en la arte de amar”) –presumably the respondent who answers the question he asks in the next few lines, namely, which is better, to simply look at the beloved, but not speak to her or to look and speak, but not touch her. The first respondent claims that the questioner already knows the answer: that it is best to gaze upon her and even speak to her, but not to touch her. The final respondent (el “otro”), however, has a very different opinion. He thinks the lover should not only console himself by approaching her, but then very crudely details that this consolation should take the form having sex with her –screwing her (enclavarla) and shaking over her until close to death (orgasm?). Such an obscene debasement of a courtly theme is not uncommon in fifteenth-century Spanish *cancioneros*, but is not found in the other known versions of this debate (as discussed below).³

Debating Love in Fifteenth-Century *Cancioneros*

The theme of the poem –the proper ways in which the lover-poet can approach his beloved– clearly locates this text within the larger literary themes and forms of fifteenth-century Peninsular *cancionero* poetry, which in turn, draw from the lyric traditions of the Provençal troubadours via the Catalán tradition. *Preguntas* and *respuestas* constitute a poetic debate form whose popularity among Castilian,

² The final letters of lines 3 and 4 are missing due to damage in the manuscript. I have reconstructed the final words, “placer” and “creer” with consideration of the surrounding rhyme and of preceding letters. In line 3 more of the word is preserved (including the Hebrew letters pe-lam-aleph-sin plus what may be a yod and the first stroke of a resh, although also resembles a tav –however the tav would make less sense than the yod-resh). Only the first two letters of the final word of line 4 survive, the first is clearly qaf, and the second I believe to be a resh.

³ Whinnom; Macpherson (103-04).

Aragonese and Catalan poets is contested to by the many examples found in several fifteenth-century Iberian *cancioneros*. This form reached its height of popularity under Juan II of Castile (1406-54) (Cummins, “Methods”).

Poetic debate between two and sometimes more Provençal poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on an aspect of love or the lovers’ behavior are variously designated as *tenso*, *contenso*, *partimen* or *jocs partitz* (Crane 8-9; Riquer li). In the *jocs-partitz*, the subject of debate is usually a “question concerning love, and the first poet generally challenges the second to take over whichever side he will and defend it” (Crane 10). John Cummins distinguishes the *joc-partit* from the *tenso* according to their form: “in the *tenso* the discussion develops freely, whereas in the *joc-partit* the poet beginning the debate gives his opponent a choice between two conflicting hypotheses” (“Survival” 9). These *aljamiado demanda and respuestas* conform to the *joc-partit* thus defined –the first interlocutor offering two choices (1. *tratalla e non fablalia nin sola mente mirarlla* or 2. *veer e fablar e nunca a ella llegar*). The first respondent maintains the decorum of the courtly debate, defending one of the two positions offered, while the third comically subverts the debate by scurrilously saying he chooses neither, but instead will not only look, speak and touch her, but have sex with her as well. This seems to be one of the few (if not the only) such ribald forms of this *joc partit* in the Iberian tradition. Other critics have generally treated the amorous subject matter of many of these debates (to which I would add the one studied in this article) harshly –Riquer calls them silly and infantile, (“*nimios e infantiles*”) (li) and Macpherson similarly concludes that the “generous selection of *preguntas, respuestas, reqüestas, debates* and *adivinaciones*” in the *Cancionero de Baena* are frivolous (“Game” 103). Álvaro Alonso is less harsh, calling them picturesque (“*pintorescas*”) (39). Antonio Chas Aguión’s 2002 dissertation, *Preguntas y respuestas en la poesía cancioneril*, however, not only reviews the critical disparagement such debates have received since the seventeenth century, but also encourages us to reevaluate these debates in the context of popular courtly performance, stressing their semitheatrical nature (26, 34-58). Many *preguntas* and *respuestas* exist on themes of a non-amorous nature, including philosophical or theological themes (Cummins, “Survival” 14).

Whatever one’s opinion on the subject of this particular debate (the best way to “know” the beloved) its importance in contextualizing this *aljamiado* poem and its copyist cannot be underestimated. The *demanda* or question presented in the first stanza of this poem is a variant of one of the best known of fifteenth-century *preguntas* –that posed by Juan Alfonso Baena and answered by Ferrán Manuel de Lando in the *fnida* of poem 360 of the *Cancionero de Baena*:

Dezidme, señor, gentil, emperante:
Ver mi amiga e nunca miralla,
O siempre fablalla e nunca miralla,
De qué l’faga d’esto me dat consonante. (*Cancionero* 644, MANID 1494)

This *finida* addresses the same problem and maintains the same rhyme (–alla) we find in the *aljamiado* poem, as well as utilizing some of the same vocabulary, “ver,” “fablar” and “nunca.”⁴

Ferrán Manuel de Lando answers that one should not speak to her, but conquer her through skillful gazing (E assy Respondio non enbargante / que nunca querades amigo falualla/ veyendo la syenpre podra conquistalla/ el vuestro graçioso & lyndo Talante)” (*Electronic Corpus*, PN1-370; MANID 1495). Ferrán Manuel and Baena exchange a volley of rebuttals that escalate in number of insults, with Baena threatening to take the matter before the Infante, and Ferrán Manuel de Lando defaming Baena’s Jewish background.⁵ This exchange belies the assertion that such debates on amorous themes provided a courtly space in which political and social rivalries were suspended.⁶ Clearly, Manuel de Lando brings the social tension between *conversos* and *cristianos viejos* into this seemingly inane debate on the behavior of the courtly lover. Baena responds to Ferrán Manuel’s attack by saying that the latter has only made the matter more obscure with his verses and then asking Ferrán Sánchez Calavera to clear up the matter (*Cancionero* 646, no. 375, v. 9). Dutton and González point out that while Baena addresses Ferrán Sánchez in the poem, the rubric claims Baena asked Fray Diego de Valençia to resolve the issue (*Cancionero*, 646 n 374). This confusion between rubric and poem is further compounded by the fact that the rubric of the following poem, in which the matter is finally resolved by a third party who rules that seeing the beloved is better than speaking to her, is attributed to Diego de Valençia with no mention of Ferrán Sánchez.⁷ This suggests that the last poem, no. 377, in

⁴ In the body of the poem we find other shared vocabulary, such as “yerro” and “enmendar.”

⁵ In 373 vv. 11-12 Baena claims, “e si non, prometo, creedme sin falla, / que campo vos ponga delante el Infante” (*Cancionero* 646). Dutton and González Cuenca note that if this Infante is Fernando de Antequera then the poem and exchange dates from before 1412, but if it refers to Juan or Enrique de Aragón then this debates dates from after 1412 (*Cancionero* 646 n 373). Ferrán Manuel tells Baena he is not familiar with the noble pastime of arms and battle, but rather as a *converso* is a rent-collecting scribe (*Cancionero* 646 n 370): “AL noble esmerado ardit & constante / bañado de agua de santo bautismo / al sabio profundo que por sylogismo / penetra los çetros del çirculo estante / & al puro jurista quel curso formante / docto perfeçiones de abto profeccta / al digno de alta & Ryca Planeta / pressento rrespuesta & so Replicante” (*Electronic Corpus*, PN1-370. MANID 1495). Elsewhere Manuel de Lando praises San Vicente Ferrer (Cantera Burgos 80).

⁶ Victoria Burrus claims that courtly debates and games, like this one, that required the participants to take on roles, “had a very important practical benefit...in the mixed company of the *palacio* all nobles were equal in the role of lover, be they nobles of ancient lineage or the most recent recipients of a concession of noble status. The lover had no official concern outside the love relationship: political rivalries, the obligations of rank, even duties of to king and country were brought to nothing...for the duration of the game” (115).

⁷ Crane (17) does not question this attribution. The rubric reads, “Este dezir fizo & ordeno el maestro fray diego de valençia por quanto el fue tomado por juez & determinador dela rrequesta & debate que en vno ovieron los dos batallantes juan alfonso de baena & fferrant manuel de lando Segund que ante desto es contenido en la qual rrequesta eldicho maestro dio esta Setençia.” The rubric introducing this poem firmly locates it in the “games of love” (describing the poets as “batalladores”) typical of the fifteenth-century Spanish courts. Ian Macpherson has pointed out that these game texts were revived in fifteenth-

which the matter is resolved may be in reality that of Ferrán Sánchez (misidentified as Diego de Valencia in the rubric). Whatever the identity of the final participant, in the *Cancionero de Baena* we do find a debate on the theme of the best way to interact with the beloved that involves three participants just as in the *aljamiado* debate.⁸

The *Cancionero de Baena* is not the only collection, though, to contain a debate on this theme. It is revisited by Gómez Manrique and Francisco Bocanegra in a *cancionero* Gómez Manrique gave to the Conde de Benavente.⁹ In this version Gómez Manrique claims that idleness led him to wonder on the matter, “Por quanto la oçiosidad amado mucho de my es causa segun oy de pensar muncha maldad & solo por esquiuar aquesto considere esta quistyon que no se por trobas vos preguntar.” His question to Bocanegra comes in verses 15-25:

qual es a *vuestro* entender
destas cosas la mejor
Syendo vos enamorado
de dama muy virtuosa
en estremidad fermosa
por quien fuesedes penado
fablarla sin esperar
de nunca jamas la ver
o verla syn la poder
en *vuestra* vida hablar.¹⁰

century Spanish courts in a different context than those in which they were originally deployed in the Provençal traditions of courtly love (“Game of Love” 99-100). After some sixty verses praising the interlocutors (vv. 8-15; 53-65) and comparing his situation as judge of this debate to that of Virgil (v. 25), Diego de Valencia praises the sense of sight “Señor Reuerente Amigo LeaL / yo veo a sseñora que Nunca fable / & fablo a otra que Nunca Mire / por ende dezit me aquel / *que* mas val / Vysta la pregunta ssotyl & perplexa / aquel otro Responde muy justa rrazon / amigo non puedo con mi Coraçon / por ver & mirar A la / que me *quexa* / & vysto como dyxo *quel* hablar lo dexa / vn poco ganllo Moly sse cortez” (vv. 70-80). He continues, though, by adding that sometimes all the senses are necessary, “diziendo el *que* ama Amiga apuesta / la su vysta ssola non es abastante / mostrar sus amores dezir su talante / ssola por su fabla *que* en su cor es puefta / yo fallo syn dubda En fylossofya / que los çinco sssesos son nesçessarios / & lybran al cuerpo de muchos *contrarios* / & dan le plazer sseyquiera algunt dia” (*Electronic Corpus* PN1-377 MANID 1502, vv. 88-95).

⁸ Chas Aguión puts Diego de Valencia into the earliest generation of poets whose work is recorded in the *Cancionero de Baena*, those born in the period 1340-70. Manuel de Lando’s inclusion in this group is not certain. Juan Alfonso de Baena pertains, according to Chas Aguión, to the second generation, those poets born between 1371 and 1400 (115).

⁹ Dutton designates it with the *sigla* MP3 (MS. II-1250, Biblioteca Real). See also Manuel Moreno, “Descripción,” 2.

¹⁰ MP3-2 (11-12) (*Electronic Corpus* MANID2968). Another variant of this version of the debate is found in Dutton’s corpus (MN-19-48). *Electronic Corpus*. Cummins identifies it as the *Cancionero Castellano*, poem 311. In the latter, the rubric of MP3-2 becomes the first 9 verses, and his question comes in verses 29-32: “fablarla sin esperar / de nunca jamas la ver / o verla sin la poder en vuestra vida hablar.”

The manuscript in which this debate between Gómez Manrique and Bocanegra is found dates to c. 1475, and thus much closer in time to the paper on which the *aljamiado* poem was recorded (as discussed below).¹¹ These two Castilian testimonies to the existence of a form of the debate addressed in the Hebrew *aljamiado* poem, while providing no definitive information about the nature of the copyist of the *aljamiado* manuscript, does provide some clues to his cultural horizons. These clues, while useful, can also be contradictory. Of the last two poets who engaged in a version of the debate in a historical moment closest to that when our scribe was recording his version in *aljamiado*, little is known of Francisco Bocanegra, beyond his attachment to the court of Juan II, while Gómez Manrique's more extensive biography documents his identity as nephew of the Marqués de Santillana, and protector of the *conversos* of Toledo.¹²

More is known about the group of debaters of the version found in the *Cancionero de Baena*. Although historically more remote from our copyist, these poets, with the exception of Ferrán Manuel de Lando are *conversos*. Baena was a learned *converso* who converted from Judaism in the pogroms of 1391, and his *converso* identity and its impact on the collection of poems found in the *Cancionero de Baena* and in his own works has been amply studied by Charles Fraker, Francisco Cantera Burgos, and more recently by Yirmiyahu Yovel.¹³ Such studies document the presence of many Jews and

¹¹ On MS. MP3 see *BITAGAP*, MANID 1649. This opinion is based on my analysis of the manuscript *in situ* in 2002. The worm holes found on folios 205-06 are not found on folio 207. See note 26. Additionally watermarks of these folios are different, as is the ink and hands. The watermarks found in folios 24-128 include the shield and crown of Aragón, which closely resemble marks 240 (from Vic 1473) and 242 (from Besalú, 15th century) in Valls i Subirà; whereas the folios containing the *Danza*, which this debate poem follows, include two versions of a hand with flower, a bull's head (resembling Briquet's 1254 from Vic / Valls 1454) and a church (resembling Valls i Subirà 1604 from Santa Pau/Olot, 1470). Vic, Valls and Santa Pau / Olot were all near towns with Jewish populations in the mid-fifteenth century; Montblanc and Girona.

¹² Alonso informs us that according to the *Crónica de Juan II*, Bocanegra was in his court in Toledo, 1441, *Poesía de Cancionero*, 176. Manrique addressed many poems "to main players in the disorders of Toledo under Enrique IV and the Catholic Monarchs, including Toledo's devious archbishop, Alfonso Carrillo, the mercenary first Marqués de Villena, and the fourth Conde de Benavente (Enrique's supporter until 1460 and the son of one of Manrique's cousins), who is the external addressee of the entire *Cancionero*. Manrique was trained as a troubadour in Carrillo's episcopal court, which replaced the troubadour circle of another opponent of Enrique IV, the Marqués de Santillana, upon his death in 1458. Indeed, Carrillo fostered the careers of numerous versifiers, including at least three "letrados conversos" (Pero Guillén de Segovia, Juan Álvarez Gato, and Rodrigo Cota), several "bufones conversos" (among them, Juan Poeta and Antón de Montoro), three "clérigos humanistas" (Pero Díaz de Toledo, Juan de Mazuela, and Alfonso Ortiz), and even a few noted "caballeros" (Lope de Estúñiga as well as Pedro and Gómez Manrique)" (Rodríguez García 265; Alonso 223). According to Chas Aguión (123), Gómez Manrique pertains to a generation of poet born between 1401 and 1430. Francisco Bocanegra's inclusion in this group is uncertain.

¹³ See the studies of Fraker and Cantera Burgos. Márquez Villanueva has also documented a number of Jewish "clowns" that shows also haunted the same court, including Ferrandes Semuel or Daviuelo ("Jewish "Fools" of the Spanish Fifteenth Century" 388-90).

conversos in the Trastámara court, and the ways in which this Jewish identity plays out in the choice of subject matter –including theological debate and satiric vituperation.¹⁴ The other converso interlocutors in the Baena version of the debate, Ferrán Sánchez and Diego de València, also wrote on these themes. Diego de València, in fact, answered a series of questions posed by Fernán Sánchez on the trinity (Gerli 336-37). Alonso describes Ferrán Sánchez as an author of amorous verse and theological poems marked by his *converso* status, and he says of Diego de Valencia that he was a Franciscan theologian of *converso* origins who wrote a variety of types of poetry, including theological, philosophical, amorous and obscene verses, praised by Juan Alfonso de Baena as knowledgeable in all the sciences (103). The fact that the copyist of the Hebrew *aljamiado* debate recorded a variant found in the Castilian *Cancionero de Baena* and the MP3-2 *Cancionero* suggests we have someone familiar with the poetic activities of Juan Alfonso de Baena, Ferrán Manuel de Lando, Diego de Valencia and/or Gómez Manrique and Francisco Bocanegra.

The Crown of Aragón

Moving beyond the text and its analogues, the nature of the manuscript in which this Hebrew *aljamiado* poem is recorded offers other clues as to the identity of the copyist. This intriguing little poem is currently found in a manuscript with several other *aljamiado* texts, including the *Danza de la muerte* and an *arte de la memoria*. The current bound manuscript consists, I believe, of two previously separate manuscripts bound together at a later date.¹⁵ Based on the paper, ink and hands, this poem was originally included with other works “typical” of the Spanish *cancionero* corpus, the *Danza de la muerte* and another anonymous as of yet unidentified poem of

¹⁴ David Nirenberg problematizes the “Jewishness” of the *Cancionero de Baena* and of the poets who contributed to it, arguing that the accusations of Jewishness used by poets in the *cancionero* was but one of many different ways of insulting an opponent (403-05). Given the existence of this *cancionero* debate poem written in Hebrew characters, I am not fully convinced that knowledge of Hebrew vocabulary and Jewish cultural traditions evidenced in the *Cancionero de Baena*, as well as the participation of many first generation *conversos* in it and other *cancioneros* who discuss their Jewish heritage and their identity as *conversos* make it inquisitorial to investigate the role of Jews in the *cancioneros*.

¹⁵ This opinion is based on my analysis of the manuscript *in situ* in 2002. The current manuscript has been rebound at least twice: once in the nineteenth century and again in 1983. The paper of the debate poem (folio 207) has no watermark –nor has its bifolio been included in the quire, which instead ends in a stub. Additionally wormholes found on folios 205-06 are conspicuously absent on folio 207 (that of the poem) indicating that 207 was not have originally included in the manuscript and quire where it is now found. This impression is further substantiated by the fact that the wormholes on folio 207 match those found on folios 198 and 199, suggesting that it was originally included between these two folios (where in the current binding we find only stubs) –thus, between another poem fragment and the beginning of the *Danza*.

a mystical nature.¹⁶ This debate poem currently follows the *Danza* in the manuscript and is bound in the same (and final) quire.¹⁷ The watermarks on the paper used for the *Danza de la muerte* resembles that made in mid-fifteenth-century Valls / Vic and Olot / Santa Pau, then part of the Crown of Aragón, and indicate that this poem originally preceded the *Danza*. Thus the codicological evidence –the Hebrew characters, the Aragonese watermarks on folios found around this poem, as well as the poem’s inclusion with other *cancionero* works, including a version of the *Danza de la muerte* that includes Aragonese / Provençal linguistic traits, suggests that the copyist was a Jew or *converso* affiliated or familiar with Aragonese court culture in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁸

While the manuscript points to Aragón, the language (despite being recorded in Hebrew characters) is Castilian. However, this mix of Castilian language and Aragonese material culture fits with the socio-historical context of the fifteenth-century Aragonese courts under the Trastámaras. A version of the other work with which this Hebrew *aljamiado* poem is included, the *Danza* was performed in 1412 at the coronation of the first Trastamaran monarch of Aragón, Fernando de Antequera. The latter monarch, although Castilian, was elected king of Aragón by way of the Compromise of Caspe when his uncle Martin I died without heir (Giménez Soler 187-92). His son Jaume II was a strong and contentious ruler whose own son, Charles of Viana, with whom Jaume II maintained a bitter, adversarial relationship, was a learned man who translated Aristotle’s *Ethics* into Castilian (Giménez Soler 196-200). Important Jews and *conversos* in the court of the fifteenth-century Crown of Aragón are numerous and include (among others) the Eleazars, Alconstantini, Benvenistes / de la Caballería, DaPieras, Lorkis / Santa Fes (esp. Pedro de Santa Fe, favorite of Queen Maria), and Pablo de Santa Maria.¹⁹

¹⁶ The folios (199-207) containing the *Danza* and the debate poem are also of a different color and quality. Beit-Arié (371) identifies the hand of this poem as mid-15th-century Sephardic semi-cursive script. Watermarks of the folios used for the *Danza* are different than those used in folios 1-196, as is the ink and hands.

¹⁷ Thus the information on previous owners of the first sections of the manuscript, including possibly one Solomon ibn Crispin whose name on the Table of Contents (folio 1r), a later edition to the first part of the manuscript and one not originally related to the section containing the poem, does not necessarily help identify previous owners of the folios on which we find the Hebrew *aljamiado* poem –nor does the identity of a later owner, J. R. Graziano on folio i recto. Solomon ibn Crispin may be a descendent of “Moses ibn Crispin Cohen, who in 1336 left his native Cordoba to settle in Toledo, composed a tract on providence and the afterlife” (“Crispin”). Graziano was an Italian rabbi who died in 1684, indicating that the first section of this manuscript was in Italy by then (“Graziano”). Again in the first section, and thus not necessarily reflective of the section in which we find the poem, is the date given in a colophone on folio 137v, February 1st, 1468 (Beit-Arié 371).

¹⁸ On this *aljamiado Danza* see Morrás and Hamilton; Hamilton “Text.” I also presented a paper on the other poetic fragment preserved in these folios (Hamilton, “El nuestro padre”).

¹⁹ See “Eleazar,” “Alonstantini,” “DePiera,” Targarona Borrás (540-41), “Lorki,” and “Pablo de Santa María.” Other important Aragonese Jews outside of the court include Isaac and Meir Arama, father and

As far as the identity of the copyist of the *aljamiado debate*, one of the most suggestive figures is the *converso* Alfonso de la Torre. De la Torre was Carlos de Viana's preceptor at the court of Olite from 1440 to 1448, and met Carlos some 10 years later in Naples (just a couple of years before the date given in the colophone of Parma 2666) (Girón Negrón 12). He is author of 10 poems that survive in *cancioneros*, including poetic debates with Fernando de la Torre and the Aragonese poet, Juan de Villalpondo. Alfonso de la Torre is also author of the *Visión Delectable*, a philosophical treatise included in *aljamiado* in the first part of the manuscript containing the *aljamiado* debate (Girón Negrón 13). Because of his connection to the Aragonese / Navarran court, his abilities as a poet, and the dates during which he lived, as well as his identity as a *converso*, Alfonso de la Torre is a viable option for owner of the folios containing the *aljamiado* debate examined above. However, there is no direct evidence linking him to this debate poem. He does, though, offer the portrait of the type of person who could have composed and/or copied such a poem.

The connections between Castilian and Aragonese courts and literary traditions as evident in Alfonso de la Torre's biography and cultural production, however, are not unique. In fact, Íñigo López de Mendoza, the Marqués de Santillana, uncle of Gómez Manrique, who, as mentioned above, is credited with a contemporary version of the debate we have recorded in Parma 2666, was not only a member of the Castilian aristocracy and sometime supporter of the Castilian monarchs, but also, like Alfonso de la Torre, present at the Coronation of Fernando de Antequera (and thus at the performance of a version of the other work preserved in Parma 2666, the *Danza*) and frequented the courts of Aragón.²⁰ As witness to the nine-day celebration of the Coronation of Fernando de Antequera as King of Aragón held in Zaragoza (1414), Santillana would have been exposed to the numerous Jewish poets known to have participated in the coronation celebration. One such Jewish troubadour whose name is preserved in the *Libro verde de Aragón* is Galua, a lute player from Calatayud (Vendrell de Millás 381-83).

The Marqués de Santillana is also connected to one of the leading figures of fifteenth-century Aragonese culture, Enrique de Villena, "el animador cultural de aquella sociedad de nobles letrados," who dedicates his treatise on poetic composition, *Arte de trovar*, to Santillana (Pérez Priego 30-31). Íñigo López de Mendoza receives some of Villena's books when the latter's library is disbanded and partially destroyed upon his death (Pérez Priego 31). Both Villena and Santillana were involved in translations of Hebrew works into Castilian, most notably in the case of Santillana,

son rabbis and authors of theological-philosophical texts who left Aragón for Naples during the Expulsion ("Arama").

²⁰ "Desde muy joven, cuando inicia su formación cortesana y caballeresca, don Íñigo López de Mendoza estuvo vinculado a la Corona de Aragón, en cuyas tierras residió bastante tiempo con viajes interminentes a Castilla" (Pérez Priego 30).

that of Maimonides' *Moreh Nebuchim*.²¹ Santillana, presumably because of these many connections with the culture of the Crown of Aragón, includes a section on the poetry of Aragón in his pioneering declaration of Iberian poetry, the *Prohemio e carta al Condestable de Portugal*.

Many *cancioneros* survive from fifteenth-century Aragonese (and Navarran) courts and/or including the work of poets active in those courts, including the *Cancioneros de Herberay, de Egerton, and la del Marqués de Barerá* (Beltran Pepió). The *Mellon Chansonnier* is an example of a *cancionero* produced in the Aragonese court c. 1475. It provides a microcosm of the cosmopolitanism of the fifteenth-century Aragonese court, including scribes from Northern Europe (France, Low Counties) and works in Italian (because of the connection to Naples) and Castilian (Perkins and Garey). The work of several *converso* poets has been preserved in perhaps the best-known *cancionero* associated with the Aragonese court, the *Cancionero de Estúñiga*, a collection of poems written mostly in Castilian (with Aragonisms) which was compiled in the Aragonese court of Naples and that offers further evidence of Castilian literary activity and patronage in Aragonese courts.²²

Conclusion

The existence of this *aljamiado* debate poem on a theme debated by some of the best-known Castilian poets of the fifteenth century, including Juan Alfonso de Baena, Gómez Manrique, Férran Manuel de Lando, and Diego de Valençia, is an important testament to the participation of Jews / *conversos* in the courtly idiom of fifteenth-century Iberia. This poem, existing as it does in Hebrew characters, not only adds to the very short list of surviving secular literary texts that have survived in *aljamiado*, but also offers one of the few, if not only extant example of such a text that is entirely void of theological or moral overtones that characterize the other best known surviving *aljamiado* texts, the *Proverbios morales* and the *Coplas de Yosef*, or even the *Danza de la muerte*, the other text accompanying this poem.²³ This *aljamiado* debate also adds yet another variant version of the debate as found in the *Cancionero de Baena* and the *cancionero* designated by Dutton as MP3, further complicating in this case the issue of authorship, a topic of much debate in *cancionero* studies (Beltrán Pepió 23-33; García 49-56). In addition to authorship, the existence of this poem also contributes to the complex relationship of languages and reception addressed by Deyermond in terms of political and/or economic power (Deyermond 165). Because of the date revealed by the watermarks of the paper on which the works accompanying this poem were written –the mid-fifteenth century– the use of Hebrew characters leads

²¹ Santillana financed the translation by Pedro de Toledo (Girón Negrón 52-54). This is suggestive given that the first part of the section containing the *aljamiado* debate poem contains a list of Hebrew terms from Maimonides' treatise on logic, *Millot ha-Higgayon* (Beit-Arié 370).

²² See Salvador Miguel. On Aragonisms, see Manuel and Elena Alvar (28).

²³ González Llubera, *Proverbios morales* and *Coplas de Yoçef*. See also Girón Negrón and Minervini.

to a different, but related set of questions related to power and confessional identity. If, as I think most likely, this poem was recorded by someone who participated in the life of the court, did he write in Hebrew because that was the only alphabet he knew? This would seem to be unlikely given the learned nature of courtly life, and the fact that many *conversos* at court, such as Alfonso de la Torre, read widely in vernacular texts of many languages. Perhaps then, this text and the other included on adjacent folios, is from the personal copy of a courtier who felt most comfortable writing in Hebrew, i.e. Hebrew would have been the alphabet he learned first, as a young Jewish boy. This would indicate that our copyist was either a *converso* who converted later in life, or a Jew, who had not yet converted, even in these final decades before the expulsion. Whatever the identity of the copyist, the existence of this poem expands our knowledge of fifteenth-century Hebrew *aljamiado* literature, and the circulation and participation of Jews / *conversos* in Castilian letters.

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Appendix 1. Hebrew transcription of 207v Parma 2666

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Image 1: Hebrew Transcription

אוסרו	רישפואשטה	דיסאנדה
סאן פירפ'ונדו טראסינדיר	איל שאביר ווש לי טיניש	ווש קי טאנטו שאביש
קי מי טראיש	אי אינסנדייש /	אי ואליש
אין פונטו די פ'לאש(יר)	קיריישמי פריגונטאר	אין לה ארטי דיל אמאר
אי פור אוטרה פארטי קר(יש)	פור פרוב'אר	אקורדי די פריגונטאר
אי קונשולאר	איל מי שינסידו קואל איש	פורטי אב'ישאר /
די אקי נון מי טראיריש	שי יירו אינסנדארייש	אלה קי מאש קירייש
נין מי קאנשאריש	קי דיגו קי קיירו שין פ'אליה	קואל דישטו אישקוגיריש
די קודיליה	דישיאליה	אוואישטרה גישה טראסאליה
אי אלקאנסאליה	אי פ'אבלאליה	אי נון פ'אבלאליה /
אי לואגו פרישטו אינקלאב'אליה	אי נון סוקאליה	נין שולה מינטי מיראליה
אי שוברי איכיה דיטימלאר	אי קיירו לא ב'יר אי מיראר	או ביין ב'יאיר אי פ'אבלאר
פ'אשטה לה ב'ידה אפוקאר //	אי נונקרה אאיליה ליגאר //	אי נונקה אאיליה לייגאר //

Appendix 2. Transliteration of 207v Parma 2666

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. dym'ndh | rjspwsth | 'wtrw |
| 2. wws qy t'ntw s'bys 'yl s'byr wws ly tynyst'n pyr'pwndw tr'syndyr | | |
| 3. 'y w'lys | 'y 'yn tyndyys/ | qy my tr'ys |
| 4. 'yn lh 'rty dyl 'mwrqyryysmy prygwnt'r | | 'yn mwndw dy 'pl's[yr] |
| 5. 'qwrđy dy prygwnt's | pwr prw'b'r | 'y pwr 'wtr' p'rty qr[yyys] |
| 6. pwrmy 'bys'r | 'yl my syntydw qw'l 'ys | 'y qwnswl'r |
| 7. 'lh qy m's qyryys | sy yyrw 'ynmynd'ryys | dy 'qy nwn my tr'yrys |
| 8. qw'l dystw 'ysqwgyrys | qy dygw qy qyyrw syn ' | p'lyh nyn my q'ns'ry s |
| 9. 'wwlystrh gysht'r't'lyh | dysy'lyh | dy qwrylyh |
| 10. 'y nwn 'p'bl'lyh | 'y 'p'bl'lyh | 'y 'lq'nç'lyh |
| 11. nyn swlh mynty myr'lys | 'y nentwq'lyh | 'y lw'gw prystw |
| 'ynql'b'lyh | | |
| 12. 'w byyn 'by'yr 'y 'p'bl'r | 'y qyyrw l' 'byr 'y myr'r | 'y swbry 'ylyh rytyml'r |
| 13. 'y nwnqh 'ylyh lyyg'r // | 'y nwwqy 'yl'h lyg'r // | 'p'sth lh 'bydh 'pwq'r |

Image 2: Key to transcription

'	א
b	ב
g	ג
d	ד
h	ה
w	ו
z	ז
*	ח
t	ט
y	י
*	כ
l	ל
m	מ
n	נ
ç	ס
*	ע
p	פ
*	ץ
q	ק
r	ר
s	ש
t	ת

* designates letters that are not used in this text

Appendix 3. Manuscript Images

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