LAS ‘OBRAS DE BURLAS’ DEL
*CANCIONERO GENERAL*
de HERNANDO DEL CASTILLO

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eds.

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Amadís de Gaula (Venecia, 1533), ejemplar de la Universidad de Arkansas
(Grabado, fol. 316r)
About four decades ago, the two modern editions of the Cancionero de obras de burlas (19OB), of Domínguez (1978) and Jauralde Pou-Bellón Cazabán (1974), finally condemned to its deserved obscurity Usoz y Río’s 1841 edition. Even though both his edition and his library on spiritual topics have an evident archaeological interest (Vilar), the Quaker sympathiser born in Spain presented an abbreviated version of this canciónero to prove that, by his lights, the obscene and decadent habits of the Spanish empire were built upon Catholicism. Thus, the first thing to point out is that scholars have only been able to read the complete 19OB since the late 20th century, which has made it impossible for us to understand in depth what we can consider to be the first catalogue of medieval and renaissance jibes and jests written in Spanish.

The Cancionero de obras de burlas has often been described as a blend of the burlesque poetry from Hernando del Castillo’s Cancionero general with the addition of the indecorous Carajicomedia. This is true, but it

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2 I use Dutton’s ID system to locate both poems and songbooks mentioned in this paper, according to the method designed by Tato García & Perea Rodríguez 93-94. I also use the Philo-Biblon system, Manid and Tezid, to locate both manuscripts and texts mentioned in this paper (see Faulhaber et al.).
son más que nombres a quien se les atribuye tal o cual composición” (Gerli 1994, 12), a variegated group of *conversos* are of particular importance; just as important are the attacks against them due to a popular belief that they obstinately persisted in their crypto-Jewish practices. Thus, Spanish medieval songbooks serve as primary sources for the history of Jews and *conversos*, as has been pointed out by Arbós Ayuso (1982 and 1987) and Alcalá Galve (2011, 265-292), among others.

**Converso Poets in 11CG and 14CG**

As far as I know, determining the total number of *converso* poets in the *Cancionero general*, as Cantera Burgos (1967) did for the *Cancionero de Baena*, is a task that no one has yet pursued. I shall attempt it here. The first writer I shall discuss is also the poet who appears at the beginning of both 11CG and 14CG: Mosén Tallante. All of his poems were written with the aim of praising Christian concepts, especially the creed of the Holy Trinity. Américo Castro saw this as *prima facie* evidence of being *converso* (Castro 1982, 543). Other scholars, on the contrary have denied this, arguing that it is chancy to take this fact as a mathematical equation, for a poet who praises the Holy Trinity could just as easily be a devout Christian believer (Asensio 1992, 95-96).

Because of his courtesy title as ‘mosén’, most scholars have thought that Tallante, whose first name was Juan, was born in Valencia (Darbord 264) or, at least, lived there most of his life. My research has proved that although he indeed was familiar with the brilliant cultural milieu of Valencia at the turn of the 16th century (Perea Rodríguez 2003, 230-231), he actually lived in Murcia, where he inherited from his father, Juan Alfonso Tallante, the public office of city counselor and attorney during the early years of the Catholic Monarchs’ reign (Perea Rodríguez 2012a, 292).

In addition, he also had some sort of relationship with the *Adelantado* Pedro Fajardo, the greatest noblemen of the region. In one composition (ID 0995, LB1-311 fol. 80r; “Ynsigne señor querellas”) Tallante, knowledgeable in the law, poetically defended two ladies of the court who had
a certain case against Fajardo. Since the latter’s response is built upon the mockery of typical foods eaten by conversos (i.e., aubergines, or stew with onions and other vegetables), it seems clear that Tallante, who also appears as “Mosén Talante, libertado de nuestra señora” in another poem of the same songbook (ID 1002, LB1-319 fols. 82r-83r: “Su profunda conclusión”), had an evident reputation as converso in the city of Murcia. To crown it all, we should remember that in 1393, during a later outbreak of the anti-Jewish violence mentioned above, two members of presumably the same family, Bartolomé Tallante and his daughter, Inés Tallante, suffered attacks by the Christians citizens of Murcia, most likely due to their converso origin (Perea Rodríguez 2003, 231). Thus, Tallante’s poetry illustrates quite well that apparently sincere conversions—as evidenced by the social status of the converso—were not sufficient, unfortunately, in both popular and courtly perception, to protect the individual from those ras-tros de confeso defined by el Ropero.

Similar to Tallante is Ginés de Cañizares, another virtually unknown troubadour connected with the brilliant cultural milieu of Valencia at the turn of the 16th century. Another writer, Álvaro de Cañizares, whose poems can be read in the Cancionero de Baena (Chas Aguión 2013), came from the small town of Castillo de Garci-Muñoz (province of Cuenca) – which became famous in Spanish history as the place where the poet Jorge Manrique died in 1479. It seems possible, although it is not firmly established yet, that Álvaro and Ginés might be members of the same family (Perea Rodríguez 2009, 81-82).

Far more meaningful for our purpose is to consider Ginés de Cañizares’ converso reputation, proposed by McPheeters (1952) but not really easy to prove, given the paucity of his poetic production. In fact, the main proof of his converso origin is found in a little broadside printed in the 16th century, in which Joan de Timoneda, the well-known Valencian author, put together some mordent stanzas on

las desdichas de Ginés de Cañizares, honradíssimo ropavegro, nascido y criado en las entrañas del Alcaná de Toledo, las quales le fueron no-
should also be pointed out that the complex relationship of the first two editions of Castillo’s *Cancionero general*, published in Valencia in 1511 (11CG) and 1514 (14CG), as well as certain small details of the *Cancionero de obras de burlas*, suggest an evolution in readers’ sense of humour, which is reflected in the changes, additions, and / or suppressions within these *cancioneros*.

The most important of these details, without question, is what is usually called ‘the *converso* problem’, which originated after 1391 when Old Christians began their continuous conflict with New Christians (Benito Ruano 2001, 199-200; Márquez Villanueva 2006, 95-96). As Netanyahu writes, Spanish society began then to be “deeply conscious of its divisions along the lines of ethnic and religious origins” (43). In this context, and probably as a fearful reflection upon the anti-Semitic riot in Córdoba of 1473, Antón de Montoro, ‘el Ropero’, wrote a vivid description of those troubled times (ID 1933 MP2-81, fols. 114v-115r: “Ó, Ropero, amargo, triste”). His testimony has been considered as the most representative poem of Spanish *converso* literary mentality (Orfali 118):

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Hice el Credo y adorar
ollas de tocino grueso,
torreznos a medio asar,
oír misas y rezar,
santiguar y persinar,
y nunca pude matar
este rastro de confeso (Montoro 1990, 202).
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The meaning of this stanza is clear: no matter how much effort the Spanish *conversos* made to prove they were good Christians (Johnson 224), praying like any common believer in the faith of the Christian God or deviating from their mandatory *Kashrut* dietary law, the accusations against them remained the same. These ‘rastros de confeso’, in regard to poetry, can mostly be found first within the section of ‘obras de burlas’ in the *Cancionero general*, and afterwards in the printing of this portion alone. More than a century after the beginning of massive conversions, the
presence of this topic in Spanish songbooks suggest that it was still of primary importance. Several historical and literary reasons explain this fact. Let us review a few of them.

Since the violent pogroms of 1391, numerous members of the Jewish communities chose to abandon their former religion in order to avoid these perils (Valdeón Baruque 1994, 29-30). But these conversions were not enough to eliminate their social rejection, because Old Christians always looked at conversos not only as notorious liars, but as crypto-Jews who still practiced their former creed (Domínguez Ortiz 17-25).

As a matter of fact, it is no coincidence that 1391, with its violent pogroms against Jewish neighbourhoods all over Spain, was also a critical year in every sense. Just over two decades before, a new royal dynasty, the Trastámara, had claimed the throne of Castile thanks to the victory of the bastard Henry, Count of Trastámara, in the battle of Montiel, 1369. The legitimate king, his half-brother Peter I, had been defeated and killed by Bertrand Duguesclin, a Breton knight and commander-in-chief of the army of the Count of Trastámara (Valdeón 2001, 15-16).

Crowned as King Henry II after his 1369 victory in the civil war, the former Count Henry had a primary obsession during the ten years of his reign, until 1379: to erase the illegitimate origin of his family in order to hide the Trastámara dynasty’s illegal seizure of the crown. At this point, just as he had done during the civil war (1354-1369), King Henry did not hesitate to raise the flag of anti-Semitism in order to bolster his popularity (Valdeón 2001, 81-83). This was diametrically opposed to Peter’s positive attitude toward his Jewish subjects, exemplified by rabbi Sem Tob of Carrión’s dedication of Proverbios morales to the monarch, once acclaimed as el justiciero, ‘the just’ (Valdeón 2000, 27-33). Consequently, Henry’s victory over Peter at Montiel was not only a coup d’état, but also the starting point of a conception of the state far removed from any kind of coexistence between Jews and Christians (Roth 2002, 9-10).

In spite of this, King John I, Henry II’s son and heir, initiated reforms to put an end to general complaints, even those raised by Jews and the
first generation of conversos. But his unexpected death in 1390 left the kingdom in a compromised situation. The saddest possible result then occurred: during the minority of his son, Henry III, violence and pogroms against the Jews swept the kingdom in what can be defined, paraphrasing Américo Castro, as the explosion into fury of twenty years of anti-Jewish policy (Castro 1982, 18-19).

If 1391 may be posited as the starting point, we can set the year 1492 as the point of no return, when the Catholic Kings, carrying to its ultimate conclusion a policy of unification espoused since the beginning of their rule, forced Jews to convert to Christianity if they wished to remain in Spain. While 1492 was the origin of the Diaspora of Spanish Jewry, it was not the end of struggles between New Christians and Old Christians, for these would continue and intensify in the 16th and 17th centuries (Domínguez Ortiz 61-127), albeit with a significant moderation in regard to the punishment of the so-called crimes.

This issue would become one of the peculiar problems of Spanish history (Benito Ruano 2001, 36-37), despite the fact that it has been generally overlooked by Spanish academics. In addition, if we apply these chronological coordinates to Spanish cultural history, we can appreciate the congruencies between cultural and historical topics. As I have done elsewhere (Perea Rodríguez 2009), it is accurate to consider ‘poetry in the age of the Trastámara’ as synonymous with what we are wont to call canciónero poetry, i.e., Spanish poetry whose apogee came between the 14th and 15th centuries. According to Brian Dutton, it was a modest composition, En un tiempo cogí flores, that marked the birth of canciónero poetry in Spain (Dutton 7: VII-VIII). This poem was written by King Alfonso XI himself and was most likely dedicated to his lover, the famously beautiful María de Guzmán (Beltran 1985). Since the Trastámara dynasty began precisely with Count Henry, later Henry II, the first illegitimate son of Alfonso XI and María de Guzmán, the result is a perfect parallel between this new style that we call canciónero poetry and the new dynasty that would rule Castile and Aragon at the zenith of their history.
There are not only chronological coincidences between the kind of poetry that flourished in this period and the Trastámara reigns, but also cultural interactions between royal power and troubadours, between monarchs and their poets, that allowed a total transformation of the cultural patterns in Iberian poetry (Boase). This is why the first anthology of medieval poetry written in Spanish, the *Cancionero de Baena*, can be read as a poetic chronicle of the half century from ca. 1380 to ca. 1430 (Menéndez y Pelayo 2: 211). This sort of journalistic element of the Spanish songbooks allows us to find in them multiple references to the complicated coexistence between New Christians and Old Christians during the late Middle Ages, as scholars like Fraker (1966) and Beltran (2001) have demonstrated with regard to the *Cancionero de Baena*. My purpose here is to suggest an identical reading of Hernando del Castillo’s *Cancionero general*, the most important collection of Spanish medieval poetry. It achieved such great success, in fact, that it was continually reprinted during the following years: in Valencia again, 1514; later in Toledo, 1517, 1520, and 1527; Seville, 1535 and 1540, and finally Antwerp, 1557 and 1573 (Perea Rodríguez 2014).

In analysing this songbook, we must always bear in mind that most of the poems included by Castillo were composed in the second half of the 15th century, during the reigns of Henry IV (1454-1474) and the Catholic Monarchs (1474-1516). Thus, if we have earlier highlighted 1492 as a point of no return for *conversos*, we can understand through the poetry of the *Cancionero general* the quotidian condition of the *converso* years after his obligatory conversion, and especially how difficult life became because of the continuous suspicion from which they suffered.

During the first decades of the 16th century, *cancionero* poetry was at the peak of its popularity. Consequently, Hernando del Castillo collected the poetry of all the greatest poets of the previous fifty years, “de Juan de Mena acá” (Castillo 1958, Iv), as he wrote in his prologue; but Castillo also proved his originality by showcasing other, quite unknown, authors, perhaps neglected by other compilers. Hence, among these poets “que no
Timoneda’s characterisation of Cañizares as a converso emphasises the nature of his job, “honradíssimo ropavegero”, or ‘ropero’, this is, second-hand clothes dealer, or clothes-peddler (Yovel 4), just like Antón de Montoro. As a matter of fact, textile jobs have been frequently marked as typical converso offices; thus, within the conversos habilitados in Sevilla during 1495, forty worked as clothes-peddlers a number only slightly less than those found in other important converso occupations, such as the sixty-one tailors and fifty-three silk workers (Ladero Quesada 1992).

Furthermore, Timoneda underscored the fact that Ginés de Cañizares was “nascido y criado en las entrañas del Alcaná de Toledo”, one of the most popular converso neighbourhoods in the Imperial City (Galmés de Fuentes). This is, of course, the same place in which Miguel de Cervantes met “un muchacho a vender unos cartapacios y papeles viejos a un sedero” who provided the author of those aljamiado texts related to “Historia de don Quijote de la Mancha, escrita por Cide Hamete Benengeli, historiador arábigo” (Quijote 1, 9), another well-known pun involving both false writers and dietary habits attributed to conversos (D’Agostino).

Ultimately, the poetic references to selling herbs and snails, “yervas y caracoles”, have the same sense in underscoring Cañizares’s humble jobs, appropriate for low-class conversos such as himself:

Dexé de ropavegero;
prové de ser herbolario
y después caracolero:
¡todo me salió contrario!
No tengo más que dezir,
responde a quien es ninguno:
¡dime en qué puedo bivir,
por que no te sea importuno! (Rodríguez-Moñino 229)

In a certain way, Cañizares’s poverty shows the other side of the converso reality, because to think of them as a social group comprised of a power-
ful intelligentsia is not completely true: the majority of conversos were just like Cañizares; they belonged to "los sectores intermedios de la sociedad, e incluso a las capas más desfavorecidas de la misma" (Rábade Obradó 20). It seems unlikely that Timoneda, born in 1518, could have met Cañizares personally because of the difference in age, but his little romance might have been based on the pitiable and unlucky fame achieved by Cañizares in the Valencian cultural milieu shared by both. Continuing with the Alcaná, the most outstanding example of a converso poet from Toledo is Rodrigo Cota, or Ruy Sánchez Cota (Roth 2007, 179-181). He is sometimes nicknamed el Viejo, 'the Elder', to distinguish him from other homonymous members of the same family (Cantera Burgos 1970; Martz 101-103). The life of this troubadour “during the turbulent second half of the 15th Century appears to have exemplified that of the converso who tried to assimilate yet found his attempts thwarted by an increasingly hostile Old Christian society” (Kaplan 2002, 93).

Born around 1435, Rodrigo was just a teenager in 1449, when his father, Alonso Cota, became the main target of a popular uprising against the New Christians because of his job as tax farmer (Benito Ruano 1961, 34-36). Fortunately the poet’s life was saved, although during this dramatic episode (Amran; Kaplan 2012), he watched the sad spectacle of his houses being burned down by the mob (Benito Ruano 2001, 42). No wonder then that Rodrigo Cota left Toledo shortly afterwards and went to live in Torrejón de Velasco, a small town near Madrid (Cantera Burgos 1970, 21-22). Nevertheless, at the end of his life Rodrigo returned to live in Toledo, where he was appointed sworn councilman of the city until his death, which occurred around 1506 (Cantera Burgos 1970, 43-44).

Some of the most original compositions of 15th-century cancionero poetry came from his witty pen (García-Bermejo Giner), such as the successful Diálogo entre el Amor y un viejo (ID 6103, 11CG-125 fols. 72v-75v: “Cerrada estaba mi puerta”). Aside from other more typical converso topics, such as precisely burlesque lampoons (Kaplan 2002, 90-105), it seems that Rodrigo Cota attempted to focus his poetry on the suffering and tribula-
tions of love, a poetic path followed by other conversos in a similar situation. That may be the meaning of this little esparsa (ID 1094, 11CG-126 fol. 75v), in which the speech of the lover mystified by the contradictory ways of love, as conceived by Petrarch, may be also understood as the complaint of a converso soul racked by storms of passion:

Vista ciega, luz oscura;
gloria triste, vida muerta;
ventura de desventura;
lloro alegre, risa incierta.
Hiel sabrosa, dulce agrura;
paz y ira y saña presta...
es Amor, con vestidura
de gloria que pena cuesta.

The next writer suspected of being a converso is Diego de Burgos, one of the principal figures of 15th century Iberian humanism, although we know little about his life (Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 248). We do know that he served as secretary and scribe to the Mendoza family, first for the Marquess of Santillana himself (Schiff LX-LXI); then, for his son and heir, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Duke of Infantado; and finally, for another one of Santillana’s sons, Pedro González de Mendoza, Cardinal of Spain and Archbishop of Toledo (Perea Rodríguez 2012a, 304).

The only one of his poems to appear in the Cancionero general is precisely a homage to Don Íñigo. The Triunfo del Marqués de Santillana (ID 1710, 11CG-87 fols. 52r-63v: “Tornado era Febo a ver el Tesoro”), praises Santillana’s rich personality, especially his skills not only as a writer but as a knight and warrior. Through its more than fifteen hundred lines, Diego de Burgos guides us, by the light of a transfigured Dante (Gutiérrez Carou), to a poetic spectacle in which the blaze of Santillana’s vast classic and humanistic culture shines forth in all its splendour (Di Camillo 123-130).

Recently scholars have examined certain aspects of Santillana’s literary environment, such as the existence of a brilliant Jewish community in Carrión de los Condes, his birthplace, which enjoyed don Íñigo’s protection,
as well as Santillana’s profound admiration for the *Proverbios* of San Tob de Carrión (Girón-Negrón 2000). Similarly, the large number of *converso* officials surrounding Santillana (Gómez Moreno), especially in Guadalajara (Cantera Burgos & Carrete Parrondo), has been highlighted. Could the poet be identified with a certain Diego de Burgos who lived in Gómar, near Soria, and testified in 1501 before the Inquisition against a former neighbour, Juan de Fernamartínez, saying that he had heard him “renegar de Dios” several years before (Carrete Parrondo 1985, 125)? We do not yet know much about the poet Diego de Burgos; but one of the keys to his identity may lie in his relationship with two other people not related to the Mendozas: Pedro Fernández de Villegas, Archdeacon of Burgos; and the son of the Duke of Medinaceli, Íñigo de la Cerda, with whom he had an interesting exchange of letters. These can be read in Villegas’s translation to Spanish of Dante’s *Divina Commedia*.3

Pedro de Cartagena’s case is diametrically opposed to that of Diego de Burgos. Simply called ‘Cartagena’ in the songbooks, he was the author of some of the greatest hits of the imaginary 15th century Spanish poetry billboard, such as the Petrarch-inspired composition “La fuerça del fuego que alumbra, que ciega” (ID 0889, 11CG-140, fol. 84r). We know a great deal about his life (Cantera Burgos 1968; Avalle-Arce 1974 & 1981; Martz 31-33) and have a detailed edition of his poems by Rodado Ruiz (Cartagena 2000); but no one better than an eyewitness to Cartagena’s biographical wanderings, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo –probably a *converso* himself (Alcalá & Sanz Hermida 59)–, to provide a fascinating description of this poet:

> Cartajena, que fue uno de los bien vistos y estimados mancébos galanes y del palacio que ovo en su tiempo. Graçioso y bienquisto cavallero, de muy lindas gracias y partes, e de sotil e bivo ingenio, y tan lindo trobador en nuestro romançe e en castellana lengua como lo avrés visto en muchas e gentiles obras en que a mi gusto fue único poeta palançiano con los de

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Born in 1456, he was a member of two of the most distinguished *converso* families from Valladolid: that of his father, García Franco, nick-named *Doctor Franco* and chief accountant of King John II of Castile; and that of Alonso de Cartagena, his maternal grandfather (Avalle-Arce 1974, 287). This latter was quite renowned for his appointment as bishop of Burgos after he had served as rabbi of the same city (Fernández Gallardo; Roth 2007, 127-132), becoming thus an outstanding figure of the *converso* influence on Iberian Humanism (Kaplan 1996, 53-68).

In 1473 Cartagena married Guiomar Niño, daughter of Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, and Isabel de Castro, joining the Castilian nobility: “la aristocracia de la sangre –los Niño–, la aristocracia del dinero –los Franco– y la aristocracia del intelecto –los Cartagena– apuntalaron el vivir de nuestro poeta” (Avalle-Arce 1974, 296). Soon after, when Queen Isabella I seized the Castilian throne, Pedro de Cartagena defended the Catholic Monarchs’ cause against the Portuguese invasion of the kingdom. He also took part in the war of Granada, in which death unfortunately found him during the siege and conquest of Loja in 1486. He was only thirty years old when a Saracen arrow put an abrupt end to his exceptional career as courtly troubadour.

Aside from this, Pedro de Cartagena had an elder brother who must be added to the list of *converso* poets: Antonio Franco, who decided to take his father’s surname –Franco– rather than the family patronymic –Cartagena–, chosen by Pedro instead. This flexibility to choose surnames, which sometimes converts genealogical research into a difficult labyrinth, was a
common practice not only among members of the Spanish nobility in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Nader XI-XIII), but was also frequently used to hide either humble origins or New Christian ancestry. Antonio Franco’s life was certainly a perfect blend of the two parallel lines of his lineage: business and warfare. He inherited his father’s position as royal accountant and, as his brother did, he also took part in the conquest of Granada as commander of a noteworthy contingent of fifty spears (Cantera Burgos 1968, 26-27; Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 173). He married Isabel de Guzmán, heiress to the lordship of Toral, but when he died, in 1504, he left no progeny (Martz 32). His only composition in 11CG (ID 0921, 11CG-487 fol. 140r: “De la vida que perdí”) is a small poem found in the ‘invenciones y letras’ section (Macpherson 1998, 47).

Cartagena and his lesser known brother perfectly exemplify the path followed by those New Christian poets who were close to the royal court and, consequently, enjoyed a safe position in Castilian society: they simply avoided any spiritual or religious concerns in their compositions, preferring instead to carry to its limits the concept of courtly love (Perea Rodríguez 2013a, 39-45).

There is another occasional writer connected to these two brothers through his gloss in 11CG (ID 6739, 11CG-958 fols. 213v-214v: “Con tristes congoxas ni muero ni bivo”) on a successful Petrarchan imitation (Alonso 48-49; Perea Rodríguez 2010a, 613) by Pedro de Cartagena (ID 0889, 11CG-140 fol. 84r: “La fuerça del fuego que alumbra que ciega”). His name was Francisco Hernández Coronel and he was a member of perhaps the most peculiar and notable Castilian converso lineage of the 15th century: the Coronel family.

His maternal grandfather was Abraham Seneor, Jewish counselor and treasurer of the crown (Rábade Obradó 26; Ladero Quesada 2002), who changed his name to Fernán Pérez Coronel after his conversion to Christianity in 1492 (Ladero Quesada 2003, 13-14). Seneor’s son-in-law—called Rabi Meir Melamed before his conversion—also received a new name, Hernán Núñez Coronel (Carrete Parrondo 1986; García Casar),
He was the father of Francisco Hernández Coronel as well as Luis and Antonio Núñez Coronel, considered “figuras egregias” in the cultural circle created by Cardenal Cisneros in the Complutensian University of Alcalá de Henares during the early years of the 16th century (Hernando; Gómez Menor 590). After having studied Theology at the University of Paris (Farge 112-116), they returned to Castile (García Villoslada 386-395; Perea Rodríguez 2010a, 616-617), where Luis became a Dominican priest and royal preacher to king and emperor Charles V (Beinart 496), while Antonio enjoyed a quite remarkable career as author of theological treatises (Farge 113-114).

One of Antonio’s writings, his Quaestiones logicae in Praedicabilia Porphyrii, was printed for the first time in Paris around 1509 (Renouard 511) and later on in Salamanca around 1521 (Norton 218). At the end of both editions there is a letter, written December 15th, 1509 in the Monteagudo College of Paris, dedicating the work to his brother “Francisco Ferdinando Coronel, tum literis ac animi generositate tum rei militaris disciplina ornatisimo fratri suo amantissimo” (Perea Rodríguez 2010a, 617).

The poet and third son of Rabí Meir Melamed, called variously Francisco Hernández Coronel or Francisco Hernando Coronel, unlike his brothers, did not study theology in Paris (Beinart 497), but rather excelled thanks to the military skills described by his brother Antonio. Nevertheless, aside from the gloss on Cartagena in the Cancionero general, the only other thing we know for sure about Hernández Coronel is that he inherited his father’s position as money lender to the Catholic Monarchs at the turn of the 16th century. This conclusion can be drawn from a memorandum that our poet, on behalf of the heirs of his father, submitted to King Ferdinand the Catholic in 1515 (Beinart 457). He claimed then a large amount of money for the grievances against his family that, according to his opinion, were due to wrong decisions taken by the Castilian monarchy in regard to the economic policy established by the crown after the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 (Perea Rodríguez 2013b). This controversy might serve to open an interesting field of research that might allow us to gain a
better understanding of the hypothetical networks, as defined by Gómez Bravo (2013), between *converso* poets of the Catholic Monarchs’ milieu and the finance sector of Castile during the final years of the 15th century and the initial decades of the 16th.

The next poet was born in Madrid, in a street near the Plaza de Santa Ana that nowadays bears his name: Juan Álvarez Gato (Roth 2007, 132). Related to the powerful *converso* family of Arias Dávila, he is often presented as a member of the Catholic Monarchs court, because Queen Isabella appointed him as one of her private counsellors (Gómez Bravo 2011, 232). But, Álvarez Gato had enjoyed already of a long career in the previous years, first serving as a majordomo in the court of García Álvarez de Toledo, second Count and first Duke of Alba (Beltran 2002, 549), and also being a prolific poet during King Henry IV’s reign. In fact, as I have attempted to prove elsewhere, he might have been the most prominent troubadour of that period, in which the courtly and literary milieu of Henry IV, at that time a respected and powerful monarch, used to take place in Madrid (Perea Rodríguez 2010b).

His literary works, especially those connected with his activity before the age of the Catholic Monarchs, reveal interesting political details. For instance, some of his poems showcased how the Castilian *conversos*, who had strongly supported king Henry IV at the beginning of his reign, decided to abandon his cause after 1466 (Perea Rodríguez 2007b) in favor of that of his half-sister Isabella, the future Catholic Queen (Kaplan 1998). Like the Cartagena-Franco brothers, in his early years as a poet Álvarez Gato focused his lyrics on love poetry and other classic courtly topics. In contrast, some years afterwards, and long before his death in 1510, he suffered a profound spiritual crisis that drove him to a more ascetic lifestyle (Márquez Villanueva 1960, 203-205). This fact caused him to regret all his former frivolous compositions, as explained in his well-known palinode extracted from his manuscript *cancionero* (ID 3171, MH2-106 fol. 138v):

*Este libro va meytades*  
*hecho de lodo y de oro:*
la meytad es de verdades,
la otra de vanidades;
porque yo, mezquino, lloro
que, quando era moço potro,
syn tener seso ninguno,
el cuerpo quiso lo uno,
agora el alma lo otro (Álvarez Gato 61).

Another remarkable point in Álvarez Gato is his admiration for Fray Hernando de Talavera (Roth 2002, 152-153), clearly perceived in the biography he wrote in praise of the Archbishop of Granada (Márquez Villanueva 1960, 105-154; Avalle-Arce 1974, 262-279). Aside from composing one of the earliest examples of medieval drama (Cátedra 2005, 203-225), he also wrote a number of letters and literary epistles in which we can read of his peculiarities as a converso and his “amargura vital” (Márquez Villanueva 1960, 246).

If Juan Álvarez Gato had not existed, Fray Íñigo de Mendoza would be considered to be the archetypical converso poet of medieval Spain. The Franciscan friar, related to both the powerful Mendoza and Cartagen families, was also the paramount religious poet of 15th-century Castile (Mendoza IX-LXXIX). Probably born in Burgos around 1425-1430 (Roth 2007, 538), he first appeared at court during the reign of Henry IV, having become a friar some years before (Díez Garretas 2006, 339-341). He might have developed a certain affection for the then Princess Isabella, as can be guessed by the remarkable political propaganda he composed in her favor during those years (Carrasco Manchado 244-245). Perhaps in return for this, when she seized the Crown, Fray Íñigo was given a prominent place in her court, quite an accomplishment if we consider the contrast between the legendary integrity and moral rectitude of the Catholic Queen and Mendoza’s dubious reputation as womaniser (Dutton & Roncero 590), quite awkward indeed considering his clerical status. Nevertheless, after 1495-1497 the friar retired to the Franciscan convent of Burgos, although he continued to enjoy of Queen Isabella’s protection until she
passed away in 1504, just a few years before his own death in 1507 (Díez Garretas 2012, 422-424).

Fray Íñigo de Mendoza is the last of the *converso* authors in 11CG and 14CG, except for the four included within the ‘obras de burlas’ section. However, Castillo selected none of Fray Íñigo’s most famous pieces of poetry, which had been published long before, in 1482, in the *cancionero* which bears his name. Castillo also omitted burlesque poems against Mendoza because of his short height (Márquez Villanueva 1982, 407-408), but he did select derisive compositions against him. One, written by an anonymous troubadour, can be construed as mocking precisely the fría’s alleged amatory arts (ID 2995, 11CG-815 fols. 169v-170v: “Discreto frayle señor”). Another one, composed by the virtually unknown Vázquez de Palencia (ID 2908, 11CG-814 fols. 168v-169v: “Por la coplas qu’enbiastes”), criticised in depth, albeit ironically, both fray Íñigo’s *Coplas de Vita Christi* (Mendoza) and the personal behavior of its author.

Finally, we have a scolding courtly burlesque divided into two different pieces (ID 6113, 11CG-141 fol. 85r: “Mezcla de tal perfección”; ID 4333, 11CG-142 fols. 85r-85v: “Señor padre reverendo”). It seems likely that this composition was performed in public, at court, because Ferdinand the Catholic himself ordered Pedro de Cartagena –who was Fray Íñigo’s cousin– to compose a mock attack against the confessor of Queen Isabella. Among other jibes, Cartagena accused his relative of having plagiarised some of his lines from Juan de Mena (Avalle-Arce 1970, 309-310). These attacks also serve as a symptom of what would happen next, for they evolved as the primary characteristic of the New Christian presence in Spanish *cancioneros*.

**Converso Poets in the ‘Obras de Burlas’ and 19OB**

So far, we have focused here on those poets in Castillo’s *Cancionero general* who had a clear profile as *conversos*, although none of them, not even Fray Íñigo de Mendoza, was included in the ‘obras de burlas’ section. This honour belongs to four extraordinary authors.
Let us start with Per Álvarez de Ayllón, a poet better known as the brother of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, the successful explorer of Florida. Fernández de Oviedo related in detail the wanderings of the latter within Spain’s America bureaucracy during the early 16th century (Fernández de Oviedo 1959). In this chronicle we find that Per Álvarez de Ayllón was born around 1470 in Toledo, where his family had lived from time immemorial. His father, Juan de Ayllón, was regidor of Toledo, i.e., alderman, a typical converso post (Márquez Villanueva 1957), which he obtained under the patronage of the Silvas, the family of the influential Count of Cifuentes (Avalle-Arce 1974, 348), a staunch protector of Toledo’s New Christians (Benito Ruano 1961, 103-107).

In the early 16th century, our poet ventured to Italy in the retinue of César Borja, Duke of Valentinois, natural son of Pope Alexander VI, although later on, in 1503, he served as a soldier of King Ferdinand V during the siege of Salses, near Gerona (Avalle-Arce 1974, 352). Three years later he returned to live in Toledo, where he signed an important document of peace, harmony, and concord among the rebellious knights of the city (Benito Ruano 1961, 305-310). Despite his appointment as a commander of the Order of Santiago, and perhaps due to the same fear of prosecution suffered by many other conversos that abandoned Spain, he decided to join his brother Lucas in America, where he probably died around 1540. He left unfinished his Comedia de Preteo y Tibaldo llamada Disputa y remedio de amor, which was later completed and printed by Luis Hurtado in 1553 (Avalle-Arce 1974, 340-343). His literary career ranges from typical courtly cancionero poetry to the early Spanish drama, making him thus a remarkable figure in the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, a sort of doppelgänger of Garcilaso de la Vega although much lesser known than his famous Toledan neighbour.

Like Cartagena, Antonio Franco, and the early works of Álvarez Gato, Álvarez de Ayllón also appears in the Cancionero general as a troubadour of courtly love. However, among his poems, one finds an impudent jest about a not-so-innocent courtly maiden that Castillo includes in the ‘obras de
burlas’ (ID 4120, 11CG-1004 fol. 229r: “Con mi crescido cuidado”). This makes him the first converso poet to appear in all editions of the Cancionero General from 1511 to 1517 and thence 19OB.

In both qualitative and quantitative terms, the last three authors I shall discuss can be defined as the most representative converso trio in the Spanish cancioneros. The first one, known as ‘comendador Román’, has been identified by Mazzochi as a certain Diego Román who lived in Toledo between 1470 and 1474, serving the Duke of Alba (Román 9-22). Later on, he fought in the war between Castile and Portugal in the service of Queen Isabella and against the legitimate daughter of Henry IV, spuriously known as Juana la Beltraneja. Probably as a reward for this, Román was appointed contino, i.e., in continual service to the court (Montero Tejada), by the Catholic Monarchs, to which indeed he owes the courtesy treatment of ‘comendador’ (Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 200-204).

His rowdy personality made him the target of poetic attacks that may be read throughout the Spanish cancioneros. Thus, Antón de Montoro, whom we shall discuss below, was engaged in an acrimonious debate with Román (Lope), calling him “bellaco, sermonero / chocarrero de Román” (Montoro 335) in a well-known composition (ID 6762, 11CG-985 fol. 226v: “¿Qué es oy el cavallero?”). Similarly, Suero de Ribera, a Castilian poet connected with the Neapolitan court of King Alphonse V of Aragon (Periñán), had told Juan Poeta that “especialmente Román / contra vos lleno d’enojos / que os llama ganapán / si trobáis siendo albardán / c’os quebrantará los ojos” (ID 6773, 11CG-1003 fol. 229r: “Ó, qué nuevas de Castilla”). In the past, scholarly critics took this poetic accusation much too seriously, thinking that Román’s religious conversion arose from his Moorish origin. But, as Mazzochi explained (Román 13), it appears that we should not take that ad pedem litterae.

Nevertheless, a similar statement is unanimously accepted as regards the second member of this converso trio: Juan Poeta (Roth 2007, 734). A conspicuous participant in the polemic debates of the 15th century (Kaplan 2002, 40-57), he has been considered a perfect example of a tragi-
comic existence, like Garci Fernández de Gerena, who was well known as the primary target of courtly jests in the *Cancionero de Baena* (Perea Rodríguez 2009, 41-42).

Juan Poeta is sometimes known as Juan de Valladolid, most likely because he was either born there or lived there for some time (Rubio González 101-112). His longevity and his frequent Mediterranean trips provided him access to courts ranging from Castile, and Aragon to Naples, Mantua, or Milan (Menéndez Pidal 413-420). Although his biography still contains many obscurities, especially with regard to his sojourns in Spain, he continues to be the most likely candidate for being the “Juan Poeta” who, on August 25th, 1466, was appointed *contino* of Prince Ferdinand of Aragon, future Catholic Monarch (Vicen Vives 624).

Aside from the polemics with Montoro and Román, he endured the hurtful lampoons of the Count of Paredes, Rodrigo Manrique (Campos Souto). In these frequently reprinted jokes, the Old Christian nobleman rejoiced in castigating Juan Poeta as a crypto-Jew, the supreme example of the false Christian who was then the butt of general mockery and who later on became the main target of the Spanish Inquisition (Perea Rodríguez 2012b, 333-334).

The last biography we must mention is that of the *converso* poet of the Spanish *cancioneros* who most accurately conforms to the stereotype, with the particularity that on a few occasions he dared to use his lyric skills to denounce the fury displayed by Old Christians against New Christians: Antón de Montoro (Roth 2007, 541-543). Born probably at the end of the 14th century, he lived in Córdoba between 1404 and 1480, although he was also connected with the royal court his entire life. As we have seen before with Ginés de Cañizares, Montoro was nicknamed *el Ropero* because he made his living by selling old clothes, which also made him the object of criticism from other *converso* poets, such as the Comendador Román and Juan Poeta, both mentioned above (Lope; Campos Souto).

A prominent and witty poet, Montoro outshone all other *converso* authors; he was, of course, a troubadour capable of making his contempo-

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4 See *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (Barcelona, Spain), *Maestre Racional*, L. 939, fol. 30r.
raries—and ourselves—laugh out loud because of his very particular, clever, ironic, and politically incorrect sense of humor. Indeed, he added to this the fact that he was the only cancionero poet with the talent to pretend that he was just a fool proudly flaunting his Jewish origin, among other things, while actually was fooling everybody else (Márquez Villanueva 1986; Gerli 1994-1995). This accomplishment is quite remarkable for a man whose family, a few years after he passed away, was pitilessly prosecuted by the Inquisition, to the extent that his widow, Teresa Rodríguez, was burned at the stake (Márquez Villanueva 1982, 397). Montoro’s life and works therefore illustrate perfectly the tortuous road walked by the Iberian conversos during the 15th century, whose traces may be followed clearly throughout the medieval Spanish songbooks.

Heretofore, we have examined a handful of short biographical sketches of those poets in both the Cancionero general and the Cancionero de obras de burlas of whose converso origins we are sure. But how many more conversos may be found there?

The most frequently discussed case is that of Diego de San Pedro (Roth 2007, 714-718), whose biography is still an enigma despite the efforts of the academy (Whinnom 1: 93-94; Severin 2014). It was Cotarelo who posited the hypothesis of his possible converso origins, based on Inquisition documents that connected a certain Diego de San Pedro with the Fonseca family (Cotarelo 1927). Nonetheless, Whinnom rejected it, arguing reasonable doubt, without taking into consideration the cultural peculiarities of Cárcel de amor uncovered by other critics (Márquez Villanueva 1966; Kaplan 2002, 106-129; Fontes).

The same thing may be said of Juan de Mena, the successful Córdoba-born poet who served King John II of Castile as secretary of Latin letters and chronicler (Roth 2007, 524-528). Lida de Malkiel (1950) and Castro (1962, 81-91) argued in favor of his converso origin, while Asensio (1992, 111-119) and Street denied it (149-173); lately, any converso trace in Mena’s biography has been denied by rejecting both Castro and Lida de Malkiel theories with a strongly positivist attitude (Cañas Gálvez 12-13).
But Castro himself also suspected that the two foremost authors of early Iberian drama, Juan del Encina and Gil Vicente, were both *conversos*, supposition that has been proven with regard to the Portuguese writer (Girón-Negrón 2011), albeit still needs further confirmation in the case of Encina. Perhaps clearer is the *converso* origin of the nonetheless barely known Juan Agraz de Albacete, a troubadour related to the cultural circle of the second Count of Niebla, Henry of Guzmán (Márquez Villanueva 1982, 400-401), due to the fact that he, like Montoro, Román and Juan Poeta, was the object of attacks by other *converso* poets (Yovel 4-6).

Among the large number of poets known only by their family names, a few of them have typical *converso* surnames, such as ‘Soria,’ ‘Salcedo,’ ‘Peralta,’ and ‘Tapia.’ Starting with this latter, I must say that a certain “Pedro Sánchez de Tapia, vecino de Calatañazor” aroused my suspicion that he might be the same poet as the Tapia of the *Cancionero general*. He was accused of being a crypto-Jew in 1501 for a curious reason: his wife, Catalina, used to call their son ‘Araquigüelo,’ a family nickname for the typical Jewish name of ‘Arragel.’ The child also had the Christian name of ‘Juan,’ but witnesses testified that he rarely paid attention when he was called by that name, only when he heard ‘Araquigüelo’ (Carrete Parrondo 1985, 113). What seems to have been just an episode of childish rebelliousness was sufficient cause to open an Inquisitorial case against the family of the very cultivated Pedro Sánchez de Tapia. Was he the same elegant troubadour whose lines may be read in the *Cancionero general* (ID 6596, 11CG-827 fol. 174v: “Hermosura tan hermosa”)?

As for the remainder of the poets, some have been labelled as possible *conversos*, such as García de Astorga (Carro Celada 20-24) and, especially, Antonio de Peralta, Rodrigo Cota’s son from his second marriage (Cantera Burgos 1970, 21-22). Francisco de la Fuente, author of several pieces in the *Cancionero general* (Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 254), might have been the homonymous literary amateur tried by the Inquisition in Almazán in 1505 (Carrete Parrondo & Fraile, 89); Romero might have been the same “bachiller Juan Romero, vecino de Soria,” denounced to the Inquisition
at the end of the 15th century for having eaten meat during Lent (Carrete Parrondo 1985, 42). The poet surnamed 'Soria' might have been Diego de Soria, "casero en Santa María del Mercado, vecino de Soria," accused of being crypto-Jew in 1491 (Carrete Parrondo 1985, 49), or perhaps the quiet Alonso de Soria, nicknamed el Ezquierdo, whose posthumous Inquisition record described him as "encendiendo los candiles los viernes en las tardes e leyendo sus libros en hebreo" (Carrete Parrondo 1985, 21).

Losada, who wrote a subtle composition on the Trinity in the 1511 edition of Castillo's collection (ID 6070, 11CG-36 fols. 17v-18v: "Padre eterno glorioso"), and the unknown Serrano, author of motes and villancicos (Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 264), might also have been conversos. The first might perhaps be identified with Rodrigo de Losada, associated with the court of the Catholic Queen Isabella I (Perea Rodríguez 2007a, 257). The second might have been a certain Gonzalo Serrano, who lived in Guadalajara and was linked to the court of the Dukes of Infantado. His previous Jewish name was Yuçá Serrano (Cantera Burgos & Carrete Parrondo, 71-73 and 366-367).

Other converso poets in the Cancionero general may include Pero Guillén de Segovia (Guillén de Segovia 21-22), author of the Siete Salmos Penitenciales (ID 1712, 11CG-26 fols. 12r-12v: "Señor, oye mis gemidos"; Francisco de León (Perea Rodríguez 2007b, 18-19), author of a gloss on the famous Romance del conde Alarcos (ID 0810, 11CG-434 fols. 13r-131v: "La desastrada caída"; the unknown Suárez, perhaps to be identified with Francisco Suárez el Viejo, or, more likely, with Bernaldino Suárez, a converso doctor from Guadalajara (Cantera Burgos & Carrete Parrondo, 367); and Juan Barba, whose poetry is historiographical (Cátedra 1989). Finally, last and least, some Valencian poets, like the Comendador Escrivá or Jerónimo de Cabanyelles, might also have been conversos (Ventura 104-118). The list would be almost endless and, despite notable and recent efforts such as the dictionary of Jewish and converso authors by Roth (2007), we still have much more historical and biographical work to do.
Towards an Interpretation of *Converso* Polemics in 11CG, 14CG, and 19OB

In terms of a sociological analysis, the existence of a group of lampoons against New Christians clearly explains the main feature of the *converso* problem in the 15th century: *el recelo* (Benito Ruano 2001, 17), i.e., mistrust, the daily suspicion against the other. According to the *longue durée* of the persecution of minorities (Nirenberg 6-7), the soul-crushing daily routine of Spanish *conversos*, which Álvarez Gato both poetically and dramatically described as “la amarga muerte que de contino lluvizna” (Márquez Villanueva 1960, 391), might have affected their behavior significantly. With regard to the cultural analysis of medieval Spanish poetry, this fact was vigorously championed by those critics (Gómez Martínez 410-411; Seidenspinner-Núñez 243-249) who, like Castro, maintained that the literature written by *conversos* is wont to reflect “la voluntad de no querer ser como los otros” (Castro 1965, 151). Indeed, the problem lies in this sociological aspect of *voluntad* ‘will, desire, wish’, which not only has problems of definition (Surtz 548-549), but also has been categorically denied by scholars opposed to Castro, such as Asensio (1992, 87-119) or Round (1995, 560-564), among others.

Focusing on the *cancioneros* analysed here, the conflict between *marranos* and *lindos* habitually appears in disguise, hidden beneath lampoons, in accordance with the long satirical tradition of medieval Spanish literature (Scholberg), and the typical use of parody as an integral part of poetical debate (Brea et al. 2013). These clever disputes, descending from both the Provenzal and Galician-Portuguese courtly traditions, had been a constant feature of *cancionero* poetry since the *Cancionero de Baena* (Labrador Herraiz; Chas Aguión 2001). In consequence, long before Hernando del Castillo selected a good few of these mocking poems for 11CG, “el material, el género existía” (Rubio Árquez 387), one with a large community of readers, an audience that relished jests and jibes (Theros 68-74).

Because these farcical lyrics were not unidirectional, i.e., an Old Christian troubadour mocking a New Christian, but also two Old Christians
mocking each other and two or more New Christians doing the same, it is hard to accept the idea of a burlesque poetry composed in order to “break free of the *converso* identity and evade its predicament” (Yovel 3). Instead, *converso* poets seem to have utilised their undeniable talent to create a poetic universe that provided them an escape from their cruel reality. The long tradition of ‘Jewish Fools’ (Márquez Villanueva 1982, 391-396), their habitual *bufonesco* sense of humor that transformed court jesters into surprising campaigners for social justice (Scholberg 303-360), might have been the preferred intellectual weapon through which New Christians poets fought against the social prejudices of their times (Márquez Villanueva 1985-1986, 514). Spanish *cancioneros* would be entirely in line with the buffoon’s ability to speak the bitter truth praised by the Erasmian masterpiece *Moriae Encomium* (Márquez Villanueva 1982, 399), or found within the universally acclaimed Shakespearian plays, such as *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will* (Míguez 75-79).

Despite this, there are other aspects of the *converso* presence in the *obras de burlas* that might indicate a more hostile reception to what Antón de Montoro pithily described as the *rastro de confeso*. In the first instance, it has been demonstrated that misogynistic language in Spanish *cancioneros* resembles that found in burlesques against New Christians: “the discourse of anti-Semitism and the discourse of misogyny are often conjoined and mutually reinforcing” (Weissberger 208-210). It should not go unnoticed that, together with readers who enjoyed irreverent poems about the poor and drunks, or a comic dialogue between a man and a donkey, or a pornographic and oneiric trial between the male and female genitals, there was a huge audience inclined to laugh about dubious jests concerning the tragedy of those marked by religious prejudice.

The great success achieved by this poetry had an intricate double consequence. First, Hernando del Castillo’s “olfato comercial” (Rubio Árquez 289) concerning burlesque poetry was undeniable, and it was absolutely proven with the reissue of 19OB as a stand-alone book, separated from the rest of the *Cancionero general*. On the other hand, Castillo also certified
himself as a cautious man in choosing the materials related to New Christians. This might be a key element in order to evaluate his mechanisms of textual selection (Rubio Árquez 391-392). I would dare to say that, with regard to the poetry in the ‘obras de burlas,’ including the *converso* lampoons, Castillo’s criterion was purely and simply chronological: he chose poems composed by troubadours who had passed away long since, in contrast to his focus elsewhere on newer materials. Otherwise, he might have condemned to the Inquisitorial bench not only those supposedly selected authors, but perhaps himself as well.

This hypothesis is related to a fact that I believe I have already demonstrated elsewhere (Perea Rodríguez 2012b, 342): the ‘obras de burlas’ section contains the oldest poetry in the entire *Cancionero general*. Only 5% of the poems included in this sector were composed between 1511 and 1519 and a modest 20% during the twenty-five years of the Catholic Monarchs’ undisputed reign, 1480-1504. This means that fully 80% of the poetry gathered by Hernando del Castillo in 1511, reprinted and modified first in 1514, then in 1517, and ultimately in 1519, was written earlier than 1480, three decades before its publication. There is a slight possibility that these poetical burlesques might have been composed in a more relaxed atmosphere of relationships between New Christians and Old Christians, long before the installation of the Inquisition in Castile in 1480. But even then, they had been just the echo of a bygone age, as clearly perceived by the high success achieved by these jokes mocking *conversos* among readers of the early 16th century.

Finally, there is another important matter to note with regard to *converso* authors and topics in both the *Cancionero general* and its printed derivatives. I am in total agreement with the consideration of this burlesque poetry as just “la punta del iceberg” of an enormous tradition of satirical poetry (Rubio Árquez 390). In that case, Hernando del Castillo could have selected these ‘obras de burlas’ to recall a deeply-missed bygone time, when lampoons like these were more habitual in *cancioneros* that had already disappeared—and that perhaps have been lost forever. To this end,
he might have taken advantage of a certain easing in the rigorous control of Spain's cultural production by Isabella and Ferdinand imposed after 1480, but especially after the approval in 1502 of the Pragmática Sanción, the royal order through which the Catholic Monarchs controlled the printing industry (Moll 51-52). We should remember that their attitude toward any sort of writings, speeches, popular songs—or even just gossip and rumours—that might harm their authority was extremely harsh, guided by a firm authoritarianism. Such is the conclusion that can be drawn from the few examples of which we are aware, like the 1492 prohibition of any popular “coplas, cantares e palabras desonestas” regarding the establishment of the Inquisition in the city of Burgos (Perea Rodríguez 2011, 201-208).

This iron fist over the printing industry, verging on censorship, is totally responsible for the eulogistic tone characteristic of much of the literature under the Catholic Monarchs, cancionero poetry included. Nevertheless, this tight control seems to have taken a brief holiday during the unstable period following Queen Isabella’s death in 1504, as I shall argue immediately.

Let us take, for instance, the Coplas de Mingo Revulgo (ID 2024, MN67: “Mingo Revulgo, Mingo”), a very well-known cancionero piece that allegorically emphasises abuses committed against the common people by noblemen and monarchs (Rodríguez Puértolas 23). This poem circulated widely in manuscript form, either alone (BETA, Texid 1121), with an anonymous gloss (BETA, Texid 3470), or with the reputed comments by Hernando del Pulgar (BETA, Texid 1716). Because of its dissemination during the reign of Henry IV—who is, obviously, the hidden king criticised in this poem—, it seems likely that it was part of the Isabelline political propaganda (Carrasco Manchado 134), despite the message within the poem may be considered harmful to the authoritarianism of the Castilian monarchy. Aside from the mentioned manuscript transmission, the poem was printed for the first time in 1485, which might be understood as a vigorous boost of support to Isabella I barely a decade after her controversial access to the throne. In spite of that fact, just four years afterwards, in 1489, a quite similar lines to Mingo Revulgo in both tone and topics were com-
posed: the anonymous *Coplas del tabefe* (ID 0206, MN17-20 fols. 35r-36v: “Abre, abre las orejas”). This poem was never printed because simply its manuscript dissemination caused the incarceration and execution of some of the authors involved in its composition (Perea Rodríguez 2011, 201-208). Hence, if such inflexibility regarding book censorship would have remained in Castile, it is certainly difficult to explain the almost three consecutive reprints of *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, with its controversial criticism against the monarchy, in scarcely six years after the Catholic Queen’s death: 1504 (04*MR), 1506 (06MR), and 1510 (10MR).

In addition, jests and pranks were given out during those years of censorship hiatus by using the favourite printing method for small pieces of literature: throughout ‘pliegos sueltos’, this is, chapbooks or ‘broadsides’, as preferred by Bryant (15). In this context, excelled the presence of another consummated poetical prankster, Rodrigo de Reinosa (Puerto Moro), in a handful of burlesque chapbooks printed in 1508 (08*RR), 1513 (13*DS), 1515 (15*RT), 1517 (17*RF and 17*RJ), and 1520 (20*RH, 20*RN, and 20*RT). Aside from these, it must be underscored how some parts of ‘Obras de burlas’ from the *Cancionero general* were printed alone as ‘broadsides’, such as the already mentioned jibes against Juan Poeta by the Count of Paredes, printed in 1512 (12CP); the funny lines as a closure of another small ‘pliego suelto’ again in 1512 (12MC-2); those ‘Disparates’ composed by Álvaro de Toro (13*TD) around 1513; the ‘Coplas de Juan Agraz a Juan Marmolejo’ around 1514 (14*JAC); the ‘Coplas que hizo tremar a una alcahueta’ in 1515 (15*AC); the ‘Metáfora en metros’ by Álvaro the same year (15*RT); and the ‘Pater Noster de las mugeres’ by Salazar in 1518 (18*PN).

The censorship pause should be crystal clear now for once and for all. These works previously described, 15 out of 100 printed in the period 1504-1518, have no possible counterweight, for not a single one of either poetry books of chapbooks printed before 1504 –0 out of 60– can be classified by no means as ‘burlesque’, being most of them either religious or love songbooks (Severin 2004, 40-42).
Continuing with this chronological overview, it must be pointed out that in 1513 a collective songbook, entitled *Cancionero llamado Guirlanda Esmaltada de galanes* (13°FC), was printed for the first time. Compiled by a certain Juan Fernández de Constantina, it did include a section of ‘obras de burlas’, albeit a partial one. But in fact, this one is merely a shortened version of the *Cancionero general* with a different prologue (Foulché-Delbosc), so that it should not have a particular consideration in this story.

In short, based on my research, I would venture to firmly conclude that there were no specific ‘obras de burlas’ section in any individual or collective *cancionero* other than 11CG and 14CG, except those burlesque chapbooks already mentioned and profusely printed during the first quarter of the 16th century. Jests and jibes against *conversos* were central element in those ‘obras de burlas’, even though they were composed a long time ago. The reason seems to be obvious: after the establishment of the Inquisition all over the Iberian Peninsula, any poem constructed by mocking anyone of being a crypto-Jew would have caused the confinement of the both of them, accused and accuser. Due to this fact, Iberian society could only mock those *conversos* who had passed away many years before, being the reason why ‘obras de burlas’ contains the oldest compositions within these three songbooks analysed; because they had plenty of these attacks against *conversos*.

In addition, most of this ‘jibe poetry’ would have remained in the dark if it were not for the gap in the censorship control already mentioned, a period elapsed between the death of Queen Isabella I in 1504 and the publication of 19OB in 1519. Furthermore, it is not a coincidence that the end of this hiatus occurred shortly before the arrival of Charles V in Spain marked the return of a political agenda capable of providing sufficient stability for the monarchy to regain control of the printing industry. And it is not a coincidence again, in my opinion, that Valencia was the primary scene of two closely related cultural phenomena. First, these three *cancioneros* with ‘obras de burlas’, 11CG, 14CG, and 19OB, were printed there because of the quality of the Valencian courtly milieu (Perea Rodríguez 2008, 246-247) and the traditional affection of Valencian readers
for all kinds of burlesque poetry in both Castilian and Catalan (Martínez Romero). Second, when Charles the Emperor was finally victorious in the Germanías conflict, after 1523, the rebirth of panegyric poetry occurred there as well (Perea Rodríguez 2008, 259-260).

These are the reasons that may explain why the successive reprints of the Cancionero general in Toledo (1517, 1520, and 1525) and Seville (1530 and 1535) saw a significantly modified section of ‘obras de burlas’, as detailed in the prologue of the first Sevillian edition:

E finalmente agora en esta última impresión se han quitado del dicho Cancionero algunas obras que eran muy desonestas e torpes, e se han añadido otras muchas assí de devoción como de moralidad (Rodríguez-Moñino 1968, 52).

As a result of this new cultural, spiritual, and social background, no new burlesque materials were added to reprints of Castillo’s poetical collection, not even in the last editions, in Antwerp, 1557 and 1573. In fact, quite the opposite, the total suppression of the ‘obras de burlas’ occurred in 1573 (Martos Sánchez 163). Even before this, however, readers expressed their discomfort with these texts by means of erasures, alterations, or even by burning pages of the ‘obras de burlas’ section in copies of the earlier editions (Perea Rodríguez 2014, 160-165). But perhaps the most relevant fact is that the continuator of Castillo’s tradition in compiling songbook poetry during the 16th century, Esteban de Nájera, refused to include any kind of burlesque poetry in his Segunda parte del Cancionero general, printed in 1552, nor in his Cancionero general de obras nuevas published two years later (Nájera XIII).

It is habitually considered a fact that lampoons and jests moved in a quite different direction in Golden Age poetry (Glaser; Pedrosa). Therefore, it seems to have been just the peculiarity of the converso presence in the Spanish literature, together with a twist of fate in the historical and political evolution of Spain in the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, that provided us with a number of extraordinary poems such as those burlesques incorporated in both the Cancionero general and the Cancionero de obras de burlas.


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