

Historical and literary influences on Tsarfati's *Poem composed by the Poet upon his translation of the tale of Melibea and Calisto*¹

Amy Baron² & Amaranta Saguar García³
University of Oxford

In 1507⁴ Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati, physician to Pope Julius II, poet, linguist and academic⁵, wrote *A poem Composed by the Poet upon his Trans-*

1.– During the elaboration of this article, Shon David Hopkin (University of Texas at Austin) has defended his dissertation «Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati and Fernando de Rojas: *Celestina* and the World of the Go-Between» (in the bibliography, Hopkin 2011). Unfortunately, it has been impossible to incorporate his interesting observations into this work, as it was already finished and undergoing just minor corrections when we received the bibliographical reference. Moreover, for the sake of bibliography, the articles «Joseph ben Samuel Sarfati's *Tratado de Melibea y Calixto*: a sephardic Jew's reading of the *Celestina* in light of the medieval Judeo-Spanish go-between tradition» (Hamilton 2002) and «Hagirshah ha'ivrit harishonah shel *Lah Selestinah*» (Almagor 1992) should be mentioned too, despite not being quoted in the following pages.

2.– This article is a revised version of my Finals Extended Essay at the University of Oxford, which Dr Juan Carlos Conde and the graduate student and future *celestinista* Amaranta Saguar have encouraged me to publish. I would like to thank them both for their wisdom and suggestions, and above all, their support during the development and realization of this project. I would also like to thank Prof Carpenter, whose 1997 article first alerted me to this fascinating topic, and Dr Xon de Ros for her consistent support throughout all my academic endeavours, including the current article.

3.– I would like to thank Amy Baron for having approached me with such an interesting research topic as Tsarfati's introductory poem to his translation of *Celestina* and having considered me worthy of providing guidance to her during her academic pursuit. I would also like to thank her for allowing me to participate in the elaboration of this article. Dr Juan Carlos Conde deserves a special mention, too, for trusting my knowledge of *Celestina* and serving as intermediary between Amy and me. Finally, I thank Prof Ángeles Navarro for having shared her knowledge on Spanish-Hebrew poetry with me, without which this study would have been impossible.

4.– At the end of his poem, Tsarfati writes *ה"ל מלשנ מ*, meaning that this work was completed in the year 438. McPheeters (1985: 39) attributes this dating to a «cronología hebrea menos corriente basada en la destrucción final del Templo de Jerusalén, el año 69 o 70 de nuestra era, lo que nos da una fecha de composición para la poesía de 1507 o 1508».

5.– More biographical details on Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati in Cassuto (1935), McPheeters (1985) and Carpenter (1997). All biographical references and statements rely on these works, unless stated otherwise.

lation of the Tale of Melibea and Calisto⁶. Whilst the aforementioned translation is unattested, it is a widely-held and logical assumption that there once existed a 16th century Hebrew translation of Fernando de Rojas's *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, otherwise known as *Celestina*⁷, to which this poem is considered to be the prologue. In this article we will analyse Tsarfati's poem according to the principles of Schirmann (1967: 235), who calls upon scholars of Hebrew poetry to consider the Hebrew poet's present and past, and to evaluate how the cultural, educational and literary activity within both time-frames contributes to the poet's work. Schirmann's proposal seeks to determine how the Hebrew poet reflects the culture and worldview of his contemporaries, and how the literary legacy of preceding generations had influenced the Hebrew poet's work. With respect to Tsarfati's introductory poem to his Hebrew adaptation of *Celestina*⁸, this dual focus related to time period inevitably extends

6.– וטסילקו האיבילמ רובח תקתעה לע ררושמה ורבח ריש. Quotations from the Hebrew are taken from Cassuto's edition of the poem (Tsarfati 1935), while the English translation is always Amy Baron's, unless otherwise noted. The complete English translation can be found in the next article in this issue of *Celestinesca* and maintains the verse numeration of Cassuto's Hebrew edition of Tsarfati's poem, so that verse numbers correspond to both the Hebrew and English versions. Hereafter, when quoting Tsarfati's poem, only the verse number will be given. Other primary sources will be quoted under the same conditions and only the page number will be provided. Quotations from the Italian follow Kish's edition of Alphonso Hordognez's *Tragicomedia di Calisto et Melibea nuovamente traducta de Spagnolo in Italiano idioma* (Hordognez 1973), while quotations of the Spanish *Celestina* are taken from Russell's edition of Rojas's masterpiece (Rojas 1991). The extant bibliographical references will be quoted as usual.

7.– The *Tragicomedia*, not the *Comedia*, is widely accepted as the version of Rojas's work from which Tsarfati translates, since no translation of the *Comedia* is known and there is no evidence that Spanish was among the several European languages he mastered. By contrast, there was an early Italian translation of the *Tragicomedia* to which he could have resorted (see notes 12 and 13), Italian being his second mother tongue, together with Hebrew. In addition to the linguistic factor, and despite not conserving Tsarfati's translation, we could mention one textual evidence of the *Tragicomedia* having been his model: the concept of war with which Tsarfati's poem opens and ends (vv. 1 and 62):

Turn and look, friends, to the war of lovers, | [...]
[...] | Turn, friends, to the war of lovers

The idea of conflict and battle does not appear, at least not explicitly, in the *Comedia*, but is the leitmotiv of the prologue to the *Tragicomedia* from its very beginning («Todas las cosas ser criadas a manera de contienda o batalla» p. 213), hence Tsarfati's choice of the word «war» in this context could have been determined by Rojas's prologue opening. This impression is reinforced by the fact that Tsarfati's poem repeats some key ideas of the preliminary texts of the *Tragicomedia*, for example, «With witty words and entertaining proverbs» (v. 2) looks quite similar to «[...] otros pican los donayres y refranes comunes» (p. 218), as do «And the deceptions and counsels of servants» (v. 5) and «And there, the craftiness and deceptions of old crones» (v. 8) to «[...] los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos y lisonjeros sirvientes» (p. 221) of the *sequitur*.

8.– «And I do not translate word for word | But I arrange the splendor of my discourse to my brethren, the Jews» (v. 56). This affirmation inserts Tsarfati in the Humanistic polemic on style and translation *ad verbum* or *ad sensum*, which was a hot topic by the end of the 15th century and continued being discussed in the first half of the following century. Similar

to the dual nature of the literary influences upon Tsarfati's work. These influences are, undoubtedly, Hebrew and European cultural and literary models, inspirations, conventions, genres and ideals. In this way, attention must be paid to Tsarfati's utilization of both religious and secular imagery and themes, especially at a time when Renaissance and Humanist activity was flourishing and making a powerful impact in early 16th century Italy (Vogelstein 1940: 221). In doing so, we shall consider the balance between Tsarfati's employment of European literary ideas and Hebrew literary conventions, and we shall discuss how this contributes to a remarkably multi-faceted poetic composition.

Tsarfati was well established in the cultural and social milieu of early 16th century Rome and, like his father before him, he was physician to Pope Julius II (Carpenter 1997: 273). Aside from his cultivated knowledge and educational career (*ibid.* 229-230), Tsarfati's involvement at the Papal court was probably a crucial platform for his exposure to secular European literature. The court was a cultural centre, and Pope Julius II a patron of the arts (Pastor *et al.* 1923: 454). Indeed, Tsarfati's laudatory reference to Julius in his poetic prologue to *Celestina* is an indication of his close relationship with the Pope⁹, and perhaps also to Julius's blessing regarding Tsarfati's literary undertaking. Tsarfati's experience in the Papal court provides convincing evidence regarding his appreciation of, and familiarity with, secular Italian literature.

The Papal court was also the home of Alphonso Hordognez¹⁰, the first translator of *Celestina*, who had finished translating the *Tragicomedia* into Italian in 1505¹¹, and saw it printed in Rome in 1506¹². Tsarfati wrote his

concern can be noted in Hordognez's translation —«Che se falimenti alcuni ui sonno, [...] parte nea colpa la dicta lingua castiliana, quale in alchune partite, e impossibile posser ben tradure li uocaboli secondo la affectione e desiderio che ho de servir V. Illustrissima S. Non hauendo io riguardo ala rudita dela ordinatione e differentia di sententie» (p. 30)— and even in the later German translations (*cf.* Saguar 2012).

9.— Tsarfati establishes his personal relationship to the Pope in verses 53-54:

[...] | Is it not he who has served great rulers and princes
Including Lord Julius, high priest of the nations, | who has crushed the pride of
the evil powers?

Apart from this, Tsarfati refers to Julius as אָרַי [high priest], a word which refers not only to human superiors, but also has clear divine overtones. Tsarfati's use of this word represents his highly reverent recognition of Julius's authority.

10.— «Per Alphonso Hordognez, familiare de la sanctita di nostro signore Iulio Papa Secondo» (p. 31).

11.— «Nel mille cinquecento cinque apunto / Despagnolo in idioman [sic] italiano / E stato questo opuscul trasunto / Dame, Alphonso de Hordognez, nato hispano» (p. 262).

12.— We will not enter here the polemic of the Rome 1506 edition (*Tragicomedia di Calisto et Melibea nuovamente traducta de Spagnolo in Italiano idioma*, Eucharius Silber, Rome, 1506) being or not the *editio princeps* —see Infantes (2007: 79) for a brief review of the state of art in this question— but, on account of Tsarfati being established in the Roman Papal court as physi-

prefatory poem, and assumedly, his translation of *Celestina*, a mere two years later. Tsarfati does not mention in his poetic prologue the version, or the author, of the text from which he translated. However, the almost immediate appearance of Tsarfati's translation after that of Hordognez's, together with the convincing linguistic evidence discussed in note 7 presents cogent arguments in favour of the hypothesis that Tsarfati followed Hordognez's accurate¹³ translation of *Celestina* as the basis for his own. Indeed, Tsarfati and Hordognez were contemporaries at the court of Julius II¹⁴, and as such, Tsarfati might have known of Hordognez's project even before it was printed. It is very likely that Hordognez's translation had encouraged Tsarfati to undertake his own work on the Italian.

On the other hand, Tsarfati was probably affiliated with the school of thought of the highly distinguished Judah Messer Leon (Carpenter 1997: 273; for what follows too). Messer Leon's Renaissance treatise on rhetoric, *Sefer Nofet Zufim* [*The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow*], first printed in Mantua by Abraham Conat in 1475, embraced the Italian humanist ideal of *homo universalis* and *studia humanitatis* in order to formulate and promote the Jewish model of *hakham kolel*. The *hakham kolel* referred to a model of Jewish leader who combined integrity of character with extensive erudition based upon both religious and secular learning (Mann 1989: 14). In his work, Messer Leon aimed to demonstrate to the non-Jewish community that Jews were willing to welcome and appreciate non-Jewish, secular thought¹⁵. Tsarfati's undertaking of a Hebrew adaptation of *Celestina* certainly represents an open attitude towards secular culture. In recognition of this, Cassuto (1935: 123) regards Tsarfati's production of a Hebrew *Celestina* as essential proof of the involvement of Italian Jews in their surrounding culture. He considers Tsarfati's introductory poem to *Celestina*, together with the Hebrew translation that once accompanied it, to represent the vibrancy of Hebrew literature in Italy at a unique time in European cultural history.

Furthermore, with respect to the lands of the diaspora in which Hebrew poetry had prospered, one should not dismiss the role that the He-

cian to Julius II, the geographic logic and the chronological proximity point to Tsarfati having had this edition at hand.

13.– In absence —as far as we know— of a thorough comparison of the Spanish and the Italian versions, Kish's statement that «[...] it is possible to deem his translation accurate» (Kish 1973: 9) must be believed.

14.– Tsarfati was confirmed as the personal physician to the Pope Julius II in 1504 (Hopkin 2011: 138). Hordognez's stay at the service of the Pope is more difficult to ascertain (Scoles 1961: 166-188), but he was at Julius' court in 1505.

15.– E.g. «If you consider the Holy Scriptures, you will find that what Aristotle and Quintilian said is undoubtedly true» (Leon 1475, but we quote from Herrmann 1999: 28). For more on the involvement of Italian Jews in their surrounding culture and their open attitude towards secular culture, see Roth (1969: 217).

brew literary tradition in Spain might have played in the development of Tsarfati's literary expression. As Robert Alter explains in his foreword to *Hebrew Poetry of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Pagis 1991), literary innovators of the Andalusian school, such as Abraham Ibn Ezra with his pioneering *Sefer Tzahut* [*The Book of Linguistic Purity*]¹⁶, brought to Italy the literary conventions of Spanish Hebrew poetry. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal between 1492 and 1497, Italy became a prominent cultural center for European Jews. Jewish poets writing in Hebrew there «continued to be richly aware of their Iberian antecedents» (*ibid.* xiii).

Although we will discuss the relevance of the conventions of medieval Hebrew-Spanish poets to Tsarfati's poetic prologue to *Celestina* later in this study, we shall here mention a tradition of Hebrew works, written in both Spain and Italy, which «make women their focus, either warning of their wiles, or extolling their virtues» (Fishman 1981: 89). Indeed, a large part of Tsarfati's poem constitutes a diatribe against the wiles and deceits of women. This was also a central theme of 15th century non-Hebrew poetry and prose throughout Spain, Italy and Europe in general (Bock 2002: 1). But Tsarfati's awareness of this genre of misogynist (and philogynistic) Hebrew literature (Rhine 1911: 352), including such texts as the Spanish 12th century *Minhat Yehuda, Sonei Ha-ashim* [*The offering of Yehuda, the Misogynist*] by Yehuda Ibn Sabbetai, and Abraham da Sarteano's poem *Sonei Ha-Nashim* [*The Misogynist*]¹⁷, should not be dismissed. We do not propose that this tradition of Hebrew writing was Tsarfati's inspiration for his literary approach to *Celestina*. However, we do regard his consciousness of this genre to be relevant to the direction and message of certain parts of his poem, *e.g.* the urgent warnings against women, and to the written formulation of his misogynistic message, *e.g.* the use of biblical quotations or *exempla* more familiar to an audience with a Hebrew background¹⁸.

In the field of secular Hebrew poetry written by Jews in Italy, we consider it crucial to mention Immanuel of Rome (1261-1328) for his unique and monumental contribution to the corpus of Hebrew poetry in Italy, and for the subsequent responses he provoked. Immanuel was a symbol of literary innovation, who dared to absorb and amalgamate untraditional, secular and occasionally burlesque literary conventions into his own

16.– Ibn Ezra had travelled from Andalusia to Italy and Provence in order to spread the poetic conventions of Jewish writers in Spain, to other parts of Europe. More on this in Bregman (2005: 11).

17.– Indeed, this last work, composed of 50 tercets abundant with biblically-justified anti-female hostility, was produced in Tsarfati's lifetime and native country (Italy, 1492). See Rhine (1911: 352) and Schirmann (1934: 210) for more details on this.

18.– In fact, Tsarfati admits to write for a purely Jewish audience: «[...] I but I arrange the splendour of my discourse to my brethren, the Jews» (v. 56).

Hebrew works. He possessed an unique openness to non-Hebrew literary influences, through which he was able to pioneer the Hebrew sonnet (Bregman 2005: 11). Roth (1969: 144) explains that Immanuel embraced not only the prosodic and metric conventions of his immediate literary environment, but also their thematic perspectives¹⁹. He even modelled the final section of his *Mahberot* [*Compositions*] on Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Therefore, the work of Immanuel of Rome is relevant to that of Tsarfati, who also encountered non-Jewish writers and non-Hebrew literature, and used this as one of the many inspirations for his own works (McPheeters 1985: 273).

Despite dating from the 13th century, Immanuel's *Mahberot* were printed by Gershom Soncino in Brescia in 1491, and thus Tsarfati, as an educated member of Jewish literary circles in Italy, would have been exposed to the newly accessible literature of Immanuel, and the entirety of its innovative stylistic and prosodic skill. The apparent irreverence and novel eroticism of Immanuel's poetry faced conflicting reactions. Whilst many admired his skillful and original works, the predominant opinion was that they were an example of literary indecency. This latter reaction had a powerful impact on the dissemination of Immanuel's work, both before and after Tsarfati's time (Bregman 2005: 106). Indeed, in 1416, Moses da Rieti (1388-1460) wrote *Miqdash Me'at* [*The little temple*], in which he bestows a seat in Paradise to those Jews whom he considered renowned and respectable. He pointedly excludes Immanuel of Rome from this privilege, «because of his language and because of what he wrote in the licentious *Mahberot*» (*ibid.* 102).

It was not that Moses da Rieti opposed Hebrew poetry's employment of themes and motifs originating from secular non-Hebrew literature; nor was he against the integration of Jews into Christian Italian life. Indeed, he served in the Papal court as physician to Pius II and he also, perhaps daringly, composed a poem based on Dante's *Divina Commedia*, although he explicitly justifies his very Christian Dantean inspiration²⁰. Furthermore, Da Rieti's condemnation of Immanuel may even be considered to be hypocritical, since he employs a metrical scheme innovated by Immanuel, and follows his practices in other places (Bregman *et al.* 2003: 69). However, Da Rieti not only apologises for any apparently unconventional aspects of his work, but he also «devotes his poetry to restoring forgot-

19.– «[...] the influence of the environment over him was by no means restricted to form. He fell under the spell of its spirit too, showing in his verses not merely a flippant, but a licentious outlook hitherto unknown in Jewish literature, and writing [...] a number of poems of a distinctly erotic tendency».

20.– Rieti attributes the minimal opportunity for Jewish literary invention to exile. The logical response to this was to learn from non-Jewish poets. To support this argument he compares his relationship to Dante to Maimonides's relationship to Aristotle (Rieti 1981: vv. 31-41, Bregman 2003b: 20).

ten knowledge and to preventing future erosion» (Bregman 2003a: 19). His profound poetic purpose clearly opposed the playful, light-hearted and indirect style of Immanuel's *Mahberot* (*ibid.* 23), for which Immanuel did not apologise²¹.

In 1565 Joseph Caro, in *Shulhan Aruch* [*Set table*, a.k.a. *The code of Jewish law*], further vilified and denounced the reading, writing and printing of Immanuel's *Mahberot*. Caro, like Da Rieti, also regarded Immanuel's words to be «licentious in nature» (Bregman 2005: 102). Caro's censure of Immanuel's poetry is not directly relevant to Tsarfati, since it was published several decades after Tsarfati's death. However, Caro's denunciation of Immanuel in an official codification of Jewish law is indicative of the long-standing contempt and fear held against Immanuel's works for their frivolity, bawdiness and absorption of secular conventions. This authoritative viewpoint regarding the impiety of certain examples of secular Hebrew literature clearly endured before, throughout and after Tsarfati's lifetime.

It is significant to observe the responses to Immanuel's thematically unorthodox works, for the potential impact this may have had on Tsarfati's own approach to introducing an unconventional and very secular work into the corpus of Hebrew literature. Tsarfati wrote the introductory poem to his translation of *Celestina* almost two hundred years after Immanuel produced his *Mahberot*, and almost a century after Moses da Rieti's bitter censure of Immanuel's works. In spite of this fact, we identify emphatic elements of defence in Tsarfati's poetic prologue, regarding his translation of *Celestina*. Although Tsarfati's outlook is urgent and serious in tone, in contrast to Immanuel's frivolity, his prefatory poem to *Celestina* suggests that he does not take for granted his responsibility as a writer to provide a legitimate and worthy work to his readers. Indeed, Tsarfati does not introduce his translation of a Spanish play, whose protagonist is a greedy and deceitful prostitute-sorceress, without justification.

Tsarfati's defence: comparing the prologues of Tsarfati and Rojas

Deborah Bregman (2005: 107) points to the apology in Tsarfati's prefatory poem. The term is used by Rojas himself in *El autor a un su amigo* to justify his defective writing too: «para *disculpa* de lo qual todo [...] ofrezco los siguientes metros» (p. 202; emphasis is ours). However, whilst it is possible to establish several parallels between Rojas's prologue and Tsarfati's poem, we consider both authors' prefatory texts to be disparate

21.— Bregman (2003b: 54) suggests that Immanuel's lack of «apology or explanation that might soften the confrontation with these nonconforming elements» is a cause for his disrepute and disappearance throughout the late 14th and 15th centuries.

with respect to attitude and expression. It may be possible to interpret Tsarfati's defence of his translation of *Celestina* as an utterly defiant justification, especially in comparison to Rojas's explicitly apologetic and humble tone. We shall examine how Rojas's approach to *Celestina*, as set out in the paratexts preceding the 21 acts of the *Tragicomedia*, differs from that of Tsarfati in his prologue-poem, due to the way in which the authors present themselves as writers, how this affects their relationship to the text, and to their different cultural backgrounds.

Many scholars now think that Rojas was not the original writer of the vast majority of the paratexts that can be found in *Celestina*, but it is generally accepted that he wrote *Carta a un su amigo* and/or the acrostic stanzas. He uses this prefatory material to explain the purpose and process behind his transformation of the single act of a *comedia* that he happened to stumble across, first in the sixteen-act *Comedia*, and then in the twenty-one act *Tragicomedia*. Rojas also makes clear that he does not deem himself worthy enough to assume an author's role, nor to create a fictional literary work. Indeed, he presents himself as unworthy of completing the original, sole act of *Celestina*²², and by mention of his occupation as a law student, he emphasises the little authority he has to present a piece of fictional literature²³. As the title to the acrostic verses explains²⁴, he even apologises («excusándose») for his error («yerro») in doing so, when he should have been studying law²⁵. Moreover, in *El autor a un su amigo*, Rojas defines his writing as «el fin baxo que le pongo» (p. 201). By contrast, Rojas praises the original author of Act I, whoever he may be²⁶, only in order to further undermine the worth of his own work, and he explains the compelling and unique literary quality of the first act of *Celestina*²⁷. This is the technique, typical of Latin and medieval

22.– «[...] donde comienzan mis mal doladas razones» (p. 202, emphasis is ours).

23.– «[...] mayormente siendo jurista yo, aunque obra discreta, es agena de mi facultad» (p. 201).

24.– *El autor, excusándose de su yerro en esta obra que escribió, contra sí arguye e compara.*

25.– «[...] no por recreación de mi principal estudio, del qual yo más me precio, como es la verdad, lo fiziesse; antes, distraído de los derechos en esta nueva labor me entremetiesse» (pp. 201-202).

26.– «[...] pero, quien quier que fuesse, es digno de recordable memoria por la sotil inención, por la gran copia de sentencias que so color de donayres tiene. Gran filósofo era» (p. 201).

27.–
 «Y así que esta obra en el proceder
 Fue tanto breve quanto muy sotil,
 Vi que portaba sentencias dos mil,
 En forro de gracias, labor de placer.
 No hizo Dédalo cierto a mi ver
 Alguna más prima entretalladura,
 Si fin diera en esta su propia escritura
 Cota o Mena con su gran saber.

European literature, of *captatio benevolentiae*. Through this, Rojas devalues and undermines the worth of his work and literary capabilities, in order to gain the tolerance, approval and goodwill of his audience, despite the inevitability of detractors²⁸.

Conversely, Tsarfati's poetic prologue introduces a work —his translation of *Celestina*— which he considers to be a valuable contribution to the Hebrew literary corpus, not least because of his notable literary skills (v. 56)²⁹ and his position in both the Jewish and Italian communities (vv. 51-54)³⁰. Tsarfati's praise might appear to be echoing the quality of self-elevation present in numerous medieval Spanish works as a result of Arabic influence (Tobi 2004: 247). Although earlier Hebrew authors, who were usually *paytanim* [leaders in prayer], would disassociate themselves from their work when Hebrew poetry came under the influence of Arabic poetry in medieval Spain, Jewish writers came to embrace Arabic literary customs, including the technique of self-praise. Of course, not all Hebrew authors employed this technique, and humility was itself a *topos* in the Middle Ages in the Hebrew tradition (Bregman *et al.* 2003: 66)³¹. However, self-elevation can be seen abundantly in the works of ancient Spanish-Hebrew authors such as Sa'adia (892-942), Samuel ha Nagid (993-1056) and Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021-1057). For example, the latter expounds in *Truth seekers turn* the didactic benefit and the divine quality of his poems:

Jamás yo no vi en lengua romana
Después que me acuerdo, ni nadie la vido,
Obra de estilo tan alto y sobido
En tusca ni griega ni castellana.
No trae sentencia de donde no mana
Loable a su autor eterna memoria,
Al cual Jesucristo reciba en su gloria
Por su Pasión santa que a todos nos sana»
(Rojas y antiguo autor 2000: 12-13).

28.— «[...] puesto que no han de faltar nuevos detractores a la nueva adición» (p. 220). Alternatively, «[...] y a mí están cortando / reproches, revistas y tachas» (p. 206).

29.— «[...] the splendour of my discourse» (emphasis is ours).

30.— «I am Joseph, son of rabbi Samuel, I prince to those united to the religion of those who have been established; A fountain of wisdom and a spring of protection, I the support of the stakes of Jacob's tent. His name is Tsarfati. I Is it not he who has served great rulers and princes. Including Lord Julius, high priest of the nations, I who has crushed the pride of the evil powers?».

31.— In his *Miqdash Me'at*, Moses da Rieti assumes a particularly *paytanic* approach to his poem. Not only does he apologise for his work, but he also presents the letters of his name, Moshe, in an acrostic in the first tercet of his introductory canto. This is quite similar to the technique employed by Rojas for his own work and demonstrates that humility was customary among the authors of Hebrew literature too, and not alien to Tsarfati's cultural background.

Truth seekers, turn to my poems
 and you who are ignorant, learn:
 they'll teach you hidden wisdom
 and instruct you [...]
 hold to these poems and you'll hold to faith
 (Cole 2007: 75, vv. 1-4, 6)

Tsarfati's call to his friends at the beginning and at the end of his poem (see note 7) and in verse 48 («Turn to me and incline your ears to my words»), is reminiscent of Ibn Gabirol's appeal to truth seekers to turn to his poems in verse 1. Furthermore, Tsarfati, like Ibn Gabirol, considers in verses 45-47 that his work is exemplary:

And I will place as an example Melibea, to all her friends,
 | and Calisto, to all lovers and to all who desire.
 And they will turn from the peoples' path of desire. |
 And they will be free from all the passion of its fire,
 And from their hearts and from their innards. They will
 extinguish | its source and they will destroy it to its founda-
 tions

In *I'm prince to the poem* Ibn Gabirol immodestly presents his relationship to the poem, before extolling the integrity of his wisdom³². Pride in one's wisdom, and self-elevation to a regal status, can also be identified in Tsarfati's prologue to *Celestina* in verses 51-54:

I am Joseph, son of rabbi Samuel, | prince to those united
 to the religion of those who have been established;
 A fountain of wisdom and a a spring of protection, | the
 support of the stakes of Jacob's tent.
 His name is Tsarfati. | Is it not he who has served great
 rulers and princes
 Including Lord Julius, high priest of the nations, | who
 has crushed the pride of the evil powers?

Indeed, whilst Tsarfati does appear to seek the benevolence of his readers by praising them and asking for their approval (vv. 59-60)³³, at no point in this process does he present himself as inferior to his readers, or unworthy of their acceptance. In contrast to Rojas, who writes of his

32.- «I'm prince to the poem, my slave [...]
 and here I've lived just sixteen years
 and my heart is like eighty within them»
 (Cole 2007: 76, vv. 1, 5-6)

33.- «Judge me on this score in my favour, | my people, pious ones adorned with comely ornaments. May your brilliance quickly illuminate your minds | and may God grant you precious gifts!»

«pobre saber» (p. 213), Tsarfati discusses «the splendour of his discourse» (v. 56). Rojas's use of *captatio benevolentiae*, and Tsarfati's application of self-praise, reveal the different literary traditions from which they come. This distinction represents Tsarfati's enduring connection to the literature of his Hebrew predecessors in Europe, and there is a small chance that he chose to adhere to the Spanish-Hebrew tradition as a result of the Spanish origin of his inspiration, *i.e.* *Celestina*.

Tsarfati's self-praise also takes the form of explicit self-identification³⁴, whereas Rojas, who assumes the same of the author of the first act of *Celestina*, seeks anonymity³⁵. The different attitudes of Tsarfati and Rojas towards self-reference is, to a certain extent, indicative of their differing perspectives regarding detractors. Rojas assumes the reason behind the anonymity of the original author of the first act of *Celestina* is for fear of those who may speak out against his work³⁶, and he adopts the same response to such a prospect³⁷. Furthermore, he devalues his writing and complains about being criticised³⁸, showing his sensitivity to other people's opinions and leaving a path open for suggestions. In fact, Rojas attributes his decision to amend *Celestina* to the influence of his readers' opinions³⁹, thereby minimizing his role as an author, as he had done previously by praising the achievement of the first author. Finally, in the prose prologue to the *Tragicomedia*, Rojas explains the inevitability of discord and resigns to the fact that «no han de faltar nuevos detractores a la nueva adición» (p. 220), in spite of the «nueva adición» responding to his readers' wishes. As such, he can never be fully satisfied with his work.

Tsarfati also reflects upon the certainty of opposition to his translation, but he shows less tolerance and resignation than Rojas towards this inevitability (vv. 57-58):

The crowd of scoffers arrayed against me, | shall be
judged measure for measure

34.– «I am Joseph, son of rabbi Samuel, [...] His name is Tsarfati.» (vv. 51 and 53).

35.– «Y pues él [...] celó su nombre, no me culpéys si, en el fin baxo que le pongo, no espresare el mío» (p. 201). However, Rojas does present his name in an acrostic within his poem, and the publishing editor reveals this in his poem to the readers.

36.– «[...] con temor de detractores y nocibles lenguas, más aparejadas a reprehender que a saber inventar» (p. 201).

37.– Rojas's concern for the «qué dirán» points in this direction: «[...] mayormente que [...] quien lo supiese diría que [...]» (p. 201).

38.– «[...] a mí están cortando / reproches, revistas y tachas. Callando / obstará y los daños de invidia y murmulos» (p. 206).

39.– «Assí que, viendo estas conquistas, estos dissonos y varios juyzios, miré a donde la mayor parte acostava, y hallé que querían que se alargasse en el processo de su deleyte destes amantes, sobre lo qual fuy muy importunado. De manera que acordé, aunque contra mi voluntad, meter segunda vez la pluma en tan estraña lavor y tan agena de mi facultad» (p. 220).

And it is not in vain that Gehenna is burning within
them | there they will give an account of future deeds

Unlike Rojas's sensitivity towards negative criticism, Tsarfati is not disheartened by the notion of criticism or rejection. He is confident that he is correct in pursuing this literary activity and that his detractors are misguided and will face divine retribution for opposing him. This self-assurance and disdain for criticism can be found in Spanish-Hebrew authors as well⁴⁰.

Similarities between the prologues of Rojas and Tsarfati are also relevant. Both authors choose to defend their works by resorting to the classical principle of *prodesse et delectare*. In the paratexts to *Celestina*, Rojas places greater emphasis on the didactic purpose of his work than its aspect of entertainment, although he acknowledges the important role of amusement within his educative aim⁴¹. He fashions his prefatory material in such a way in order to justify why his work should be read: whilst he is not capable of charming his audience with his literary skill or qualifications, his work can instead be of some use to lessen «la necesidad que nuestra común patria tiene de la presente obra» (p. 200). This necessity serves as motivation for Rojas's continuation of the delightful, yet unfinished work he supposedly found⁴², and in which he saw a source of education and instruction.

Although Tsarfati does not employ the same specific pedagogic language as Rojas does, and he clearly has more pride in the aesthetics of his work than the author of *Celestina*, emphasis on the moral and educational nature of the *Tragicomedia* is a priority for him too. The admonitory tone throughout Tsarfati's poem represents the didactic purpose of his adaptation of *Celestina*, apart from his defense of the exemplary nature of his translation in verses 45-47 (see above). To a certain extent, Tsarfati

40.– For example, in the bitter verses of Selomoh Bonafed (ca. 1370-ca. 1450):

No preguntéis si son demasiado elevados para este tiempo | mis poemas, sino si
tienen juicio quienes los escuchan.

No preguntéis si son dulces mis palabras, | sino si la miel y el maná resultan a los
enfermos repugnantes.

¿Dónde hay faltas en el metro de sus versos? la que | yerra es la balanza del pen-
samiento de los hombres.

¡Ay de las flautas que suenan entre los indignos! | ¿pueden mezclarse las palomas
con los cuervos?

(Sáez-Badillos 2002: 16, vv. 1-4)

41.– «Desta manera mi pluma se embarga / imponiendo dichos lascivos, rientes, / atrae los oídos de penadas gentes; / degrado escarmientan y arrojan su carga» (p. 207). Tsarfati expresses a similar aim to delight the vulnerable and unfortunate: «Truly my tongue has copied this work | to sweeten the suffering of the poor, and the heart of pursued men» (v. 55).

42.– «Movíme a acabarla por estas razones: [...] y es la final ver ya la más gente / buelta y mezclada en vicios de amor. / Estos amantes les pornán temor / a fiar de alcahueta ni de mal sirviente» (p. 208).

sees himself as an adviser or teacher⁴³, who addresses directly a well-defined audience of «friends and aristocratic companions» (v. 49). He wants them to learn from «the war of lovers» (vv. 1 and 62) the painful and deceitful nature of love.

In spite of Carpenter's (1993: 234) claim that «Tsarfati's purpose is less enseñar deleitando than deleitar narrando», we consider both Rojas and Tsarfati to express an aim to fulfil the purpose of *prodesse et delectare*. Conscious that they are introducing new types of work to their readers and aware of the controversy this may provoke, Rojas and Tsarfati employ this combination of instruction and charm in order to justify the validity of their respective works. With respect to this element of their prefatory defences, Rojas and Tsarfati are united. However, as previously discussed, both writers justify themselves and their works in numerous other ways, and in alternate manners: Rojas self-consciously appeals for benevolence, whereas Tsarfati defiantly reassures himself.

Indeed, it is within Tsarfati's defiance that we identify his caution in presenting to the Jewish community of Italy a secular piece of literature, with a somewhat sordid nature, exposing immoral and irreligious living. As previously mentioned, in the last 14 verses of his prefatory poem Tsarfati emphasises the benefits of his work for the Hebrew community he elevates himself and validates his right to write and to teach (vv. 51-52, 56), he expresses solidarity with his fellow Jews (v. 51), and he confidently condemns those who may judge him (vv. 57-58). Tsarfati seems self-confident and convinced of the value of his translation: his purpose and his skills are highly legitimate, if not remarkable. However, this apparent self-assuredness could be a defense mechanism, signifying the author's awareness that his translation of *Celestina* might be considered licentious and contrary to Hebrew tradition.

Moreover, Tsarfati's translation of *Celestina* may be seen to go against two liturgical sources: one from the Old Testament, the other from the Talmud. Carpenter (1993: 235) points to a justification for objections to Tsarfati's involvement with *Celestina*, namely, Lev 18:3, which prohibits «walking in the statutes» of other, non-Jewish, nations⁴⁴. Furthermore, the Talmud presents an ancient Jewish ban on theatres and circuses⁴⁵,

43.– «[...] I and rejoice with me, *counsel and assembly* of survivors» (v. 48, emphasis is ours).

44.– «After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes». For biblical quotations, we use the Jewish Publication Society version of the Old Testament (1917).

45.– In the Talmud, in tractate Avodah Zarah 40a, «the view is taken that attending a circus is equivalent to an act of murder; in the Bab recension of the same tractate (18b) the close connexion [*sic*] of theatres and circuses with idolatrous worship is emphasised; and in Jerus. *Berakoth* 7b col. 2 [...], a thanksgiving is offered by a pious Rabbi for having had his lot cast in the house of learning and the house of prayer, and not in theatres and circuses» (Hastings 2003: 173, see Bregman 2005: 107 too).

thus Tsarfati's literary novelty⁴⁶—and the «osadía» of it— must certainly have been monumental.

The tradition that considered the introduction of a text such as *Celestina* into the Jewish literary corpus as inappropriate, also extends to later periods, and other countries. For example, as Brown (1994) identifies, a 17th century Sephardic reader's rejection of *Celestina* appears in the obscure text *Diálogos entre dos hermanos, Obadía Ben Israel y Andrés Antonio, sobre la falsedad de los Evangelios y verdad de la ley de Mosseh, Primera [y Segunda] partes*, whose aim is to persuade Spanish *conversos* to return to the Jewish faith. In dialogic form, the text refers reproachfully to *Celestina*, in an attempt to convince the listener of the amorality and depravity of secular Spanish culture⁴⁷. The listener then questions whether or not such texts occur in the «lengua hebrayca», to which the speaker firmly responds: «Nunca ubo, ny avra, quien tan atrevido sea, que las palabras de la lengua santa emplea en tales locuras, y vanidades» (*ibid.* 153). Clearly unaware of Tsarfati's translation of *Celestina*, the speaker affirms the purity, sanctity and morality of the literature of the Hebrew language. His claim that «sin haver nunca quien una sola palabra deshonesto escribiesse en tal lengua» (*ibid.*) represents the widespread Jewish notion of the corruption of secular literature. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that centuries of biblical, talmudic and literary comments on the development and propagation of so-called «licentious» literature and activities, such as theatres and circuses, and the previous experience regarding the reception of the poetry of Immanuel of Rome, may have motivated Tsarfati to use his poetic prologue as a defiant defence of his translation of *Celestina*. Moreover, Tsarfati's awareness of Rojas's apologetic and defensive tone within the prologue of the original *Celestina*, could have contributed to this attitude as well.

Some aspects of Tsarfati's poem

The discussions above emphasise the heterogeneous nature of Tsarfati's poetic prologue to his translation of *Celestina*. We propose to further analyse this multiplicity by identifying some of the poem's most compelling themes and conventions. These various literary elements of

46.— Numerous scholars credit Tsarfati with the innovation of introducing theatre and comedy into the Hebrew literary corpus through his translation of *Celestina*, e.g. Bregman (2003b: 50), Cassuto (1935) and Carpenter (1993).

47.— «[...] y alla en España, quando un muchacho sale de la Escuela, como no ha depren-dido, ni leydo por otros libros que el de *Celestina*, y otros tales, sabe muy bien de que manera a de enamorar una mosa, y como la ha de embiar el alcahueta, armar de noche la escala a la ventana, para escalar su casa, y honra, y fielmente que palabras le dira, para se la robar, y dexarla deshonorada. Veis aqui el provecho que saca de lo uno, y el fruto que se sigue de lo otro» (Brown 1994: 152).

Tsarfati's poem may overlap in certain instances. Indeed, Tsarfati's poem refers at the same time directly and indirectly to the plot, characters and allusions within *Celestina*; and to specific vocabulary or ideas found in Jewish religious writings. Certain themes correspond to topics of Medieval and Renaissance Spanish and Italian Hebrew poetry too; as well as of earlier and contemporary secular Italian poetry.

Many of Tsarfati's references to the plot and characters of *Celestina* can be identified within the first 10 verses of the poem. Here, Tsarfati alludes to the beginning of Act I, in which Calisto falls in love with Melibea. He tries to win her affections with words of sincere adulation, only to be greeted by her abrupt disinterest in him and her disgust towards the notion of being in love (vv. 3-5)⁴⁸. Tsarfati generalises the situation, referring to «maidens» and «lovers» in the plural, nonetheless, these verses undoubtedly relate to the very beginning of *Celestina*, as well as to other relevant passages of the Spanish text⁴⁹. At the same time, verses 5-7 allude to the disloyalty of servants, referring most pertinently to Sempronio and Pármeno⁵⁰. Apart from echoing the warning of the *sequitur*⁵¹, as Carpenter (1993: 234) demonstrates, with the imagery and wording of «And the deceptions and counsels of servants / Whose wiles are weapons of destruction» (v. 6), Tsarfati echoes the language of Gen 49:5⁵². By echoing the verse from Genesis, and by simultaneously referring to the behaviour of Sempronio and Pármeno against their master, Tsarfati has achieved an ingenious synthesis of *Celestina*'s plot and the convention within Medieval Hebrew poetry to draw upon biblical sources. Finally, *Celestina* herself is evoked in «And there, the craftiness and deceptions of old crones, Who lay their traps everywhere» (v. 8), and Lucretia's intervention could be suggested in «And there, maid-servants will have conversations | to light a fire and firebrands in the heart of lovers» (v. 9).

48.– «And the maidens' fierce rages and fears: | their strife and their love are intertwined.

Sweet words which flow from the lips of lovers, | as they speak with delightful discourse to beautiful maidens, Are their weapons as they wrestle with their desire | [...]».

49.– E.g. «the maidens' fierce rages» (v. 3) looks quite similar to the irate response of Melibea in act I and the so-called «furia de Melibea» in act IV, as well as her contradictory behaviour in acts IV and X fits well with «their strife and their love are intertwined» (v. 3).

50.– «[...] | And the deceptions and counsels of servants, Whose wiles are weapons of destruction | to place fracture and ruin in the heart of a man. And their conspiracy to steal their master's glory, | as they rebel against him at all times».

51.– See note 7.

52.– «Simeon and Levi are brethren; weapons of violence their kinship». Furthermore, Tsarfati's use of the Hebrew language almost mirrors that which is written in Genesis, if not in vocabulary, then in nominal form. Tsarfati substitutes *מהירכמ סמה ילכ* [weapons of violence are their kinship] for *מהילכ סמה ילכ*. The translation that accompanies this article considers the word *מהילכ*, which corresponds to the word *מהירכמ* in that both are plural masculine nouns with a masculine plural possessive suffix attached, to be superfluous in meaning, but effective as wordplay. Its consonantal sounds correspond both to *ילכ* and *מהילכ* preceding it.

Aside from its title, Tsarfati's poem only makes one direct allusion to any character in *Celestina*. This occurs in verse 45, in which he also refers explicitly to his didactic activity: «And I will place as an example Melibea, to all her friends, I and her lover, to all lovers and to all who desire». Here, Tsarfati names Melibea, only alluding to Calisto as «her lover». Tsarfati's singular mention of Melibea may be casual. However, it is interesting to note that Tsarfati prioritises Melibea's name elsewhere, namely, in the title to his poem—and, we can assume, also in the title of his translation⁵³—, despite the reverse being expressed in Rojas's original title for the play⁵⁴. Tsarfati's direct reference to Melibea, together with the priority he gives to the her name in the title to his poem, gives rise to a curious consideration: Tsarfati could be aware that women, too, suffer in love and that Melibea is under its influence. Consequently, Tsarfati may be suggesting that women can also benefit from reading his version of *Celestina*, and the «they» of verses 46-47 could refer to male as well as to female victims of love, in spite of Tsarfati's poem being addressed to his male «friends and aristocratic companions» (v. 49). Alternatively, Rojas makes clear that his intended audience is male at numerous points in his prologue, too. In *El autor a un su amigo*, Rojas addresses a male friend and recalls this friend's own suffering in the pursuit of love⁵⁵. Rojas's subtitle also clarifies the intended male audience: «[...] filosofales y avisos muy necesarios para mancebos» (p. 181). However, Rojas does allude to women explicitly in the acrostic stanzas: he appeals to «damas, matronas, mancebos, casados» (p. 210) to defend themselves from Cupid's arrows and love's grasp. In this way, Rojas widens the audience of the *Tragicomedia* to all men and women in his prefatory poem, in a similar way to the ambiguous «they» of Tsarfati's poem.

However, Tsarfati does not identify Melibea as a lover or as a victim of love in the same way that he values Calisto as such. Indeed Melibea and those to whom she may be an example, «her friends», are differentiated from Calisto and «lovers and all who desire». Furthermore, Tsarfati's dispassionate reference to Melibea is submerged in a plethora of warnings and admonitions regarding the demonic nature of women and their role in the destructive experience of love. Tsarfati may well be acknowledging Melibea's sorry fate, but without pity. He may be making an example of her to her friends as a deterrent against being a destructive woman. In this way, Tsarfati successfully conveys and perpetuates the ambiguity

53.—In the title of his poetic prologue, Tsarfati refers to his translation as *והסליקו האיבילם רובה* [that of the treatise of Melibea and Calisto].

54.—*Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*.

55.—«[...] por la muchedumbre de galanes y enamorados mancebos que posee, pero aun en particular vuestra mesma persona, cuya juventud de amor ser presa se me representa aver visto, y de él cruelmente lastimada» (p. 200).

regarding the tragic nature of Melibea, provoked by Rojas in the original *Celestina* (cf. Russell 1960, Tozer 2002).

The conceit of love as pain, is widespread and apparent in classical works such as Ovid's *Amores*, courtly poetry and Italian secular poetry⁵⁶. Hebrew poets of medieval Spain also employed the trope of the torment of love, as it appears in verses 11-14 of Tsarfati's prologue⁵⁷. Yehuda Al Harizi (1165-1225), in his poem *A Lover Wandered*, describes «desire's pain like a wound through him» (Cole 2007: 213). Furthermore, in a poem within his *Sefer ha-Meshalim* [*The book of parables*], Ya'aqov ben Elazar (1170-ca. 1233) questions: «Are we all alone in this torturous state? / Do all lovers share this fate?» (*ibid.* 220). Todros Abulafia (1247-ca. 1300), who does not write with antagonism towards love and women, but maintains a personal dimension to his poetry (*ibid.* 257); describes the angst-ridden heart-ache of a lover: «[...] that fine gazelle, that fawn sent / to torture lovers with endless grief» (*ibid.* 259). Indeed, according to Pagis (1991), this kind of love is a characteristic feature of Tsarfati's own poetical production, so that it is impossible to ascertain which was his main influence. It is perhaps legitimate to assume that Tsarfati, a prominent member of the Papal court and an exceptionally erudite man, was well-educated in the literature of courtly love and in earlier Italian literature, but the Spanish-Hebrew tradition or even the writings by Immanuel of Rome could have played a role in his choice, too. In addition, it is likely that he identified Petrarchan as well as courtly tropes in *Celestina* and determined to represent them in his own work.

The concept of misogyny represents a category within Tsarfati's poem which connects him to his Hebrew poetic predecessors and to the 15th century misogynistic poetic trend—as we have mentioned above—, as well as to the anti-feminine discourse of Sempronio in act I. It is important to note that Tsarfati would not have had the justification for misogynistic expression without the latter, as anti-feminism is not a topic treated by him in any of his works. Therefore, this is a singular example of impassioned misogyny in his literature (cf. Pagis 1991). By applying the techniques of earlier Hebrew misogynistic poetry to *Celestina*, Tsarfati has produced an extravagant warning against passionate love, which serves as an indication of the moral purpose to be derived from his trans-

56.— The situation is similar with regard to the topical idea of the oxymoronic state of love in the opening description of the lovers' discourse («[...] strife and love are intertwined» v. 3) and Tsarfati's description of the helpless, confused and irretrievable experience of the desperate and lamenting lovers (vv. 11-12).

57.— «And the voice of lovers in sorrowful sufferings, | their bodies torn apart by anguish, Their crying of their lamentation, the wailing of their desperation. | Full of wretched anger, they wander amongst the scorned And they shout and they moan, | and in every moment, every misfortune, they tremble. And in their anguish is pain, speech and mourning too, | as they speak. They are like helpless wanderers».

lation and respects the didactic emphasis placed upon the play in Rojas's paratexts. Tsarfati's criticism of women resonates more closely with the Hebrew tradition than the literary model of *Celestina*, as he concentrates in the Hebrew topic of women's taste for jewelry and garments, and how their love can be bought through presents (vv. 30-37)⁵⁸, which —surprisingly— is not treated in Sempronio's diatribe. However, both share the idea of women being «vessels of impurity, disguised in precious and sacred garments» (v. 42)⁵⁹ and cause of the fall and ruin of men⁶⁰. Among these, Tsarfati, as well as Rojas, consider Solomon and David «witnesses to the wiles and fetters of women» (v. 39)⁶¹.

Aside from the above mentioned David and Solomon, Tsarfati also alludes to less well-known biblical figures, only familiar to someone with a Hebrew background and/or a good knowledge of the Old Testament, as victims of love, e.g. Calcol (v. 15)⁶². Other obscure Old Testament allusions, with which Jews would be more familiar than Christians, can be identified in Tsarfati's poem. For example, the downfall and destruction of Sisera (Judg 4-5) could be the inspiration for the second hemistich of verse 15, according to Cassuto (1935: 135)⁶³.

These references to the Old Testament allow us to introduce another notable quality of Tsarfati's poem, characteristic of post-biblical Hebrew writers: the abundant use of biblical allusions. With respect to the exceptional diversity of Hebrew poetry, Schirmann (1967) explains:

58.— «But silver will gather the hearts of women, I and giving others scarfs with shrouds. And gold will raise the haughtiness of a lover. I From every bramble will sprout a spikenard. And he is a prince, who elevates men, I and brings joy to the old and the young. Many gifts will capture the heart of gazelles, I and a necklace upon the throat will lead away great anger. Give gifts and presents to the maidens I and, to the attractive ones, continuous changes of raiment! Indeed, her anger will relax when a ring is placed on her nose, I and bracelets on her hands. And thus the maiden will desire her lover, and kiss him, I and she will satisfy his desires with precious things. No longer insolent in her behavior, I she will boil food according to his desire, in order to satisfy him».

59.— «¡Considera qué sesito está debaxo de aquellas grandes y delgadas tocas! ¡Qué penamientos so aquellas gorgueras, so aquel fausto, so aquellas largas y autorizantes ropas! ¡Qué imperfición, qué alvañares debaxo de templos pintados!» (p. 242).

60.— «Llenos están los libros de sus viles y malos exemplos y de las caídas que levaron a los que en algo como tú las reputaron» (p. 240). Compare with «And each day these women ruin men, I and destroy each life with their sorcery» (v. 41).

61.— «Di, pues, esse Adam, esse Salomón, esse David, esse Aristóteles, esse Vergilio, esses que dizes, ¿cómo se sometieron a ellas?» (p. 242).

62.— «And there, all the wise men like Calcol, I are despoiled at the hand of a shameless woman». This is a direct reference to 1 Kings 5:11: «For he was wiser than all men: than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the nations round about».

63.— Indeed, in Judg 5:27, the word *דודש* [ruined], which is placed in Tsarfati's poem at the end of verse 15, is used to describe Sisera's death. In addition to this, we consider the verse, «And she will crush the glory of a military leader» (v. 24), as an allusion to the fate of Sisera.

[...] besides the language in which they were written [...] there does seem to be a second common element [...] namely, their dependence on the Bible, its style, contents and spiritual atmosphere [...] from the intentional use of quotations [...] complete verses or parts of verses from the Bible slightly changed or mere allusions to the original text [...] to attempts at presenting subjects from the Scriptures in modern phraseology.

Tsarfati includes several of the above applications of biblical literature in his prologue poem. The translation of Tsarfati's poem that complements this article is footnoted with as many biblical and Talmudic allusions as could be identified⁶⁴, therefore we do not propose to examine here every biblical quotation or allusion employed by Tsarfati in his poem. We shall focus instead the present discussion on those allusions we consider most significant to the nature of his work.

Both Eva Castro (2008) and Castro Guisasola (1973) identify the occurrence of biblical allusions in *Celestina*. In his poetic prologue, Tsarfati employs very few of the same references that Rojas used for the *Tragicomedia*, namely, those references to David and Solomon that have been discussed above. Tsarfati cleverly integrates biblical allusions into his poem —some with clarity, and others with greater subtlety. He avoids allusions to New Testament sources in his poem, which are abundant in *Celestina*⁶⁵. This is perhaps understandable from the point of view that he wanted to appeal to a Jewish audience. Furthermore, he sought to prove to the «scoffers amassed» against him (v. 57)⁶⁶ that his knowledge and appreciation of secular conventions was not to the detriment of his involvement with the Jewish community and his contribution to it. Therefore, Tsarfati seeks to prove the didactic value of *Celestina* by reference to the Torah and other Jewish liturgical sources with an educative value.

A great deal of Tsarfati's poem echoes the theme of Prov 5, a very appropriate text as it is replete with imagery regarding the wiles of women, which warns men to stay away from female temptation. Tsarfati applies numerous aspects of this biblical chapter to his poem, thereby emphasizing *Celestina*'s didactic intent and approaching the genre of wisdom literature to which Proverbs belongs. Tsarfati tells his audience to «incline your ear» (v. 48), just as the speaker in Prov 5:1, 13 («[...] attend unto my wisdom; incline thy ear to my understanding») advises his own listener.

64.— Many of these allusions have already been identified in the aforementioned works of Cassuto (1935), Carpenter (1993) and McPheeters (1985).

65.— This information relies on the records of the on-line searchable database *Biblia y «Celestina»* (temporarily available at the URL <http://bibliaycelestina.webcindario.com>) and the current state of the research on the biblical sources of *Celestina* by Amaranta Saguar.

66.— «The crowd of scoffers arrayed against me I shall be judged measure for measure».

Just as Tsarfati emphasises that love lacks good counsel (v. 19)⁶⁷, Prov 5:23 warns that «he shall die for lack of instruction»⁶⁸ and he agrees with Prov 5:13 on the importance of guidance. Tsarfati's description of mistresses who «sate themselves with gall and wormwood» (v. 10), recalls woman's connection to bitter wormwood in Prov 5:4 («But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword»). Tsarfati urges his readers against the deceitful appearances of women, describing their beauty as a mask to their impurity (v. 43)⁶⁹, in a similar way to Prov 5:3-4, which belies the true nature of the woman's honeyed words⁷⁰. Prov 5:8-11 tells of the consequences of becoming involved with the temptress⁷¹. Similarly, Tsarfati explains the soul-destroying nature of the pursuit of women (v. 18)⁷², and he threatens the resulting loss of strength, power and health in a series of rhetorical questions to his readers (vv. 49-50):

But is it wise for you to be shamed, my friends and aristocratic companions, | in devotion to bands of united maidens?
Or to be like a deer without power and without horns of strength? | Or like a goat, bound by the hand of women?

On the other hand, McPheeters (1985: 38) states that «a veces la composición recoge el tono de las elegías». Indeed, Tsarfati succeeds in presenting the elegiac images of helplessness, wandering, mourning, distress, loss and desperation by resorting to the imagery of the books of Lamentations (see note 57).

For example, Tsarfati's metaphors regarding the physical consequences of destructive love echo the physical oppression described by the speaker in Lam 3:4 («My flesh and skin he has worn out; he has broken my bones») and 3:11 («he has [...] pulled me in pieces; He has made me desolate»). Moreover, Tsarfati describes the audible expression of lovers' grief, reflecting the mournful activities recounted by the speaker in Lam 1:2 («she weeps sore in the night [...]), 1:4 («the ways of Zion do

67.- «And there isn't understanding, and there isn't correct counsel, | and there isn't a guide, and there isn't someone to direct the path».

68.- «He shall die for lack of instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall reel».

69.- «[...] | Indeed, they are vessels of impurity, disguised in precious and sacred garments».

70.- «For the lips of a strange woman drop honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; | But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword».

71.- «Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house; | Lest thou give thy vigour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel; | Lest strangers be filled with thy strength, and thy labours be in the house of an alien; | And thou moan, when thine end cometh, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed».

72.- «And the time will come when they will be weary, grown old, and exhausted | from these burdens which are too heavy for them».

mourn [...] all her gates are desolate [...] she herself is in bitterness», 1:16 («[...] I weep [...] my eye runs down with water»), 5:15 («our dance is turned into mourning»). He narrates the lamentable situation of the lovers' helpless wandering, just as those facing exile in Lam 4:14 («they wander as blind men in the streets [...]») are subjected to lack of direction and wasted journeys. This is especially remarkable as *Celestina's* most elegiac scene —Pleberio's lament— opens with a reference to Lam 1:12⁷³ and also shares with Tsarfati's poem many of the reproaches made to love in verses 21-27⁷⁴.

Tsarfati's poetic prologue to *Celestina*, like many medieval Hebrew poems on the themes of women and love, contains allusions to Song of Songs. As Dan Pagis (1991: 13) explains, medieval Hebrew-Spanish «love poetry was a typical synthesis of Arabic motifs [...] on the one hand and biblical diction and love motifs on the other, the latter often drawn from Song of Songs». Cassuto (1935: 124) identifies vocabulary from Song of Songs in the opening line of Tsarfati's poem, but the most widespread motif in medieval Hebrew love poetry, originally from Song of Songs, is the presentation of the woman as a gazelle or as a doe. Following in the tradition of his poetic predecessors, Tsarfati employs this imagery: «Many gifts will capture the heart of gazelles» (v. 33). However, Tsarfati refers to the gazelle as greedy and materialistic, whilst Song of Songs employs the motif with genuine admiration and desire: «My beloved is like a gazelle» (Song 2:9). In this way, Tsarfati's adherence to this convention of medieval Hebrew love poetry is tainted with irony. He presents the motifs from Song of Songs not as images of genuine love and infatuation, but rather as cynical pictures of the troublesome and superficial nature of courtship.

Conclusion: A multi-faceted poem

As we hope to have demonstrated, it is possible to observe in Tsarfati's poetic prologue to the Hebrew *Celestina* a relationship between his literary inspiration, *i.e.* Rojas's *Celestina* or Hordognez's Italian translation of *Celestina*, Hebrew poetry written in Medieval Spain and Italy, and con-

73.— Compare «¡Oh gentes que venís a mi dolor, o amigos y señores, ayudáme a sentir mi pena!» (p. 608) with «Let it not come unto you, all ye that pass by! Behold, and see if there be any pain like unto my pain, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger».

74.— «And on what will lovers' gazes lean? | And were will they find a base for support? In love there is no shelter or cover | and no-one who shows pity or performs acts of kindness. And she will break and bury the body of a man, | and she will heap fear in the heart of a warrior, And she will humiliate and thwart haughtiness of spirit, | and she will crush the glory of a military leader. When in anger, she expels the name and the wisdom of men | from their place in the Supreme Court. From youth until old age and white hair, | beneath her yoke, officials will serve her. At all times those fools, deceived | arrange and fabricate praises on her behalf».

temporary Italian and Hebrew poetry. Tsarfati's integration into Christian Italian society and his simultaneous affiliation to the Jewish community somewhat reflects the dichotomous nature of the lives of the Andalusian courtier rabbis in 10th century Spain⁷⁵. In the character of the literature of those rabbis, Tsarfati's poem reconciles markedly secular, non-Jewish influences with a strongly traditional Hebrew background. Perhaps this is the reason why the Spanish-Hebrew influence over Tsarfati's poem appears so noticeable. Alternatively, as has been suggested before, the Spanish origin of *Celestina* might have provoked Tsarfati to employ Spanish-Hebrew topics and techniques.

Tsarfati's poem is symbolic of his position as a Jew in secular society: a position which juxtaposes one's involvement in, appreciation of and contribution to secular life, with a constant awareness and preservation of one's ancestral and religious heritage⁷⁶. The author, a Jew as well as a familiar to the Pope, appreciated a piece of Spanish literature translated into Italian by Alphonso Hordognez shortly before and, not content with the work reaching his non-Jewish Italian contemporaries alone, he saw it as his duty to transfer *Celestina* to the Jewish community as well. This poem and the lost translation it preceded constitute a less well-known and less conventional aspect of the cultural relationship between Spain, Italy, Jews and the Hebrew language; as well as an invaluable testament to the reception of Rojas's *Celestina* in non-Christian circles.

At the same time, the 62-verse poem is a manifest example of Hebrew poetry, characterised by numerous *topoi* of earlier Hebrew literary works, despite its multiple secular, non-Jewish sources of inspiration and points of reference. However, if the principal purpose of Tsarfati's poem was to introduce his translation and to explain the benefit of reading this *Celestina*, then it is possible to consider the poem's position in the realm of Hebrew poetry as secondary to its primary position as a prologue to Tsarfati's translation. The entirety of Tsarfati's literary creativity with respect to *Celestina* is unknown, since his translation is not extant. Nonetheless, in its role as a prologue the poem authorises, for example, the hypothesis that Tsarfati adapted the *Tragicomedia*, not the *Comedia* (see note 7); and that the topics of prostitution and witchcraft were irrelevant for him. In fact, he does not mention these topics in his prologue, whereas he places great significance on the treachery of servants and the consequences of love. The question as to how this might have influenced Tsarfati's translation of *Celestina* cannot yet be

75.- «[...] wealthy Jews, thoroughly educated in Arabic [...] skilled in professions, and holding positions of responsibility and power in public life, who were also pious, learned and fiercely loyal to Jewish interests» (Scheindlin 1986: 4).

76.- McPheeters (1985: 38) also affirms that the poem both «nos permite apreciar la actitud de un judío ortodoxo y distinguido» and «demuestra que el poeta compartía una actitud coherente entre sus contemporáneos cristianos».

answered. However, according to the vehemence of his poetic prologue, it is clear that Tsarfati confronted his literary pursuit with strong feelings about *Celestina* and towards his Jewish heritage and audience.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic text: a new translation with the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities* (1917), Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America.
- HORDOGNEZ, Alphonso (1973), *Tragicomedia di Calisto e Melibea novamente traducta de Spagnolo in Italiano idioma*, ed. Kathleen V. Kish, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.
- LEON, Judah Messer (1475), *Sefer Nofet Zufim [The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow]*, Mantua, Abraham Conat.
- RIETI, Moses da (1981), «Miqdash Me'at [The little temple]», in *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*, n° 23-1, pp. 25-63.
- ROJAS, Fernando de (1991), *Comedia o tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, ed. Peter E. Russell, Madrid, Castalia.
- ROJAS, Fernando de and antiguo autor (2000), *La Celestina: tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, eds Francisco Llobera et al., Barcelona, Crítica.
- TSARFATI, Joseph ben Samuel (1935), «A poem composed by the Poet upon his translation of the tale of Melibea and Calisto», in *Me-Shirei Yosef ben Shmuel Zarfati: Ha-Komedia ha-Rishonah be-Ivrit [The poetry of Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati: the first comedy in Hebrew]*, ed. Moshe David Cassuto, New York, The Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, pp. 121-128.

Secondary Sources

- ALMAGOR, Dan (1992), «Hagirsah ha'ivrit harishonah shel *Lah Selestinah*», in *Bamah*, n° 127, pp. 19-28.
- Biblia y «Celestina»* [on-line database]. Available on-line <<http://bibliaycelestina.webcindario.com>> (visited 01/2012).
- BOCK, Gisela (2002), *Women in European history*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
- BREGMAN, Dvora (2003a), «A note on the style and prosody of *Miqdash me'at [The little temple]*», in *Prooftexts: A journal of Jewish literary history*, n° 23.1, pp. 18-24.
- (2003b), «Their rose in our garden: Romance elements in Hebrew Italian poetry», in *Renewing the past, reconfiguring Jewish culture : from al-Andalus to the Haskalah*, eds Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 50-59.

- (2005), *The golden way: the Hebrew sonnet during the Renaissance and the Baroque*, Tempe, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.
- BREGMAN, Dvora et al. (2003), «Commentary on *Miqdash Meat* [*The little temple*]», in *Prooftexts: A journal of Jewish literary history*, n° 23.1, pp. 64-93.
- BROWN, Kenneth (1994), «A Seventeenth-Century Sephardic Reader's negative Evaluation of *Celestina*», in *Celestinesca*, n° 18.2, pp. 151-154.
- CARPENTER, Dwayne E. (1993), «The sacred in the profane: Jewish Scriptures and the first comedy in Hebrew», in *Fernando de Rojas and «Celestina»: approaching the fifth centenary*, eds Ivy A. Corfis and Joseph T. Snow, Madison, Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, pp. 229-237.
- (1997), «A Converso best-seller: *Celestina* and her foreign offspring», in *Crisis and creativity in the Sephardic world, 1391-1648*, ed. Benjamin R. Gampel, New York, Columbia UP, pp. 267-281.
- CASSUTO, Moshe David (1935), «Me-Shirei Yosef ben Shmuel Zarfati: Ha-Komedia ha-Rishonah be-Ivrit [The poetry of Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati: the first comedy in Hebrew]», in *Jewish studies in memory of George A. Kohut 1874-1933*, eds Salo Wittmayer Baron and Alexander Marx, New York, The Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, pp. 121-128.
- CASTRO, Eva (2008), «La Biblia y el universo dramático medieval», in *La Biblia en la literatura española I/1*, ed. M^a Isabel Toro Pascua, Madrid, Editorial Trotta, vol. I/1, pp. 191-220.
- CASTRO, Florentino (1973), *Observaciones sobre las fuentes literarias de «La Celestina»*, Madrid, CSIC.
- COLE, Peter (2007), *The dream of the poem: Hebrew poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950-1492*, Princeton, Princeton UP.
- FISHMAN, Talya (1981), «A medieval parody of misogyny: Judah Ibn Shabbetai's *Minhat Yehudah Soneh HaNashim*», in *Prooftexts: A journal of Jewish literary history*, n° 8, pp. 89-119.
- HAMILTON, Michelle M. (2002), «Joseph ben Samuel Sarfati's *Tratado de Melibea y Calixto*: a sephardic Jew's reading of the *Celestina* in light of the medieval Judeo-Spanish go-between tradition», in *Sefarad*, n° 62.2, pp. 329-347.
- HASTINGS, James (2003), *Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics*, ed. J. A. Selbie, Whitefish, Kessinger Publishing, vol. 11.
- HERRMANN, Klaus (1999), «The reception of hekhalot literature in Yohanan Alemanno's autograph MS Paris 849», in *Studies in Jewish manuscripts*, eds Joseph Dan et al., Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, pp. 19-88.
- HOPKIN, Shon David (2011), *Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati and Fernando de Rojas: «Celestina» and the world of the go-between* [Dissertation], University of Texas at Austin. Available on-line <<http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/ETD-UT-2011-08-3898>> (VISITED 01/2012).
- INFANTES, Víctor (2007), «El laberinto cronológico y editorial de las primitivas impresiones de *Celestina* (1497-1514). Con una Marginalia bibliographica al cabo», in *Actas del Simposio Internacional 1502-2002: Five Hundred Years*

- of Fernando de Rojas' «*Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*», ed. Juan Carlos Conde, Nueva York, Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, pp. 3-87.
- KISH, Kathleen V. (ed.), (1973), *An edition of the first Italian translation of the «Celestina»*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.
- MANN, Vivian B. (1989), *Gardens and ghettos: the art of Jewish life in Italy*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- MCPHEETERS, Dean W. (1985), «Una traducción hebrea de *La Celestina* en el siglo XVI», in *Estudios humanísticos sobre «La Celestina»*, Potomac MD, Scripta Humanistica, pp. 34-49.
- PAGIS, Dan (1991), *Hebrew poetry of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- PASTOR, Ludwig et al. (1923), *The history of the popes from the close of the Middle Ages: drawn from the secret archives of the Vatican and other original sources* [digitised book], London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Digitalised by Forgotten Books, vol. 6.
- RHINE, Abraham B. (1911), «The secular Hebrew poetry of Italy», in *The Jewish quarterly review*, n° 1.3, pp. 341-402.
- ROTH, Cecil (1969), *The history of the Jews of Italy*, Westmead, Gregg International Publishers.
- RUSSELL, Peter E. (1960), «La magia como tema integral de *La tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*», in *Studia philologica: homenaje ofrecido a Dámaso Alonso por sus amigos y discípulos con ocasión de su 60 aniversario*, Madrid, Gredos, vol. 3, pp. 337-354.
- SÁEZ-BADILLOS, Ángel (2002), «Šēlomoh Bonafed, último gran poeta de Šēfarad, y la poesía hebrea», in *eHumanista*, n° 2, pp. 1-22.
- SAGUAR, Amaranta (2012), «One translator, two translations, three theories: Christof Wirsung and *Celestina*», in *The limits of literary translation: Expanding frontiers in Iberian languages*, eds Javier Muñoz-Basols et al., Kassel, Reichenberger, pp. 211-228.
- SCOLES, Emma (1961), «Note sulla prima traduzione italiana della *Celestina*», in *Studj Romanzi*, n° 33, pp. 153-217.
- SCHEINDLIN, Raymond P. (1986), *Wine, women, & death: medieval Hebrew poems on the good life*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society.
- SCHIRMANN, Jefim (1934), *Mivhar ha-shirah ha-'Ivrit be-Italyah* [Anthology of Hebrew poetry in Italy], Berlin, Shoken.
- (1967), «Problems in the study of post-biblical Hebrew poetry», in *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, Jerusalem, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, vol. 2, pp. 228-236.
- TOBI, Joseph (2004), *Proximity and distance: medieval Hebrew and Arabic poetry*, Leiden, Brill.
- TOZER, Amanda (2002), «The disjunctive voice in *Celestina*: a reformulation of Melibea's demise», in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, n° 79, pp. 287-298.
- VOGELSTEIN, Hermann (1940), *History of Jews in Rome*, trans. Moses Hadas, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America.

BARON, Amy & SAGUAR, Amaranta, «Historical and literary influences on Tsarfati's *Poem composed by the Poet upon his translation of the tale of Melibea and Calisto*», *Celestinesca* 36 (2012), pp. 9-34.

RESUMEN

Este artículo ofrece un análisis literario del prólogo poético a la adaptación de *Celestina* al hebreo, realizada en Italia por Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati al principios del siglo XVI. Este prólogo resulta ser el producto de varias tradiciones literarias coexistentes y conocidas en la Roma y en el círculo del autor, al tiempo que sirve para destacar el papel de la literatura secular dentro de la literatura hebrea. El poeta reconcilia y yuxtapone su inspiración literaria, *Celestina*, tanto con convenciones literarias seculares, como con los usos y las características de la literatura hebrea medieval.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Traducción de *Celestina*, *Celestina* en hebreo, Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati, tradición literaria hebrea, *Celestina* en italiano.

ABSTRACT

This article presents a literary analysis of the extant poetic prologue to the Hebrew adaptation of *Celestina*, written in Italy by Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati at the beginning of the 16th century. The prologue is shown to be a product of various literary traditions, and an indication of the nature of the role of secular literature within the Jewish literary corpus. The poet reconciles and juxtaposes his literary inspiration, *Celestina*, and secular literary conceits with the conventions and character of Medieval Hebrew literature.

KEY WORDS: *Celestina* in translation, *Celestina* in Hebrew, Joseph ben Samuel Tsarfati, Hebrew literary tradition, *Celestina* in Italian.

