

POETRY, READING, AND THE TRILINGUAL QUESTION IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

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In Madrid, in 1603, there appeared, at the press of Luis Sánchez, a *Libro de las honras que hizo el Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús de Madrid de la Emperatriz doña María de Austria fundadora del dicho Colegio, que se celebraron a 21 de abril de 1603*. This book expressed the Jesuits' grief for the death of their benefactor, Maria of Austria; sister of Felipe II; widow of the Emperor Maximilian of Austria; daughter of Emperor Charles V; mother of Rudolph II. The Jesuits' Colegio Imperial was established in this town in 1572, thanks to Maria de Austria's generous donation. The book, apart from a description of the display done for the Empress's last honors in the church at the Jesuits' School in Madrid, includes texts of prayer and funeral sermon in Latin in which the Empress's virtues and generosity are praised.

José Simón Díaz¹ frames the book in a particular historical background. The Jesuit College aimed to be the most advanced school in Spain. The universities began a campaign against it. The Empress, who had helped found the college, had left most of her legacy to the college upon her death, in 1603. Simón Díaz, historian of the college, has also emphasized the relations between festivities and literature in early modern Habsburg Spain. This would mean that these questions touch on cultural studies of early modern Spain. Others have noted the emblems within the emblematic tradition of Europe and Spain.² The general trend—it has been argued—was to present these Habsburg women as models of piety and religious devotion and erase any trace of their real political involvement (Sánchez).

The hieroglyphics with the epigrams in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Spanish that were created and exhibited for her obsequies, are reproduced and described in the book. According to the description, the tumulus in the Jesuits' church was painted to represent white marble

with black veins, gold and bronze. It was higher than 20 feet and rested on four pedestals of two feet each. The pedestals contained inscriptions, here named epitaphs and not epigrams or poems. The order in which these compositions are presented is Hebrew, Greek, Latin and *romance*. The text in Hebrew constitutes the opening of the series of epitaphs and poems and may deserve some attention despite the neglect of these issues by early modernists, Hispanists, and Hebraists.

The text is not easily classifiable. It is a book, but is in fact a representation of the ephemeral art and architecture constructed for the ceremonies to mark the passing of the Habsburg empress. What we see on the page—including the Hebrew text—is the product of the typography of Madrid, while the inscription in the two-foot pedestal was probably not. Today, the text is sometimes described as an epigram, sometimes as poems, although the text of the *Libro de las honras* refers to them as epitaphs. The other, non-Hebraic, inscriptions followed an established prosodic discipline. The epitaphs and poetic texts in Spanish, for example, opt for the octosyllabic tercet and the octosyllabic quatrain. The observers wonder, therefore, whether this Hebrew epitaph is poetry; whether the Hebrew really is the equivalent of Latin or Spanish, etc. This leads naturally to questioning the existence and extent of a humanist trilingualism in early modern Spain particularly in the field of poetry. It also leads to questioning the assumptions and practices of the critical approaches to such texts from early modern Spain.

II

Is there any continuity with medieval Hebrew poetry in these Hebrew texts? The basic theme, conceit or idea of the Hebrew epitaph is that death strikes even the highest in the land. It is a main theme of *consolatio*, the Greco-Roman genre of writings upon death or other misfortunes. Recent work on *consolatio* noted the novelty of Abravanel's fifteenth-century *consolation* (E. Gutwirth 2000) in the vernacular against both, the image and the realities of medieval Hispano-Jewish attitudes and writings (mostly in Hebrew) on death. Levin's *'Al mot* classified themes and genres (mainly up to the twelfth century), but there were other aspects as well: the question of funereal prose oratory in Hebrew,

hesped, for example, is not treated by scholars of poetry. Here is where the image of medieval Spain as poor in *hesped* literature needed to be re-examined. It was traced to bibliographic contingencies, to the *Quntres ha maspid* and it was argued that the *Quntres* reflected the libraries where it was composed, namely Viennese libraries of the nineteenth century. Thematically, then, these traditions need close and nuanced examination because the ideas—for example—that everybody dies, even the highest in the land (followed by a list of titles or titled personages), even the daughter, wife and sister of emperors and kings, which we find here, could belong in different traditions as has been seen.

If we turn to poetic images we will find little more than the *mayyim ha-nigadim artza*. The image is, of course, biblical. It comes from the oration or plea of the wise woman of Teqoa in II Samuel 14. She had been told what to say to convince the king and her speech is therefore a model of persuasion. In verse 14 she introduces the image: “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.” The choice of a fragment from the Hebrew Bible was a fundamental component in the practices of medieval Hebrew poetry and this particular image and the particular verb do have poetic force and would have been resonant in a Spanish cultural environment. Indeed, the image of life as water had been immortalized in the fifteenth century in Jorge Manrique’s *Coplas*: “Nuestras vidas son los ríos / que van a dar a la mar / que es el morir,” to mention only the best known case.

The language has to be attended. Amongst other reasons because the few references to the *Libro de las honras* by scholars of early modern Europe do not pause to reflect on the Hebrew epitaph. Here we note only some examples: A. problems of diacritics (e.g. the absence of *dagesh* on the *mem* in *Wkamaim*) and; B. problems of vocalization (the *shewa* under the aleph of *asher* rather than a furtive *patah*); and C. basic errors of orthography (the ending in aleph –rather than *he*–in *artsa*). This list of mistakes could be extended. There is a school of thought that such Christian Hebraists texts are to be corrected or evaluated, somewhat as undergraduate proses, according to whether they are competent, tolerable or serious Hebraists, whether their Hebrew is a

correct classical Hebrew or post classical, etc. Sometimes, the evaluations are not accompanied by detailed analysis. On the other hand, if we are to use the category of Hebraist authors, we may ask whether they are Hebraists and whether they are authors.

Following on this train of thought it may be asked whether they are passive or active. Whatever the merits or otherwise of the Hebrew epitaph in the *Libro de las honras*, it is not a copy. The argument is very simple if we remember that we have no assurance that we have everything a Hebraist wrote and therefore whether he is the source of another Hebraist; that there are Mss. not examined in this context which theoretically might contain the source of the better known Hebraists' works and that even the printed books have not always been exhaustively treated or analyzed. In some cases this has to do with their extension. Thus, for example, Reyre's study of the Hebrew of fray Luis de S. Francisco (D. Reyre 1999, 2001) refers --not to the whole of the thousand page work but-- to chapter VII of Book X of the *Globus Linguae Sanctae*: his chapters or sections on *tmura*, *gymatria* and *notariqon* (on which concepts see Gutwirth 2004]. This is a small fraction of the book, but she adds usefully that, when it comes to giving concrete examples, fray Luis does not find them in kabbalistic texts in Hebrew, but in the work of Christian Hebraists, so that he would be an example of passive Hebraism, because he reflects the work of others (Sixto Senensis) rather than his own contact with the original Hebrew.³

In addition, there is also the question: to what extent were the statements on Hebrew language or texts made --by early modern Hebraists--from a position where the writer's reading of the Hebrew allowed the author to actively create arguments and to what extent are these copies, imitations, or followings of non Hispanic Hebraists or of texts translated by others or of older sources. One example has been noticed long ago. In the 1860s, the editors of Profayt Duran's works asserted that Sanctes Pagninus's appendix on grammar had been so strongly influenced by Duran that Giovanni Battista de Rossi had been right--if somewhat ironic or sarcastic--when calling Pagninus a translator of Duran.

III

The question of “marking” Hebraists and the extent of active authorship are two themes which affect not only the Empress’s anonymous Hebrew epitaph, but a number of other Hebraists and their texts. A third theme, of similar broad application, is the approach which might be termed political and is expressed under two major opposing views: the one which sees the Christian Hebraists as responsible in part for the beginnings of a change in European attitudes to the Jews⁴ and the other which sees no such major historical change but a phenomenon to be described in terms of that component (F. Manuel) of medieval iconography of the *Synagoga* type, which was still visible in the early modern period—as it is sometimes today (in Notre Dame cathedral or the cathedral of Strassburg or in Milan) – where the *Synagoga* is represented as a woman, eyes veiled, bent down and with a *broken staff*.

This political approach, I would argue, responds to a metanarrative, which in the case of Jewish history usually means Heinrich Graetz and the old *Jewish Encyclopedia* from New York (circa 1908). When, in the 1860s and 70s, Graetz saw Johannes Reuchlin and Pico della Mirandola and other such figures, as part of Jewish history and was so lavish with space and details and encomia on these individuals, he was not only reconstructing the past. Given his success and *fortuna* – particularly in translations, abridgements and popularizations⁵—he was inventing or creating a model of the “right” questions that had to be asked and of center and margin; of mainstream vs. non mainstream phenomena. Texts such the *Libro de las honras* would, naturally, be excluded.⁶ The JE, which attends to Christian Hebraists in the patristic era and then moves without interruption to the Renaissance, to Reuchlin and Pico is in the same line. The question is not, therefore, whether new details have been found or new glosses have been added, but whether the basic scheme or paradigm has changed since Graetz and the JE. This is particularly noticeable because both schools, Shmuel Ettinger’s and his opponents, however much they may disagree, nevertheless share in similar geographic and chronological schemes which of course exclude the texts studied here. So that the problem is not whether new details have emerged to be added to the old project

and models, i.e. : have the 19th century scholars ignored the case of Hebrew and Hebraism in Estonia⁷ or Sweden,⁸ etc., but rather: has there been, in the twenty-first century, real change of paradigms after Graetz and the JE and the geographic, chronological and methodological borders set by them. Such a change could end the silence concerning Hebrew poetic or rhetorical texts such as the one for the Habsburg Empress Maria.

To reintroduce the Habsburg Empire (which included Spain and its colonies) into the history of Christian Hebraism is not that simple. Christian Hebraism is not infrequently studied within the orbit of Jewish history as in the opposing views I have mentioned. There were practically no Jews in Spain during this period so that the political aspect is less relevant. From a Jewish history vantage point, Christian Hebraists in Spain would not appear therefore to be of primary interest and the decision to concentrate on what was most familiar and accessible to nineteenth century historians—Germany, Holland, France, and Italy, and perhaps England—would seem to be comprehensible. From another point of view, reinserting the Christian Hebraists of Spain into the history of Christian Hebraism would seem unnecessary since a handful of selected figures (or less) -such as Alfonso de Zamora, collaborator in the Complutensian Polyglot and Arias Montano with his role in the Antwerp Polyglot—have been so frequently treated. To claim that the Polyglot tradition is outside the mainstream or in the margins would be absurd.⁹

IV

This leads to a double approach: firstly to show the modernity or rather early modern quality of a phenomenon and therefore, secondly, to touch on the question of continuities with the medieval. To return therefore to the Empress' funeral, the art of the book which reproduces the architecture, emblems, hieroglyphs is usually termed "ephemeral" because, indeed, the art work itself did not survive. Another critical category could be proposed: "visual Hebraism". This would help to bypass another problem, namely that Christian Hebraism means different things to different people. Fabrizio Lelli's view, that the description of about 100 Christian Hebraist grammars by Santiago Jalon

is primarily of interest to librarians, reminds us that grammarians and non-grammarians do not necessarily view their genealogies in the same way. That is to say that under the same “umbrella” of Christian Hebraism we may encounter extremely different cultural phenomena. Lexicographers, theologians and exegetes may see their Christian Hebraist predecessors in different ways and so would historians of collectionism,¹⁰ translations, kabbalah,¹¹ editions, typography. So that when we take account of the institutional or disciplinary frames we realize how partial or self serving the results can be. No one particular field can be paramount. That is why the visual may be a corrective or balance since they all share the production of texts which “look like” Hebrew.

The idea is not entirely new in other, different contexts. In non-textual, non-literary frames, such as oil paintings and some prints or engravings, it has been the subject of studies. Thus, for example, at the Warburg Institute there is a collection of photographs of Renaissance paintings with Hebrew characters in them. More precisely, the list of subjects in the photographic collection contains a rubric (under “magic and science”) expressively formulated as “Oriental lettering as ornament in Western art”. So that its collector or the person responsible for devising the subject categories—Warburg himself?, Otto Kurtz?—understood perfectly well that Christian Hebraism is not circumscribed and limited to issues of grammar, religion, etc. It is not necessary to expand on the significance of such “lists of subjects” in the Warburg tradition after the recent (2011) exhibition on the *Atlas Mnemosyne* at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid. Visual Hebraism might be applied to the engraving by Meursius at the Plantin Museum treated by the late Prof. Loewe. His article on the trilingual inscription published in the Perez Castro Festschrift (Loewe 1986) was preceded, much earlier, c. 1953, by his attention to medieval Hebrew texts’ influence on Christian iconography which he placed almost on the same footing as his research on the Christian interlinear Hebrew Mss. of thirteenth century England in that same article (Lowe 1957).

The case of the engraving reminds us that in writings on early modern art, an imbalance or an overemphasis on the field of oil painting has been noted (Vega). This might explain the lack of attention to the visual Hebraism of the Empress’ funeral amongst other examples.

Again, geographic questions, questions of “the point of view” and “perspective” arise here, as in Graetz’ account, as well. One of the most comprehensive surveys of the representation of Hebrew letters in Western art, that of Gad Sarfatti was recently shown to be incomplete. It treats approximately 261 paintings from the beginnings of the fifteenth century and onwards. These productions by Christian artists all contain Hebrew characters. What had escaped his attention were fifteenth-century paintings from Vienna, which happen to be at the Lubjiana museum in Slovenia, as shown by Janez Premk.¹² So that, again, acceptance of traditions of center and margin lead to concentration on particular media (oil paintings) or particular geographic and chronological boundaries. While the questions of the “location” of the point of view are common to various possible types of analyses of Christian Hebraism –textual or visual– the fields or subfields coincide at times but not at others. And yet, some of these disciplinary boundaries are clearly arbitrary, as in the cases of poetry, biblical exegesis and grammar. That is why one may think in terms of “visual Hebraism.” Seen from such a perspective, the phenomenon of the Christian Hebrew funerary epitaph for the Empress is less rare or eccentric than it might seem.

V

Indeed, half a century earlier, in 1546, Juan Martínez Siliceo (or Guijarro) arrives in Alcalá and a complex elaborate (non-funereal) ceremonial marks his visit. Again, the artistic objects themselves have not survived but a book with reproductions appeared to mark the event: *Publica laetitia*. The context was reconstructed by historians of the event (Martínez Burgos-García): it was an attempt to pacify Siliceo, archbishop of Toledo who claimed jurisdiction over the University. Siliceo’s most famous activity was his fight for establishing the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, but here, the University chose as his host the holder of the chair of Greek, Gómez de Castro.¹³

A glance at the numerous illustrations shows that there is only one Hebrew emblem. It also shows that it is religious and in Hebrew, but makes clear the poverty of the tools for representing Hebrew characters and the poor command of Hebrew in Alcalá, only a few

decades after the achievement of the Alcalá Bible. The illustration has a priest on the left reading from a book (of prophecies?) and a building in the process of being destroyed on the right. Above, an inscription in Hebrew reads “beth ha-miqdash” (the Temple). The Hebrew is evidently not the same as the Greek and Latin, despite the usual assertions about trilingualism. To be sure, at Alcalá, students of Greek, Latin and Hebrew wore the same blue gown with the scarlet *beca*. But, more to the point, there were twelve *colegiales* of Latin, twelve of Greek, but six of Hebrew (Alvar Ezquerro; Carrete Porrondo 1983, 1987). This might lead one to think that the Hebrew of the Complutensian Bible was not a typical phenomenon of the institution but, rather, an extraordinary and unusual occurrence related, perhaps, to the quality of Cisneros’s collaborators. The theory of a purely monetary factor, that in the search and success in finding Hebrew Mss. for the *vorlaege* and selecting the best textual witnesses, the discernment was purely a question of money, does not bear discussion. A similar case which may be mentioned briefly is that of the Canonization of San Jacinto in New Spain. Here again, the canonization was accompanied by so called ephemeral art, street ornaments, labyrinths, emblems, epigrams and music and, here again, we know of this not because we can see the art today, but because of a reference to the festivities by father Alegre, who mentions a Mexico imprint of 1597, containing at least the *octavas reales* in honor of San Jacinto.¹⁴ The relevance lies in the use of Hebrew in the literary visual celebrations. A recent study of a work by Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz may also be mentioned at this point. Caramuel y Lobkowitz was known to Hispanists, as his work has been related to the love lyric of Quevedo (Smith). In 1636, in his *Declaración Mystica de las Armas de España, invictamente belicosas* (Brussels 1636) Caramuel y Lobkowitz attends to an eminently visual field, that of the visual representations of heraldry. He comments or elaborates creatively on these symbols and occasionally uses –what is believed to be a Hebraist, kabbalistic approach. He certainly uses Hebrew types for the representation of three or four letters so that visually there is an appearance of “Hebraism.” In one of his chapters, he argues that it is appropriate to represent kings by means of flowers; since Jesus is a king it is appropriate to represent him visually by flowers. Here is

where he adduces “the Rabbis and the kabbalists” to propound his theory that Jesus means *azahar* .

[...] mas es menester para explicarnos Nonbre era de el Rey de los Iudios nzry Nazareus y esta voz que se escribe con cinco puntos nZR es nombre de vna flor muy suauissima. Asi que y la flor que tenga el nombre de Rey ... Si quieres aueriguar curioso , que flor es esta que en Hebreo se llama nZR conocerasla con facilidad suma si siguiendo mi Iberio pronunciares con aquestos puntos nZR Vn Azaar. Es el Azaar flor del naranjo ... Escriben los Cabalistas y Rabinos con cinco puntos este nombre, para significar ocultamente misteriosos que este Rey Nazareno fue la flor de los hombres ...¹⁵

The study of Caramuel does not provide a source for Caramuel’s “Hebraic” comment.¹⁶ Caramuel’s notion that there can be an unseen vowel before the first consonant of a Hebrew word has not been discussed but cannot be taken seriously as evidence of grammatical acumen. And yet the visual “effect of Hebrew” produced by the four Hebrew letters surrounded by a sea of Latin characters would have been impressive indeed.

VI

The tradition of the seventeenth century continues in the eighteenth century. The point -that there is a certain Spanish tradition of Christian Hebraism which is early modern or which exists in early modern Spain,- must be qualified. As has been seen, Hebraists are not all the same. Quite the contrary, there are differences between the Hebraism of Nebrixa, Quevedo, Covarrubias, Aldrete, Arias Montano, Alfonso de Zamora. This to such an extent that readers may begin to wonder whether the label Hebraists is more confusing than helpful. There are differences between the amount of research or the number of publications on different Hebraists and the quantity and quality of the surviving evidence. But, nevertheless, at times, it is possible to detect continuities, especially in this possible trend of what might be called the visual, solemn and ceremonial, rhetorical/poetical Hebraism. The area of the funeral—as has been shown—is only one of such activities

and should not be confused with the ceremonial uses of Hebrew as a whole.

Therefore, part of this trend would be the Hebrew *Congratulatio* which Joseph Rodriguez de Castro published on the occasion of the arrival of the Bourbon king, Charles III and entitled “*Congratulatio Regi Praestantissimo Carolo quod clarum Hispaniae teneat*,” printed at the press of Antonio Pérez Soto in Madrid in 1759. He formulates the title as *brakha le-ha-melekh qarlos meod gadol shlishi sfarad* (the vocalization of the word “Carlos” has the *patah* under the *resh*). The *mise en page* gives us an idea of the project: the book opening or text is divided in four: the left pages contain the Greek in larger letters above and the Hebrew, in somewhat smaller letters, below; while the right hand pages contain, on the upper division, the text of *Congratulatio* in Latin in larger letters and below there is a transcription, of sorts, into Latin characters of the Hebrew text. This transcription has a kind of interlinear, Latin, word by word translation of every transliterated Hebrew word. It attempts to produce the impression that the Hebrew is prior to the Latin—which is supposedly only a translation. The interlinear translation reminds us not only of interlinear glosses from the middle ages, it also reminds us of the interlinear text of Alfonso de Zamora, studied not long ago (Gutwirth 2004). There are other elements of continuity. The metal Hebrew types seem surprisingly familiar to readers of the *Libro de las honras* for the Habsburg empress, including the difficulties in producing clearly differentiated metal types for the letters *dalet* and *reish*. While it is best to avoid the method of marking Hebraists texts, the question of whether this is poetry cannot be avoided as it was introduced into Rodriguez de Castro studies by Joseph Jacobs¹⁷ who asserted that he wrote Hebrew poetry or verses.

The Hebrew text is not absolutely incomprehensible (as has been seen from the title cited above) but despite the *mise-en-page* with its visual arrangement of the lines (as poetic verse), it is difficult to see how this could be called poetry. Here again, the “visual effect of Hebrew poetry” is carefully maintained and we have justification on both margins or short lines but there seems to be neither meter nor rhyme and no isosyllabism so that the bibliographer’s unproven idea that this is poetry is by no means obvious. On the contrary, it is rather questionable. There are some points which I can not help mentioning

such as *mishpat* with a *taw*, the problems of the *matris lectiones*, of yod and questions of plene or defective spelling in an unvocalized text even if we leave aside the absurdities of the grammar or syntax.

Rodríguez de Castro signs “J. R. de C. at the age of twenty” as if he were a painter. It is supposed to be a bravura performance by a twenty year old. Eventually, he received a position at the court as royal librarian. His *Biblioteca rabinica* of 1778 was in the modern language and it is arguable that it thus marks an epoch and tries to give information on so called “Spanish rabbinical authors” from the earliest times. It was republished in facsimile and marketed to some extent as a relevant tool. It is not. But it could be useful for us to mark the historiography of the development of Jewish and Hebrew studies in Spain. The *Biblioteca rabinica* elicited a reply by Juan Antonio Pellicer y Pilares, a work still in a Ms. which will be studied elsewhere. These two texts (the *Biblioteca* and the Ms.) bring us to a more interesting question. Indeed, Rodríguez de Castro is not suited to be addressed from a perspective interested only in a teleological history of scholarship. He is sometimes seen as having taken his information from the cataloguers (John Christian Wolf or Giulio Bartolucci). A preliminary reading of Pellicer’s animadversions against Rodríguez de Castro provides no evidence that Pellicer is better informed, a better Hebraist or a less derivative writer than Rodríguez de Castro. His critiques read more as personal and ideological barbs. What is more interesting is the larger question concerning Sephardi literatures or cultures, East and West. Indeed one of the questions is whether the literature in Iberian languages and Latin characters by Sephardim in the 17th and 18th centuries is really a barely rooted, episodic, eccentric curiosity with no readers but the authors themselves and their friends, a culture without continuity, without impact on readers, Jews or Christian. The question, therefore is whether it is at the opposite pole of the *aljamiado* Sephardi literature in Hebrew characters from the Balkans to North Africa which is *castiza* and well rooted, had readers and had a continuity till the twentieth century? What may be discerned in Rodríguez de Castro and Pellicer, on the contrary, is that the Spanish literature written by the Sephardim of Ferrara, Amsterdam, Hamburg, etc was being read in Spain and that it had powerful effects and aroused passions even if it was rarely referred to explicitly in print.

What the *Congratulatio regi* confirms also is the sense in which these trilingual efforts are an integral part of the early modern culture, that is that they tend to repeat themselves and reappear throughout the period. A second eighteenth-century example, about a decade later than the *Congratulatio*, is a book entitled *REALES EXEQUIAS, que a su augusta soberana Sa. Maria Amalia de Saxonía Reina de España consagró el rendido amor, y gratitud de la mui ilustre ciudad de Barcelona en los días 23, y 24 de Abril de 1761*.

VII

The royal *exequias* to the wife of the Bourbon monarch, King Charles III, Queen Amalia of Saxony, again reproduce the ephemeral art in its plates. The book, then, purports to give us the visual and textual equivalent of the ceremonial or ephemeral art which marked the death of the Queen of Spain in the engravings by Francisco Boix and drawings by the brothers Tramullas— the governors, since the 1740s of the JUNTA O ACADEMIA DE LAS TRES NOBLES ARTES. The city had chosen for the task the best talents it could find. Hebrew was left to the end of the book. The direction of the text is right to left, but the openings go from left to right. The spelling and syntax seem to be an improvement on previous efforts.

But, in other respects, the custom in 1762 is like that in the 1750s or 1603 or in 1540s Alcalá or 1590s Mexico: they all contain Hebrew and most of them try to perpetuate the ephemeral or, rather, visual products of the ceremonial. In the trilingual mode, they also include Hebrew letters or texts and a Hebrew composition on the death of the Queen which is meant to reproduce the inscriptions on the ephemeral art. In the Barcelona print, the typography is somewhat more careful and the editors have prudently avoided vocalization and diacritics.

VIII

The book of the *exequias* to Queen Amalia of Savoy draws attention to another text of about eleven years later, the funeral oration by fray Anselmo Avallé on the death of fray Martín Sarmiento published in February 1773 with accompanying *elogios* in Hebrew, Greek, Latin,

and Castilian: *Oración fúnebre, que el muy reverendo P.M. fray Anselmo Avalle, predicador mayor del Real Monasterio de San Martin de Madrid, dixo el 7 de Febrero de 1773, en las honras que dicho Monasterio celebró a la buena memoria de ... Fr. Martin Sarmiento / dala a luz con varios elogios hebreos, griegos, latinos y castellanos, el mismo Monasterio, a expensas de un amigo intimo del difunto...* The chief preacher of the royal monastery in his funereal praise of the deceased Galician friar introduces an encomium in Hebrew. The costs of the publication were defrayed by an “amigo íntimo” who remains nameless. Nevertheless, the public dedication is addressed to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, so that there is little doubt that he is responsible for the publication. Given the dates he should be identified with the XVth duke, Don Pedro de Alcántara Alonso Pérez de Guzmán y Lopez-Pacheco (1724-1779), who became duke in 1739. Martin de Sarmiento maintained a correspondence with the Duke of Medina Sidonia which has been published (Sarmiento). The life and work of Martin de Sarmiento have been intensely studied not only because he was an important figure of the Enlightenment but also because of his significance for Galician studies. He was involved in public projects such as the founding of the botanical gardens and the composition of a plan for provincial public libraries. Most of this is not germane here, except for the question of whether the use of Hebrew in the funerary texts had some individual significance, whether it could have been understood as particularly appropriate. Indeed, the book itself asserts that, upon his demise: “ sin alma ahora se quedo el hebreo ... el griego y el latín sin energía, sin alientos vitales el caldeo “(67) Another work of Sarmiento, entitled *Catálogo de los pliegos* is a kind of diary of his readings and the copies he made from these readings. Thanks to this, we know that he read a volume of the *Bibliotheca orientalis* of Herbelot and the *Biblioteca rabbinica* of Bartolucci in 1718 and made extracts .

The funerary texts make allusion to his Galician origins in various ways. Thus, for example, he is compared to Feixoo: “comparando los escritos de nuestro difunto Sarmiento con los del ilustrísimo Feixoo.” Some of the poems are attributed to the *musa gallega*: “purpura iuxta purpuram otra de la misma musa gallega al Monasterio de S Martín.” As in the previous examples, the compositions in non-Hebrew languages, such as Spanish, bear a superscription or title which

announces the prosody of the poems. Thus we read “decimas” (85) or “octavas reales” (66). No such rubrics are present in the case of Hebrew. As in the previous cases, there is a strong visual element and a desire to give some permanence to the ephemeral work of art. Thus we read “paradigma pintóse una zepa con un sarmiento”; “breve idea del funeral aparato ... se erigió un sumptuoso tumulo” (85) and “para los que no pudieron hallarse presentes se da esta breve noticia” (94). So that, again, we find the book substituting for and reflecting the visual experience.

After the rubric “in planctum” we find *po* with *waw* in *po ianuah; kol ha-deot* is meant to convey the notion “all the sciences.” He is praised for being a historian of all the nations “divrei ha-yamim kol amim” where (leaving aside the grammar] we note that *amim* is spelt with *alef*. The concepts “history” and “literature” are rendered as *midrash sfarim*. Interesting, perhaps, is the lamentation’s substitution of “oi” by “ay,” as in “=ay ha nezeq mar” or “ay ha avodat ha qasha.” The last phrase reminds us of the author’s difficulties with the construct throughout the text.

IX

What is the significance of what may be termed “a visual trend” in an age which saw the Semitists studied by Del Olmo Lete (1977, 1984a, 1984b), not to mention the projects of Canon Benjamin Kennicot D. D. or Bishop Robert Lowth? Elsewhere (Gutwirth 1993), efforts were made to emphasize the need to transcend some of the basic assumptions of students of Christian Hebraism by concentrating on the history of the study of Hebrew inscriptions and epigraphy. To be sure, the case of the attempts, circa 1794, at deciphering or transcribing the poetic Hebrew inscriptions of a Toledo synagogue had to mention that the senior member of the royal academy could not engage in such Hebraist tasks *por hallarse a la sazón enfermo*. Similarly, the first self consciously historical or critical article on the origins of the Jews of Spain dealt with Hebrew inscriptions. It was shown to be derivative and highly rhetorical. An analysis of the ideals expressed in two programs of studies elaborated by the enlightened Jovellanos (Plan de instrucción pública, 1809 and Reglamento para el Colegio de Calatrava,

1790) showed that the study of Hebrew was by no means the equivalent of the study of Latin and Greek. Despite the hyperbole in the historiography on Luis Paret y Alcázar's use of Hebrew inscriptions in his oil painting "Apparition of the archangel to Zacharias" of 1786, there were mistakes and uncertainties in the Hebrew inscriptions and the reconstruction of the Temple scenes needed no particularly profound scholarship and could be traced to text books for young students of divinity (Gutwirth 1993). Nevertheless, there are other aspects as well.

First of all, the point was that there is a need to pay attention to the evidence from the eighteenth century, transcending institutional, national or rhetorical constraints. Secondly, that, if the usual perspectives are abandoned, attention may be paid to the difference between epidermic fashions and deeper interests; to what had a continuity and what did not. Indeed, for those who are familiar with the intensity of twentieth-century investments in the study of the synagogue of Toledo and its poetic Hebrew inscriptions and similar questions, it is noteworthy how frequently these research projects or fields have their predecessors in the eighteenth century. There are many more fields whose origins can be traced to the eighteenth century rather than to the *Wissenschaft* of nineteenth-century Germany as is so commonly believed.¹⁸ It could therefore be argued that there are research projects or fields of Hispano-Jewish history and culture which owe a great deal to the eighteenth century, the age when—as has been shown—they were devised.¹⁹ Once we accept this, we might be in a position to acknowledge Rodríguez de Castro's role in the history of research on—to give just one concrete example—the fourteenth century Hebrew poet, Moshe Nathan. De Castro's article's influence on Steinschneider's work on chess is evident. The analysis of the *Totzaot Hayyim*, (Issues of Life (Gutwirth 1998)), arguably Moses Nathan's major work, was however of little interest to any of them.

Another third element which rarely receives attention is historical: the significance of the status of the practitioners and the contexts of their activity. Imperial, Royal and noble interest and support; the implicit notion that Hebrew was appropriate for canonizations, for imperial, royal and similarly exalted ceremonial and occasions; the profound desire to be perceived and seen as literate in Hebrew that

we find in universal masters such as, say, Quevedo or Calderón—whatever their real competence: these are not inconsequential. To be sure, if we look at ideas in the abstract, their seventeenth-century contemporary, Covarrubias, may make us smile—he may not have furthered the transmission of the best Hebrew scholarship—but between 1565 and 1571, Covarrubias studied some Hebrew in Salamanca under Martín Celandá. We may recall that the main dictionary of Spanish of the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century was his *Tesoro* and *Suplemento*. As an article of Reyre (1998) tells us, it contains more than 310 hebraisms if we add toponyms and anthroponyms. It begins by asserting that Spanish is like Hebrew: “Spanish must not be reckoned amongst the barbarous languages but must be equated with Latin and Greek and it must be confessed that it is very similar to Hebrew in its phrasing and modes of speech.”

Covarrubias’ *Tesoro* was constantly consulted and served as a constant reminder of the Hebrew language. It also influenced the rest of Europe: other lexicographers borrowed his work, as shown by the example of Gilles Ménage (1613-1692), grammarian and lexicographer (Leroy Turcan and Wooldridge; Lépinette). It is worth considering to what extent is there a belated echo of Covarrubias in the search for *hebraismos* in twentieth-century Spanish scholarship (such as *terefa* in Cervantes or elsewhere or in the case of the well known efforts, e.g. those made by Francisco Cantera or Iacob Hassan or, on another plane altogether, Américo Castro’s attempts to interpret Hebraisms such as *ben*, or *malsinar* or *sela* beyond linguistics). The same cannot be said for works (on Hebrew and Semitic languages which were part of the trilingual ideal of early modern Europe) which remained in Ms. or which—even if printed—were soon forgotten, however fascinating in themselves or from a teleological perspective.

X

If, as the evidence found and assembled here shows, there is a sense in which these phenomena were “modern,” we may look at the sense in which they are not. I do not refer to the grammarian’s dependence on Kimhi and Duran or the dependence of exegetes on their medieval predecessors, even if Hebrew poetry, particularly that

of the Iberian kind, cannot be isolated from grammar, biblical exegesis, and language. If we attend to ceremonial solemnity and its relation to Hebrew, we could observe the project of the Hebrew epitaph for the tomb of St Ferdinand at the cathedral of Seville (Cantera and Millás 171-75). It dates to ca. 1250. Here the Hebrew inscription is surrounded by Arabic, *romance* and Latin. There are slight differences. Thus the “infidel” is not mentioned in the Hebrew. This fact is not “pure” philology. In addition, we would have to observe the logistics of the organization of textual space and its justified columns and the coordination between the composer of the Hebrew text, that of the immediately neighboring Arabic text, and the sculptor of the stone. So that there is a visual aspect to this 1250 project. The general political context of the imperial idea in the age of Alfonso X would also need to be taken into account. A further example, also related to Alfonso X, is the Hebrew inscription on a golden vessel, a gift by the poet Todros Abulafia to his monarch²⁰. Further Hebrew poems of a ceremonial or certainly encomiastic character are addressed to this Christian monarch by the Hebrew poet of the thirteenth century. In the next century, there flourished Shlomoh ben Meshulam de Piera. He composes Hebrew poems addressed to Christian personalities. Literary critics have not yet succeeded in identifying them, but the main outlines of the phenomenon, a Hebrew poet addressing Christian readers in late medieval Spain, are clear and not affected by this. Shelomoh Bonafed who wrote poems of friendship addressed to Gonzalo de la Cavalleria could also be seen as part of this trend (Gutwirth 1985). The encomiastic Hebrew poems to Christian personalities do exist. In the mid fifteenth century, a treatise in Hebrew—a translation of Maimonides *Maqala al rabu* (Book on Asthma) contained a poetic Hebrew laudation to the Christian patron. Steinschneider (who had examined the Munich Ms.) read the title of the dedicatee as “dilator” evidently drawing on memories of Talmudic *delatoria* rather than “*relator*,” a fifteenth-century technical term which would not be meaningful to him. Once the Munich Ms. was reexamined, it became clear that there was no letter daled and therefore no delator. We could now add Fernán Díaz de Toledo, el *relator*, to the Christian recipients of Hebrew poetic laudations. The recently studied Ms. of Rashi at the Lázaro, again provides us with an example. It contains what proves to be—from a visual perspective—a

curiously executed text. It includes Hebrew praises of the patron. The patron happens to be a canon of the Sevillian cathedral chapter who achieved the dubious fame of being amongst the early victims of the inquisitorial pyre in Seville.²¹

Conclusion

The reading of the *Libro de las honras* to Maria de Austria; the *Publica laetitia*, the *Declaración Mystica de las Armas de España, invictamente belicosas*, the *Congratulatio* to Carlos III; the *Exequias* to Queen Amalia, and the *Encomio* to fray. Martín Sarmiento, amongst numerous others, leads to some conclusions and also to further questions. Firstly, that their Hebrew texts, not necessarily Hebrew verse or Hebrew poetry—however neglected—are an integral part of the culture of early modern, Habsburg and Bourbon Spain. For those who are interested in the culture of early modern Spain, they, therefore, deserve analysis. Secondly, they raise the question of the usefulness or otherwise of prevalent modes of approaching Christian Hebraism. Alternative categories such as active and visual Hebraisms have been proposed above. This leads one to question both, the complete dichotomies between medieval (polemical) and modern (tolerant) Hebraism but, also, the superficial beliefs in a simplistic or uninterrupted continuity after the expulsions. The intense links between Hebrew language (grammar, lexicography, orthography, Bible and other aspects) and Hebrew poetry precludes any hypotheses of simple continuity. And yet such questions bring other aspects to the fore.

The (apparently) poetic encomia in Hebrew to Christians were not a pure result of the onset of modernity as has been shown. The selection of apt fragments from the Hebrew Bible was traditional. The visual aspect of Hebrew poetry was deeply ingrained in the mind set of Spanish Jews. It was continuously, explicitly, and eloquently articulated from Samuel Ha-Naggid in the eleventh century to don Isaac Abravanel in the early sixteenth. Material remains or references to Hebrew inscriptions on art work for Christians from the middle ages have been mentioned—the Sevillian epitaph; Todros' inscribed golden vessel and others—and in the future one would need to argue about the differences with their Hebrew counterparts in early modern

Spain and articulate such differences in a nuanced mode. The presence of Jews and of Hebrew in medieval ceremonial and pageantry (the urban *entradas reales*, for example] would also need to be taken into account when analyzing (early) modern constructions of ceremony, particularly in the context of court, royalty and empire.

Notes

¹"Fiesta y literatura en el Colegio Imperial de Madrid": "El gran interés de este libro radica en que reproduce los dibujos de todos los jeroglíficos expuestos y las correspondientes explicaciones *en verso*, cosa que se hizo muy pocas veces por dificultades económicas o técnicas" (526).

²Although not the main focus of her study, there are interesting occasional allusions to the non-Hebrew elements in the emblems (produced for María de Austria's funeral) in López Poza (93-110).

³For a discussion of *Tmura*, *gymatria* and *notariqon* in early modern texts from Spain see Gutwirth 2004. Recently, a rare work of Damiao de Gois was discovered at the library of All Souls; see Earle (2001). Its Hebrew sources—whether second hand (i.e. not in the original language) or otherwise—are difficult to discern (Earle 2001). For us the significance lies in that it is an example of the difficulty of establishing whether a Renaissance text has first hand or second hand contact with a Hebrew source, whether it is active or passive. It also serves as a reminder that lack of attention to some early modern Iberian Hebraists is related not only to historiographic traditions or ideologies but also to the difficulties of access to e.g. uncatalogued prints or rare books, etc.

⁴Ettinger. The same idea has been rehearsed numerous times but it may possibly be traced back to Graetz' influence; see note *infra*.

⁵He also emphasized the scholarly achievements. See, amongst others, paragraphs such as: "Through a concurrence of circumstances, and especially through the genius of Joseph Scaliger, the king of philologists, Holland, in the seventeenth century, laid the foundation of that astounding philologic learning which was deposited in voluminous folios. It was the ambition of scholars to master the three favored languages of antiquity: Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and their literature. The Hebrew, as the language of religion, enjoyed even a special preference, and the scholar who mastered it equally with the other languages was certain of distinction. Joseph Scaliger, the oracle of the Protestant theologians, included even the so-called rabbinic literature in his studies, and even the Talmud he treated with a certain respect. His disciples followed his example, and devoted themselves with great zeal to this branch of knowledge which had been regarded with contempt and even with a certain aversion a century before. Johannes (John) Buxtorf, the elder

(1564-1639) of Basel, had gained a perfect mastery of Hebrew and rabbinics, and made them accessible to Christian circles. He carried on an active correspondence in Hebrew with Jewish scholars in Amsterdam, Germany, and Constantinople. Even ladies devoted themselves at that time to the study of the Hebrew language and literature. The eccentric Queen Christina of Sweden, the learned daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, understood Hebrew. Statesmen like Hugo Grotius of Holland and John Selden of England occupied themselves with it earnestly and exhaustively for their theological or historical studies" (Graetz V, ii: 21).

⁶Nevertheless it should be noted that in 1576 Don Ioan de Borja added a poem to the *Vida de S. Anton* dedicated and addressed to the Empress Maria de Austria. In it we find lines such as "hereges y malditas gentes,"; or "rayos tan Fuertes / que abrasen los elados corazones /... sus bestiales sinrazones" and "supla Dios tus fuerças con las suyas /porque a los infieles y hereges los destruyas." See Moreno.

⁷Interesting work on Bible translations and probable Hebraism may be found in Ross 2000, 2009. The main relevance here is that such researches have not yet affected the general image of Christian Hebraism in (most?) studies which frequently still concentrate on the personal, geographic and chronological choices made by Graetz.

⁸The sources are numerous and—*pace* Graetz—not restricted to Queen Catherine of Sweden. They may be divided into prints and Mss. For the latter material—prior to 1850; see for example Tornberg. Mss. in Swedish libraries also contain materials for the reconstruction of Swedish Christian Hebraism. Although this is not the focus of his studies, some of the Hebrew Mss. are treated in Alloni, "Kitve Yad Ivriim bi-Shvedia" (1977) and "Hamishah kitve yad ivriim be-sifryyat Lund" (1977).

⁹For some views on them see Gutwirth 1988/9, 1991.

¹⁰On some of the methodological problems of the histories of collectionism produced by collectors themselves or by institutions which own them see for example Gutwirth 2006. While some are sceptical about the value of Ms. or printed grammars as indices of scholarship or creativity, others may point to the force of Hebrew in the elaboration of theories or philosophies of language in the early modern period. For figures such as Fray Luis de Leon, Acosta, Malvenda, Hobbes, and Pascal, see Kottman; Oleander.

¹¹As in other cases, the direct contact with primary sources or texts can be grossly exaggerated. On the theory that *converso* women read the Zohar in early modern Spain, see my remarks in Gutwirth 1987.

¹²Premk. The list of Spanish cases of Hebrew characters in Western art is incomplete and relies on Amador. A purely random example of the absences would be the case of a panel, in the Retablo de la Virgen de la Aurora, in the Colegiata de Santa Maria la Mayor, in Rubielos de Mora. What is of interest here is not the plastic aspect—so well treated by art historians—but the aspect

of mentalités and history of Christian Hebraism. Some parameters for treating these sources from a historical perspective have been put forward. The analysis of the Hebrew is one of these. See Gutwirth 1993. In the case of Rubielos de Mora, for example, what is of interest is the (failed) attempt at vocalization and creating Hebrew words but also realizing that the one probable reading is “dinar” or “diners.” If this is accepted, the message of the painter is that the Doctors are interested in money. So that the Hebrew in the art is not a matter of pure (or random) ornaments or “signs.” For the early modern period one would have to analyze in more detail than is common, such cases as the possible Hebrew in Alejo Fernandez’ “Purificación” in Seville or in Juan de Borgoña’s “Purificación” in Avila.

¹³See also Gómez-Menor 1970, 1974. The Publica Laetitia volume includes (at pp. 76ff) a long “Glosa Castellana” on the verses “Sepa cierto la virtud.” Perhaps there is some unnoticed allusion beyond the onomastic one in the repeated references to fires such as: “si el esclavon de poder ... / haze aquel fuego poner / donde todos puedan ver / su mano muy poderosa.”

¹⁴Alegre (1841, 96): “Versos exquisitos en hebreo.” Elsewhere he writes about the relics at the Compañía’s Colegio maximo in Puebla: “Para dar asiento fijo a la fundación, pasó a la Puebla el padre Pedro Sánchez con el padre Diego López de Mesa, a quien dejó por superior de aquella casa, de que se tomó jurídica posesión el día 9 de mayo de 1578... (Colocación de las santas reliquias] Dejamos disponiéndose en el colegio máximo la solemne colocación de santas reliquias En los intercolumnios dos encasamentos cuadrados con el frontispicio agudo, y en ellos las estatuas de los dos hermanos San Pedro y San Andrés. Sobre cada estatua una tarja hermosa, y dentro de su óvalo alguna sentencia a propósito que interpretaba un dístico latino en la repisa. A los lados, en unos medallones de cartón plateado, se habían entretejido algunas sentencias en idioma y *caracteres griegos y hebreos*” (1841, 37ff).

¹⁵*Declaración Mystica de las Armas de España, invictamente belicosas* (200).

¹⁶Mínguez Cornelles. And yet the disquisitions on the name Jesus in Hebrew had been traditional amongst Christian Hebraists since at least the age of Reuchlin, Heredia and the printings of Galatino’s work.

¹⁷If he is indeed the author of the Castro article in the New York Jewish Encyclopedia, which asserts that: “He (Rodríguez de Castro) addressed to Charles III on his accession a number of Hebrew, Latin and Greek *verses*.” See Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. “Rodríguez de Castro”. There may be some influence of Steinschneider. See his Bodleian Catalogue, col. 813 (i.e. Catalogus librorum hebraeorum ... in bibliotheca Bodleiana; jussu curatorum ... Oxford. University Berlin 1852-1860). On Jacobs, see Maidment and also Fine.

¹⁸The case of Hebraism in Spain in the age of Gesenius still needs research and global generalizations on nineteenth century Hebraism can hardly be taken seriously. Nevertheless, some specific informed studies do exist. One

example would be Cantera Burgos, whose lengthy research on a nineteenth-century Hebraist leads him to affirm that: “creemos que su dominio del hebreo no paso de mediocre” (342). For Marcelino Menendez y Pelayo and Jose Amador de los Rios, see for example Gutwirth, *The Identity of Zequiel*, 2010.

¹⁹It has been argued that there existed an early modern “medievalism” in Spain and that it left a profound imprint on later scholarship. See Gutwirth 1993. Another theme which persisted for centuries (from the sixteenth to our own) is that of the *ketubbot* or aligned questions. Thus Covarrubias’ teacher is credited with the transcription and translation of an Aramaic or Hebrew *carta de dote* from Trixueque in the sixteenth century. See Fita, responding to a previous article in *Revista de Archivos*, t. IV, 360 published anonymously. Fita’s transcription of the name must be emended.

²⁰See the *Diwan* of Todros Abulafia in Abulafia.

²¹Gutwirth 1986, 2008).

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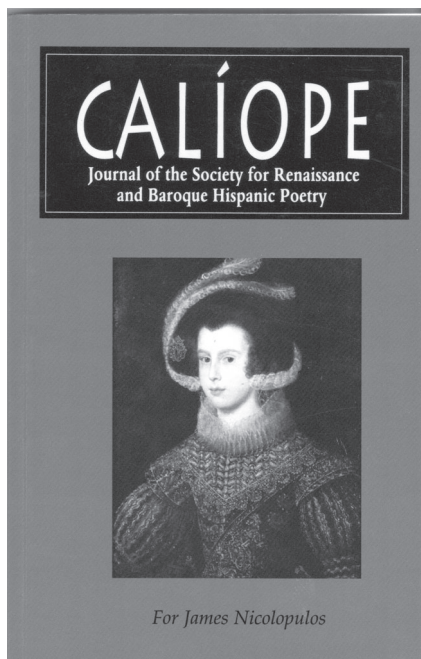
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