

Jewish Writings on Art in Fifteenth-Century Castile

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RESUMEN

Escribir acerca de arte (prescriptiva, comentarios, evaluaciones, etc.) no es algo que asociamos con los estudios acerca de intelectuales judíos medievales. Tomando como punto de partida que, como la categoría de representación, el concepto de *figura* es relevante tanto en el arte como en los textos, este artículo trata de acercarse a las actitudes judías hacia el arte expresadas por escrito en, por ejemplo, el caso de las relaciones entre el traductor castellano cuatrocentista Arragel (y otros como Duran, Bonafed o Yocef ibn Saddiq) y los artistas según sus escritos. La cuestión de la iconoclastia, el iconoclasmo o el anicomismo no es lo único relevante. Una de las alternativas a los problemas de la hermenéutica sería la de concentrarse en el contexto histórico-cultural, es decir en la historia de las relaciones entre patronos (cristianos y nobles) y clientes (judíos, estudiosos) en épocas y áreas precisas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Arragel. Judíos de España. Judíos y arte. Texto e imagen.

ABSTRACT

The activity of writing about art (prescriptions, commentaries, evaluations, etc.) is not prominent in discussions of medieval Jewish intellectual life. Departing from the realization that, like representation, *figura* is common to art and to writing the article attempts to reconstruct the fifteenth century Hispano-Jewish written attitudes to art and the painters and vice versa as in the case of Arragel (and also others such as Duran, Bonafed, Yocef ibn Saddiq). These relate on occasions to iconoclasm but cannot be exclusively reduced to this one issue. Other questions impinge on the subject. One way out of the hermeneutical impasse would be to see them in a historic-cultural context: that of the history of relations between (Christian, noble) patrons and (learned, Jewish) clients in precise areas and periods.

KEY WORDS

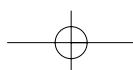
Arragel. Jews in Spain. Jews and art. Text and image.

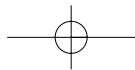
The late middle ages in Spain produced neither a Vasari nor an Interián de Ayala nor their Jewish equivalent. If they had, the following lines would be less relevant. As it is, it suffices to glance at a recent useful anthology of c. fifty-one Jewish texts on the visual arts¹ to realize the poverty of the medieval material in comparison with that of other periods. It is, possibly, this very dearth which leads to pleas for granting autonomy to the visual, in histories of medieval Jewish art.² The issue becomes of wider significance if we recall the recent thesis of Pereda,³ who argues that the spectacular rise in quantity of Christian devotional art in fifteenth century Spain is a reaction to Jewish iconoclasm transmitted by the conversos. It is this perspective—of consciousness of the dearth

of writings on art—which leads to a rereading of the corpus of texts on iconoclasm of the type included in the *Católica impugnación*.⁴ Talavera would be speaking for a whole society preoccupied with Jewish iconoclasm.

I

The best known and most frequently reprinted representation of a medieval Jewish translator is the illumination which appears near the *Prologue*, at the beginning of Arragel's *Biblia*⁵ (Maqueda, 1422-33). It has features which recall the composition scheme of "presentation scenes," a motif of ancient lineage well studied for Chris-





tian art.⁶ Some of the details have attracted attention leading to various hypotheses about its relations to reality. The attitudes of the illuminators/painters to the translator would be reflected in details such as the kneeling position, the “Jewish badge” or distinctive sign, even the beard and the folds of the cape have been searched for historical significance. The very size is seen as significant: only a few illuminations—in that large codex of more than 300 miniatures—take up a whole page, as does this particular illumination.⁷ And yet, everyone agrees that such features of fifteenth century realism as the attempts to characterize individuality or psychology by means of facial expressions—i.e. what we expect from Jorge Inglés or the Hispano Flemish school—are absent in this work. The presentation can hardly have taken place at the time of the book’s completion. Despite the relatively meagre data on don Luis de Guzmán, it is known that he was engaged in the battlefield at the time. The question of realism and representation, thus, confronts us at the very beginning of this fifteenth century Castilian work in a way that, again, recalls the lack of contemporary texts explaining this type of painting and supporting the numerous and contradictory interpretations.

II

Arragel’s *Prologue*⁸ contains a section [chapter xii] which may be seen as a written essay on iconoclasm. As he asserts with characteristic hyperbaton: “figuras... non...poner...lycenciado seria.”

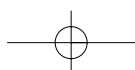
Arragel’s “essay” on iconoclasm is to some extent related to the Maimonidean Thirteen Principles he had mentioned in the same *Prologue*. But, by 1433, such Jewish iconoclasm or Maimonideanism can hardly be said to be specifically Maimonidean given the wide influence of—and opposition to—Maimonides in late medieval Spain. On the other hand, Maimonides the halakhist—with his numerous legal distinctions and qualifications of iconoclasm and intricate arguments about visual representation—is not mentioned here. Nor are Maimonides’ earlier (Talmudic, Geonic) sources on this complex legal/halakhic question referred to by Arragel in the *Prologue*. Heir to a culture which included, amongst other components, various Neoplatonic texts as well as a rich Hispano-Jewish tradition of engagement with such precise visual hermeneutics as those of the (ultimately Hellenic/Hellenistic) treatises on physiognomy, (and some recently noticed practices of ekphrasis)⁹ Arragel’s texts or iconoclasm or aniconism cannot be taken simplistically as being fully transparent. Indeed the Master had not asked him to paint images of God, and Arragel’s argument moves between the painting of God and other types of representation. In this essay he argues: “muchas veces

dezir oy a los reuerendos maestros theologos christianos que estas ystorias se fazen en los templos e libros porque la popular gente se inprensionen en Dios auer [...]”. He is echoing an idea which may be described as a convention or commonplace of the Judeo-Christian polemic even before the rise of the converso population in 1391. Thus, for example, in the polemical text composed c. 1370 by an anonymous Castilian and copied in the fifteenth century and preserved in MS 1344 of the Biblioteca de Palacio we read:

[fol. 81r:] Dize el judio Yo dudo contra vuestros usos sobreste fecho porque fazedes imagines contra el mandamiento de Dios que mando en la ley que non fiziese imagines segund que dize el verso :”Non faras a ti adoladizo ninguno de lo que es en el cielo de suso nin de lo que es en la tierra de yuso nin de las cosas de las aguas non los honrraras nin los adoraras (Ex. 20:4) Porque veo yo que vosotros cristianos que sodes contra la voluntad de Dios e por ende me parece que servides los idolos de los gentiles que otro tiempo adoraron....Pongo que los letrados de vuestra Ley e sabidores sepan e crean lo que vos dezides pero los onbres simples cristianos non diran eso que vos dezides sinon creeran que las imagines que son aquellas mismas a cuya figura son fechas [...].¹⁰

III

The relations between figures in painting and in language are not merely conceptual. Maimonides was indeed preoccupied with the question of figurative, anthropomorphic language. Arragel does indeed cite him. But, to understand the difference it may be useful to recall how (chronologically and geographically) close Arragel was to the Saragossan controversy (1380’s?) on vernacular (i.e. Ibero-Romance) translations of Hebrew biblical texts. The problem was treated in a number of epistles (Crescas, R. Nissim, R. Isaac bar Sheshet, etc.) and—according to the contemporary texts—also engaged wider groups in the community. The issue at stake was whether the vernacular translation of the Hebrew Book of Esther could be used in reading to women so as to fulfil the commandments of Purim. The problem was the case of texts whose original meaning was unclear (e.g. *ahashdarpanim bne ha-pahot*) but when translated into the vernacular offered an unambiguous, univalent but also unfounded signification.¹¹ That is the problem of Arragel as translator, but also as “critic” of the work of art, which also opts for one, unambiguous rendering where there is no such assurance in the text. Thus, for example, in the case of Judges 14: “e toda la gente de la tierra entraron en la foresta e auia miel por el suelo del campo,” the illumina-



tion¹² has two armies facing each other in late medieval battle dress and armour. In the foreground we see three cylindrical containers of which one is spilt.¹³

The illuminators opted for one interpretation of the text; that the honey was on the ground because one of the three containers/hives had fallen. Arragel's stance towards this unambiguous interpretation by the artist is not one of unqualified support:¹⁴ "E auia miel: vnos dizen ser la miel de colmena e asy se puso de fecho en la ystoria que el pintor fizo. Otros dizen ser esta foresta vn grand cañaverall de cañas."¹⁵

Maimonides—working on a Hebrew text and discussing such language-specific concerns as homonymia, roots, morphology of Hebrew verbs, nouns, etc.—did not have the same questions and methods as Arragel even when both are concerned with the figurative. These are very practical and unavoidable problems for Arragel. He articulates them explicitly. The *Prologue* does prefigure some of these practical problems. Thus he asserts:¹⁶ "en el mi prologo [fol. 31a] yo mostre quanto de peligro de vna lengua en otra romançar auia que la gramatica e equivocaciones e tres tienpos conuiene a saber que viene a las deuegadas en el ebrayco un vocablo iudgar se poder en qualquier de los tres tienpos como yo uaron mate por la mi llaga uerbi gracia como yo varon mate por la mi llaga este "mot" a que yo mate romance, otros yo matare romançan e otros yo mato e segund lo que cada vno romança asy glosa." The *Prologue* is thus, a foretaste, as it were, of concrete, practical questions of translation into the romance and exegesis in the romance which will continue to preoccupy Arragel throughout the work. Statements of intentionality in the general *Prologue* are not sufficient to reconstruct the attitude of Arragel, let alone that of a whole cultural tradition on the figurative.

Similarly he writes on another Biblical passage¹⁷ "ymagino e pienso quasy que me repiento que enregne a Saul por rey." Arragel glosses:

tanto es de peligroso el en Dios ninguna pasion corporal poner nin dezir que enel *romance* de los tales pasos se deuen los romançadores atentar e veer que dezir e so protestacion de corregimiento e non por voluntad yerrar e si ende yerro es anularlo el ebrayco dize en este punto vna tal equivoca parte que son sus equivocaciones e sentencias muchas que el ebrayco dize "nihamthy" que puse a Saul por rey e "nihamty" quiere dezir arrepentir me quiero o sso repiso o sso consolado o ymagino e ninguno de estos dezir en Dios non conuienen non arrepentir non consolar porquanto consollacion non toma este nombre saluo sobre contriccion e pesar nin menos ymaginacion que la ymaginacion vezes puede estar vezes non [Paz: sson]e la voluntad de Dios sienpre es fixa e quanto fuyendo de lo que los talmudistas dizen que estos tales dezyres

que furon dichos segun la retorica o fabla humana e que bien asy como la lengua prophetal le pone a Dios ojos e manos e otros semejantes mienbros los quales non sson en la diuinidad que bien asi non es de marauillar que passion de arrepentir o consolar o ymaginar en Dios diga segund que esto mas prolixa e clara mente posimos en la ystoria de Noe.

The problem of "poner a Dios ojos e manos" was announced in the *Prologue*, discussed in the story of Noah and in various other verses and glosses such as this specific passage. The problem belongs, according to Arragel, in the field of the functions of the *romançadores*.

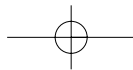
IV

On the same page,¹⁸ the Paz y Melia edition reproduces the illumination where the rending of king Saul's mantle is depicted. The rubric reads: "commo Samuel la ropa a Saul rompio en q el regno de el ronpian et ado lo dauan". ("ron" and "pian" are separated by the head/crown of Saul; i.e. they were added *after* the painting had been done). In the miniature, the tearing is done from the shoulders. The biblical verse in Judges xv reads [fol. 204]¹⁹

e boluio Samuel para se yr e e asi ole dela falda del su manto e ronpiose. Dixole Samuel por este modo rompio el Senor el regnado de Israhel el dia de oy de ti e dado lo tien el tu proximo que es megor que tu.

Arragel writes: "el pintor ystoriador yerro esta ystoria en razon de la rotura de las ropas de estos mensajeros" or "que la rotura fue desde las assentaderas abaxo de guisa que asentaderas e piernas se les parescian" or "los glosadores son aqui divisos que non determinan quien ronpio a quien la falda [...] non enbargante que el ystoriador que aqui la ystoria ystorio e pinto a Samuel, que el ronpia la falda al Saul que qualquier dellas pueden estar. Pero a lo público non me parece que se podria sostener Saul al Samuel que non la contra [...]".²⁰

The kind of close collaboration between Hebrew scribe and miniaturist that we find in such late medieval Aragonese cases as the Sarajevo Haggadah—where the Hebrew letter, without noticeable break, turns into a figurative painting—will not be found in the Arragel Bible. The *lamed* which turns into a fleur de lis, the final *khav* which sprouts vine leaves or becomes the tongue of a dragon or the tail of a stork are not a feature of Arragel's Biblia. The argument that scribe and painter are one and the same person, raised for the Sarajevo Haggadah precisely because of this close coordination, cannot be made for the Arragel case. But there are relations between the author/scribe and the artists. In some cases we have to acknowledge that the



coordination failed and that we don't know the reasons. In Genesis,²¹ for example, the rubric states: "figura del mouimiento e de las andas do pusieron a Joseph" but the painting was not carried out. On fol. 76 verso part of the text is missing and it begins: "de oro fino las faras." On Genesis 19:32 the rubric reads "figura de como estaua enbragado e las dos fijas cada una con su copa en la mano" [fol. 38r], i.e. the rubric creates a program for the painters. In this case it was not carried out.

This would mean that the coordination was, to say the least, not always perfect. It was, therefore, not simply a matter of "collaboration". But this is not always the case. In Isaiah 20:2-3 [fol. 273b], Isaiah is depicted barefoot and naked, except for a loin cloth, holding a pilgrim's staff. The painting faces the gloss, where the text explains the picture and why "andvuo [...] desnudo et descalço." The underlining of the first three lines in red ink is part of this cooperation, manifest in the organization of space no less than in the content of the gloss. In Deuteronomy 5:6-16 [fol. 141r.] the Ten Commandments are written in gold letters, arranged in two columns, framed in a decorative golden rectangle. In the text of the gloss, Arragel refers to this depiction as the "diez mandamientos [...] segund los ebreos."

Some of the glosses are directly and explicitly concerned with explaining and commenting on the works of art rather than the biblical text itself. In some cases, this is almost formally announced. E.g. "esta es la glosa de la figura e estoria que se sigue en esta colupna. Deves saber que Salomon edifico su casa donde el estava judgando [...]" [p. 746]. Or, elsewhere, [fol. 236], "e asy es conplida la glosa de la ystoria magna del tenplo que queda en esta otra colupna passada a Dio gracias." Solomon's throne and the Temple are two paintings which he treats in this fashion. He devotes to them longer and more formally noticeable essays or brief treatises. What may need emphasis is that behind the apparently simple romance essays on the paintings there is a familiarity with dispersed and sometimes intricate texts in Hebrew and Aramaic on these aspects of antiquity. They are the subject of interpretation through centuries and by the fifteenth century they require options or selections from these interpretations. Identifying such options may be a challenging task. It seems that a modern complete analysis of all the panels of the "ystoria magna del tenplo" [referred to on fol. 236] is still a desideratum especially if we bear in mind that these themes continued to be studied after the completion of the Talmud. Arragel invests his efforts in creating a series of written comments and compositions on the visual art.

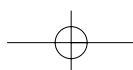
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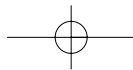
To what extent is Arragel a spokesman with a consistent message that represents Jewish and converso consistent

attitudes to art? The conversos Diego Arias Dávila—founder of the dynasty—and his son Juan Arias Dávila were patrons of the arts and crafts. The "techos polidos" of the former's residence in Segovia were no less renowned than the preference for Renaissance architecture of the latter's remodelling of the castle in the episcopal village of Turégano. When, before 1466, a painter of retablos approached Diego Arias and showed him his painting, the latter replied with a quotation from a Psalm and, addressing a Jewish friend of his who was present, he concluded it in the Hebrew original. The tenor of the story was iconoclastic, as were the expressions of women conversas against religious imagery, well documented in archival records from Castile of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. But the latter did not use Hebrew.²² Arragel was as familiar with the "iconoclastic" Psalm as Diego Arias, but he does not mention it in his letter to don Luis de Guzmán. In Belchite, in the 1440s (?) Shelomoh ben Reuven Bonafed was proud of his text's visual quality and refers to it as "creating by compass".²³ That is to say that, within a broad and diffuse category of iconoclasm, there is an extremely wide range of forms of expression, ideas and attitudes.

The period from the c. 1280's to the expulsions witnessed what might be termed an explosion of the visual arts among the Iberian Jews. Nothing remotely comparable in quality or quantity can be documented for what used to be called the "Golden Age". Although a great deal of research is still necessary, the predominance of Aragon in the second half of the fourteenth century seems to coincide with one of the golden ages of some dynasties of Aragonese Jews; the De La Cavalleria is the best known one. The ensuing Castilian fifteenth century activities of illumination seem to have had a direct influence on the Lisbon ateliers.²⁴ The patrons of these—richly illuminated—manuscripts are not outside the communal culture; they are addressed in writing by the artists or scribes in the most traditional terms expressing the wishes for a continuity in learning the Torah within their families.²⁵ Finally, it may be recalled that the late Middle Ages are the background to the composition and to the dissemination of the manuscript of the technical treatise on colouring *O livro de como se fazem as cores* in Judeo-Portuguese aljamía at Parma's Palatina.²⁶ A society/public of Iberian readers of the Hebrew alphabet, who are interested in painting to such an extent cannot be significantly described as iconoclastic.

These facts and texts, however briefly recalled here, do not support arguments of a particularly strong or even significant and coherent iconoclasm. They certainly don't suggest a homogeneous attitude to the culture of the visual. Hebrew texts from fifteenth century Iberia seem to refer to the contemporary Jewish custom of having paintings in the home. In 1403, in the *Prologue* to the *Ma'aseh*





'*Efod*, Duran elaborated on this question and constructed an ideology of patronage, where he sees the wealthy patrons amongst the Jews of Spain, throughout their history, as responsible in no small measure for the quality of their cultural achievements. The elaboration occurs in a passage of a section on education. He expresses the ideal that study should be by means of clear and richly decorated manuscripts; i.e. an ideal which requires support and patronage.²⁷ And it is possibly such areas (history of patronage) that need to be addressed.

The Talmudic *Safra we-sayyfa*, no less than *arma virumque cano*, associated arms and letters. This pairing, so well represented among Arabic, Hebrew, Latin and Romance literary texts, leads to the famous “arms vs letters” topos. It could be argued that the primal scene of presentation, the correspondence between don Luis and Rabbi Moshe, hence the whole Arragel project, is presented in these terms. Writing from the Toledan Monastery of San Augustin, seat of the court on April 5th, 1422, de Guzmán amplifies this pair. The “letters” are implied in the mention of the Bible (“en romance glosada e ystoriada” by someone who is “muy bastante”) which is necessary for “los tales como nos.” The “tales” are those who are engaged in “p[er]seguimiento” and “servicio” and other military deeds “que conuiene a nuestra orden.” (i.e. “arms”) One could trace the development of the pair also in don Luis’ allusions to Amadis or the hunt²⁸ (arms) on the one hand and, on the other hand, to letters: the cluster of images of *otium* (“tiempos que esentos nos quedan”) Bible, translation, contemplation of God and scholarship.

Sex, violence and the loving attention to the details of courtly ceremonial, accoutrement and paraphernalia (the

painters seem to use any excuse for applying gold to depictions of crowns, for example) are features of this gallery of more than 300 art works. Such an aesthetic seems to be aimed less at the Rabbi, masters of theology and monks, than at the Master of the military Order by artists, who were better informed than we can ever be about his particular tastes. The usual perspectives of reading these paintings and texts in terms of overarching, timeless—but tired—schemes (Orient and Occident, Church and Synagogue) may not exhaust or explain fully such a concrete and culturally hybrid phenomenon. Arragel himself [fol. 14] speaks in more concrete and local terms of “nuestra Castilla” and local realities enter the text when mentioning the “dos en latin biblias” which may be found “en Madrit e en Cuellar” or, much more pointedly, when identifying his public by employing the vocative to address his public directly “la tu villa de Escalona.” The movement between localities in such texts is reminiscent of the distances between Maqueda and Toledo (i.e. between the Rabbi and the painters), the absences and presences of don Luis and, in addition, the time factor: c. eleven years. It may suffice to recall the oscillating attitudes of the censor/collaborator Fr. Enzina who, at times is determined to be in control, but at other times is too busy to read the work. Numerous workshops, differences between draughtsmen, colorists, different scribal hands, different alphabets: given the facts, the last thing one can expect is consistency. It is from such a milieu—that of the noble households of Castile—and for such a milieu that there arise the negotiations of Arragel. This is also the context for his impossible—and yet necessary, indeed, essential—dreams: to translate the Bible into the romance and to write about art.

NOTAS

¹ *Jewish texts on the visual arts*. Edited with commentary by Vivian B. MANN; rabbinic texts translated by Eliezer DIAMOND, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

² Eva FROJMOVIC, “Messianic Politics in re-Christianized Spain: Images of the Sanctuary in Hebrew Bible Manuscripts”, in Eva FROJMOVIC (ed.), *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, Leiden, Brill, 2002.

³ Felipe PEREDA, “El debate sobre la imagen en la España del siglo XV: judíos, cristianos y conversos”, *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 14, (2002), pp. 59-79; *idem*, *Las imágenes de la discordia. Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del 400'*, Marcial Pons, Madrid, 2007.

⁴ See *Hernando de Talavera, Católica impugnación: Estudio preliminar de FRANCISCO MÁRQUEZ*, edición y notas de FRANCISCO MARTÍN HERNÁNDEZ, Barcelona, Flors, 1961.

⁵ Like the Bible and Maimonides, Arragel has attracted attention and the large (and growing) bibliography cannot be completely listed or critically evaluated in a precise thematic study. For the editions and some of the research on the Arragel Bible see Eleazar GUTWIRTH, “The transmission of Rabbi Moses Arragel; Maqueda, Paris, London.” *Sefarad* 63,1 (2003), pp. 69-87. For the problematics of Arragel’s

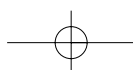
sources see *idem*, “Daniel 1/4 y las ansiedades del cortesano” in *III Simposio Bíblico Español I Luso-Espanhol*, Valencia-Lisboa, 1991, pp. 639-648. For Arragel’s writings as representative of mind sets in fifteenth century Hispano-Jewish communities, see *idem*, “The ‘lower orders’ in XVth c. Hispano-Jewish Thought”, en *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 30 (1981), pp. 83-98.

⁶ See for example James Finn COTTER, “The Book Within the Book”, *Florilegium* 12 (1993), pp. 107-140.

⁷ See the excellent reproductions in Sonia FELLOUS, *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel*, Paris, Somogy, 2001.

⁸ Although the references to the manuscript’s folios are generally from the facsimile, whenever possible I shall try to refer to the less inaccessible transcription by PAZ y MELIÁ in *Biblia-Antiguo Testamento-traducida del hebreo al castellano por Rabi Mosé Arragel de Guadalfajara-1422-1433?-y publicada por el Duque de Berwick y de Alba*, edición de A. PAZ y MELIÁ and Julián PAZ, Madrid, 1920-1922.

⁹ The literature on Jews and Neo-Platonism is vast. See, for example, Paul B. FENTON, “Un monument de la pensée juive en terre tunisienne; le commentaire kairouanais sur le Livre de la Création”, *Juifs et musulmans en Tunisie; fraternité et déchirements*, édition Sonia FELLOUS, Paris, Somogy, 2003, pp. 67-71. On attitudes to the visual



- in Hispano-Jewish communities see Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Face to face; History, Physiognomy and Pictorialism in Solomon Bonafed", en "*Encuentros*" and "*desencuentros*"; *Spanish Jewish Cultural Interaction throughout History*, edición de F. Carrete, F. Márquez *et al*, Tel Aviv, University, 2000, pp. 327-341.
- ¹⁰ Angel GÓMEZ MORENO, "Gramática castellana de palacio: Un nuncio de Nebrija", *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 1 (1989), pp. 41-51; *idem*, "An Unknown Jewish Christian Controversy in Fifteenth Century Talavera de la Reina Towards the End of Spanish Jewry", *Nunca fue pena mayor. Estudios*, edición de V. RONCERO y A. MENÉNDEZ COLLERA, Cuenca, 2001, pp. 57-86; Aitor GARCÍA MORENO (ed.), *Coloquio entre un cristiano y un judío*, London, Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2003
- ¹¹ Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Religión, historia y las Biblias romanceadas", *Revista Catalana de Teología* 13,1 (1988), pp. 115-133.
- ¹² PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I, facing p. 654.
- ¹³ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., p. 654 [from fol. 202v].
- ¹⁴ From 202v.
- ¹⁵ Arragel follows on a long textual tradition of exegesis on Judges 14:8: "There was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion." Targum had: *qina de-dabaryatha w-bey duvsha*; Rashi: *knisat devorim*; Kimhi and Gersonides had not glossed. Ferrara (1553) translated: "y ha enxambre de abejas en cuerpo de leon y mile (i.e. miel)."
- ¹⁶ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., p. 111.
- ¹⁷ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., p. 686.
- ¹⁸ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., p. 654.
- ¹⁹ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., p. 656.
- ²⁰ PAZ y MELIÁ 1920-22, vol. I., pp. 704-5 and 686. Rashi asserted that according to the literal sense, Saul grasped the "wing"- sleeve of Samuel because he wanted him to turn and kneel because they were in the *Ohel Mo'ed*. In the Midrash Haggadah this opinion is disputed. Some say that it was Samuel's mantle which had been rendered by Saul. Some say that it was Saul's mantle that had been rendered. That is to say that here, again, Arragel's attitudes to the painting are related to the sources, the texts which preceded him but which he does not explicitly acknowledge in his commentary in the romance. For other cases see for example Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Arragel on Ruth; Rashi in fifteenth century Castilian?", *Rashi, 1040-1990; hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach*, édition par Gabrielle SED-RAJNA, Paris, Cerf, 1993, pp. 657-662.
- ²¹ PAZ y MELIÁ, 1920-22, vol. I., Introduction, p. XX.
- ²² For Arias Dávila's encounter with the painter of retablos see Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "From Jewish to "Converso" humour in fifteenth-century Spain", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 67,3 (1990), pp. 223-233. For women's iconoclastic polemics see *idem*, "Gender, History and the Judeo-Christian polemic", in *Contra Iudaeos*, édition by Ora LIMOR, Tübingen, 1996, pp. 257-278.
- ²³ For a possible context cf. E. GUTWIRTH, "Jewish Bodies and Renaissance Melancholy: Culture and the City in Italy and the Ottoman Empire", in *The Jewish Body: Corporeality, Society, and Identity in the Renaissance and Early Modern Period*, édition by M. DIEMLING and G. VELTRI, Leyden, Brill, 2009, pp. 57-92, p. 83, note 53.
- ²⁴ Thérèse METZGER, "Les manuscrits hébreux décorés à Lisbonne dans les dernières décennies du 15e siècle", in *L'Humanisme portugais et l'Europe*, Paris, Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Centre Culturel Portugais, 1984, pp. 761-780.
- ²⁵ Gabrielle SED-RAJNA, *Manuscrits hébreux de Lisbonne. Un atelier de copistes et d'enlumineurs au XVe siècle*, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1970
- ²⁶ D. S. BLONDHEIM, "An Old Portuguese Work on Manuscript Illumination", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 20 (1929/30), pp. 97-135.
- ²⁷ For Duran's views on visual art see e.g. Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Religión, historia y las Biblias romanceadas." *Revista Catalana de Teología* 13,1 (1988), pp. 115-133. For the references to paintings in the Jewish home in texts from Alami to Saba see, for example Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Habitat and ideology; the organization of private space in late medieval juderías", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 9,2 (1994), pp. 205-234. Although Duran's is a fundamental text for understanding one type of written reactions to Jewish art, one may find others in the same cultural milieu [Iberian Jewish] of the fifteenth century. Two Hebrew chronicles contain passages which, it may be argued, show a similar attitude. Yosef ben Saddiq of Arévalo (around 1487) composed a work which dealt with mainstream Jewish concerns, such as liturgy. Its fiftieth chapter consists of a chronicle. In it, he writes: "[...] in the fourth year of his reign he [Alfonso X] ordered the Jewish sage Gudsal ben Moshe al-Kohen of Toledo to translate from the Arabic into the vernacular the honourable book composed by the sage Albuhatani Abd-Alrahman ben Umar Asufi which deals with matters of the stars and the zodiac and their figures according to the drawings of the heavens. The tables composed by this king about astronomy also were copied. *And my eyes have seen this honourable book and it was written in pure gold and I say that whoever has not seen this book has not seen a magnificent beautiful thing.*" Some decades later, the chronicler Abraham ben Shlomo writes: "[the king don Alonso] in the fourth year of his reign ordered Geras ben Monte the sage to translate from a foreign language into the vernacular the respectable book composed by the sage Abu Husayny ben Abdel Rahman ben Umar which deals with the stars and the zodiac and its figures according to their drawings in the sky. The king's tables on astronomy were also copied. *A sage from our country testified that he saw this book written in letters of pure gold and said that whosoever had not seen this book had never seen a beautiful ornamented thing*"; A. David has made the nineteenth century editions of the two chronicles available in facsimile: *Two Hebrew Chronicles from the Generation of the Expulsion*, Jerusalem, 1979 (hebrew).
- ²⁸ Arragel's text on one type of "arms", i.e. hunting (replying to don Luis' mention of the topic) with its pointed social critique of inequality and its advocacy of charity and compassion would become interesting when compared with Jewish involvement in hunting and the attitudes towards hunting and falconry in Hebrew texts, a subject which deserves separate treatment. One subtheme of these 'hunt writings' may be found in Moshe Arragel's use, in his romance writings, of the Greco-Roman myth of the hunting of the lion of the Nimean forest (twelve labours of Hercules) and its fusion with the *midrashim* on Nimrod, the hunter, in a humanist mode. See for this, Eleazar GUTWIRTH, "Medieval Romance Epistolarity: The Case of the Iberian Jews", *Neophilologus* 84, 2 (2000), pp. 207-224. Recently it has been argued that the hunt is a theme which is far more extensively and significantly treated in Jewish art than previously thought; see Marc Michael EPSTEIN, *Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature*, University Park, Penn State University Press, 1997; Laura PASQUINI, "The Motif of the Hare in the Illuminations of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts", *Materia giudaica* VII/2, (2002), pp. 273-282.
- The historical context needs research. For our purposes here, one point may be emphasized: the attitude towards hunting and falconry was not homogeneous even among the Christians in Arragel's Castile. Thus, for example, an anonymous treatise from 15th century Castile, the Evangelista's *Libro de cetreria* is an extremely humorous, relentless and corrosive attack on falconry, hunters and hunting literature. Paz y Meliá described it as doing for hunting what the Quixote did for knightly tales. See José Manuel FRADEJAS RUEDA, *Literatura cetrera de la edad media y el renacimiento español*, London: QMW, 1998, 41ff.