



ESTUDIOS LITERARIOS

**CONVERSOS, JEWS AND CONVIVENCIAS: HISTORY LOST IN TRANSLATION**

CONVERSOS, JUDÍOS Y CONVIVENCIAS: LA HISTORIA PERDIDA EN LA TRADUCCIÓN

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ABSTRACT

The colloquial usages of *convivencia* constitute only one case of the relevance of translation, as they differ from *convivencia* between religions in medieval Spain and *convivencia* as it appears in the thought of Américo Castro. In the following lines we set it within the frame of its time, its field of scholarship and its historiographical, theoretical and philological presuppositions. We show that it encompasses precise fields such as food studies. An examination of one concrete example throws into question not only the equation of literature and history, but also the “translation” of medieval *convivencia* as a romantic image of idyllic, harmonious, friendly relations.

Keywords: *Conversos*, Jews in Spain, Historiography, Translation, Food literature.

RESUMEN

El uso coloquial del concepto de la convivencia es solo un caso de la relevancia del tema de la traducción, ya que difiere de “convivencia” entre religiones en la España medieval y en el pensamiento de Américo Castro. En las siguientes líneas lo situamos en el marco de su época, su campo de investigación y sus presupuestos históricos, teóricos y filológicos. Demostramos que abarca áreas precisas como son los estudios de alimentación. Un examen de un ejemplo concreto pone en tela de juicio no solo la ecuación de literatura e historia —o lo creativo y lo empírico—, sino también la “traducción” de la convivencia medieval como imagen romántica de relaciones idílicas, armoniosas y amistosas.

Palabras clave: *Conversos*, judíos en España, historiografía, traducción, literatura gastronómica.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The onset of democracy or “Transition” in Spain, after 1975,<sup>1</sup> seems to have ushered in a new attitude amongst academic scholars of *Judeo-Convertos*, Jews and Hebrew, as it brought with it a flurry of studies on medieval *Hispano-Jewish* civilization. A glance at the publications of those years reveals their dynamism and intensity as well as their originality.<sup>2</sup> It is no surprise to find that around that time, it was seen as necessary to publish a new edition of a book which included attempts to tackle *Judeo-Convertos* and *Hispano-Jewish* themes, namely Américo Castro's *España en su historia*. (Castro Quesada, 1983) Indeed, numerous authors write about these subjects as if he were an obligatory reference.

The publications of those years reveal their academic contexts. Amongst these were international congresses, lectures, seminars and —particularly characteristic of academic practice at the time— what were then [echoing Cansinos Assens?<sup>3</sup>] designated as “Encuentros” (Carrete Parrondo, 1985) between scholars coming together from Egypt, France, Morocco, Israel, Spain, US, etc. and studying Muslims, Christians and Jews in medieval Spain. They represent the moment when reassessments really began to take on an international dimension. At the time also, outside the academy, *convivencia* was used in the sense of French “cohabitation” or English “coalition” amongst numerous other diluted connotations. The colloquial usage of *convivencia* is only one case of the relevance of translation, as it differs from *convivencia* between religions in medieval Spain and *convivencia* as it appears in the thought of Américo Castro. In the following lines we set it within the frame of its time, its field of scholarship and its historiographic presuppositions. We show that it encompasses specific fields such as food studies. An examination of one concrete example throws into question not only the un-nuanced equation of literature and history —or the creative and the empirical— but also the “translation” of medieval *convivencia* as a romantic image of idyllic, harmonious, friendly relations.

<sup>1</sup> But see, for the dating of the Transition, Vilarós Soler (1998). This work bears no relation to the beliefs and narratives about 1992 as some kind of *annus mirabilis* in Hispano-Jewish studies.

<sup>2</sup> Muñoz Solla believes that “... finales de la década de los sesenta, momento en el que ... los estudios sefardíes se abrieron paso en España como una disciplina científica necesariamente vinculada a los estudios hispánicos” (Muñoz Solla, 2021: 25).

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish author is famous today as one of Borges' cultural heroes. He published *Encuentros* in 1906. See Prenz Kopusar's study of Rafael Cansinos Assens and his compositions on Hebraic themes. (Prenz Kopusar, 2022: 22).

## 2. CONVIVENCIA AND JEWIS-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

*Convivencia* was a concept already current in the sixteenth century, when it was applied to matrimony or to *convivencia con los indios*.<sup>4</sup> *Convivencia* was not commonly used in the nineteenth century to define or describe Jewish-Muslim-Christian relations in medieval Spain.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, if formulated in overarching terms of “relations between religions”, the nineteenth century (Amador, Graetz, etc.) despite common beliefs, was not an absolute beginning. The topic of the history of Jewish-Christian relations did indeed exist already and did so much earlier. Thus, an example amongst others is the case of Jacques Basnage de Beauval’s work (Basnage de Beauval 1706-07) which was published in the early eighteenth century and cannot be said to ignore the history of Jewish-Christian relations as Segal points out.<sup>6</sup> Spain was within his purview as Elukin noted.<sup>7</sup> Price attends to Basnage’s use of the Jesuit Juan de Mariana’s *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* (1592/1605) to construct the framework for the history of the Spanish expulsion and Inquisition. Although Basnage admires Mariana’s extensive portrayal of the long crisis of Sephardic culture in Spain, he reproves Mariana for

<sup>4</sup> A letter from “Guatemala, 9 junio 1550” asks: “Que Vuestra Alteza mande dar orden por todas vías, como entre estos naturales y en toda esta tierra se aprenda... la lengua castellana nuestra, porque es cosa conveniente y de ello se seguirán grandes provechos: La enseñanza debe ser hecha por todos los españoles promoviéndose así la *convivencia* con los indios, mejorando la actuación de misioneros incompetentes con idiomas aborígenes”, “Carta de Tomás López Medel, oidor de Guatemala al rey”, in Solano (1991). Some other sixteenth century usages have no connection with today’s meanings: “Oh stulti et tardi corde ad credendum in omnibus quae locuti sunt prophetae! ¡Oh locos y tardos entendimientos, groseros, que no acabáis de entender la *convivencia* admirable de la cruz de Cristo para redimir el mundo y ser su cuerpo glorificado” writes Fray Alonso de Cabrera, in his sermon for Lent: “De las consideraciones sobre todos los evangelios de la Cuaresma” published in *Sermones* (Cabrera, 1906: 459).

<sup>5</sup> An important and highly influential exception is that of M. Menéndez y Pelayo [whose work was very well known to Castro] who, ca 1880, writes about *convivencia* between Moslems, Jews and Christians as a great disaster: “Además de todo esto y por la *convivencia con judíos* y musulmanes, introduciéndose muchos desórdenes; eran frecuentes los matrimonios mixtos, el divorcio, las ordenaciones anticanónicas y el concubinato de los clérigos.” (Menéndez y Pelayo, 1946-1948, II: 13). Menéndez y Pelayo’s assertion concerned Jews as well and is therefore relevant in studies of Jews and *judeoconversos*. There can be little doubt that this —and not Pidal— is at the origins of the usage of *convivencia* to refer to Christian, Muslim, Jewish relations. Julian Ribera y Tarrago was not a Hebraist but an Arabist who is sometimes confused with our subject. Indeed, in medieval usage “*judíos e moros*” are sometimes used indistinctly or conjointly. In Ribera’s case, the use of *convivencia* in his *Discursos* (Ribera, 1912: 54) is restricted clearly and explicitly to “los españoles que fueron musulmanes” and was not meant to be relevant to studies on Jews and *judeoconversos*.

<sup>6</sup> “Basnage, the Protestant, anti-Catholic historian wrote about 1700 years of (...) misery and captivity without any hope of relief, providentially determined of course, yet effected as well through the ‘cruel and barbarous zeal’ of both Christians and idolaters” Segal (1983: 303-324, 305).

<sup>7</sup> Basnage argued that “While the Church tried to cloak its cruel treatment of Jews in euphemisms, we should be honest... in the language used to describe Jewish suffering. Does the Church have the power to transform punishment into gentleness? Did the thousands of exiles who were banished from Spain and who died of hunger not suffer?” Elukin (1992: 603-630, 607).

defending the Church's cruelty to Jews. Basnage reads and accepts some of Ibn Verga's representations of Jewish-Christian relations in medieval Spain (Price, 2020: 290-312). The studies by Segal, Elukin, Price, then, do not allow us to ignore the fact of historians' attention to "Jewish-Christian relations" including medieval Spain long before Amador and Graetz. The conventional view of their pioneering role needs nuance. The case of Basnage also shows that there is no real innovation or originality in the lengthy list of later studies which concentrate purely on the negative aspects of relations between the religions. Such a focus is —on its own— by no means unexpected or new. Basnage is probably not a unique example.<sup>8</sup>

The topic of the relations between religions in medieval Spain was studied at length by Amador de los Ríos in the 1840s and 1870s (Amador de los Ríos, 1848; 1875-6). Amador also referred to Jews and the synagogue of *El Tránsito* in his influential esthetic/architectural lecture on mudéjar arts and crafts. He was not alone in including medieval Jewish monuments in appreciations of medieval Spanish architecture and arts. Contexts, analogues and antecedents to this have been found recently (Gutwirth, 2019: 147-179). But they did not refer to *convivencia*. That concept as an operative, key term relating to Jewish-Christian relations in medieval Spain —rather than to matrimony or grammar— makes its appearance in 1948, in Américo Castro's *España en su historia* (Castro Quesada, 1948).

According to the daughter of don Américo, Dr. Carmen Castro Madinaveitia de Zubiri (1912-1997), in her preface to a new edition (Castro Quesada, 1983), that book was ready in 1946 and the delay in publication was due to the publishers. Castro himself wrote that 1948 is not a significant date but an accident:

La impresión de este libro, retrasada por razones técnicas ajenas a la voluntad de la Editorial Losada y del autor, ha sido hecha en mi ausencia y con la ayuda, que nunca agradeceré bastante, de mis buenos amigos de Buenos Aires. He de dar las gracias en primer término a la señorita María Rosa Lida por la lectura del texto, y por algunas valiosas adiciones y enmiendas a los capítulos VIII, IX y X... (Castro Quesada, 1948: 19)

The book could be seen, then, as a direct reaction to the end of the war. Indeed, it mentions it explicitly in relation to its vision of history.<sup>9</sup> It is also —very consciously— the work of an academic whose field was language and literature from at

<sup>8</sup> For some further ideas of Jewish history in the eighteenth century see Kriegel (2011: 97-105). An additional example of eighteenth century historiography on Jews is Francisco Martínez Marina's *Antigüedades hispano-hebreas, convencidas de supuestas y fabulosas: Discurso histórico-crítico sobre la primera venida de los judíos a España* (Madrid, 1796). For a discussion of this author see Gutwirth (1993: 135-152).

<sup>9</sup> "La fatal distanciaci3n entre el hombre y sus productos "cultos" explica c3mo ha sido posible que Alemania, pa3s en tantos sentidos admirable, un m3ximo productor de objetivaciones de cultura, embriagado de "Leistungen", haya ca3do en la m3s siniestra, fr3a y racional barbarie, en una escalofriante insensibilidad moral. Despu3s de tan ingrato espect3culo vendr3 el de las bombas at3micas" (Castro Quesada, 1948: 628).

least the date of his doctorate and onwards. There is a sense of efforts by Castro towards the achievement of recognition of the field he had chosen. Throughout the book and throughout his career he tried to argue for the relevance of literature to history and, in some senses, to philosophy.

### 3. ORTEGA AND DILTHEY

When the book appeared, there were scholars who had worked in neighboring areas and therefore could understand something of Castro's thrust. One of them was A. R. Nykl. Although he was not a Hebraist, nor a historian of the Jews and *judeoconversos*, it could be argued that he is relevant for other reasons. He was an Arabist who had been researching Arabic poetry in medieval Spain and was allowed ca. 14 pages for his review essay in the heyday of *Speculum*. It was published two years after the appearance of Castro's book (Nykl, 1950: 379-392). A. R. Nykl believed that Castro used language differently from his colleagues. That would mean that it needed translation. Nykl was not in any way an "objective" reader.<sup>10</sup> Nykl was, however, perceptive in the sense that he understood that Castro's precise language and key concepts need to be comprehended in order to grasp the book as a whole. *Convivencia* does not occur in isolation in *España en su historia* but comes along with *vividura*, *morada vital*, *vivir desviviendo*, and such inflections of *vida*. Any attempt at understanding *convivencia* would thus have to include the other concepts. Nykl wrote to Castro before publishing his review and asked him what he meant by [i.e. asked him to "translate"] "en" or "morada vital" or "vivir desviviendo". Such contact with the author by a reviewer seems unusual. After understanding the prudence of Nykl's unusual efforts to translate the concepts, we may need to reassess the hordes of publications (more than half a century later<sup>11</sup>) on *convivencia*, which, in any case attest, rather than to supersession, to these concepts' continued interest. The question is rather where this -frequently unnoticed- concern with *vida* comes from.

A main problem is that today's readers come from a different background than those Hispanophones who matured, like Castro, in the decades before the 1930's. Like any author, Castro may be better understood by noticing the influences on him. More precisely the mentality of that intellectual and professional elite must be understood by taking into consideration the German influence [in our case Dilthey] and that of Ortega y Gasset. To introduce Ortega into this problematic may not be smooth sailing. Indeed, numerous attempts at dealing with *convivencia* rarely mention him. As Jose Luis Gómez Martínez remarks:

<sup>10</sup> He believed that Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and similar ancient Romans exhibited traits of character still current in Spain in the 1940s, just as his contemporary Tuscans were, according to him, like the Etruscans and the French "spirit" was comparable to that of the Gauls. Moreover, the character of the Spaniards, for Nykl, was like that of the Latin Americans.

<sup>11</sup> Those which are deemed relevant to my argument will be cited in the following lines.

Pero, precisamente a causa del carácter emocional de estos estudios[...] la importancia de la obra [de Ortega] quedó oculta [...] Sólo así se explica que, sin excepción, la crítica no llegara a ver la íntima relación que tenía la obra de Américo Castro con las teorías que Ortega y Gasset venía ya exponiendo desde hacía más de treinta años. (Gómez Martínez, 1983: 15-36)

In addition he points out

En España en su historia apenas se cita a Ortega y Gasset,<sup>12</sup> [...] Ello, unido a que la publicación [...] y su difusión coincide con una época en que Ortega y Gasset era mal estudiado, cuando no silenciado, servirá para explicar la incapacidad de la crítica para captar el lazo íntimo que unía a ambos pensadores. (Gómez Martínez, 1983: 15-36)

In 1939, Ortega used *convivencia* as an important concept in philosophy, politics but also in his own experience. It was a usage closely linked to his situation as a Spanish exile in Argentina. In a lecture to the Universidad de La Plata, the influential philosopher asserted that nations are united by their secrets. The matters which two members of a nation do not need to mention, that which they take for granted, cannot be understood by foreigners. What other Spanish exiles, hostile to him, were saying would never be understood by the Argentinians. In other words, they needed translation. That “secret”, unspoken, shared premise or common assumption is what constitutes *convivencia* (Campomar, 2020: 55-69). Fundamentally, Ortega was talking, in 1939, about *convivencia* between fascists and republicans or between partisans and neutrals. At the time, as highlighted by Campomar, Méndez Calzada in Paris was using *convivencia* as the model for future relations between both sides of the Civil War (Campomar, 2020: 55-69). This is not how *convivencia* is commonly understood today. That is why it needs “translation”.

In more general terms, for Ortega y Gasset, vital reason is also linked to history, because individuals and societies are attached to their past. In order to understand a reality, we must understand its history. Dilthey had been acknowledged explicitly by Ortega as an influence. The more practical point for understanding Castro's access to Dilthey by way of Ortega, is to remember that, as Gareth Williams points out (Williams, 2004: 201-211) in the November and December 1933 issues of the *Revista de Occidente*, José Ortega y Gasset “established for the first time a public relationship — a philosophical communion — with the late and little known<sup>13</sup> German philosopher of the second half of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey”. Such a link would imply Castro's relations to *Lebensphilosophie*.

<sup>12</sup> A reading of the first chapter of *España* does not support this assertion.

<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to agree on this point. Leaving Heidegger aside, more relevant for us is that he probably influenced Baer. Baer was certainly reading him and taking notes.

#### 4. CASTRO AND CONVIVENCIA

A further point would be the question as to the break effected by his exile from Spain, leading to the perception of “two Castros” (Madrid vs. New Jersey) and to his interest in the Jews who were exiles, like himself after the Civil War. Against this, there are the convictions of “unidad vital” expressed by his disciple, Marichal (1955: 316-322.) Another perspective (Gutwirth, 2011b: 27-40; 2010: 297-310) points to Castro’s clear articulation, as a medievalist in the 1920s, of his position on Rabbi Moses Arragel’s *Biblia* (1422-1433), his early linguistic/philological interest in medieval *vino judiego* and in the MS text of a previously unpublished thirteenth century *Judeo-Christian Disputa*; his sympathy (alongside Azaña) for the pro-Sephardi campaigns of Pulido;<sup>14</sup> and his intense contacts with the Jews and Jewesses of North Africa during his field work trying to obtain materials of traditional language and literature from performers of *Judeo-Spanish* songs which were believed to be relevant to the reconstruction of medieval culture.<sup>15</sup> In 1922/3, Américo Castro carried out field work on *Judeo-Spanish* oral language and literature amongst Jewish women in Xauen, in the Rif Mountains of North-West Morocco, near Tangier. It led to reports which, for unexplained reasons, remained unpublished. Only recently, Armistead indexed these papers in his “Índice temático de los romances de las Viejas de Xauen” (Armistead, 2004: 55-64). We now see his —previously ignored— early work of translation from the French which is, in fact, his first book (1910), as more significant for understanding Castro’s intellectual development. It had some links to Jewish history.

More recently there has appeared the work of Santiago López Ríos (2014: 1-22) which addresses this established question but does so innovatively, on the basis of searches for original documents in numerous archives and of familiarity with the Universidad Central background. According to López Ríos, the phrase in German used by Castro in a dated communication with Giner —“Und das Leben ist sicherlich grösser als die Philologie”— sums up the existence and presence of preoccupations which are frequently and generally dated to the 1940s, in a much earlier period. It also reveals the source of this concern with “life” and texts/learning in Giner and the programmatic ideas of the ILE:

El discípulo “incómodo” parecería estar hablando de su propia experiencia desde el *Lebensbildung* que él mismo debía a Giner. El ideario institucionista, que tanto fomentaba el pensamiento crítico, se había integrado en la “vividura” del propio Castro por utilizar un término fundamental en su producción de posguerra, pero cuyo más lejano germen quizás se remonte a aquellas conversaciones de veinteañero acerca de la preeminencia de la vida sobre la filología con el fundador de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza.

<sup>14</sup> On this period see now Muñoz Solla (2021).

<sup>15</sup> Relevant memories of his experiences in the Jewish communities of North Africa in the 1920s may be found in Castro Quesada (1997).



## 5. CONVERSOS AND JEWS

From a perspective interested in *Judeo-Convertos* and Jews, it may be useful to continue to focus on some of the circumstances attending upon the publication of the book. We note the less frequently treated profession-linked issues. As a professor of language and literature, Castro would have sensed something of the problem in analyzing or reconstructing the culture of medieval Spanish Jews without access to their Hebrew and Aramaic languages and literature. He confessed, disarmingly, more than once, that this was problematic:

Nuestra manera de ver recibiría considerable refuerzo si pudiéramos penetrar en los textos hebreo-españoles no traducidos, no sólo para enterarnos de lo que cuentan, sino para percibir lo que yace bajo ellos. A pesar de tal escollo será posible ensanchar bastante nuestra actual perspectiva con el auxilio de textos españoles y de algunas valiosas traducciones. La obra de don Sem Tob, judío de Carrión de los Condes (Palencia), no se escribió para esmaltar curiosamente la historia literaria del siglo XIV. (Castro Quesada, 1948: 583)

Indeed, there was also, alongside Hebrew and Aramaic, the field of *aljamiado* or *romance* literature of the Jews. To be sure, a great many, indeed, most, of the edited pre-modern, non-Hebraic, Jewish MSS in Spanish and Judeo-Spanish *aljamía* that are available to scholars today —e.g. from Cairene MSS collections<sup>16</sup>— had not been searched for, let alone discovered, in 1946-8. But there was some material already then which could help somewhat in their efforts towards understanding the Jewish roots of the *judeoconvertos* and their culture. These “materials” in the romance were crucial in Castro’s [and probably others too] perceptions of the roots of Jewish and *converso* *mentalité* and history of ideas. Outstanding were the two texts preserved in the Cambridge *aljamiado* MS “C”: *Coplas de Yocef* and *Proverbios morales*. The question of the dates of critical editions is only a partial explanation for the quality of the reception. Thus, for example, we note Castro’s scant interest in the anonymous *Coplas de Yocef* (González Llubera, 1935) mentioned because of a reference to washing corpses. Today, in contrast, they are being hailed, in some quarters, as a most important creation of medieval Spanish Jewry (Girón-Negrón, 2006). This *aljamiado* text had been available in transcription to Latin characters since 1933 (González Llubera, 1933: 421-433). The explanation for its practical absence in Castro may have something to do with the critical reception and its extreme oscillations. Indeed, in the 1930’s, the *Coplas* were being labeled as inelegant doggerel. Some critics, including Llubera himself, were convinced that it would be unavailing

<sup>16</sup> For some examples of previously unknown *aljamiado* literary MSS discovered in the Cairo Geniza see amongst others (Gutwirth, 1996: 420-428) on a planctus about the Mother and her seven children; (Gutwirth, 2011a: 79-92) on the “Yo me fuera a Venecia” poem; or (Gutwirth, 2008: 347-360) on the *Galli canunt* theme.



to look for literary qualities in the poem. It has taken more than seventy years of changes in attitudes to arrive at today's stance (Gutwirth, 2015a: 3-12).

In the case of the *Proverbios morales*, however, the results of the editorial delay are patently clear. Castro refers—in a book made public in 1948—to the specific problems of the edition of the text:

Uso la única edición posible, la del volumen LVII de la Bib. Aut. Esp. Es significativo que nadie haya publicado dignamente los Proverbios morales, y tengamos todavía que servirnos de tan antipática, pobre y rara edición. I. González Llubera anunció en la RHi 1933, LXXXI, 421, que iba a publicar una edición de los Proverbios morales, y ha vuelto a referirse a ella en la HR, 1940, VIII, 113. Es de esperar que tan excelente trabajo se publique para poder hablar de este gran poeta teniendo a la vista un texto decoroso. (Castro Quesada, 1948: 585)

Wartime conditions in England delayed the publication of Llubera's introduction and edition of the *Proverbios* by seven years and, apparently, this was followed by a crisis of the publishing business which is believed to have postponed the printing of commentary and glossary. Nevertheless, they were out in print by 1947 (Shem-Tob de Carrion, 1947) although, as has been seen, this is ignored in Castro's book, despite bearing the date 1948. Given the sophistication of today's work on the *Proverbios*, it may be difficult to conceive the shape of the critical reception around 1946. Suffice it to recall that some had thought to have fulfilled critical duties by labeling the author a troubadour. In the nineteenth century (1880s), the idea—fresh at the time—of the Jewish poets' "intimacy" was raised.<sup>17</sup> This quality was begrudgingly valued even if the critical heritage was, at the same time, somewhat dismissive of the *Proverbios morales* because their morality (for them this meant "Jewish morality") was believed to be that of the bazaars of Damascus and Cairo. This, then, was the ossified orthodoxy Castro was subverting. He took *Proverbios* studies—and perhaps, by implication and extension, those on the *Hispano*-Jewish literature he knew of—to a different level.

Castro noted that the valued virtues in the book were intellectual and this-worldly. It is in this sense [rather than an Italian one] that he found in the poet from *Tierra de Campos* a "llano y suelto humanismo". His familiarity with medieval literature allowed him to observe that the *Proverbios* was a book "sin parejo en la Castilla cristiana del siglo XIV". For Castro, Shem Tov was a "refinado racionalista, rebelde al aburrimiento, rechaza los lugares comunes de quienes maldicen el mundo". It is necessary to bear in mind the above mentioned influence of Giner, in

<sup>17</sup> Menéndez y Pelayo's notion of Jewish "intimacy" was original when first formulated in the nineteenth century. It reappears, later, in Castro. But it does so in a somewhat subtler form. The setting is the imaginative analysis of a passage in a work from the Alphonsine age, the *Cronica General*: "La simpatía emocionada del escritor (un judío converso?) se concentra en la intimidad religiosa-estática sin movimiento épico más que en el esfuerzo combativo" (Castro Quesada, 1948: 192).

order to understand better the full significance of “moderno celo pedagógico” in his remarks on Shem Tov’s encomium of books: “El elogio que los *Proverbios* de Sem Tob hacen de los libros suena a moderno celo pedagógico, y no tiene precedente en la literatura hispano-cristiana” (Castro Quesada, 1948).

Shem Tov’s lines *cuando la rosa seca/ ende su tiempo sale* are treated by Castro in a way that differs profoundly in its ambitions and quality from the usual tenor of the analyses of aljamiado (and, in some cases, Hebrew) texts from medieval Spain by his contemporaries and still bears citing:

Pero esta rosa de don Sem Tob vive mientras muere, gracias a poseer una esencia deslizando y migratoria, y a haber sido concebida según los principios de la ontología árabe; su belleza se extingue al ritmo de nuestra melancólica simpatía, aunque por dicha su no ser vale más que su ser, y renace en seguida como invisible y consoladora fragancia. El aspecto se ha desvanecido en olor, drama diminuto que roza nuestras angustias en torno al morir y al resurgir. Fue, por consiguiente, un judío el primero que tradujo a hermosas palabras castellanas una vivencia sin suceso externo. Su rosa se limita a existir en un “hortus conclusus”, lindo y chiquito, en donde conviven un sentimiento, el fenómeno en que existe y nada más. (Castro Quesada, 1948: 586)

His remarks on subjectivity are based on an understanding of the elements which go to make up the lyric, which he assumed his readers were familiar with. The “discovery” of the lyric *jarchas* of Hebrew *muwashahat*, made known in the same year as the printing of *España en su historia*, excited a flurry of publications and could not be ignored by Castro, who seems to have read Stern in the USA, not in 1948, but in 1950. Mettmann (1958: 1-29) who has explained Castro’s attitude to medieval lyric, underlined Castro’s belief that there was no continuity from Roman poetry and that Castro believed the lyric would have been dangerous in medieval Christian Castille. Castro himself writes that the *jarchas* are “lovely” and that he had introduced these “Mozarabic lyrics” *in support of his idea of Castilian life* for the next edition of his book (Castro Quesada, 1952: 188-9). It is patently clear, then, that concepts of “life” affected his literary criticism [on the lyric, in this case] and within this, his views of the Jewish roots of *judeo-converso* culture.

## 6. CASTRO, CONVERSOS AND GASTRONOMY

Castro does not see “en su historia”, the field of history, as restricted to, say, prices and salaries, agrarian practice, economic, military, legal, dynastic, and other such conventional aspects. Few topics are more clearly justified by the emphasis on what Castro termed *das Leben* than the attention to alimentation [including *tocinofobia*].<sup>18</sup> Of course, this is not the approach of, say, the school of *Annales* with its ideals

<sup>18</sup> For a comparison with the Arabic/Muslim materials see the article and substantial bibliography in the notes to Marín (2004: 35-52). For *Hispano-Jewish* history of alimentation according to response,

of archival, documented reconstructions of an *histoire totale*. Two main questions are of interest here: what is the relation between this subject and Castro's thought and what is its relation to *convivencia*?

Evidently, this interest in and observation of food coheres with the centrality of "life" in *convivencia*'s philosophical/theoretical underpinnings. It may also have biographical, personal resonances. To identify these may be helpful because we know from his correspondence with Goytisolo that as late as the 1960s and 1970s he still had very vivid memories of his earlier field work amongst Jewish women in North Africa. The songs and words of the Sephardi women were, for him, like flowers coming out of their mouths. Around 1922/3, as mentioned, Castro was engaged in field work amongst Sephardim in North Africa (Larache, Tetuan, Tanger, Xauen). We now know that it was then that he wrote a relevant letter to Menéndez Pidal. He reports to him that "se les oye comiendo en la cocina hablando con la abuela y es el caos, mixtura [...] forno, golor de fdjiondez [...] frozalde 'hojaldre', moleza 'molleja'" (Cid, 2015: 149).

It is not surprising that in his book he devoted a whole essay to the *comida en honor de los muertos*. In Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd ibn Ḥazm (d.1064) Castro selects and observes beliefs about *bebidas y manjares* which lead him to reach notable conclusions:

Pero insiste Ibn Hazm, que si no hay en el mundo de acá abajo forma alguna que no exista en el mundo de las esferas celestes, habrá que aceptar que también hay en la otra vida... bebidas, y manjares, y goce sexual (...) Se comprende desde ahora que queden muy esfumados los confines entre el "buen amor" y el "amor loco".<sup>19</sup>

That is to say that the peculiarity of the Arcipreste's Castilian masterpiece is explained by the earlier beliefs about food (amongst other elements) expressed in the Arab/Muslim author's assertions.

Forms of politeness are not outside philological/linguistic studies. And yet there is intensity in Castro's approach to them in the area of *comer y beber* as Spanish vestiges of an Arabic culture of hospitality:

Al ir a comer o beber delante de alguien que, por el motivo o la situación que sea, no va a participar de la comida o de la bebida, lo correcto es decir: "¿Usted gusta?" En pueblos andaluces, a alguien que pasa junto a quienes están comiendo, se le dice: "¡Venga usted a comer!" Nadie acepta, por supuesto. En portugués se dirá: "Você é servido", o "¿Quer fazer-me companhia?" En Galicia: "Quédese con nosco". En catalán: "Sou servit?" Las respuestas son: "Que aproveche", o "De salud sirva", según las regiones, la clase social, etc. En portugués se responde: "Bom proveito".<sup>20</sup>

see Gutwirth (1995); for other aspects see Gutwirth (2004); Gutwirth (2009). See also, for medieval Jewish food according to visual evidence, the article by Cohen (2011: 23-39).

<sup>19</sup> Castro Quesada (1948: 393). This position contrasts with Pagani (2008: 283-290).

<sup>20</sup> Castro Quesada (1948: 100). See also Castro's essay on "La comida en honor de los muertos" (Castro Quesada, 1948).

When reading de la Torre he selects his writing on *pan y fruta*:

Lo peculiar en este caso es que Fernando de la Torre [...] convierte la fertilidad de la tierra en algo mágico y deslumbrante: “non una vez en el año, mas tres en algunas partes, lleva o puede llevar pan la tierra y fruta los árboles”. Castilla se basta a sí misma, en tanto que otras gentes han de importar lo que ella produce. (Castro Quesada, 1948: 35)

The great fifteenth century Castilian prosaist/letter writer is examined not as a testimony of agrarian history, but of how Castilian agriculture is experienced and expressed in the fifteenth century. A custom concerning bread is brought to bear on the cultural question:

No sé si besar el pan al recogerlo del suelo es una influencia cristiana dentro del Islam, o al contrario. Cuando en Andalucía cae un trozo de pan al suelo, lo recogen y lo besan diciendo que “es pan de Dios”. Los moros hacen y dicen lo mismo: fays Allah, ‘pan de Dios’. (Castro Quesada, 1948: 103)

The topics of the attitudes to Galileo or to medieval scholasticism are —or were at the time— established, fundamental questions for those interested in the Middle Ages and Renaissance and are relevant in books touching on the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. But in the formulations of Castro, Galileo and scholasticism are the equivalent of the inner consciousness of the *converso*. And this is expressed in his “repugnancia hacia el tocino y el jamón” (Castro Quesada, 1974: 42). Such a profound and intimate link between gastronomy and history —need one say it?— has something to do with the inextricable link between *vida/Leben* and alimentation. It shows how tightly linked the alimentary issue and that of *Leben* really are in Castro’s thought. In fact, after reading the numerous texts adduced above, it could be argued that one cannot understand *judeoconversos* in Spain and Castro’s views while ignoring the question of alimentation. Similarly, dietary usage, alimentation, conviviality are usually considered by consensus as factors in the relations between Jews, *judeoconversos* and the surrounding majority. Such relations or *convivencias* cannot be fully comprehended while ignoring the medieval evidence on the dietary aspect. *Convivencia* and alimentation are not, then, two divergent, incommensurable subjects to be treated in isolation.

The study of food is seen as key to various important aspects of the culture. This interest in food is far from an individual, personal quirk. For someone who had published on Cervantes, the memory of earlier scholarly interest in Cervantes’ *duelos y quebrantos* or *trefe* would have been indelible.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the interest in food per se is not a totally improvised research project of Castro, nor is its interpretation as a

<sup>21</sup> Castro would have been aware of the study of *duelos y quebrantos* by Morel-Fatio (1915: 59-61). Recent works on alimentation include Rodilla (2015: 27-44); Parelló (2019a: 76; 2019b: 171-185); Savo (2014: 231-252) and others.

keystone of cultural transmissions. Some such elements of Castro's ideas were already present in the slightly earlier work of Dübler (1942) on *berenjenas*<sup>22</sup> and Palencia's views on that same theme.<sup>23</sup> Max Meyerhoff's earlier work on pharmacology also touches on food stuffs (Meyerhoff, 1935: 1-41; 1938-1939: 85-94). All of them were concerned with the question of Arab origins of Iberian food/cooking and its language before Castro's book. The question which is of interest here, that of Jewish food customs in medieval Spain, is a different one which requires familiarity with different types of evidence. It may be furthered by attention to —amongst others— the evidence of unpublished MSS. Indeed, it is amongst the synagogal Cairene MS fragments in Latin characters at Cambridge that a book of cooking recipes in Catalan, possibly of the fifteenth century —MS Cambridge University Library, Or.1080 4.12— has been found and identified. If this synagogal Geniza MS were characteristic, we would have to abandon many assumptions about alimentation. Followers' research so far has neither confirmed nor denied the presence of *berenjenas* but as it continues we shall know more.

The real, historical presence of an acute preoccupation with, and interest in, food and its significance becomes obvious when one observes that it is a part of the literary work on *etopeya* in Golden Age writings: when a character in *Fuenteovejuna* dreams of “casar una berenjena con otro tanto tocino” she does so because she has to appear as a thoroughly authentic —but witty and articulate— Old Christian *labradora* and when, in *Las paces de los reyes*, David and Levi come to Alfonso's garden in search of Raquel, Belardo asks: “¿Es una que no ha comido/ tocino en su vida?” (vv. 1758-59<sup>24</sup>). Character, alimentation and the image of *conversos* are not incommensurable topics but are clearly and closely linked, as anyone familiar with Golden Age texts, such as Castro, would have realized.

## 7. GASTRONOMY AND CONVERSOS

More recent historical work did not deny the importance of food in literature and history. It tried, rather, to explain the personal gaze and internal focus on food and its centrality in terms of cultural anthropology. It linked it to food as a prime component of constructions of ethnicity (Gutwirth, 1985a: 83-102). It was argued that archival evidence was germane to this and to the literary question (Gutwirth, 1985b: 1-14). It was searched and found to parallel the satirical *anticonverso* elements. This showed the historical, real currency of such beliefs, such an imaginaire and such focusing of attention amongst Inquisitors and their witnesses in the Castile of the last

<sup>22</sup> Dübler (1942: 367-390). See also, for the Arabic materials on berenjena, Marín (1981: 193-207); Ciceri (1992: 87-94) emphasizes berenjena's literary link to Jews and *conversos* (Gil, 2009: 121-142).

<sup>23</sup> Palencia (1935: 248) argues for cultural transmissions, especially in the section on vocabulary which includes food stuffs such as *berenjena*.

<sup>24</sup> On the character of Raquel in Mira and its repercussions for representations of identity see Reyre (1996: 497-510).

quarter of the fifteenth century. In the 1470s, in the *Epitalamio* of the *converso* Rodrigo Ruiz Cota, the references to food have been seen as much needed elements of coherence in that satire. The lesson was clear: texts about *conversos* had to be read from familiarity with Inquisitorial records (*ibid*).

In Castro we note that Spanish literature is held to be worthy of attention especially when it does not have analogues in the rest of Europe. And yet, such analogies do exist in the area of food (Hostetter, 2020: 15-28). For example, the centrality and relation to power of meat carving in the rest of Europe may be attested by *The Boke of Kervynge* which was published in 1500 by Wynkyn de Worde.<sup>25</sup> This work parallels Castile's earlier *Arte cisoria* (1423) by Enrique de Villena. George Jones has stressed the importance of recognizing dietary satire in mediaeval German literature (Jones, 1960: 78-86). Its targets were the peasants and it often concerned turnips, porridge and even beer. The approach to food by way of the Lent/Carnival binary is present in Chaucer and therefore scholarship has attended to, e.g. Carnival food imagery in Chaucer's description of the Franklin and other trans-Pyrenean texts such as *Gawain* or the first stanza of Deschamps's *Ballade* n.º 350, "Contre le Careme, [...] Sus! alarme! ce dist le Mardi Gras au Charnage: nous serons assaillis! Caresme vient; que feront nous, hélas?" (Jonassen, 1994: 99-117). These also have a counterpart in the earlier battle between doña Cuaresma and don Carnal in the *Libro de buen amor*. Medieval Christian dietary laws or norms are behind the popularity of the Lent/Carnival literature. The opposition between meat and non-meat comestibles is not without relevance in satiric literature on Jewish and judaizer's alimentation. Religion, then, is important in the medieval literary representations of food not only in Spain and not only when satirizing *conversos*. But there may be religious resonances also to the other mainstream frame of food in literature: the folklore concerning the Land of Cockaigne. These resonances would be related to the Eucharist and *manna*. And yet, Resnick's survey of dietary laws as a subject of religious, Christian-Jewish polemic reminds us that:

Although the biblical dietary laws explicitly named numerous animals that were to be excluded from the diet, it was the pig and not the camel or rock badger, for example that occupied a central position in Jewish-Christian polemical exchanges concerning the dietary restrictions. In particular, medieval Christian theologians sought to explain as a moral instruction the biblical dietary condemnation of swine, arguing that it is meant to instruct the faithful only to avoid sinful, pig-like behavior, while allowing the Christian to retain pork in his diet. By contrast, the Jewish disputant in Gilbert Crispin's late eleventh-century *Disputation of a Jew and a Christian* concerning the Christian Faith insists that a figurative or allegorical meaning ascribed to the dietary restrictions does not supplant the literal. (Resnick, 2011: 3)

<sup>25</sup> For further examples see Krohn (2020: 17-40); Long (2001: 102ff.).



While the selection of the pig and erasure of other items is a constant, aspects such as allegorical exegesis do not appear in the food literature, i.e. in the satire. Nor do the polemical texts take pride in ostentatiously exhibiting familiarity with the supposed gastronomy of the judaizers and —crucially— its language. These are only some of the differences brought into relief by a necessary comparison between the two distinct fields: that of the polemic corpus and that of the poetry.

It is undeniable that there is a strong emphasis on food in Spanish satire against *Judeo-Conversos*. The Evangelista<sup>26</sup> [ca. 1460 or 1490] writes a prose prophecy/dream about the future, parodying the existent analogues satirically. In it, he uses *berenjena* as synonym or parallel of confeso: “Á la postre verás tanto de confeso que cubrirá el suelo como langosta; tanto de (...) berenjena”. There are, moreover, at least twenty food and related concepts listed in the *Epitalamio burlesco* by Rodrigo Ruiz Cota in the 1470s, whose function is to reflect the judaizing character of individual guests and of the wedding in general. The items are, however, not prescribed or commanded by Jewish dietary laws in the Hebrew/Aramaic sources. Neither are there Jewish laws mandating the use of cazuelas or the consumption of *berenjenas*.

In the Middle Ages no one would authoritatively declare food as (apt for consumption) *kosher* or (its opposite) *trefa*<sup>27</sup> on the basis of mere acquaintance with a few biblical verses or their translation. It was elementary that acquaintance with the laws needed thorough, careful study of tractates of the Babylonian Talmud such as, amongst others, *bHulin*. But this was not enough. The relevant corpus that goes from Geonic sources to the codifiers and other halakhists of the late Middle Ages seems immense, but had to be mastered. Of course, there is no translation of this corpus in Inquisition records or literary, mostly satirical, writings. Hence, rather than “kosher food” or “Jewish dietary laws” what we are dealing with in these texts is a parcel of the local *imaginaire*.<sup>28</sup> Few examples are more telling and solidly documented than the case of the above mentioned *berenjena*.

In the *Cancionero de Baena* (ID 6787), Baena attacks Juan Agraz as *converso*: “ya l’han dado con agetes/ravanetes/ la cuchar con verengena”. The allusion to “agetes” reminds us that garlic [and onions] would reappear in the writings of the chronicler of Expulsion, Discovery and Conquista, i.e. in Andrés Bernaldez’ putative “testimonies” of *converso* behavior and alimentation. The historian of the period, famous for

<sup>26</sup> Paz y Melia (1877: 245); Martín-Martínez (2018: 5-27). Menahem Ibn Zerah (d. 1385) has recently been seen as a helpful primary source on the history of Hispano-Jewish material culture. He mentions the eggplant but implies that it is mainly cooked [rather than in Spain] in the Maghreb with meat. See Löw (1924-34: 377ff.).

<sup>27</sup> “Y me seréis varones santos. No comeréis carne destrozada por las fieras en el campo; a los perros la echaréis” (Ex 22:31).

<sup>28</sup> To be sure, some elementary notions were available in Inquisition testimonies, polemical texts and manuals, but this is not a basis for *pesaq*, authoritative decisions on permitted or forbidden food. Nor does it explain the protagonism of such items as the *cazuelas* which do not appear in the Bible nor in the post biblical legal texts.



his original archival research, Tarsicio de Azcona, has compared some of Bernáldez' "testimonies" to filmic fantasies produced by twentieth century cinematic cities (1964: 505). Similarly, before 1417, we find: "Este dezir fizo e ordenó Diego d'Estúñiga contra Juan Alfonso de Baena como a manera de requiesta e so entención de le bal-donar e afear, por quanto avía tomado requiesta contra todos los Mariscales e todos los otros" (ID 1552):

... yo tengo muy grant pesar  
si se falló en Baena;  
dígo por non usar  
en vuestra tierra trobar,  
que más curan de sembrar  
(146ra) mucha buena berenjena,  
el qual han por buen manjar.

Baena, according to Juan García, had "los ojos de berengena" (Baena, 1993: 655), and was therefore told to recite the rhyming *Ave gratia plena*. That is to say that the exploitation of the [etymologically Arabic/Persian] *berenjena*'s sounds and rhyming potential [Baena, *gratia plena*] may attest to the undetected weight of the signifier, rather than only the signified, in these poetic fields. Berenjenas and poetry are in opposition for Diego d'Estúñiga, who was not only a poet but a *mariscal*, a title (since 1382) by royal appointment for one of the highest types of military officers at the royal court. Also a *mariscal* was Íñigo López de Estúñiga. He describes Baena as chased from Andalusia by a rain of berengenadas (Baena, 1966: 269, 883). In the *Coplas del Provincial*, from the reign of Enrique IV, the anonymous writer tells Franco Afandari "... A ti Franco Alfandari: allá te embio en estrenas un buen halcón Bahari con que caces berenjenas, y porque en él te reueas sabe que es pollo judayco, que caça a todas raleas y mátalas en hebraico" (Rodríguez-Moñino, 1950: 123-146), amalgamating the contempt for Hebrew language, for "Jewish food" and for the (supposedly) non-hunting class. Pedro Manrique, in his poems against Juan Poeta, speaks of the patena —plate for the Host in the Eucharist— which was turned into *caçuela con verengena*. This would be echoed later in the creative fantasy about the culinary repertoire of the conversa Aldonza, the famous *Lozana andaluza*. In *Mamotreto II*, within a list of foods she knows how to prepare, we find the *caçuela de berenjenas mojies*. Pedro Manrique, again, was not only a poet but also Señor de Amusco, Treviño, Paredes de Nava y Valdezcaray, adelantado mayor y notario mayor del reino de León. These apparently feeble satirical writings could be viewed differently if —against the critical heritage— we bear in mind the historical and social factor, the wealth, access to weapons and the military power wielded by some of the satirists. Nevertheless, one should not forget that some of the satirists were themselves *conversos*. Manrique's inclusion of the Host might be viewed in light of recent work

which has seen the late Middle Ages as a period of Eucharist anxiety.<sup>29</sup> The *caçuelas* and *verengenas* are repeatedly supposed to symbolize the non-Christian character of *converso* objects of satire more than a century before *Quixote*'s Benengeli. So do they in the 1470s *Epitalamio* (Gutwirth, 1985b):

En la boda del a  
ljama (f. 16r)  
non se comí peliagudo,  
ni piscado sin escama  
en quanto 'l marido pudo,  
sino mucha verengena  
y açafrán con acelguilla...

## 8. GASTRONOMIC SPECIFICS

The poets' knowledge of Spanish vegetables is performed as metonymic of judaizing. Similar beliefs and images are found by searches of archival documents of the period as mentioned above. But the untackled questions are: how accurate or realistic, i.e. historical, is this equivalence? What is the evidence? It may be pointed out that the present day Hebrew word for *berenjena* (*hašil*) is not biblical but a neologism [apparently coined by Abraham Lunz, 1854-1918]. This should raise suspicions as to a belief in a simple, continuous line to the Hebrew Bible. This is the case although some critics use just a few biblical verses or, rather, their translation, to explain fifteenth century representations of diet as if medieval Jews had no other sources for their practices.

Dietary, medical/ pharmacological works are no less eloquent as testimonies than satire. Kuhne's work<sup>30</sup> (Kuhne Brabant, 1996: 69-86) is useful in that it gives us an idea of the attitudes to non-meat diet as a whole in medieval texts of medicine and pharmacology. Among the latter, some stand out, due to their novelty, such as those of the Spanish Jew, lsháq b. Abí Hártin lbn Waqqár who, although a subject of the kings of Castile, left us a work written in Arabic. It is preserved in an autograph written in Guadalajara in 1425 (?). According to Kuhne, fruit was classified as a drug and was generally the object of negative evaluations, as in the case of Maimonides. And I quote Kuhne Brabant (1996: 72):

Maimonides says (1135-1204): "Of the fresh fruits, those that trees produce are generally bad food ... the fruit juices, jams, syrups and medicines that are made from them are useful for specific diseases, since their action is different as food

<sup>29</sup> Yeager (2011: 56). This late medieval feature in Latin Christendom continues until Shakespeare where there are echoes of irreconcilable disputes over the essential nature of the sacrament of the Eucharist creating a pressing epistemological conundrum according to Kwan (2015: 3-18). Greenblatt (2001) linked it to the Protestant critique of Catholicism (Walsham, 2016: 232-249).

<sup>30</sup> See now González Manjarrés (2015a: 119-142).

than as medicine ... More blunt, if possible, is our Arnau de Vilanova: "Temperate bodies should not use fruit instead of maintenance and food..."

There is no need here to enlarge on the enormous authority and influence of Maimonides and his writings amongst the Jews of late medieval Spain, even if his adult and creative life was spent in Egypt and not in Spain. Maimonides had referred to the *berenjena* in at least two of his treatises or regimens. In his *The Treatise Sent to the King al-Afdal, son of Saladin, concerning The Regimen of Health*, Maimonides asserted that "Those vegetables that are generally bad for all people, are... eggplant; these are very bad for whoever wishes to conserve his health." In his *The Response to the Letter of al-Afdal in which he elucidated all those accidents which have befallen him*, he again writes against the *berenjena*: "He spoke the truth who advocated avoidance of..., eggplant, and everything that heats, for all these increase those accidents of which our Master has complained" (Bar-Sela, 1964: 19). The *converso* Juan de Aviñón, born Moses ben Samuel of Roquemaure, has affinities with Maimonidean doctrine. In his *Sevillana medicina* he asserts:

... segun las viandas que se comen son los sueños, ca viandas ay que fazen sobir bahos melancolicos: en guisa que fazen soñar cosas espantables: assi como ... *berenjenas*... (f. 25v) las viandas espessas & malas que engendran malancia: son como... *berenjenas* ...y de sus semejantes. (D'Agostino, 2011: 329)

These ideas seem to come from Avicenna and it is, therefore, no surprise that Amatus Lusitanus, the Iberian *judeoconverso* who returned to Judaism in the Ottoman Empire, ca. 1560, also disapproves of the eggplant (González Manjarrés, 2015a: 449-465). Medical texts by Jews and *conversos* were inimical to the *berenjena*. If we look at medieval exegesis of the Hebrew Bible we may attend to the story of Elisha and the gourds (II Kings 4) or story of "death in the pot":

38 Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot and cook some stew for these prophets."

39 One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine and picked as many of its gourds as his garment could hold. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. 40 The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it.

The poisonous vegetable's identification constituted a major challenge for the medieval translators. They produced divergent, contradictory renderings. E8/E6 are Escorial MSS dated to the mid-XIIIth century, i.e. slightly prior to the Alphonsine corpus. They translate *gogombriellos amargos*. The *General estoria*, around 1270, renders it *una como vid montesina*. E3, the Escorial MS of 1425-50, whose

*romanceamiento* is close to the Hebrew, gives us *fongos de campo*. Rabbi Moses Arragel [1422-1433] translates *una vid silvestre*. In contrast with other exegetes (such as, say, Rashi.) David Kimhi (1160-1235) in his *Commentary* seems to identify it with the eggplant.<sup>31</sup> To identify an eggplant stew as the protagonist of the “death in the pot” story does not seem to support the belief that the eggplant is the most beloved item in the Jewish diet.

Finally, we note that the halakhic/legal status of the eggplant, although generally ignored by modern literary critics, is by no means simple and unambiguous. Those medieval rabbinical authorities, before 1492, who considered it as coming from a tree, sometimes forbade it because of the laws of *’orla*.<sup>32</sup> Today, it might be seen as almost an icon of Sephardi identity—as in the case of the verses in Judeo-Spanish *‘Los Guisados de la Berenjena’* edited by Weich (Weich-Shahak, 1980). Could this be yet another case of the invention of tradition? It certainly had a rather turbulent past in Jewish [and *Judeo-Converso*] medieval translations, exegesis, medical texts and halakha.

## 9. CONCLUSION

At one level, one notes a certain consistency in the satires where poets vie with each other to add items to, or to reformulate or reimagine *conversos’* food—and its language—in their texts from ca. 1400 to the Golden Age. Alongside contempt and hostility (undoubtedly present) there are efforts to contend with and surpass each other in flaunting the extent of their alleged familiarity with Jewish/judaizers’ alimentation and detailed knowledge about its particular items and the specific words for them. The confusion with “Kosher” or “Jewish dietary laws” may have been introduced by modern critics. The question would be: to what extent is this treatment of gastronomy an example of *convivencia*? It certainly has nothing in common with misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Castro’s thought (unaware of its theoretical and historiographic foundations) as if invested in presenting an idyllic, romantic picture of harmonious, friendly relations. Literary—including humorous and satiric—representations of food are a far broader phenomenon, existing elsewhere in Europe and they are also concerned with religion. Needless to say, there are also Spanish satires about food which do not concern *conversos*. They dwarf the Spanish case we have been discussing. But in Spain, as we have seen, they also concentrated around the *conversos*, thus creating different modulations of the alimentary paradigm and connecting with Castro’s more general concern with the many—and quite specific—terms related to ‘life’.

<sup>31</sup> This is the view of Löw (1924-34). It may be of some relevance to note that amongst the numerous Ibero-Romance glosses in the Bodleian aljamiado-Hebrew MS of the thirteenth century, the *berenjena* is absent. See Alfonso (2021).

<sup>32</sup> Lev 19:23. See Löw (1924-34).

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