

CHAPTER FIVE

או ליברו די מאגיקא – *O LIBRO DE MAĠIKA*

(BODLEIAN MS. LAUD OR. 282)

1. INTRODUCTION

The text that I refer to as *O libro de maġika*¹ is by far the largest in the Judeo-Portuguese corpus. At over 800 pages (each containing between 29 and 31 lines), the Bodleian manuscript on its own comprises more than half of the known body of Portuguese written in Hebrew script. It has nonetheless remained virtually unexamined by scholars of Portuguese or Judeo-Romance linguistics, and the edition here marks its first appearance in print.

The earliest reference to the Hebraicized version² of *O libro de maġika* appears in a brief article by Gonzalez Llubera (1953), which outlines the salient features and textual history of this and a shorter Bodleian astrological text in Hebraicized Portuguese (see below). Most importantly, at the end of the article a small portion (approximately one page) of the text is transliterated into Roman characters. However, no commentary is provided, and the only Romanization is a skeletal transliteration (cf. chapter 8 § 2.3.1), which renders the *matres lectionis* uniquely as their historical Semitic consonant counterparts and so features no Roman-letter vowels. In a suite of articles Hilty (1957-58)

¹ Based on the scribe's use of this title in the closing line of the manuscript: אקי שי אקבא או: אקי se ak^aba o seteno libro de maġika ke konpos ġuan ġil de burgos lobado seġa deu am^en 'Here ends the seventh book of magic composed by Juan Gil of Burgos, praised be God, Amen'. On the s-less form of God's name see § 2.2.

² The only other copy of the text appears to be a Roman-letter manuscript of the third chapter (f.230r.-283v. in the Hebraicized version), held at the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville (Spain). It has also gone unexamined thus far.

makes further reference to the manuscript, although his primary object is the shorter of the two Bodleian astrological texts, או ליברו קונפרידו אינוש גואיזוש דאש אישטרילאש *O libro kunprido enos g̃uizos das estrelas* 'The Complete Book on the Decrees of the Stars' (Bodleian ms. Laud Or. 310). Most recently the provenance and authorship of *O libro de maḡika* has been addressed by Levi (1995), though like Hilty his main focus remains on *O libro kunprido*.

Based on the note at the end of the manuscript, the text of *O libro de maḡika* was composed by an astrologer whom the scribe identifies as גואן גיל די בורגוש *g̃oan gil de burgos*. However, the precise identity of this figure has not been clearly determined. Pereira da Silva (1924) provides the earliest and only concerted investigation³ into this alleged author of *O libro de maḡika*, and identifies him as an Aragonese court official, João Gil de Castiello, whose fourteenth-century work on astronomy is cited in the *Livro de Montaria* of the Portuguese King D. João I (1357-1433). The identity of the copyist of the Hebrew-letter manuscript itself remains completely unknown.

2. OVERALL LINGUISTIC CHARACTER

Based on the twenty-seven pages presented here and others I have examined less methodically, *O libro de maḡika* presents a less adventurous adaptation of Hebrew script than either *As kores* (chapter 4) or the smaller Passover texts (chapter 6). Its orthography is generally more consistent than the other texts, while its lexicon is less proportionally varied than *As kores*. Specific items are discussed in greater depth in the commentary of § 6.

³ Levi (1995) does review the evidence brought by Pereira da Silva (1924) and Gonzalez Llubera (1953) regarding the authorship of *O libro de maḡika*. Although the latter considered "Joan Gil" merely a Catalan copyist of the astronomical work, Levi ultimately agrees with Pereira da Silva's conclusion about the author's identity.

2.1. אָדִיב(י)דאַר *adib(i)dar*

Special mention should be made here of this word, which pervades *O libro de maḡika* and is probably the most frequent verb in the text. It usually occurs followed by the preposition *sobre*, describing the action or dominion of the planets or signs of the Zodiac over a variety of individuals, groups, and objects. The word does not appear to have survived in any form in the modern language, and I have found no reference to it in any work on medieval Portuguese. I am therefore greatly indebted to D. de Acosta (p.c.) for the following account.

Portuguese *divida* and Spanish *deuda*, both meaning 'debt', derive from Latin DEBITA, the plural form of the substantivized past participle of DEBEO < DE-HABEO 'have from; owe; be bound to by logic, necessity, moral or natural law' 'owed things, debt'. In Spanish there is another word *deudo* 'a relative, ancestor, or descendant', which comes from the singular DEBITUM, with the sense of 'bound by natural or moral law'. This sense is also found in two of the three definitions of *adeudado* given in the first dictionary of the *Real Academia Española*, published in 1726: (1) indebted, owing money; (2) related by family; and (3) bound, obligated. The third definition reads "equivale a lo mismo que *obligado* por algún título de equidad, razón o justicia. Es voz antigua y de ningún uso." This third *adeudado* is then defined as equivalent to Latin OBNOXIOUS 'liable, obliged, subject, obedient' and OBLIGATUS 'bound, under obligation', and an example of usage is given: "Por ley de Dios los hijos son *adeudados* y *obligados* a ayudar y honrar a sus padres" [By God's Law, children are bound and obliged to aid and honour their parents].

There are also a few examples of *adeudar* in astrological contexts in the Real Academia's historical corpus. From a 1427 translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*:

E llámale tempestad, que quiere dezir mal tiempo, e çelestial, porque veno del çielo, es a saber de corrupçión del aire desecado; e aunporque lo **adeudaron** las costillaçiones çelestiales" [And he calls it *storm*, which is to say *bad weather*, and *celestial*, for it comes from the sky, that is to do with corruption of dry air; and also because the heavenly constellations **preside** (over) it].

From a late fourteenth- / early fifteenth-century medical treatise:

La vna segun la naturaleza delos tiempos delos vientos y losconponimientos de vnos con otros. La [otra] porel **adeudamiento** delosmouimientos celestiales: los quales non podemos alcançar, segun dixoAuicena enel libro del canon" [The one according to the nature of the weather, of the winds, and the combinations of (the) ones with the other. The other according to the **effect** of heavenly movements; which we cannot grasp, as (what) Avicenna said in the Book of the Canon].

The verb *adividar*, then, is likely the now-archaic Portuguese counterpart of Spanish *adeudar*, and is used in *O libro de maḡika* to mean 'have under one's authority, preside (over)'. In terms of its orthographic form, the verb is written in all but a very few instances with **ɓ** *b* as the second consonant (in the other cases it occurs with a single *w*), and on rare occasion a second *y* does follow this consonant. Particular occurrences are discussed in the commentary in § 6.

2.2. Jewish character

It may be tempting to view (some of) the peculiarities described above as marks of the elusive pre-expulsion Judeo-Portuguese dialect (as compared to the more distinguishing characteristics of seventeenth- and eighteenth-

century Jewish Portuguese in post-Iberian communities; see da Silva Germano 1968, Wexler 1985, Tavani 1988). If they were, however, we would above all expect to find them both elsewhere in the corpus – especially in the more manifestly Judaic Passover texts – which we do not,⁴ and they do not recur in any systematic way in post-1497 Jewish Portuguese.⁵ Nor, for that matter, do they correspond to the characteristics that Minervini (1992) discerns in early Judeo-Spanish – presuming that there was any commonality to Judeo-Ibero-Romance besides the religion of its writers and speakers. This is not to say that some of the linguistic character of *O libro de maḡika* cannot be attributed to influence from the spoken language of someone involved in the transmission of the text. However, given its utterly un-Judaic content, and that many of the putative Jewish features might be purely scribal (in that sense, perhaps more rightfully "Judaic") in nature, it seems unnecessary at best, presumptuous at worst, to derive this influence from a Jewishness beyond the individual Jew who generated the manuscript.

The sole piece of potentially compelling evidence for a Jewish imprint occurs in the final line of the manuscript (see note 1 at the beginning of this chapter), where the scribe, using his own "voice" (unless the note itself is merely copied), writes the vernacular name of God as *דֵּיִאֵן* *deu* without the expected *-s* (*דֵּיִאֵיִשׁ* *deus* is the normal form throughout the text). This would indeed correlate with the same phenomenon in pre- and post-expulsion Judeo-Spanish, where God is normally referred to as *el Dio* (the *-s* of this semi-vernacular term having been construed as a plural marker and so dropped in

⁴ The patterns discussed in the previous sections do recur, to a degree, in *O libro kunprido*, but each of Gonzalez Llubera (1953), Hilty (1982), and Levi (1995) considers the two Bodleian astrology manuscripts to be products of a single hand.

⁵ Tavani (1988) does note the occurrence in the Portuguese of Livornese Jews of *-ANTIA* nouns lacking a final diphthong (cf. chapter 7 § 3.1).

deference to the Jewish concept of the "oneness" of God). However, this being the only occurrence in the text of an *s*-less form of this word, it is difficult to determine how much significance to attribute it.

3. TRANSCRIPTION

Given that *O libro de maḡika* contains more than 800 pages of text, my edition obviously constitutes only an excerpt of the manuscript. Nevertheless, because the text has never been published in any form (other than the single page transliterated by Gonzalez Llubera), in contrast to *As kores* I have provided a Hebrew-letter transcription of this excerpt. These twenty-seven pages present the text in the same modern Hebrew typeface used throughout this study, with only a small number of emendations and abbreviations resolved. By far the most common of these is an **א-ל** <a-l> ligature, which occurs in all positions (though not without exception). As with the final forms, I have not indicated the use of this ligature in my Romanization.

Parentheses in the transcription and Romanization (§ 4) indicate letters or words that have been added above the letter or word by different hand.⁶ These interlinear insertions may be accompanied by a horizontal line through one or more letters or words (though some strikethroughs occur without any correction), which is also reproduced in both transcription and Romanization. Words in bold are those written by the scribe using larger letters as section headings. Square brackets indicate letters that due to wear or damage were not fully discernable from the manuscript nor imputable from context.

⁶ According to Gonzalez Llubera (1953), eight distinct hands have added corrections and marginal notes to the manuscripts, though four of them are in Roman script.