

Research Project

Silveiradas or the theological polemics of Abraham Gómez Silveira (1656-1741)

Project funded by own resources

Project title Silveiradas or the theological polemics of Abraham Gómez Silveira (1656-1741)

Principal Investigator(s) [Den Boer, Harm](#) ;

Organisation / Research unit

Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / Iberoromanische Literaturwissenschaft (den Boer)

Project start 01.01.2018

Probable end 01.07.2023

Status Completed

Edition of a multivolume manuscript work of 8 volumes, with an evolving title. Started as *Disertaciones sobre el Mesías*, the Spanish/Portuguese Jew of converso descent Abraham (olim Diego) Gómez Silveira (1656-1741) formulated a reply to *Dissertations sur le Messie* (1699) of the French Protestant theologian and minister Isaac Jacquelot, aimed at convincing the Jews to accept Christ as their Messiah. Silveira translates and glosses this work with theological arguments, most of them based upon interpretations of the Scriptures. However, this work evolves into a dynamic reflection on philosophy, religion and history, and, contrary to the polemical texts by other Sephardi authors written in vernacular (Spanish, Portuguese, occasionally Italian) they include a substantial part of rhetoric, word plays, literary devices and humor.

The work, extant in manuscripts that are spread over a number of libraries -no library having a “complete” series, comprises over 2’500 pages, with an estimate of 600’000 words. Silveira repeats or rephrases many of his arguments, experimenting with a variety of literary genres, in which humanistic dialogue and poetry are mos prominent.

By its breath, its originality and the fact that Silveira comments and reacts to so many authors and currents of religious, philosophical and political thought of his time the work occupies a unique place in Jewish (including Sephardic) Literature.

We aim at a critical edition of this oeuvre in its original language -a very readable Spanish- accompanied by extensive commentaries and would very much like to exchange views over how such a work could or should be published. As for the author the general content of the present work of which no volume has hitherto been published and the context of Early Modern Sephardic Culture, both Wilke and Den Boer have authored relevant studies (full text copies available).

Innovation presented by manuscript: the publication of these volumes adds a significant new dimension to Jewish-Christian polemics. Contrary to traditional Jewish polemics, the work does not center exclusively on divergent interpretations of the Bible or religion; contrary to other vernacular Sephardic polemics (as the *Diálogos de Marrakesch* published by Wilke at Brill 2014), the process of persuasion and conversion is not played out in depth. In stead, the author reflects on religious, philosophical and political events and trends of his time, including the Libertins and Freemasonry, and repeatedly formulates pleas for the free exchange of ideas and religious tolerance. The playful, literary character of the work is also unique in the context of religious polemics.

Keywords Jewish Studies, Religious Polemics, Philosophy, 18th century studies, Spanish Studies, Portuguese Studies, Literature, Religion, Sephardic and Converso Studies, Intellectual History

Financed by

University funds

Add publication

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
4639757	Den Boer, Harm	Wilke, Carsten Lorenz	Central European University	01.01.2018	01.07.2023