Research Project

Mapping the Scriptures in Western Sephardi Literature

Third-party funded project

Project title Mapping the Scriptures in Western Sephardi Literature
Principal Investigator(s) Den Boer, Harm ;
Co-Investigator(s) Pancorbo Murillo, Fernando José ;
Organisation / Research unit
Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / Iberoromanische Literaturwissenschaft (den Boer)
Department
Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften
Project start 01.01.2022
Probable end 31.12.2025
Status Active

The project seeks to carry out an extensive study on the role and the use of the Bible for the Spanish and Portuguese Jews with a Christian background in newly founded communities of the so-called Western Sephardic Diaspora (1550-1800).

A unique feature of these Iberian Jews with a Christian background was the central place occupied by the Bible in the educational, religious and cultural lives, far beyond what was common in the European Jewry of the Early Modern Age. For the first time in history, Jews extensively read and referred to their Bible in (Spanish) translation, opening up a broader audience, engaging more frequently and differently with Christians.

Although the importance of the vernacular (above all Spanish) Bible translations is always mentioned in scholarship, no comprehensive study has been realized of the considerable output and content of these translations. Also, no comprehensive study on the particular reception and use of the (Spanish) Bible translations in Western Sephardic literature has been realized, although editions and manuscripts are nowadays largely available in digital collections.

A groundbreaking feature of the project is the incorporation of resources and instruments provided by the Digital Humanities. The project aims to "map" the role and presence of the Bible in the Western Sephardi Diaspora in two ways:

1)ăăăăăăăă through an online OA textual database containing a transcription of over 50 different editions ofă the Spanish Bible translations, as a big data corpus enabling types of distant reading, statistics and visualizations only possible with the help of Digital Humanities;

2)ăăăăăăăă through a series of in-depth studies on the Bible in the Spanish and Portuguese Sephardic literature, such as:

1. the presence and role of the Psalms for the fashioning of individual and collective Converso religiosity/religious identity;

2. the use of the Bible in Spanish and Portuguese preaching of the Western Sephardic Diaspora;

iii.ăăăăăăă the use of the Bible in Spanish/Portuguese polemical anti-Christian or apologetic literature;

1. the presence and relevance of the Bible in both religious and secular Spanish and Portuguese literature produced in the Western Sephardic Diaspora.

The studies of the second part benefit from the insights into the use of the Bible gathered with the database made in 1, allowing for finding special "hot spots" of biblical quotations, frequently quoted passages (in translation), the versions of the Bible used (e.g. the Spanish Jewish translation, a Spanish protestant translation, the Vulgata) etc. Other forms of data analysis will also become possible, as for instance, theă correlation of biblical quotations with text sorts, targeted readers, authors, etc.

The results will be:

– the online OA textual database (part 1) as a consultable platform and a Virtual Research Environment (VRE);
– a series of c. 300 transcriptions/editions as base and product for part 2; also available in OA digital format, contributing to the VRE;
– an international, multidisciplinary conference on the role of the Bible in the Western Sephardic Diaspora in a comparative confessional context;
– a series of monographic studies (dissertations) and articles.

Keywords Intellectual History, Spanish Studies, Portuguese Studies, Literature, Jewish Studies, Religious Studies, Early Modern History, Digital Humanities, Cultural Analysis, Sephardic and Converso Studies

Add publication

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners