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The Western Sephardic Diaspora and European Literature

Valentina Nider

Abstract

This work focuses on the literature of the *conversos* (Jews who converted to Catholicism) and the Spanish and Portuguese ‘New Jews’ who settled in Europe (Italy, France, Holland, and Germany) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will examine how leading figures of the Western Sephardic Diaspora developed cultural and political relationships with their new host countries, and how they maintained ties with the Iberian Peninsula. Some characteristic features of *judeoconverso* literary production, including methods of imitation and the practice of creating two versions of the same text, each targeting a different public, will be illustrated through analysis of the works of Antonio Enríquez Gómez and Josef Penso de la Vega.

Historical and Geographical Dynamics

During the sixteenth century, Jewish *conversos* settled in several Italian cities (Rome, Venice, Ferrara, Mantua, Ancona, Florence, and in the region of Savoy), from which they were then cast out, persecuted and expelled. Subsequently, due to decrees assuring them greater protection and certain privileges relating to religious freedom, promulgated by the Medici in 1556 and in the period 1591-1593, many settled in Tuscany, in the cities of Pisa and Livorno (Leghorn) (Frattarelli Fischer 2008) and in Venice in 1589. In France, new Christian Portuguese merchants responded to the invitation made in 1550 to move to cities in the southwest, such as Bordeaux and Bayonne. In northern Europe, many relocated first to Antwerp and later, following their expulsion in 1549, to Amsterdam and Hamburg. In these centers, some converted back to Judaism, thus acquiring a new identity as ‘New Jews’, according to the definition of Kaplan (1994), similar to the category of ‘New Christians’ used to describe Iberian converts. The Western Sephardic Diaspora took place under the pressures of the Inquisition and the discriminating measures taken against the descendants of the Jews following the coerced conversion of their forefathers in 1492 in Spain and 1497 in Portugal. A substantial number of the Spanish Jews who had opted not to convert became protagonists of the first Diaspora and converged in Portugal. The *conversos*, on the other hand, benefited from

anti-discriminatory measures and conditions of relative calm which allowed them, until the institution of the Inquisitorial Tribunal in 1536, to reinforce through endogamy an ‘ethnic solidarity across religious and socio-economic lines’ (Graizbord 2018: 219). This served to lay the foundations for the *Nação portuguesa* or Portuguese Nation (a term already used in the Medieval period to indicate foreign communities of students or merchants), in which the protagonists of the Western Sephardic Diaspora recognized themselves and with which they were identified by their contemporaries. The *Nação* created and brought together a vast commercial network that expanded across the Atlantic and throughout various continents during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

The Sephardim or Sephardi Jews and the ‘homens da Nação’

The *Sephardim*, descendants of those expelled in 1492, settled prevalently in the eastern part of the Mediterranean dominated by the Ottomans, in North Africa and in Italy, where they had been successful in mediating between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (along the Constantinople-Thessalonika-Venice axis), and between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe (Trivellato 2018).

According to Bodian (2008) and Kaplan (1996), the *conversos* and the *judíos nuevos* never identified completely with the Mediterranean Sephardim, considering them only as ‘distant cousins’ with whom they could forge alliances to counteract the Ashkenazim attitudes that had given rise to a real phobia against them. In Venice, where the ghetto was instituted in 1541, the *homens da Nação* (*Ponentini*) dedicated themselves to international commerce by decree, while the Sephardim (*Levantini*) traded locally. With its own myths of origin—including the experience of the Spanish Inquisition, essential for its ‘heroic self-image’ (Bodian 2008: 72)—, Jewish *converso* religious culture differs from rabbinical-legislative culture, although Kaplan (1989) has amended the traditional vision of the *conversos* as deprived of Jewish culture. In Amsterdam, community institutions took into account the specificity of the New Jewish Culture, opting not to insist on the concepts of ‘rabbinization’ and ‘Sephardization’ for the controlling of individual consciences.

The Economic Success of the Portuguese Nation

It is important to emphasize the modernity and dynamism of the Portuguese Nation. Its extraordinary success originated in its nature as a 'Diaspora within a Diaspora' (Israel 2002), that is to say, its capacity to adapt, establishing relations with the commercial empires of the period, and thanks to its polycentrism, in contrast with a world dominated, particularly in political and economic terms, by centralism. Studnicki-Gizbert (2007: 10) underlines the identity-making importance of the fact that the members of this diaspora 'shared, in terms of experience and social interaction, much more with one another than with their home society'. They built transverse alliances in which the religious aspect appears to be only one of the common elements, since most of the merchants and bankers operating in the Iberian Peninsula or as correspondents in the Spanish Empire were officially identified as New Christians. Some intellectuals participated in commercial activities unfolding in a global world and therefore displayed considerable mobility within the frame of 'networks of individual associated merchants' (Studnicki-Gizbert 2007: 68). They were engaged in varying types of business with different partners, rather than in Companies, a fact that enabled them to penetrate new markets and obtain commercial monopolies (*asientos*) within the Spanish Empire (of tobacco, sugar, or slaves, for example). The Nation exploited the interstitial gaps in the colonial system, bypassing the borders established by traditional political alliances, thus giving rise to accusations of smuggling and 'conspiracy with the enemies of the empire' (Studnicki-Gizbert 2007: 165). The political and economic influence of the Portuguese was in fact felt in various settings: in Spain they took over from the Genoese bankers during the period of the Count-Duke of Olivares's *privanza* (only to then be persecuted in the early 1630s and after his fall); they also financed the Portuguese Restoration and the presence of the Dutch in Brazil; they laid the foundations for new ventures with the Dutch and the English in Curaçao and in Suriname, to the detriment of the Spanish; and lastly, they sustained William III of Orange's accession to the English throne.

Cultural Premises: Prints and Translations

In this context, it is important to note some basic cultural constants of the *Nação*. The Spanish language seems to have been widely adopted in literary works and for the production of written versions of vernacularized religious texts for proselyting. Portuguese was reserved for community legislation, though there were some exceptions to this. The literary models followed were generally Iberian and modern, but there was also considerable receptiveness towards other models, particularly Italian. In the sixteenth century, the fondness for Iberian and

especially Spanish literature is evident, as demonstrated by the circulation among Roman and eastern Sephardic Jews (Minervini 2005) of translations in Hebrew or *aljamiadas* (Spanish texts written in Hebrew or Arabic script) of important works such as the *Coplas de Yosef*, *La Celestina* and *Amadís de Gaula*. This interest is confirmed by the printing in Ferrara of the famous Bible (1553) and of liturgical works in Ladino or Judeo-Spanish, but also of classics such as the *Visión deleitable* [Delightful Vision] by Alfonso de la Torre together with a part of the *Coplas* by Manrique. The works of Leone Ebreo and of Petrarch, translated into Spanish by Salomón Usque (2007), constitute an example of the interest in Italian models, in which the works in Spanish are presented in a Jewish-*converso* context but intended for a wider public. These publications should be included, as already noted by Meregalli (1971), within the scope of the hundred or so Spanish books and the thousand or more translations published in Venice between 1550 and 1650. In Amsterdam, the vast production of texts printed in Spanish, as Boer (1995) explains, was intended for the Sephardic community, but also for the international market (this includes, again, the *Visión deleitable* and European miscellanies such as the *Jardín de flores curiosas* [Garden of Curious Flowers] or anthologies of *comedias*). The phenomenon of double names—whereby authors and editors used one Hebrew name in some contexts and a second, more generic Hispanic name in others in order to disguise their Jewish origins—is particularly interesting, as is that of forged editions with false imprints. As far as the circulation of non-Iberian literature is concerned, the translations from Italian of the works of Niccolò Franco and Giovanni Battista Guarini and of Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas from French must be considered. The distribution of manuscripts of the translations of suspect texts, traces of which remain in community libraries, needs to be investigated. Such texts are not only concerned with Hebrew subjects, as shown by the translation of the *Encomium Moriae* conserved in Amsterdam, probably a copy of a lost printed edition (Ledo and Boer 2014), and of the Koran, based on an Italian translation and destined for the *moriscos* (former Muslims converted to Christianity) (Tommasino and Boer 2014).

Cultural Premises: Reading and Libraries

Research on private libraries has shed light on the reading choices of the *homens da Nação*. While we cannot deal with the *conversos* from the Iberian Peninsula here, nevertheless there is an emblematic case worth commenting on: in 1992 in Barcarrota, a library was discovered and became famous for containing the only copy of the *Lazarillo* printed in Medina del Campo. The owner, a *converso* doctor, had built it before fleeing to Portugal. It also contained titles

included in the *Index librorum prohibitorum* [Index of Forbidden Books] written in Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese and French, showcasing significant examples of plurilingualism in the history of the *converso* literature and culture. Moreover, the fate of private libraries constitutes a perfect illustration of the parallelisms between the censorship (and burning) of Jewish books, and the persecution of *conversos* due to the identification of Judaism with heresy and magic (Caffiero 2012). What was read by the Western Jewish and *converso* Diaspora can be retraced, on the one hand, by sifting through the rare catalogues of libraries and, on the other, by looking at the statements of the Inquisition. The deductions that can be made from these catalogues and inquisitorial documents may be considered illustrative, in the former case, because the owners belonged to a cultural élite, and in the latter, because the information therein depended on the requests of the inquisitors who were specifically interested in the possession of holy and liturgical writings and books of worship and devotion. As is well known, a controversial debate arose among historians regarding the role of inquisitorial tribunals such as the ‘Marrano Factory’ (Saraiva 2001), and the dissemination of an ‘inquisitorial Judaism’, based on a list of suspect readings and rituals, drawn up to instigate accusations and to influence witnesses and defendants. The particular efficacy of the interrogations in reconstructing *converso* religiosity has recently been defended by Stuczynski (2015: 65), who describes the emergence of a ‘polyphony’, ‘a useful concept for disentangling the complexity of *converso* crypto-Judaism’ from the monological speech of the inquisitor, to recall Carlo Ginzburg.

Regarding libraries, Boer (1995) reminds us that the first community library of the Diaspora was set up in Amsterdam in 1639. The texts, like those found among the books of the rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (1605-1692?) (Kaplan 2002), seem to be oriented particularly towards the worship practices of the ‘*judíos nuevos*’ or New Jews. Those in Spanish make up about a tenth of the whole—most of them are in Hebrew—and feature predominantly historical texts. Naturally, as in the other libraries of Amsterdam or Hamburg, there are also books by authors of the Western Jewish and *converso* Diaspora and books on worship (Kaplan 2016), including the works of Luis de Granada and the *Flos sanctorum* by Alonso de Villegas (from which the lives of the ‘saints’ of the Old Testament can be drawn). Literary works are few and far between, restricted to Virgil and Homer, to the ‘cantos’ of Lope de Vega and to the *Gran teatro del mundo* [Great Theater of the World] by Calderón, while there is more Spanish literature to be found in the library of Spinoza (<http://www.iliesi.cnr.it/>), which included the *Novelas ejemplares* [Exemplary Novels], *La Diana*, and the works of Quevedo, Góngora, Pérez Montalbán, Antonio Pérez, Gracián and Saavedra Fajardo. As for Italian works, Machiavelli

(also in Latin), Petrarch, and Gregorio Leti stand out, found in almost all of the inventories examined. In addition to those dedicated to the classical languages and to Hebrew, lexicographical works include Franciosini's dictionary and the *Tesoro* by Covarrubias.

The library of the rabbi Samuel Abás (?-1691), working in Hamburg, shows tendencies which foreshadow those of the generations to come. Almost half of the books are in Latin, only a fourth are in Hebrew, and those in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian collectively make up another fourth (Studemund-Halévy 2002). The well-furnished library of the rabbi David Nunes Torres (1660-1728), studied by Boer (1995: 106) and Kaplan (2002), is remarkable for the presence of French and English classics, as well as for the works from the Spanish Golden Age. While pertaining to a diverse cultural sphere, the library of Giuseppe Attias (1672-1732) of Leghorn, 'the most Learned Jew in Tuscany' according to Montesquieu (Frattarelli Fisher 2008), reveals similar characteristics. Most of the works are eighteenth-century, while those of Golden Age theater in the original language are inherited, and other Spanish classics appear in Italian or French. In this library, works against the Inquisition in various languages, including those of Ferrante Pallavicino, are the most conspicuous. Information about libraries in the Americas, for instance, in Peru, reveals the presence of Latin classics, books of a historical nature and literature of the Golden Age, while data concerning the readings of the members of the Nação come from the Inquisition. It is known that in Lima there was a constant fear that works of Protestant propaganda and Jewish proselytism could be spread with the arrival of English and Dutch ships. An inventory of the books belonging to the merchant Manuel Baptista Peres, put to death in Lima in the auto-da-fé of 1639 (Guibovich Pérez 1990), lists 155 works just in Spanish or Portuguese. Prevailing interests in these libraries included modern languages, calculus, contemporary geography and history, particularly of the kingdoms of the peninsula and the Hispanic-Portuguese conquests, and the great authors of Spanish literature. Inquisitorial trials frequently make reference to prayers delivered orally and to translations of holy writings and liturgical and devotional works. In some cases, however, literary texts are cited incidentally. In the trial in Pisa (1616) against the 'Portuguese' who staged a play by Lope de Vega, the data are precise enough to allow us to identify the specific edition they used (Nider 2012). Notarial documents concerning the merchants of Amsterdam confirm their preference for history and the circulation of literary texts such as *La Diana* and the translation of Petrarch by Usque (Swetschinski 1982).

Literary Production of the *judeoconversos*: Current Methodological Trends

Regarding the original literary production of the *conversos*, some recent methodological trends emerging among scholars in this field can be mentioned in order to describe some of their distinguishing features and intricacies. In an important project on *converso* literature, Ruth Fine (2014) proposed a classification on the basis of a wide variety of textual and non-textual criteria, including bio-geo-chronological elements, and those relating to the target reader. She also offers a reflection on aspects such as collective memory, the representation of the *converso* as ‘the Other’ in Spanish literature and on the alternative *judeoconverso* aesthetic paradigm. The latter is characterized by a ‘transgressive’ poetics, both all-encompassing (that is, mingling and breaking with traditional types) and many-voiced, capable of elaborating new compositional and rhetorical strategies. The differing perspectives and disciplinary orientations of scholars have also influenced this debate. The concept of ‘crypto-Judaism’, for instance, used by Pedraza Jiménez, González Cañal, and Marcello (2014), has been criticized by those concentrating on the production of authors of the Diaspora. Of late, Wilke (2018: 279) has wondered whether there really were dissenting voices in the peninsula after the repression of the thirties: ‘a text-immanent approach would obviously be unable to detect any dissident intent in literary works written under censorship. The question we now have to ask is this: can we find a way to break the hermeneutical circle without recurring to biographical projections?’

Hybridization and Counter-Discourse: Apologetic-Religious Literature and Dialogues

Linked to the fundamental question of dissent is the choice of utilizing the term counter-discourse with its several connotations, correlated to and often contrasting at various levels with ‘hybridization’, another term much used to establish a framework for this production, emphasizing the imitation and reusing of structures and models. Historians, as we have seen, have anticipated this research. The term counter-discourse has been applied also to the classical vein of studies dedicated to historical, apologetic and catechetical works in which the reuse of Catholic religious texts subjected to a process of ‘Judaization’ can be observed, as in the *Certeza del camino* [Certainty of the Path] by Abraham Pereira. In her study of several texts of this era, Bodian (1997: 87n2) reveals the same controversial aim in the use of the concept of ‘purity’, which sounds familiar while offering an alternative to the Christian concept of *limpieza de sangre* [blood purity]. As Boer (2005: 54) asserts, this phenomenon can be found in various literary and expository genres in which the *converso* author engages in a dialogue with the Christian world, shaping counter-arguments that reinterpret structures and genres of

the dominating culture, challenging them from an ideological viewpoint. Preaching offers an excellent occasion for challenging certain topics and religious interpretations, and a good example can be found in the sermon of Isaac Aboab de Fonseca, who took as a theme and commented on the verse chosen as a motto by the Inquisition. The handwritten or printed works dedicated to the memory of victims such as Isaac de Castro Tartás (1647), or Abraham Núñez Bernal (1656) can be placed halfway between literature and apologetics, among the ‘Christian’ genres of hagiography, panegyric writing, eulogies to martyrdom, and broadsheets (*relaciones de sucesos*) connected to the auto-da-fé. A fascinating case from a literary point of view can be seen in the dialogues in Spanish and Portuguese, studied for years by Carsten Wilke (1996), who edited an excellent edition of the parent text of the movement, *The Marrakesh Dialogues* (2014), identifying the author as Estêvão Dias of Antwerp. In these works, generic characteristics are exploited not only for apologetic purposes but also for subverting the predominant ideological and political-moral aspects through the criticism of Iberian societies. These dialogues, which were handwritten and generally anonymous, were set in realistic frameworks with a lively, conversational style. The characters, in the case of the *The Marrakesh Dialogues* (ca. 1583), are two brothers, divided by divergent religious choices and geographical locations, who re-unite in the North African town. In the *Viaje entretenido de Jerónimo de Contreras* [Entertaining Journey of Jerónimo de Contreras], from the mid-sixteenth century (Orfali 1997), the protagonist ineffectually sets out on a journey from Spain to Rome in the company of some clerics to try and assuage his theological doubts; these, however, are clarified brilliantly by the Jewish *puer senex* Danielillo during a sojourn in Leghorn. Representing the Christian as a ‘pilgrim’ aspiring to the truth who converts to Judaism by choice out of rational conviction, and is not driven by *la sangre*, is one way of contesting the stereotypes of *conversos* and perhaps, in the case of *The Marrakesh Dialogues*, the patriarchal dynamics predominating in commercial activity at the time, a theme which invites further research elsewhere.

Hybridization and Counter-Discourse: Theater and Burlesque Works

Hybridization and counter-discourse merge together in literary works, offering a vast range of variations including imitations of the Iberian tradition. Among the works composed in Amsterdam (Den Boer 2011), worthy of note are those inspired by the *autos sacramentales* (a form of dramatic literature unique to Spain), such as the *Diálogo dos montes* [Dialogue of the Mounts] by Rehuel Jessurun (Paulo de Pina), performed in the synagogue in 1624, and the

autos mosaicos by Daniel Leví de Barrios (Miguel de Barrios). The famous satirical and parodic *Chanzas del Ingenio y dislates de la Musa* [Jests of Wit and Absurdities of the Muse] by Manuel (Jacob) de Pina (1656) (Mata Induráin 2018) were banned by the Jewish authorities for obscenity and because it was forbidden to mock the religion of the hosting country. The production and reception of these *comedias burlescas* constitute a significant example of such works and their prohibition. The genre is built on the use of absurdity and nonsense, gestures and ridiculous attire, and parodic transposition of the ‘serious’ theatrical texts. The critical scope of these works has always posed a question for scholars who tend to minimize it, considering the context of their representation to be one of carnival-like and ceremonial pageantry. Within the framework of the *converso* communities outside the Peninsula, on the other hand, the *comedias burlescas* were perceived as irreverent. Consider the case of Pisa, where the actors were tried for the staging of the *Entremés de la infanta Palancona* [Interlude of the Infanta Palancona] (1616) (Nider 2011), and later Amsterdam, where in 1652 *La mayor hazaña de Carlos VI* [The Greatest Feat of Charles VI] by Manuel de Pina, parodying *La mayor hazaña de Carlos V* [The Greatest Feat of Charles V] (1652), a comedy that exalts the religiosity of the Emperor who retreated to Yuste, was banned by the Jewish authorities (Huerta Calvo 1994). Lastly, particularly interesting and worthy of note are the *Fábula burlesca de Jesucristo y de la Magdalena* [Burlesque Tale of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene] and the *Historia del famoso don Sabatay Sevi* [Story of the Famous Sir Sabatay Sevi] (attributed to a certain Antonio Marques, professor in Salamanca who is said to have edited it in London in 1623 after fleeing the Inquisition), and again, the *Diálogos theológicos en versos jocosos entre un judío, un turco, regormado [sic] y católico* [Theological Dialogues of a Jew, a Turk, a Reformer, and a Catholic] by Abraham Silveira (1656-1740), supposedly written against the Protestant theologian Jaquelot and perhaps a parody of the apologetic dialogues mentioned above (Brown and Boer 2000).

The Biblical Poem as Counter-Discourse

A special case of counter-discourse concerns the epic poem, a genre that was highly esteemed at the time in which religious and biblical themes are among the most frequent, as exemplified by the widespread imitation of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* [Jerusalem Delivered] (Boer 2011). Rewritings of the Old Testament by the *judeoconversos* of the Diaspora, composed from the early to the mid-sixteenth century, in Italy and in France, even though often treating the principles of the Christian faith, differ macroscopically from analogous texts by Christian

authors because, among other things, they eschew figurative interpretation. This subgenre, studied by Díaz Esteban (1994), includes the works of Estrella Lusitano, Jacob(o) Uziel, João (Moisés) Pinto Delgado, Miguel de Silveira—Crypto-Jewish Portuguese in the Spanish courts of Madrid and Naples—, Antonio Enríquez Gómez, and his son Diego Basurto (although Galbarro [2017] attributes the poem to the father), and has given rise to many interpretations (see, for instance, Blanco [2017] on Silveira, or Zepp [2014] on Pinto Delgado). Among the numerous avenues of research, particularly evident is the concern of the *judeoconversos* for biblical poems written in the ‘hosting’ countries, as exemplified by the publication in Amsterdam of the translation by Francisco de Cáceres of the *Sepmaine* [Week] by the Calvinist Du Bartas and the participation of Uziel in the debate held in the Venetian *Accademia degli Incogniti* [Academy of the Unknowns] (Zinato 2018).

Antonio Enríquez Gómez

Antonio Enríquez Gómez (Cuenca 1599/1602–Seville 1663), with his background as self-taught merchant, is considered an emblematic author of *converso* literature. In fact, he was the correspondent in Madrid of the family enterprise (the family of his father was decimated by the Inquisition and fled to France), in a network engaged in the trading of textiles and slaves in various countries and continents (Revah 2003). He had direct contact with French Jews and was heard as a witness in the trial of the famous Bartolomé de Febos. In Madrid he took part in cultural and theatrical activities: his plays were put on stage and some of his poetic texts published with the works of others. Between 1635 and 1637, for fear of the Inquisition or for financial reasons, or perhaps for political ones—the conflict between Olivares and Manuel de Cortizos, his protector—he moved to France where, until his return to Spain in 1649, he published various literary and political works under the name of Fernando de Zárate y Castronovo. His first works included the *Academias morales de las musas* [Moral Academies of the Muses] (1642), of which there is a splendid edition (Enríquez Gómez 2015b), printed by Maurry di Rouen, who also published *El siglo pitagórico y Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña* [The Pythagorean Century and Life of Sir Gregorio Guadaña], *La culpa del primer peregrino* [The Guilt of the First Pilgrim], *La Torre de Babilonia* [The Tower of Babel], and *Sansón Nazareno* [Nazarene Samson]. The latter texts, of a panegyric and political nature, contain elements suggesting the desire to please both the French king and the new Portuguese king. At the behest of the consul of ‘restored’ Portugal in France, Manuel Fernández de Villareal, Enríquez Gómez composed the *Triumpho lusitano* [Lusitanian Triumph] (1641), a ‘relación de

sucesos' [accounts of events] in verse, as an appendix to the account in prose of the Portuguese ambassadors' mission at the court of Louis XIII, about the recognition of the legitimacy of the Duke of Braganza's accession to the throne.

Two Versions between France and 'Restored' Portugal

The exaltation of the Restoration, which bestowed upon Enríquez Gómez the Order of San Miguel and maybe even Portuguese citizenship (Enríquez Gómez 2015a), can also be seen in the political treatise *Luis dado de Dios a Luis y Ana, Samuel dado de Dios a Elcana y Ana* [Luis Given by God to Luis and Ana, Samuel Given by God to Elkanah and Hannah] (1645). The treatise deals with various themes such as the relationship between trustee and monarch, the administration of justice and the role of informers, protections due to foreigners, and religious tolerance, with specific reference to the condition of the *conversos*. The title can be explained as a celebration of the birth of the Dauphin through biblical verses and the identification of the French kings as models of perfect *principes*. Two versions of the work exist: as indicated by Rose (1981: 537), these two versions are largely identical, but one portion of the book, a quire (pages 137-44), varies across the two versions. The first version stigmatizes the work of the inquisitors who administered justice in silence while making public condemnations. The judges availed themselves of false testimonies and took advantage of these in order to confiscate the property of the defendants, feigning holiness while acting out of interest, moved by hate and iniquity. The work offers, on the one hand, the positive example of realms that allowed subjects to choose between different religions and did not expect parents' sins to be paid for by their children. On the other hand, it suggests that the best way of ensuring peace was by honoring vassals; and that with the passing of time and of generations, religious opinions gradually came to be forgotten.

The text of the second version defends the Restoration of John IV of Portugal, identifying the two sides in conflict with those alluded to in the book of Samuel: the Spanish tyrants are the Philistines, and the Portuguese, the people of Israel. The Spanish government is tyrannical since its dominion is due neither to a just war nor to a hereditary right, and it is ruining the colonies, maritime trade and commerce in the Portuguese kingdom, while doing everything possible to overshadow the glory of the Portuguese people. This is why the Spanish are hated, since power must be legitimized by love and not by hate. Rose grounds her hypothesis about the later date of this version in codicological reasons, arguing that the critique of the Inquisition

would appear to be the result of a personal outburst of the author while defense of the Portuguese Restoration would be more objective. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that there are plenty of elements to defend the contrary hypothesis, inasmuch as allusions to the Inquisition can be found in other areas of the text as well and are not limited only to the variant portion, as is the case instead for the defense of the Portuguese Restoration.

Two versions of the *Política angelica* [Angelic Politics], published in 1647, also exist; however, these correspond to two essentially different works. The first consists of five dialogues between two interlocutors, Teogio and Filogio, and is dedicated to ‘Louis Faucon, señor de Ris, consejero de Su Majestad Cristianísima en su Consejo de Estado, primer presidente en el parlamento de Normandía’ [Louis Faucon, Lord of Ris, Advisor to His Most Christian Majesty in His Council of the State, First President of the Parliament of Normandy], while the ‘second’, the subtitle of which is ‘sobre el gobierno que se debe tener con los reducidos a la fe católica, y con los que se apartaron della’ [on the governance of those converted to the Catholic faith and those who have moved away from the same], is dedicated to ‘todos los príncipes cristianos, columnas de la militante Iglesia de Roma’ [all Christian princes, pillars of the militant Church of Rome] and consists of two dialogues, with some parts eulogizing the French rulers and others harshly judging the Inquisition and Spanish politics (Enríquez Gómez 2019; Stuczynski 2019).

‘Dreams’—Hybridization and Counter-Discourse

El siglo pitagórico y Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña (1644) is set in a framework in which the first-person narrator recounts a vision from a dream, following the model of Francisco de Quevedo in his *Sueños*, a series of thirteen units (or ‘Transmigraciones’ [Transmigrations]), most of which are in verse. Transmigración V contains the story of *la Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña*, son of a doctor and obstetrician. This novel owes much to elements of the allegoric-moral tale, to the structure of the academies, and to the *comedia de enredo* [comedy of errors]; at the same time, the *Vida* includes direct and indirect references to at least ten picaresque novels, thus showing links with this genre as well (Navarro Durán 2015). In this work, the protagonist Alma embodies various models of the society of that period, which thus may be criticized, so to speak, ‘from within’. Among these, worthy of note is the presence of a *malsín*, a spy of the Inquisition and a recurring figure in the works of Enríquez Gómez. Other texts highly critical of the Inquisition, which have remained unpublished, can be placed within his

French period. A satire of the *malsines* of Rouen was reported in the papers of the interrogation of a relative of Enríquez Gómez in Lima, while others, handwritten, have been published only in modern times. Among these, *La Inquisición de Lucifer* [The Inquisition of Lucifer] (Enríquez Gómez 1992) again exploits the Quevedesque model of the dream to elaborate a counter-discourse. The protagonist in this first-person narrative is an Old Christian, invited on two consecutive nights to carry out an inspection in the company of various demon-inquisitors of the *Inquisición de Lucifer*. The ‘human’—that is, the Spanish—Inquisition is constantly compared with the diabolical Inquisition. This comparison is reflected in other paradoxical and metaphorical Inquisitions. In the first dream, for example, a courtesan claims to be a member of an Inquisition much more powerful than the human one, as Parrafiscotado, the demon chaperone, explains:

vuestra Inquisición castiga a los herejes que dan en ser herejes, pero la inquisición de esta los que dan en ser miserables. Allá se condenan los bienes de los culpados, y aquí los de los inocentes. Allá se perdona al que se arrepiente de su pecado, y aquí se condena al que se arrepiente de su pecado, y aquí se condena al que se arrepiente de lo dado y se perdona al que lo ha dado como lo demás. Allá la Inquisición es secreta, y aquí secreta y pública; la una es ‘Santa’ y la otra ‘Pecadora’. (1992: 20)

[your Inquisition punishes the heretics who appear to be heretics, while this inquisition punishes those who appear to be down-and-out. There, the property of the guilty is taken away; here, that of the innocents. There, those who repent of their sins are forgiven, and here those who repent of their sins are condemned. Here, those who regret what they have given are condemned, while those who have given are forgiven. There, the Inquisition is secret, and here it is both secret and public; one is ‘holy’ and the other ‘sinful’.]

On his travels, after having witnessed the double life of a purported saint who venally exploits his alleged miraculous powers, the protagonist listens to another demon who asks why the Inquisition concerns itself with the souls of heretics, given that they are condemned to Hell and thus destined to be thrown to the demons:

Una de dos: o son tuyas o son nuestras. Si son tuyas, ¿para qué nos las envían acá?, y si son nuestras, ¿para qué nos las castigan y tienen allá? (...) ¿Quién mete a los inquisidores con las almas, si Dios solamente tiene potestad sobre ellas, y nosotros, cuando Dios nos las entrega? Si lo hacen por materia de estado, pretendiendo que no haiga en su reino herejías, castiguen los cuerpos, destierros hay, pero las almas de nuestra justicia, por la que reciben allá, no, de ninguna manera, muriendo en su herejía delante. (...) ¿quién los mete a poner fuego a monte que no es suyo, ni en labrar tierra que no heredaron ni compraron? (1992: 33)

[One or the other: either they are theirs, or they are ours. If they are theirs, why send them to us? And if they are ours, why do they (the Inquisitors) condemn them (the souls) and keep them there? (...). Who lets the inquisitors deal with souls, since only God has authority over them, or we do, when God delivers them to us? If they do it as state policy, so that there might be no

heresy in their kingdom, let them punish the body, or make use of exile, but the souls under our jurisdiction, no, by no means should they be under jurisdiction there, better that they die as heretics. (...) What gives them the right to burn a forest that is not theirs and cultivate fields that they have neither bought nor inherited?]

The human Inquisition, created only one hundred years earlier, takes years to reach a verdict, while the diabolical inquisition, which has existed since mankind first began to sin, takes only a moment. For these and many other reasons, it can be asserted that the Holy Inquisition is worse than the Inquisition of Lucifer. In the second dream, the protagonist initially persists in defending the good faith of the Inquisitors but the demon chaperone, making ‘an Inquisition of the Inquisition’ (Enríquez Gómez 1992: 52) shows him to what extent they are more *verdugos* [executioners] than judges, as illustrated by a case in which they torture a child. In this case the inquisitors behave sadistically, unconcerned by the child’s virginal modesty. At that point the protagonist, knowing that he is invisible, upset and outraged, wishes to leave in order not to witness this horror, but the demon tells him that he must remain so that he can give testimony regarding all that happens to the court (1992: 55). As in the *Alguacil alguacilado* [The Bailiffed Bailiff] by Quevedo, a demon chaperone decides to enter a Lutheran church and take his place in the interrogation of the Inquisitors, comically highlighting the paucity of their claims in the face of a fierce defendant, so fearless and untouched by pain that they consider him mad for the disarming simplicity of his allegations. Indeed, in many ways this scene of dialogue brings Erasmus’s *Moriae encomium* to mind. In the end, after having addressed the inquisitors with a cathartic string of insults and accusations of venality, the demon frees himself and crushes them underfoot, going back to the gates of Hell. The narration ends with the hope that the infernal Inquisition can supersede the iniquitous Spanish one, a desire which, while attributed to the demons, would also seem to be shared by the Old Christian who, once he has concluded his initiation, appears to change his mind about the holiness of the Court, just like the protagonists of the dialogues studied by Wilke as counter-discourse.

The Biblical Poem *Sansón nazareno* as Counter-Discourse (with the *Romance al Divín Judá Creyente* as Backdrop)

If the *Inquisición de Lucifer* cannot be seen to confirm the thesis of the author’s return to Judaism, according to Salomon (2011), neither can this thesis be substantiated by the *Romance al Divín Judá Creyente*, dedicated to the death of Lope de Vera, an Old Christian student who embraced the Muslim faith and circumcised himself in prison, and for this reason

was burned at the stake in 1644. The text is attributed to Enríquez Gómez by Miguel de Barrios, who belonged to the same group of scholars in Amsterdam. The *Romance*, studied and edited several times, is a counter-discourse written on the model of a panegyric for the victims of the Inquisition mentioned above.

The *Sansón nazareno* (Enríquez Gómez 1999), the last work of the author's French period, is a biblical poem in *ottava rima* and published in 1656, though probably composed before 1649, the year in which, according to the editor, the first thirteen of its fourteen cantos were printed. A portrait of the author can be found in the paratexts, while the prologue offers a review of his printed and his unpublished works—including 22 plays—which cannot be examined here in detail, as well as the plays he produced for the theater under the name of Fernando de Zárate upon his return to Spain. Enríquez Gómez quotes Virgil, Homer, Tasso, and Camões; and among the Spanish, while he mentions Garcilaso, Góngora, Lope de Vega, Villamediana, Valdivielso, and Ercilla, he prefers to indicate as a model Miguel de Silveira, a Portuguese physician and astronomer, author of the poem *El Macabeo* [The Maccabean] (1638), published in Naples.

As we have seen, this genre is often used to elaborate a counter-discourse, and its ambiguity can be perceived in the title, which applies the term 'Nazarene'—associated with Christ in Christian literature—to Samson. In the final episode (canto XIV) about the destruction of the Temple, Samson is mocked by the crowds (stanzas 28-34) for having capitulated not in war but to a woman, a condemnation articulated by Balonte, 'priest of a profane cult', occupied with a 'despicable sacrifice' 'to the statue of an idol'. In his reply, Samson (34-52) calls Balonte 'Príncipe del Imperio Filisteo' [Prince of the Philistine Empire], compares the prerogatives of his God to those of the false one, 'mi Dios está en el cielo (...) Mi Dios es Dios de dioses soberano' [My God is in Heaven (...) My God is the sovereign God of Gods] (36), declares that Adam was also overcome by a woman (41), and confesses that he has sinned three times with his eyes, deceived by three women (44). Before dying (58-64), Samson, a 'Jewish pilgrim' (57), asks God's intervention to give him the strength to carry out the task and once again professes his faith, in line with the biblical source and the Hebrew liturgy ('Dios de mis padres, Autor Eterno / de los tres mundos soberanos Atlante / Incircuscrito, Santo y Abeterno / Dios de Abraham (...) / Dios de Isaac (...) / Dios de Jacob' [God of my fathers, Eternal Author / of the three sovereign worlds Atlas / Uncircumscribed, holy, eternal / God of Abraham (...) / God of Isaac (...) / God of Jacob]; 58). Previously, Oelman (1982: 211), and more recently

Kramer-Hellinx (2015), pointed out that these verses not only evoke the Bible but frame the rewriting of an important Hebrew prayer, the *Amidah*, in which the three patriarchs are cited in this order. Indeed, the same profession of faith can be seen in stanza 61:

Yo muero por la Ley que tu escribiste,
por los preceptos santos que mandaste,
por el pueblo sagrado que escogiste
y por los mandamientos que ordenaste.
Yo muero por la patria que me diste
y por la gloria que al pueblo honraste.
Muero por Israel, y lo primero
por tu inefable Nombre verdadero. (XIV, 61)

[I die for the Law which you have written,
for the holy precepts that you have ordered,
for the sacred people that you have chosen,
and for the commandments that you have ordered.
I die for the country that you have given me
and for the glory with which you have honored the people.
I die for Israel, and above all
for your ineffable true Name.]

In contrast, Fine (2015: 104), basing her assessment on stanza 64, considers Samson a *converso* hero, obsessed with a sense of guilt for having betrayed his true faith (he broke the pact with God by revealing the secret of his strength and marrying a non-Jewish woman), even though the death of the protagonist, which causes that of his enemies, may assuage the thirst for revenge of the *judeonuevos*, who would be tempted to transform every auto-da-fé into a massacre of the Christian public:

¿De qué sirve, Señor omnipotente,
esta nación de sangre filistina?
¿Qué gloria sacarás desta vil gente
en maldades y vicios peregrina?
¡Ea, Señor, acabe incontinentemente
esta fábrica fiera dragontina!
¡Muera Sansón con cuantos filisteos
sustentan estos nichos cananeos! (XIV, 64)

[What purpose, Almighty Lord, does this nation
of Philistine blood serve?
What glory can be reported of these mean people
of such rare wickedness and vice?
Come, Lord, bring down at once this
awful dragon's temple!
Let Samson die with all the Philistines
who support these Canaanite chambers!]

The intertextuality and the use of common biblical and liturgical sources in this last prayer of Samson in the poem, and in the *Romance al Divín Judá Creyente* [Ballad to the Holy Believer Judah], have been highlighted by Oelman (Enríquez Gómez 1986: 80) and Kramer-Hellinx (2015). I believe that similarities of a structural nature can also be evinced here: the discourse of Lope de Vera begins by reiterating the themes of the ‘lógica ciencia / de un teólogo moderno’ [logical science / of a modern theologian] (ll. 45-46), aimed at converting him, to then deliver a profession of faith proclaiming the prerogatives of the Jewish God (‘Deidad incomunicable (...) siendo su nombre ab eterno (...) y siendo infinito Dios (...) deidad increada’) [Incommunicable deity (...) whose name exists *ab aeterno* (...) and, God being an Infinite God (...) he is a deity uncreated]; ll. 85-97). These similarities can be identified explicitly when just before dying ‘en el fuego’ [in the fire] of the ‘tribunal de Antioco’ [court of Antioch], Lope de Vera evokes the example of Samson: ‘cual otro Sansón asido / a las columnas del templo / he de morir por vivir / aunque pese al filistëo’ [Just as another Samson / embracing the pillars of the temple / I shall die in order to live / even if this should displease the Philistine] (ll. 281-84). From the flames ‘de la vil Inquisición / tribunal de los Infiernos’ [the vile Inquisition / Hell’s tribunal] (ll. 307-08), Lope de Vera finds the strength to invoke the ‘Dios de Abraham, Dios de Isaac, / Dios de Jacob, Rey eterno, / cuyo nombre incircunscrito / sólo consta de Sí mismo’ [God of Abraham, God of Isaac, / God of Jacob, Eternal King / whose uncircumscribed name is composed only of itself] (ll. 329-32). It is likely that, at the time, the references to human sacrifices in the *Sansón nazareno* (VII, 10; V, 32; IX, 27), which are not present in the biblical book, as well as the amplification of this final scene (the riotous crowd witnessing the ritual, the mocking of the condemned man, the significance of a pyre offered in fulfilment of a vow), together with the words pronounced by the hero, can be considered modernizing elements through which, in the ceremony described, an auto-da-fé can be explicitly construed, rendering the work a counter-discourse.

This part of the production of Antonio Enríquez Gómez, an author with a multi-faceted and elusive personality, in its constant exposé of the Spanish policy towards the *conversos* and in its no less continuous appeal to new or consolidated European policies, offers a substantial discursive unity that goes beyond the diverse literary genres adopted.

The Italianism of José de la Vega

José de la Vega (1649-1692?), as he signs himself in many works published in Amsterdam—

though the imprint of his books indicates Antwerp as the place where they were printed—or Josef Penso Passarinho, the name he uses in the Hebrew community of Livorno, was born into a family of Andalusian *converso* merchants who returned to Judaism in Amsterdam. He composed his first work for the theater in Hebrew but along the lines of Spanish drama. His other works, written in Spanish, reflect a strong Italian influence. In his youth, probably from 1675 to the early 1680s, Vega lived in Livorno, taking care of the commercial activities of his family, related to the Vega Passarinho family, who were at the center of a transatlantic commercial network. Isaac Orobio, in his ‘Elogio’ published in the collection of short stories *Rumbos peligrosos, por donde navega con título de Novelas, la çosobrante Nave de la Temeridad temiendo los peligrosos escollos de la censura* [Dangerous Paths, along which the Foundering Ship of Recklessness Sails, Fearing the Dangerous Shoals of Censorship] (1683), insists on the precocity of the author’s talent and on his prodigious talent for the rhetorical genres which brought him fame both in Amsterdam and in Livorno.

The titles of several of his discourses, published on his return to Amsterdam, bring back to life the occasions on which they were discussed in Livorno, either in the Synagogue or in an academic session (Nider 2011; Pancorbo 2019). José de la Vega was a promoter of the first literary academies of the Western Sephardi diaspora (of the *Sitibundos* in Italy and of the *Floridos* in Amsterdam). In the prologue to the *Rumbos*, the first of his publications in Spanish, all of which were printed in Amsterdam but probably drafted in Italy, there is a list of literary projects, a self-promoting strategy that was fashionable at the time. In this list, where we find his readings and preferred models, the Italian references significantly outnumber the Spanish. For example, Vega affirms that he translated *Filosofia morale* [Moral Philosophy] (1670) by Emanuele Tesauro; however, to date no trace remains of the translation, although the influence this work and others by the Jesuit is evident in Vega’s literary production. The other focal point of his Italianism is represented by the authors of the Venetian *Accademia degli Incogniti*. Like the founder of the Academy, Giovan Francesco Loredano, of whom he says he translated the *Salmi penitenziali* [Penitential Psalms], Vega considers publishing his own letters, taking credit for the wide range of thematic interests and the influence of non-fiction. Loredano had published his *Adamo* in 1640—one of the *istorie sacre* [sacred stories] that followed the *Davide* by Virgilio Malvezzi (1634)—and it is of Loredano that Vega’s project of a *vida* of the same character, rejected by Rabbinical censoring (Boer 1995: 54), makes us think. In Italy this genre, frequently adopted by the *Incogniti*, was the object of debate (Ferrante Pallavicino, for instance, suggested to Loredano that he should not publish *Adamo*) and censorship, since it was thought

that the texts might include considerations akin to libertinism.

The *Vida de Joseph* [Life of Joseph] (which, according to the author, he completed over the course of six months five years earlier, while he was residing in Livorno) must have belonged to the same genre—comparable to the biblical novel *Giuseppe* by Pallavicino—as well as the *Vida de Faustina* [Life of Faustina], probably a reformulation or imitation of the *Vita di Faustina* by Antonio Lupis (1660), Loredano's secretary. This work on the love life of the daughter of Antonino Pio, which also contains eulogies of the native town of the author as well as of Venice, and references to the *Accademia degli Incogniti* and its founder, may have exerted an influence over some aspects of the *Rumbos peligrosos*. Also related with the *Incogniti*, we find the translations of seven rhetorical speeches from the collections of Loredano, Pallavicino, Giovanni Battista Manzini, Lupis and Vincenzo Pasqualigo (Nider 2011): these speeches are performed by classical characters (such as Cicero, Cleopatra, Nero, and Mark Antony) imagined in dramatic moments of their lives. This is a rhetorical genre that may be ascribed to historical preparatory exercises, initiated by Manzini and Loredano, and which was popular in Europe at the time (Nider 2017b). José de la Vega takes the credit for introducing the genre to Spanish literature. As well as translating these works, most likely during the period spent in Livorno, Vega also wrote new material of his own, about biblical characters. The project illustrated in the prologue of *Rumbos* in 1683 reveals his intention to publish them in a collection. This pattern takes shape in the *Ideas posibles* [Possible Ideas] (1692), in which original discourse and translations converge. The latter are integrated into an overarching structure thanks to a network of thematic correspondences, a feature that is lacking in the first Italian collections but which can be identified in those corresponding to the years nearer to the Italian sojourn of the author, such as those of Lupis (1664) and of Pasqualigo (1671). The articulations of these sylloges, rich in paratexts, probably had an influence over the *Rumbos peligrosos* as well (Fradejas Lebrero 1994; Copello 2013). In the opening prologue, Vega presents himself as an innovator, starting from the expansion of the paratextual structure. As well as the paratexts at the opening of the volume, each story is prefaced with a dedication (as in Matteo Bandello, one of the foremost authors of the Italian *novelle*) and a prologue.

To conclude the examination of the Italianism of José de la Vega, an aspect which, as will be shown, has textual and interpretative implications, it is necessary to mention the fact that the Italian authors cited recur also in his subsequent works, the *Discursos académicos, morales, retóricos y sagrados, que recitó en la florida Academia de los Floridos* [Academic, Moral, rhetorical and sacred, which recited in the florid Academy of the Floridos]

Rhetorical, and Sacred Discourses, Recited in the Florid Academy of the Floridos] (1685), which partially recast the *Academia de los Sitibundos* of Leghorn, and in the dialogue *Confusión de Confusiones* [Confusion of Confusions] (1688), the best known work of the author. The interlocutors in this dialogue, set in 1688, year of the demise of the Dutch East India Company and the collapse of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, are a merchant, a stockholder and a philosopher. The intermingling of specialized registers, the formation of neologisms derived from the word *acción* [action] such as *accionasmo* [actionasm] and *accionología* [actionology] is extensive, as is the use of loanwords from Dutch and from other languages (Vega 2000: 41-50, 101). By way of example, the merchant declares to the stockholder: ‘por la verdad que profeso, que me creí en la torre de Babilonia al oír la mezcla y confusión de lenguas que hicistes, ya con el opsie en latín, ya con el bichilé en flamenco ya con el surplus en francés’ [by the truth that I here profess, I thought myself in the Tower of Babel when I heard the mixture and confusion of the languages that you have created, with the *opsie* in Latin, the *bichilé* in Flemish and lastly with the *surplus* in French] (2000: 133). The tone is that of a pleasant conversation flavored with erudite notes, confirming the tendency of the author to ‘Italianize’ the text, built on the model of the *Tabula Cebetis* through the comment of Agostino Mascardi (Nider 2019). This intertwining does not emerge as it should in the modern editions. An in-depth examination of the function and the consistency of the ‘library’ of the author (as Kaplan [2016] does for Spinoza and Menasseh ben Israel, readers of Cellorigo and Huarte de San Juan) would go a long way towards revealing the details of his cultural choices and his compositional techniques.

Italian Models and Counter-Discourse

The *Discursos académicos* are presented by the author as texts ‘para divertir’ [for amusement] and considered by critics as identical to the Iberian academic discourses, devoid of confessional allusions. Analysis of an excerpt taken from *Il Niente* [Nothingness] by Luigi Manzini (1634) reveals the presence of a Jewish perspective and of a subtle dig at informers, a main theme of *converso* satire. Manzini questioned the principle of authority in the name of the search for a new intellectual liberty, triggering a philosophical-literary controversy that aroused interest far and wide (Ossola 2007; Nider 2017b). It is thus of particular interest that Vega should cite this text, as well as *La metafísica del Niente* [The Metaphysics of Nothingness] by Tesauro (1659-1660) in another discourse; the *Discursos académicos* (1685: 237-45) illustrate the absence of a theme, a ‘point’, for the academic session. Nevertheless, like Manzini, Vega recalls that

Nature abhors the void and rejects the idea that Nothingness cannot be known. The play on the word ‘Homo’ is adapted, omitting the Trinitarian meaning of the letter ‘M’ (the three ‘legs’ of the letter ‘M’ symbolize for Manzini the three persons or hypostases of the Trinity), to conclude that the academy rightly praises Nothingness without imposing a specific theme (or ‘point’) on the proceedings. This is particularly significant because the locution *dar puntos*, according to Covarrubias, is synonymous with informing on someone, just as the *soplones* to the Inquisitors: ‘dar puntos es de soplones porque, como explica Covarrubias, los chismes se parecen a los puntos que simbolizan las vocales en el hebreo. Covarrubias bajo la entrada chisme: “porque la chisme siempre se dice entre dientes, pasito, y a la oreja”’ [*dar puntos* is something spies do because, as Covarrubias explains, rumors sound like the notes that stand for the vowels in Hebrew. In the entry on gossip Covarrubias notes: “because gossip is always muttered under one’s breath, into one’s ear”] (s.v.). This example, besides its Italianism, also reveals that even works addressed to the public and programmatically designed only ‘para divertir’, also contained elements adapted to Judaism, with satirical ideas dedicated to a *judeoconverso* public.

Analogous considerations can be formulated from the analysis of Biblical themes in the *Ideas posibles*. In line with the Ovidian model of the harangues directed to female interlocutors, the speech of Samson is addressed to Delilah, his beloved and betrayer for religious reasons, in all likelihood delivered in the temple of the enemy shortly before the hero’s moment of martyrdom (as seen in Enríquez Gómez). In the first part, he affirms that his decision to reveal the secret was choosing the lesser evil, given that not responding to Delilah’s insistent requests and breaking with her would have led to his certain death, but in the last part, the amorous element is overshadowed as Samson prays to God to assist him in his revenge ‘con estos pilares a que me arrimo al mayor acierto como guiaste a mis venerables padres en el desierto con el pilar’ (1692:283) [with these pillars, through which I am near to accomplishing my greatest success, just as you guided my venerable fathers in the desert with the pillar]. A further variation on this same theme of the pillars, upon which notices announcing the guilt of the perpetrators (including Samson himself) are affixed, indicates the desire for social and religious redemption:

Y si conociendo ser la columna del valor, solicitó que se fijasen a estas columnas los procesos de su delirio, borre derribando estas columnas los procesos para que se puedan erigir nuevas estatuas a su heroicidad destas columnas. (1692:284)

[And if, feeling himself to be a pillar of courage, he asked that notices of the trials of his madness be affixed to the pillars, in knocking down these same pillars he could erase the trials so that with these pillars could then be erected new statues in honor of his heroic deeds.]

In the harangues, the model of which is Italian rather than Iberian, imitation is not unoriginal: the rhetorical structure and the very function of the discourse appear to convey not so much a rhetorical diversion as an exemplary incident that exhorts identification, favored by collective reading aloud in an academic context. In the case of the Livorno academy—frequented by the rabbis—and that of Amsterdam, it was in fact impossible for these not to have a religious connotation.

In conclusion, the works of these two authors, of different generations and of diverse experiences (Enríquez Gómez was born and bred in Spain in a *converso* environment, and José de la Vega, in Amsterdam and in Livorno in a Jewish *milieu*), clearly illustrate the political, economic and cultural interests of the *homens da Nação*. The protagonists of the Western Sephardic Diaspora, accustomed to changing their economic and political strategies in order to confront a constantly evolving and expanding world, besides their religious choices demonstrate a remarkable curiosity and intellectual open-mindedness towards the culture of the hosting countries. These attitudes lead to eclectic and modern cultural choices, as their readings and their writings show. Iberian literary models are intermingled and often reformulated into counter-arguments that testify to their interest in acknowledging the claims of the *converso* minority. This does not supplant their sense of affiliation to the Iberian world, with which the *conversos* wish to maintain a constant dialogue, and to which new prospects of development and renovation are proposed, thanks to the introduction both of new themes reflecting the new global and cosmopolitan scope of the *Nação*, and of new genres, tailored to meet the requirements of the *judeoconverso* ethnic-religious group. These novelties are also addressed to Hispanic readers and scholars, as evinced by the persistent use of Spanish, even in works dedicated to the political and military leaders of other European countries that showed more willingness in welcoming the Western Sephardic Diaspora.

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