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PROLOGUE

THE VOICES OF THE SACRED

XAVIER TERRADO, FLOCEL SABATÉ

“Seek Wisdom over all and you will build a house/ and by your understanding you will fulfill its rooms. / Do not credit anything that be unworthy of credit. / And do not pretend to achieve what is unachievable.”¹ These words, translated from Moshe Natan’s work, can be applied, in our opinion, to the intellectual attitude of the select group of researchers who have written this book, devoted to analyzing a corpus of texts with a common relation to the world of sacred.

This book responds to a scientific challenge that arose from the Consolidated Medieval Studies Research Group «Space, Power and Culture» of the University of Lleida. The structure of the group (with many historians, art historians and philologists) has facilitated the perception of the importance of religion in Medieval times and aided the understanding of the basic function of the sacred texts in the three great monotheistic religions that marked the Middle Ages and our culture for centuries: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. There was a necessity, in our opinion, to reflect specifically on the texts themselves in order to grasp their incidence throughout time accurately.

In our approach to the subject of our meetings, we rejected considering the three religions as separate branches of the same old trunk. We have conceived them instead as adapted forms of the same *phylum*, whose branches (we borrow the biological metaphor from Teilhard de

1. Josep Xavier MUNTANÉ, *La col·lecció de proverbis de Moixé Natan Qüestions de vida (segle XIV) i el llibre bíblic de Proverbis*, into the present book.

Chardin²) grow as if they were an inflorescence tending to approach and fold over each another. This is the reason why we have brought together studies in this publication which, in spite of being very different, nevertheless are linked by an underlying weft that joins and gives them life. On page 100 of the Morisco manuscript found in Aitona, written in the early years of the 16th century and well studied by Pablo Roza, we can read the story of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of Jesus, according to the Islamic tradition. Not far from Aitona, the Catholic tradition inspired the acting of very similar scenes in the Cathedral of Lleida, consecrated to the Assumption of the Mother of God.

As we can see, Christianity and Islam come closer to each other in their cultural expressions. We can say likewise of the ways according to which the sacred has manifested itself in Islamic and Hebraic spaces. Vincent Barletta, speaking about the function of the Morisco Aljamiado texts, states, «they served to mediate in certain social activities (such as ritual practices, prayer, oral narration of tales and religious celebrations)». In our opinion, the same statement could be applied to Jewish Aljamiado texts. And this assumption becomes even stronger when we consider the Sapiential books of the Bible, whose teachings impregnate a wide part of Christian, Jewish and Islamic sacred literature.

Taking into account the above reflections, we considered it highly advisable to share our search with several of the leading researchers that have worked on different aspects of the same issue. The central theme of the sense of the voices of the sacred made it easier to combine the different threads, which taken separately, could have been considered fuzzy thinking. We understood that it was necessary to organize several meetings and we gave them the form of a thematic trilogy.

We began with a gathering held on the 9th and 10th of October 2008 on the topic *The Voices of the Sacred*, in which the debate was encouraged by such outstanding specialists as Soha Abboud-Haggar, Emili Casanova, Pere Casanellas, Joan Furió, Claudio García Turza, Fernando González Ollé, Alberto Montaner or Fernando Rodríguez Mediano.

A second meeting was between the 11th and 12th of November 2010, coinciding with the commemoration of the 4th centenary

2. Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Le cœur de la matière*, Seuil, Paris, 1976, p.47: *Cette anatomie prodigieuse d'un vaste phylum dont les rameaux, au lieu de diverger comme d'habitude, ne cessent —telle une monstrueuse inflorescence— de ser reployer toujours plus étroitement les un sur les autres.*

of the deportation of the Spanish Moriscos. This event gave us the opportunity to make, with the outstanding collaboration of Alberto Montaner, a calm and detailed reflection on *The Voices of the Sacred in the Morisco Texts*. This included contributions from such renowned specialists as Vincent Barletta, Touria Bouhmedi, María José Cervera, Federico Corriente, Alberto Montaner, María Teresa Narváez, Pablo Roza Candás and Miguel Ángel Vázquez.

The trilogy was completed with a conference held on the 28th and 29th of June 2011, with the invaluable assistance of Pere Casanellas in the framework of the *First International Medieval Meeting Lleida*, specifically focused on *The Voices of the Sacred in Jewish Texts*, with contributions from Andrés Enrique Arias, Piero Capelli, Emili Casanova, Pere Casanellas, Enric Cortés, Francesc Feliu, Joan Ferrer, Luis Girón, Harvey Hames, Josep-Xavier Muntané, Josep-Vicent Niclós, Constantino Vidal and Mario Zonta.

Owing to the great value of the scientific content debated in our meetings, we were impelled to complete our reflection by publishing a book containing the contributions by most of the specialists on the tables of our gatherings. The publication that is now available to the scientific community and every reader interested in *The Voices of the Sacred* is the end of a long journey.

The book opens with a work devoted to the most widely debated field in our sessions: the biblical texts. Pere Casanellas, co-director of the *Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum* project, summarizes the up-to-date knowledge about biblical translations in Catalan from medieval times. This study, entitled «Medieval Catalan Translations of the Bible», is a basic reference text for all subsequent studies.

We must thank the same author for the second chapter in our compilation: «14th - Century Techniques of Translation of the Bible». This is a detailed and well-exemplified presentation of the procedures and technical resources used by the researchers who, in the framework of the Biblical Association of Catalonia, are collaborating in the edition and study of the biblical texts.

The *Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum*, with its indexes of words and list of concordance, is a crucial tool. Well-founded proof of this can be seen in the third of the works contained in the book, «The Old Versions of the Miserere in Catalan». It is well known that the psalms have had a constant presence not only in the liturgy but also in daily

prayers. That explains the great number and the diversity of translations in all epochs, a fact that Joan Ferrer and Francesc Feliu take advantage of to give us a beautiful approach to Catalan, based around a single text: psalm 51 (number 50 in Septuaginta). They speak of “a flexible and modulated language” and adduce such examples as “the lovely Corellian paraphrase: *aparellat era oferir-te sacrifici*”.³ These are certainly forms of expression immersed in the language of the people. This structure, used by Roís de Corella in his psalter published in Valencia, can be found without literary pretensions in the mouths of a group of Jews from Sos del Rey Católico: *Nos aparellados somos de rendervos todas vuestras cartas* (1313, in an unpublished document in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon). In some respects, this popular language remains alive after seven centuries. To give another example, the adjective *axarat*, *axerrat* ‘astrayed’ ‘mislead’, that draws the attention of the authors of the study, is used in the everyday idiolect of the person writing these words.

The diachronic perspective offered by Feliu and Ferrer can be projected over the geographical space by means of a contrastive analysis of the current synchrony, as is presented by the *Bíblia Catalana: Interconfessional Translation*, in its adaptations to Valencian and Balearic Catalan. This is the field that professor Emili Casanova is working in. He makes the observation that these versions of Bible “have given us an instrument, a looking glass or optimum mirror, to compare and understand the most important diatopic differences –and of style and ideolectals– between the versions of Catalan”.⁴

The following contribution introduces the reader to the complex world of relations between Christianity and Islam in Spain in the latter part of the 16th century. Fernando Rodríguez Mediano narrates the exciting and almost incredible story of the *Libros Plúmbeos del Sacromonte* (texts written on lead sheets). It was a prowess of care and philological skill to set up the greatest falsification of documents in our history. Rodríguez Mediano’s work merits careful reading, because it also reviews the controversy that arose in the Europe of the Protestant Reformation around the authenticity or falsehood of these lead sheets.

3. Francesc FELIU, Joan FERRER, *Les versions antigues del Miserere en llengua catalana*, into the present book.

4. Emili CASANOVA, *Estudi lèxic contrastiu de la versió catalana, valenciana i balear de la Bíblia, traducció interconfessional*, into the present book.

Dwelling upon the issue of social and moral status of the Morisco population, María José Cervera focuses on the topic of contact with the supernatural. The divine words, mainly borrowed from the Qur'an, were a powerful lever able to move a world in which the Moriscos felt themselves defenceless.

The magic and ritual practices are not far from what Vincent Barletta considers the *raison d'être* of Aljamiado literature, "According to this approach, the literary texts are not merely a reflection of reality, but instruments to continually form and reform it".⁵ Barletta's study, «The Aljamiado literature as a cultural practice», delves deeply into the sociology of literature when he affirms that to feel pleasure is universally human, but not so making use of written texts to experience pleasure. The Moriscos had many reasons to seek aesthetic pleasure in a hostile world.

In the following study, Professor Federico Corriente tackles the problem of characterizing the range of Morisco idiolects, as they appear in the Aljamiado manuscripts. If we have not misinterpreted it, this work sets out a methodological premise: we cannot describe the Morisco idiolect through its deviations from a supposed Castilian norm. It is necessary to describe the idiolect in itself, as a system with its own elements and norms. Thus can we understand better his criticism of transcription systems that omit graphemes that are supposedly irrelevant, "we observe that the presumption of denying the phonemic value of these graphemes and attributing their insertion to mere graphemic or phonemic habits of Arab has been bold and uncritical, without having even established a comparison with what happened in other cases of adoption of alphabet by other languages than Arab, including non-Semitic ones".⁶ Nevertheless, this criticism of certain procedures in the studies of Aljamiado texts is integrated into another deeper one about the attitude of those who have approached Morisco literature. What perhaps should be corrected is "the tendency of the Romanists who have mainly addressed it as merely a part of Hispanic studies, with little concern for its Arab-Islamic ingredients".⁷

Still inside the Islamic world, professor Hossain Bouzineb shows admirable skill when he tackles an issue that is as difficult to prove as

5. Vincent BARLETTA, *La literatura aljamiada como práctica cultural*, into the present book.

6. Federico CORRIENTE, *Interferencias arabo-romances en el idiolecto morisco*, into the present book.

7. Federico CORRIENTE, *Interferencias arabo-romances en el idiolecto morisco*, into the present book.

the subliminal dimension in the Morisco texts. “I have always considered that the Aljamiado texts were elaborated, that is, created or translated, many times, to transmit subliminal contents”⁸. Underlying the texts there is intentionality, not always explicitly declared, but always evident and legible in these texts. We have learned in the studies by Rodríguez Mediano, Cervera or Barletta that the motivation behind the Morisco texts is related to a social and spiritual situation that obliged people to hide what they really wanted to express. Faced with a Morisco text, we have no doubt that it wishes to tell us something, but we also know that it may not want to express this openly.

The following work, by Pablo Roza Candás, is based on his doctoral thesis, devoted to an Aljamiado codex found in Aitona, a village on the banks of the river Segre, a few kilometres south of Lleida. Summing up the fundamental data, the codex can be dated between the final years of the 16th century and early years of the 17th. The manuscript is written in Aragonese, with a strong Castilian influence, and it also contains brief expressions and fragments in Arab. From sheet 224 onwards, the manuscript seems to be an auditive copy, in other words, one written by someone being dictated to by a person who could read an Aljamiado text well. Pablo Roza emphasises the singularity and exceptionality of this codex within the range of the Aljamiado production and highlights that we are witnessing “a new dimension of the linguistic modality of the Aragonese crypto-Muslim communities which shows a marked internal diversity from both diatopic and diachronic perspectives, thus proving how the Morisco linguistic variety reflected in our codices is certainly no stranger to the geographical context and time of their production”.⁹

The set of works devoted to the Islamic space finishes with the contribution from Touria Boumehti, whose doctoral thesis consists of the study of the Aljamiado unpublished manuscript J57 in the CSIC, in Madrid. As in the Aitona manuscript, this is a manuscript with immense potential, and many possibilities for study. Among these, for this chapter, the authoress has chosen several aspects of translation and narrative technique. One of the objectives that have drawn our attention is, using

8. Hossain BOUZINEB, *Dimensión subliminal en los escritos moriscos*, into the present book.

9. Pablo ROZA CANDÁS, *Particularidades gráficas y lingüísticas del manuscrito aljamiado de narraciones islámicas de Aitona*, into the present book.

the words of Touria Boumehdi, “to prove that peculiar accounts in the Aljamiado literature can be submitted to modern literary analysis fitting into a scheme established for another type of literature”.¹⁰

The four works that close the book refer again to biblical texts, but now from a perspective more akin to the Hebrew world.

Enric Cortés, in his study entitled «Senses and sense of the Midrash in Jewish Literature», makes clear that the Midrash is a method of interpretation that biblical authors themselves used, very frequently in the Torah, in the texts of the Prophets and the Sapiential books. For instance, the prophets take up sentences from earlier prophecies, study them and apply them to the new times. They do not limit themselves simply to reading and quoting. They perform a work of interpretation destined to the great mass of believers. They justify the apparent contradictions of the doctrine and the adaptation of scriptures to new times and places. It was not simply a question of hermeneutics. As Cortés says, “For those men full of faith, the linguistic problems were only a means to reach an authentic contemplation of God’s word, that gave them and gives us life. This was the sense of the Midrash”.¹¹

In his work, José-Vicente Niclós deals of two different issues. The first is the existence of a medieval Hebrew translation of the Gospel. It is the oldest version of a complete Gospel and we find it in the book *Eben Bohan* ‘The Touchstone’, a play by a Jew from Tudela by the name of *Shem Tob Iben Shaprut*. The second issue is an anti-Jewish manuscript that is supposed to have been written by a Jewish convert who lived either in Toledo or Uncastillo. Niclós supposes that Bishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada was behind the initiative for the translation of the dialogue between a Christian and a Jew contained in this manuscript. One of the interlocutors in it is Bishop Braulio of Saragossa.

Just after this chapter, Josep Xavier Muntané introduces us to the figure of Moixé Natan, a writer in both Catalan and Hebrew, who lived and worked in Tàrrega in the first half of the 14th century. He wrote two collections of learned proverbs, rhymed and versified, one in Catalan, the other in Hebrew and entitled *Totseotkhaim*, that

10. Touria BOUMEHDI TOMASI, *El manuscrito J57 del CSIC Madrid: características traductológicas*, into the present book.

11. Enric CORTÉS, *Sentits i sentit del midraix en la literatura jueva. Primera part : antic testament*, into the present book.

Muntané translates into Catalan as *Qüestions de vida* ('Questions of Life'). Muntané's study analyses *Totseot* accurately in order to show that, without being a simple variation of biblical teachings, these proverbs suppose a very precise knowledge of the sacred texts, an essential condition for awakening a feeling of complicity in the readers and to ensure their aesthetic enjoyment.

The book closes with a study again referring to the psalms, a contribution by Constantino Vidal Salmerón entitled "A Catalan translation of the Hebrew Psalter"¹². This psalter, whose translation can be dated to the second half of the 15th century, constitutes an exceptional milestone in translations of the bible into Catalan, since according to Vidal, it is direct translation from an original Hebrew manuscript. At the time Constantino Vidal read his dissertation in Lleida, he was preparing the edition of the manuscript, within the *Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum* project. The comparison between the Masoretic text and the Catalan and Latin Vulgate, made it possible to put forward this hypothesis that, after the Hebraising and Judaisating translation, a second hand attempted to bring the text closer to the Latin Vulgate, introducing additions in the margins or between the lines.

In short, *The Voices of the Sacred* express themselves in a series of texts to which our societies have conferred vital importance, because they have drawn their values and their forms of articulation from them. This philological approach to the filiations, derivations, transferences and adaptations of these words, accepted by our societies, now offers a better understanding of their historical meaning and the reasons that motivated their deep social rooting turning them into a strong popular heritage for a wide part of humanity. On the basis of a sound and, at the same time, humble scientific contribution, the set of works offered in this book covers different aspects of the study of *The Voices of the Sacred*, assuming a denomination that embodies in itself the coherence of a work and also encouraging efforts to continue the research in its different and multiple facets.

12. CONSTANTINO VIDAL SALMERÓN, *Un saltiri català traduït de l'hebreu*, into the present book.

MEDIEVAL CATALAN TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

PERE CASANELLAS¹

1. ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF STUDYING THE MEDIEVAL CATALAN BIBLE (1890–2011): OUR CONTRIBUTION

The first scholar of modern times to develop a serious interest in medieval Catalan translations of the Bible was the Frenchman Samuel Berger whose articles discussing medieval Romance versions of the Bible include, from 1890, a paper on the extant versions in Provençal and Catalan.² Since then, several scholars have devoted their attention, to a greater or lesser extent, to this subject, the latest being Josep Perarnau and Armand Puig i Tàrrach. For reasons of space, and to ensure that no name worthy of attention goes unmentioned, the reader is referred to the extensive bibliography published on the website <http://cbcat.abcat.cat/bibliogr-e.php> (section “1.2. Medieval Catalan versions”), where there is a list of articles by Berger and the other scholars. The annotated bibliography prepared by Josep Perarnau,³ is extensive and well organized.

Sadly, the majority of medieval versions of the Bible in Catalan are conserved in manuscripts that have not yet been published (or

1. The English of this article was revised by Dr John Francis Elwolde, Translation Consultant with the United Bible Societies.

2. Samuel BERGER, «Nouvelles recherches sur les Bibles provençales et catalanes» *Romania*, 19 (1890), pp. 505-561. A century had already passed, however, since scholars had begun to be aware of medieval Catalan versions of the Bible, starting with Joaquín Lorenzo VILLANUEVA, who, in *De la lección de la Sagrada Escritura en lenguas vulgares*, discusses the historical context of the translations and transcribes some fragments. Josep PERARNAU, «Aportació al tema de les traduccions bíbliques catalanes medievals», *Revista Catalana de Teologia*, 3 (Barcelona, 1978) p. 17, notes 1–3.

3. Josep PERARNAU, «Aportació al tema de les traduccions...», pp. 17–21.

for which the process of publication is just beginning), and the few that are in print are found in unpublished dissertations or non-critical editions. This goes some way to explaining why studies carried out to date either do not address the contents of the texts or do so only tentatively, usually without venturing to draw any definitive conclusions (those that do often fall into error), because they are based on small samples of often considerably longer texts that are not necessarily uniform across all their pages. Moreover, from the point of view of language, these texts have not yet been transcribed, at least not systematically, so as to enrich historical dictionaries and grammars.

Consequently, philologists have been insistent in their encouragement of the publication of these versions in critical editions, and several projects have been undertaken to this end, albeit until recently with very little with regard to results. For example, in 1906, on the occasion of the First International Congress of the Catalan Language, the learned Languedocian, Raymond Foulché-Delbosc, unveiled his project to publish the entire corpus of Catalan versions of the Bible produced up to the end of the 16th century. In 1908, the Institute for Catalan Studies (*Institut d'Estudis Catalans*) took on this project, with the aforementioned Foulché-Delbosc at the reins. However, in 1914, Foulché-Delbosc was forced to abandon the project for reasons of health without publishing anything. A second attempt was made in 1976 by the Biblicist Guiu Camps, from the abbey of Montserrat, supported by the Bible Association of Catalonia. Guiu Camps, who attributed Foulché-Delbosc's failure to the magnitude of the enterprise, was joined on the project by three other scholars. Work began on the project; however, various sets of circumstances meant that this attempt would also ultimately be unsuccessful. Finally, in 1997, and again under the auspices of the Bible Association, a new project emerged, on the initiative of Armand Puig i Tàrrach, known as the *Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum* (CBCat). This project has as its goal the publication of all extant Catalan versions of the Bible up to the 19th century (and not just the medieval versions) across a total of forty-two volumes. Several dozen scholars have worked more or less intensively on this project, under the direction of both Armand Puig and Pere Casanellas (the latter on a full-time basis) for the first few years, and subsequently under the direction of Pere Casanellas alone, with Armand Puig as project Chairman. Two volumes on the Middle Ages have already been published, as well as a volume focusing on

the 19th century, and the rate of publication is expected to increase from now on, ideally achieving and maintaining a rate of two (or even three) volumes per year. Full information on this project can be found online, at <<http://cbcat.abcat.cat>>.⁴

It seems, then, it will soon be possible to study medieval Catalan versions of the Bible with greater confidence, something from which philology will reap enormous benefit, particularly in light of the fact that computerised word indices and concordances will also be published for each of the texts published in the Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum. For texts written in the Middle Ages, an additional process of lemmatisation will take place and the resulting entries will be incorporated into the *Dictionary of Old Catalan Texts* (*Diccionari de Textos Catalans Antics*), leading to the creation of a *Dictionary of Old Catalan* (*Diccionari del Català Antic*) (see <<http://www.ub.edu/diccionari-dtca>>). By way of a small example, the publication of the third volume of the Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum (*Bíblia del segle XIV: Èxode. Levític*) led to the discovery of about a hundred words or meanings of words that were up to that point undocumented in Catalan.⁵

At the request of the congress organisers, this presentation will provide an overview of medieval Catalan versions of the Bible: we will list, in bold, all that include at least one book of the Bible (but will omit mention of most fragmentary versions), the date of each translation (where it is known) and of the manuscript it is found in, the possible relationships existing between the various translations, and whether or not they have been published. We use footnotes to indicate the manuscript shelfmark, the corresponding reference code for the *Bibliography of Old Catalan, Valencian and Balearic Texts* ('BITECA') and, where the manuscript has been analysed, some of the studies that make reference to it. In view of the title of the congress, with its reference to Jewish texts, we will identify which of these texts have been translated from Hebrew or display a Jewish influence. Finally, we will endeavour to place these medieval Catalan versions within their broader historical context.

4. The predecessors of the Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum, and a detailed description of the current project and its importance for Catalan philology, are given in Pere CASANELLAS, «El Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum: Un antic tresor que finalment comença a ser explotat», *Llengua & Literatura*, 16 (2005), pp. 517-530.

5. See Pere CASANELLAS, «El Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum: Un antic tresor...».