



**Juan Manuel (1282-1348) and ‘Jewish’ Professions in *Count Lucanor*: A Medieval Iberian Model of Inter-Group Relations**

**Juan Manuel (1282-1348) y las profesiones ‘judías’ en *El Conde Lucanor*: Un modelo medieval ibérico de relación grupal**

**Juan Manuel (1282-1348) e as profissões ‘judeus’ no *El Conde Lucanor*: um modelo medieval ibérico de relação de grupo**

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**Abstract:** This article aims to analyze the personal relationship between Christian writer Juan Manuel (1282-1348) and the Jewish community in his collection of didactic *exempla*, *El Conde Lucanor* [*Count Lucanor*]. Through the theory of out-group interaction, and the mechanisms of *re-fencing* and *extended contact hypothesis*, I will examine the relationship of trust and respect reflected between the author and the Jews through the portrayal of some professions attributed to that community by popular folklore, such as money lenders, physicians, alchemists, nigromancers and sorcerers, as shown in the introduction and four *exempla* of the book. I will analyze several literary techniques employed by the author in regards to these ‘Jewish occupations’ as a resource to minimize the social rejection towards the Jew, and an example of a complex *convivencia* [cohabitation] that shaped XIV-century Castilian Christian-Jewish relations.

**Resumen:** El objetivo de este trabajo analiza la relación personal del escritor castellano Juan Manuel (1282-1348) y la comunidad judía dentro de la colección de *exempla* de *El Conde Lucanor*. Tomando como base la teoría de interacción de grupos y los mecanismos de *re-fencing* y *extended contact hypothesis*, examinaré la estrecha relación de respeto que el autor proyecta sobre el judío en la introducción y cuatro *exempla* de la obra tomando como referencia varias profesiones que el folklore atribuyó a este grupo religioso: prestamistas, físicos, alquimistas, nigromantes y hechiceros. Analizaré las técnicas literarias empleadas en los estereotipos asignados hacia estas ocupaciones ‘judías’, como un recurso de autor para minimizar el rechazo social que sufría esta

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comunidad, así como un ejemplo de una compleja *convivencia* que marcó las relaciones cristiano-judías de la Castilla del siglo XIV.

**Keywords:** *Count Lucanor* – Convivencia – Extended Contact Hypothesis – Jew – Juan Manuel.

**Palabras-clave:** *El Conde Lucanor* – Convivencia – Extended Contact Hypothesis – Juan Manuel – Judío.

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The medieval-cultural context of the Iberian Peninsula was characterized by a fusion of three cultures –Christian, Jewish, and Muslim– that forged a period of relative tolerance, known by Spanish historians as ‘convivencia’ (cohabitation). This interaction produced not only ideological and cultural interchange, but also shared hostility, violence, rivalry, and mistrust.<sup>2</sup> The contact experienced at all levels merged a series of eclectic traditions that shaped writers’ literary productivity and their perception and representation of the ‘other’ in their works. Among these authors was Castilian noble Juan Manuel (1282-1348). His religious and social positions granted him a hegemonic role over the Jewish and Muslim communities, which he used as characters and themes in his literary production. Juan Manuel’s best-known text is the didactic masterpiece *El Conde Lucanor* [*Count Lucanor*], written in 1335.

The work comprises a collection of fifty-one *exempla* linked in a frame of running dialogue between two protagonists, Count Lucanor and his advisor Patronio, who responds to these specific questions offering advice to the Count. The narrative and proverbial material, borrowed from Greco-Roman, biblical, Patristic and Oriental sources, served as an instructional text with the

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to GLICK, Thomas F.’s definition of this term as a concept that ‘is loosely defined as coexistence, but carries connotations of mutual interpenetration and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion’ (‘Convivencia: An Introductory Note.’ In: *Convivencia*, 1992, p. 1). For an introduction of the term, see CASTRO, Américo. *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos* (1948), and *La realidad histórica de España* (1954). Also, see BAXTER-WOLF, Kenneth. ‘Convivencia in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea’. In *Religion Compass*, 3.1, 2009, pp. 72-85.



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purpose of improving the morals of mankind. The Jewish presence in the text is manifested in a subliminal manner in the prologue and four *exempla* of the collection, where several professions attributed to this community by popular folklore are mentioned: moneylenders, physicians, alchemists, nigromancers and sorcerers.

However, the stories do not directly inform the reader about the religious identity of the protagonists who play these occupations, showing a lack of anti-Semitism abundant in similar didactic works of this period.<sup>3</sup> Taking the mechanisms of *re-fencing* and the *extended contact hypothesis* of inter-group relationships, I will aim to analyze Juan Manuel's narrative techniques employed in this work to hide the Jewish representation. I will argue that the author's close ties with some members of the Jewish body at a personal level led him to silence the Jewish voice as a response to minimize the social hostility held toward this group and occupations stereotyped as 'Jewish' by folklore, as well as to enhance the respectful relationship between the author and the Jews as an example of *convivencia*.

The categorization of an out-group and its individual members can be defined as a process based on features, qualities and attributes that shape the individual and the group. Through this process, the group's identity is developed, which results in various kinds of external social comparisons—economic, professional, religious, or racial—that lead to a positive or negative evaluation of the group from the outside:

Group membership is meaningful to individuals, conferring social identity and permitting self-evaluation. It is a shared representation of who one is and the appropriate behaviour attached to who one is. [...] Groups distinguish themselves from, and discriminate against, other groups in order to promote their own positive social evaluation and collective self-esteem.<sup>4</sup>

In order for an individual and their community to be categorized with certain qualities, –positive or negative– they must first be recognized by the other out-groups with which they interact. In this way, 'perceptions of similarities within groups and differences between groups are enhanced, emphasizing

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<sup>3</sup> These texts include Gonzalo de Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* [Miracles of Our Lady], *Cantigas de Santa Maria* [Songs of Holy Mary] by King Alfonso X, and King Sancho IV's *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir* [Teachings and Treatises for Right Living].

<sup>4</sup> JENKINS, R. *Social Identity*. London; New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 89.



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social difference and group distinctiveness'.<sup>5</sup> This factor can also lead to hostility between out-groups as a consequence of the superiority of one group, as well as ignorance and distrust toward the other group:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional support (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.<sup>6</sup>

The field of professions held by different out-groups' members can also serve as a catalyst for hostility and prejudice, especially towards a minority group. Within the Western medieval setting, European Jewry experienced a shift in the professions common to the group, which impacted the way they were perceived by the rest of society. After flourishing under Carolingian rule thanks to the permissive attitude of the secular and ecclesiastical lords, the Jewish community experienced an opposite shift at the end of the XI century.<sup>7</sup>

The First Crusade in 1095 and the subsequent centralization of the Church targeted any kind of organized heresy and crystalized in a series of anti-Jewish decrees at the Third Lateran Council in 1179. Among the prohibitions imposed on the Jews were the gradual barring from agricultural activities and the ban from holding authority over Christians.<sup>8</sup> However, the concept of the Jews as the king's *servi*, which became very widespread in the European kingdoms, established a close bond between the Jews and their rulers, permitting the former to develop and establish an influential role in certain professions.

The prohibition on Christians from lending money to other Christians for the purpose of usury favored the Jewish community to carry out tax collection and moneylending activities, which became their most notorious profession.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> GAERTNER, S., and DOVIDIO, J. *Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model*. Philadelphia: The Psychology Press, 2000, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> ALLPORT, Gordon. W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Wesley, 1954, p. 281.

<sup>7</sup> JOHNSON, Paul. *A History of the Jews*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987, p. 205.

<sup>8</sup> COHEN, Jeremy. *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> NIRENBERG, David. *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013, p. 194. The Church interpreted the Law as it reflected in the Old

These occupations forged the stereotype of the *homo judaicus economicus* and came associated directly with Jews, even though only a small number were directly involved in these types of practices.<sup>10</sup> This view prevailed in the medieval mentality, deteriorating the already weakened Jewish-Christian relationships.<sup>11</sup>

Like their coreligionists in the rest of the European kingdoms, Iberian Jews were actively involved in similar activities. The Christian expansion during the Reconquista represented new occupational opportunities in which the Jewish community took part, including working as artisans, lawyers, scribes, physicians and royal emissaries.<sup>12</sup> Jews were also successful in the financial activities of the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, a practice at which they previously excelled as advisors of the Emirs in al-Andalus.

As the monarch's servants and direct contributors to the Crown, Jews were entitled to certain monetary privileges, which impacted their perception from the rest of society as a menace, due to their growing influence and power in daily life affairs.<sup>13</sup> The social attitude toward the Jewish group depended on the degree of contact and interaction that existed between them and the Christian community. In the case of writer Juan Manuel, his close ties with Jewish subordinates would not have been different from those of other nobles at the time, or indeed from those of the kings, since 'these relationships were based on trust and respect, sentiments that Juan Manuel expresses briefly in a

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testament but understood "thy brother" as referring to other Christians and the 'foreigner' to non-Christians, hence Jews were allowed to become moneylenders. The posture of Judaism towards usury was similar to that of the Church. Jewish Law [*Halakhab*] rooted protections for the needy forbade a Jewish creditor from profiting in any way from lending to another Jew. See Deuteronomy 23: 20-21; Exodus 22: 24; Leviticus 25: 35-37. All Biblical references are to the Vulgate at [www.vulgate.org](http://www.vulgate.org).

<sup>10</sup> NIRENBERG, D., *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>11</sup> '[The] Jewish involvement in money-lending made them subject to restrictive legislation and to hostile political actions, not to mention social opprobrium and physical violence. Things went from bad to worse in the thirteenth-century. [...] The Christian ideology of economic modesty was well and alive [...] and the wish to believe those oppressed by usurers was no doubt genuine'. See SHATZMILLER, Joseph. *Shylock Reconsidered: Jews, Moneylending, and Medieval Society* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, pp. 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> RAY, Jonathan. *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006, pp. 67-68.

<sup>13</sup> NIRENBERG, D., *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

few places in his books'.<sup>14</sup> Although the majority of Jews professed low-level occupations, the minority who moved into moneylending were highly visible, and thus their profession was applied broadly to the group.<sup>15</sup> As a nobleman and governor, Juan Manuel had Jewish advisors in charge with the collected taxes from his domains, in which the *aljamas* [Jewish quarters] under his jurisdiction played an important role with their revenue contributions.

However, Juan Manuel does not mention this economic relationship in his works.<sup>16</sup> In *Count Lucanor's* fifty-one *exempla*, only one tale portrays a story involving a moneylender: *exemplum* IV, 'De lo que dixo un genovés a su alma' [What a Genoese Said to His Soul When He Was about to Die].<sup>17</sup> The story is based on a Christian legend that appeared in various *exempla* collections that circulated in Europe during that period.<sup>18</sup> It describes the life of a Christian moneylender who, after a serious illness and not being able to escape death, challenges his soul to remain with him in exchange of all his wealth. The

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<sup>14</sup> RUIZ, María Cecilia. 'Jewish Representation in Juan Manuel: Respect, *Convivencia* and Silence.' In: SCARBOROUGH, Connie L., (ed.), *Revisiting Convivencia in Medieval and Modern Iberia*. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2014, p. 251.

<sup>15</sup> During the reign of Alfonso's X, Juan Manuel's uncle, the Crown's finances were administered by Çag de la Maleha, *almoxarife*, or royal rent collector. De la Maleha's father, Solomon ibn Zadok, known as don Çulema, was commissioned to collect taxes from the Kingdom of Granada until he was succeeded by his son Çag (See CASTRO, A., *Op. cit.*, (1948) p. 336; RAY, J., *Op. cit.*, 61). In the Crown of Aragón, the ascendancy of Jewish officials developed under the reign of James I and continued with his son Peter III; among the Jewish members associated with public service, such as *mandaderos* [ambassadors] and *escribanos* [secretaries], were Judah de Cavalleria, Muça de Portella, Aaron Abinafia, and the Ravaya family. See NEUMAN, Abraham A. *The Jews in Spain; their Social, Political and Cultural Life during the Middle Ages*. New York: Octagon Books, 1969, (vol. 2), p. 233.

<sup>16</sup> RUIZ, María Cecilia, *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>17</sup> BLECUA, José Manuel (ed.). *Don Juan Manuel: Obras completas*. Madrid: Gredos, (vol. 2), 1981, pp. 67-68. English translation of the *exempla* by KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.). *The Book of Count Lucanor and Patronio*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993, pp. 68-70.

<sup>18</sup> The first collection of the *exemplum* appears in Jacques de Vitry's (1160-1240) *The Alphabet of Tales* (*exemplum* 1,291). Similar versions are found in the Catalan collection *Recull de Exemples* [Collection of Examples] by Arnoldus Leodiensis (ca. 1276-ca. 1309) (*exemplum* 1, 198), and the *Scala Coeli* [Stairway to Heaven] by Johannes Gobi (133-1350) (*exemplum* 456); See AYERBE-CHAUX, Reinaldo (ed.). *El Conde Lucanor: Material tradicional y originalidad creadora*. Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1975, p. 32; GARRIGA-NOGUÉS, Santiago G. *Sobre los orígenes de "El Conde Lucanor" de Don Juan Manuel*. México: Instituto de Estudios Iberoamericanos, 1972, p. 100.



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protagonist represents the abstract terms of moneylender, usurer and greed, attributes applied to the Jews involved in this economic activity:<sup>19</sup>

vn genues era muy rico et muy bien andante, [...] et aquel genues adolescio muy mal, et de que entendio que non podia escapar de la muerte, fizo llamar a·sus parientes et a·sus amigos [...] et fizo traer ante si todo su tesoro et todas sus joyas, et de que todo lo que touo ante si, començo en manera de trebejo a·fablar con su alma [...].<sup>20</sup>

[There was once a Genoese who was very rich, [...] and became very ill and when he realized he could not escape death, he sent for his relatives and friends. [...] He ordered all his treasures to be placed before him and his jewels, and when everything was there, he began to talk jokingly to his soul.<sup>21</sup>

The storytelling fits perfectly into its historical context, coinciding with the Italian *Trecento* characterized by a thriving commercial expansion.<sup>22</sup> The various benefits the moneylender provides the soul in exchange for staying with him do not seem enough, and he concludes by sending the soul a message that reflects the destiny that awaited those who abused of usury:

Pues con todo esto non quieres fincar et quieres buscar lo que non sabes, de aqui adelante ve con la yra de Dios, et será muy nesçio qui de ti se doliere por mal que te venga.<sup>23</sup>

[And since you have these possessions and are not yet satisfied and cannot stand your good fortune, and since you do not to choose to remain but wish to go in search of you know not what, go in God's wrath, for it would be foolish to grieve for any misfortune that may come to you].<sup>24</sup>

Although the main purpose of the story is to advise the readers on the negative consequences of greed, it is interesting to observe how the main character of the moneylender is not portrayed as a Jew, but as a Christian merchant. Juan Manuel's consciousness of the adverse effect this occupation had on the Jewish community and his close relationship with his Jewish personal advisor might have served as a mechanism to refrain from using a

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<sup>19</sup> TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *The Devil and the Jew: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism*, New York: Harper & Row, 2002, p. 189.

<sup>20</sup> BLECUA, J. M., (ed.), *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> AYERBE-CHAUX, Reinaldo (ed.), *Op. cit.*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> BLECUA, J. M., (ed.), *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

Jewish character in the story. Instead, he employs a Christian merchant, allowing him to transmit to his audience the message that any individual is liable to commit this kind of behavior and result in a destructive outcome. Silencing any possible link that related this monetary profession with the Jews is transferred in similar terms onto other occupations labeled as 'Jewish': physicians, nigromancers, alchemists and sorcerers.

To explain the effects of this interaction between Juan Manuel and his Jewish personal advisor, I rely on the out-group contact mechanism known as *re-fencing*.<sup>25</sup> This process occurs with the establishment of close relations with a particular member of an external group. The stereotypes projected over that out-group are not applied on the individual with whom the initial friendship was established. This factor generates a separation between the individual and his group, 'fencing' the former from the latter, and excluding him from negative stereotypes projected over the rest of the out-group members:

By excluding a few favour cases, the negative rubric is kept intact for all other cases. [...] When a fact cannot fit into a mental field, the exception is acknowledged, but the field is hastily fenced in again and not allowed to remain dangerously open.<sup>26</sup>

In a similar way, friendships between individuals from different groups have been associated with reduced levels of prejudice toward a particular group, favoring the sympathy and affection not only for a particular individual of that group (*re-fencing*), but gradually toward the rest of the members of the group. This social feature, known as the *extended contact hypothesis*, permits that the rest of the out-group members are assigned with the same positive attitudes that originated from the initial friendship established with a particular individual of the group:<sup>27</sup>

if two individuals belonging to two different groups meet and when, during the course of the friendship, group membership of each becomes salient, the out-group should also, to an extent, become included in the self. At each level (inclusion of other, inclusion of out-group), the overlap of the self-other of self-group mental representations will be greater, to the extent that the

<sup>25</sup> ALLPORT, *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> WRIGHT, Stephen C. 'Cross-Group Contact Effects.' In: *Intergroup Relations: The Role of Motivation and Emotion*, OTTEN S., SASSENBER, K. and KESSLER, T., (eds.). New York: Psychology Press, 2001, p. 263.



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intergroup friendship is deeper and more intimate [...] including other in the self reduces prejudice.<sup>28</sup>

The friendship forged with a particular member of an external group gradually grants the out-group members as a whole the same traits, behaviors, and positive psychological conditions as the individual from the out-group with whom the initial contact was established.<sup>29</sup> The positive contact between out-groups is more effective when close friendships are established with individuals of the out-group. The application of this process in the interaction between Juan Manuel and his Jewish subjects illustrates how silencing the negative categorization applied to the Jewish moneylender (*re-fencing*) serves as the foundation extended (*extended contact hypothesis*) to other professions applied to that group, as portrayed in the book.

Next to moneylending, medicine ranked as the most frequent profession for Iberian Jews.<sup>30</sup> Their knowledge of both Arabic and Latin, as well as vernacular languages, made them an important link between the culture of the East and the rising civilization of the West, combining their talents in medicine and their rich linguistic ability.<sup>31</sup> They wielded great influence over the kings, and their popularity was not limited only to the Crown and nobility, but also the rest of the social class pyramid. Many Jews were employed by a wide variety of Christian patrons, and at times, ‘this made for some interest and professional relationships’.<sup>32</sup>

Their high esteem among the populace is best attested by the fact that although the municipal councils, as a rule, bristled with hostility to Jewish interests, some of them employed Jewish physicians as salaried officials in charge of the public health.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> ARON, A., and MCLAUGHLIN-VOLPE, T. ‘Including Others in the Self: Extensions to Own and Partners Group Memberships’. In: SEDIKIS, C. and BREWER, M. (eds.), *Individual Self, Rational Self, Collective Self*. New York: Psychology Press, 2001, pp. 96-97.

<sup>29</sup> PETTIGREW, Thomas F, and TROPP, L. *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact*. New York: Psychology Press, 2011, p. 116.

<sup>30</sup> SHATZMILLER, Joseph. *Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> BAER, Yitzhak. *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, SCHOFFMAN, L. (trans.). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966, (vol. 1), p. 48.

<sup>32</sup> RAY, J., *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> NEUMAN, A., *Op. cit.*, (vol.1).

Physicians could perform several tasks at the service of the Crown and the nobility, taking more diverse roles such as interpreters, diplomats and tax collectors.<sup>34</sup> Although their role as expert physicians was highly valued by the monarchy, this led to linking some occupations directly to the Jews, increasing prejudice and restrictions, in this case by holding them responsible for poisoning wells and cisterns.<sup>35</sup> It is remarkable to highlight Juan Manuel's posture on the role of the physician, which differs from that shown in the legal field and popular folklore, as he enhances the occupation in several of his texts.<sup>36</sup>

In *Libro en finido* [Unfinished Book], addressed to his son Fernando, he advises him to keep close the family's Jewish physician don Çag, since he will not find anywhere a faithful subject and excellent doctor like him:

Et mando vos et consejo vos que en quanto pudieredes aver fisico que sea del linage de Don Çag, que fue fisico de mio padre et mio, que nunca lo dexedes por otro fisico. Ca yo vos digo verdadera mente que fasta el dia de oy nunca falle tan buenos fisicos et tan leales, tan bien en la fisica commo en todos sus fechos; et seguro seed que asi lo seran a vos et a todo vuestro linage.<sup>37</sup>

[And I command you and advise you to have a doctor of the lineage of Don Çag, who was my father's physician and my own. And never leave him by

<sup>34</sup> RUIZ, María Cecilia, *Op. cit.*, p. 263; SHATZMILLER, J., *Op. cit.*, (1990), p. 59.

<sup>35</sup> These fears were registered in the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, increasing in the next century with the onset of the Black Death in 1348, which resulted in the anti-Semitic belief that this pandemic was a *pestis manufacta*, a disease spread by human malice (JOHNSON, P., *Op. cit.*, p. 216). Among the conditions and restrictions imposed on Jewish physicians were the prohibition to administer medicinal formulas directly to Christian patients, to avoid those patients being "poisoned".

<sup>36</sup> Don Abraham, brother of don Çag, was Juan Manuel and his father's private doctor, as well as King Sancho IV's personal physician; other important Jewish figures include Ruy Capón, Moshe ben Samuel, and Jucef ben Trevi, who worked in the courts of Aragon and Navarre. In the Kingdom of Aragón, King Peter III extended grants of favor and protection not only to Jewish physicians in his territory, but also in Sicily, which was under his dominion. Among the principal Jewish doctors serving at the Aragonese court were brothers Isaac and Samuel Benveniste, Samuel ben Manasse, Abraham des Castlars, Shem Tob Shaprut, and Moshe ben Samuel as well as Jewish families involved in medicine, such as the Cabrit and Cresques family from Mallorca. See, DE LOS RÍOS, José Amador. *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal*. Madrid: Aguilar, 1960, (vol.2), p. 309; NEUMAN, A., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 216; and CARDONER PLANAS. 'El linaje de los Cabrit en relación con la medicina del siglo XIV.' In: *Sefarad*, 16, 1956, pp. 357-68.

<sup>37</sup> BLECUA, J. M., (ed.), *Op. cit.*, (vol. 1), pp. 155-156.



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another doctor. Because I truly tell you that until today, I never had such a good and loyal doctor, both in his science and his acts; and be sure that they will be there for you and all your lineage.]

According to the author, the role of the doctor was essential, since it allowed the healing of the Christian body from pain, permitting him to continue working in his task of serving the state and God. Similar views are expressed in *Libro de los estados* [Book of States]:

Et pues el fisico forçada mente a de hablar con el sennor muchas vezes et en muchos tienpos, si el sennor fallare que a en el estas cosas sobredichas, non se puede escusar de aver grant parte en la su priuança, et en los sus consejos. Et si el fisico obrare bien en la fisica et en la priuança del sennor, si a ella llegare, puede fazer muchas cosas buenas et saluar muy bien el alma [...].<sup>38</sup>

[The doctor must necessarily speak many times with his lord, if the lord knows that it has relied on him for so many things, and cannot excuse himself of having such an important role in his privacy and his advice. And if the physician does well in his science and the safety of his lord, he can do many good things and save the soul.]

In the introduction of *Count Lucanor*, Juan Manuel reminds his audience about the role by doctors performed over the individual. Medicine and physicians are used as a metaphor to enhance the purpose of the book; the fifty-one *exempla* become a medicinal formula, which seeks to advise and heal human conduct to help obtain a better, more profitable life:

Por ende, yo, don Iohan, [...] fiz este libro segund la manera que fazen los fisicos, que quando quieren fazer alguna melezina que aproveche al figado, por razon que natural mente el figado se paga de las cosas dulçes, mezclan con aquella melezina que quieren melezinar el figado, açucar o miel o alguna cosa dulce et por el pagamiento que el figado a de la cosa dulce, en tirando la para si, licua con ella la melezina que a de aprovechar. Et esso mismo fazen a qual quier mienbro que aya mester alguna melezina, que sienpre la dan con alguna cosa que natural mente aquel mienbro la aya de tirar a si.<sup>39</sup>

[Therefore, I, Don Juan [...] wrote this book in the fashion of doctors, who when they want to prepare a medicine that will minister to the liver, since naturally the liver likes sweet things, they mix with the medicine intended for the liver some sugar or honey or something sweet; and because of the pleasure

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, (vol. 2), p. 28.



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that the liver gets from sweet things, as it takes them to itself, it takes along with them the medicine which is for its own good. And they do the same for any organ that needs medicine, for they give it with something that that organ naturally attracts to itself.<sup>40]</sup>

As the remedies that doctors apply to heal the liver are mixed with sweets to please the organ and the patient, the writer sweetens his moralistic message with *exempla* and proverbs easy to be assimilated by his audience, in order to heal, strengthen and modify the reader's conduct.<sup>41</sup> Juan Manuel's medicine represents his word, whose moralizing function pursues to improve the human condition. The author's more powerful social position allows him to reinforce the role of Jewish physician in positive terms, as opposed to the attitude of general bigotry propelled by the Crown and Church authorities.<sup>42</sup>

Alchemy was another practice attributed to Jews. Medieval folklore devoted a good deal of speculation to the supposed occult powers of gems and the virtues contained in their nature. Jews were the leading importers and dealers in gems during the Middle Ages, and were commonly accredited with a certain specialization in the use of metals and stones for magical purposes.<sup>43</sup> Despite the small number of Jewish alchemists known in this period, as well as the inexistence of a Jewish literary canon on the art, alchemy was directly categorized as a Jewish vocation, due to its association with magic.<sup>44</sup> Its popularity linked to the Jew was in part due to the development of Kabbalistic studies in Castile during the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> DE LOOZE, Lawrence. *Manuscript Diversity, Meaning, and Variance in Juan Manuel's El Conde Lucanor*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006, p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> The close friendship between Juan Manuel and his private physician, Don Salomon, is shown in the author's will documentation. The first testament, dated May 31, 1339, mentions the writer's Jewish doctor as one of the beneficiaries of his inheritance. See GAIBROIS DE BALLESTEROS, Mercedes. 'Los testamentos inéditos de don Juan Manuel.' In: *Boletín de la Academia de la Historia*, 99, 1931, pp. 3-59. For further study of the relationship between Juan Manuel and his Jewish subjects, see RUIZ, María Cecilia, *Op. cit.* 251-282.

<sup>43</sup> PATAI, Raphael. *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> PATAI, R., *Op. cit.*, p. 8; TRACHTENBERG, J., *Op. cit.*, (2002), p. 73.

<sup>45</sup> SCHOLEM G. *On The Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. MANNHEIM, R. (trans.). New York: Schocken Books, 1965, p. 157.

This occupation serves as the next study case in *exemplum* XX ‘*De lo que contesçio a vn rey con vn omne quel dixo quel faria alquimia*’ [What Happened to a King for Whom a Man Promised to Perform Alchemy]. The story inspired by the Oriental collection of al-Jawbarī describes the life of a young swindler who aspired to grow rich to get out of poverty. Knowing that a certain king was trying to learn the knowledge of alchemy, he took himself for an alchemist and taught the monarch how to make gold coins by blending them with a new metal made up by the false alchemist, which he called *tabardit*.

When the king saw that he could make any quantity of gold he desired, he ordered as much of the material to be brought to him as possible, so he could produce a thousand doubloons. But when he saw that the *tabardit* was lacking and that he could not make gold, he asked the swindler how to make more of the essential metal. The false alchemist advised the monarch that he was most prepared to go in search for more *tabardit*. In order to prepare his journey, he demanded a large amount of gold and money; when he had these in his possession, he left the kingdom and never came back.

The story is inspired by the Catalan version from *Félix* or *Llibre de les meravelles* [Book of Wonders] by Catalan Dominican Ramón Llull (1232-1315), which also served as an adaptation in the Castilian chivalric work of *Caballero Çifar* [Knight Zifar] (circa 1325).<sup>46</sup> The changes made to this *exemplum* in *Count Lucanor* are more akin to Llull’s version. The main character is depicted as a young man who was forced by life’s vicissitude to make deception his own:

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<sup>46</sup> In Ramón Llull’s version, the deceiver shows the king his ability to multiply gold by mixing it with herbs before the king’s eyes before disappearing with the king’s treasure. In *Caballero Çifar*’s adaptation, the text stands out by its derogatory content toward the Jewish community, in particular, physicians and emissaries of the Crown. In chapter CCII of the same book, entitled *Los hechos de Roboán* [Roboán’s Deeds] the Emperor of Trigida asks Roboán for advice about a physician who arrives at the kingdom and promises the king that he has found a formula to heal pain. But in order to create the magic formula, he needs to search for special types of herbs, and demands thirty camels and enough provisions for two years. The king, hesitating at the physician’s request, decides to ask his advisor Roboán, who narrates the story that Juan Manuel reflects in his tale. See BATLLÓN, M., and CALDENTEY M. *Ramón Llull; Obras literarias: Libro de Caballería; Blanquerna; Félix; Poesías*. Madrid: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 1958, p. 716; DA COSTA, Ricardo. (ed. and trans.). *Félix ou O Livro das Maravilhas*. São Paulo: Escala, Coleção Grandes Obras do Pensamento Universal vols. 95-96, 2009 (2 vols.); PICCUS, Jules. ‘Consejos y consejeros en el Libro del Cauallero Zifar’. In: *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 16. 1/2, 1962, p. 24.



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Vn omne era muy grand golfin et avia muy grand sabor de enriqueçer et de salir de aquella mala vida que passava. Et aquel omne sopo que vn rey que non era de muy buen recado se trabaia de fazer alquimia. [...] Et aquel golfin moro vn tienpo en aquella villa en manera de omne muy assesgado et fue diziendo a vnos et a otros, en manera de poridat, que sabia fazer alquimia.<sup>47</sup>

[There was a man who was very dishonest and very anxious to grow rich and to give up the hard life that he was living. And he knew of a not-very-sophisticated king who was trying to perform alchemy. [...] And the swindler lived in the town quietly for a while, and he went around telling people quietly that he knew how to perform alchemy.<sup>48</sup>]

The false alchemist runs into the king by coincidence, who invites him to his court in order to instruct him in this art:

Et estas nuevas llegaron al rey, et envio por el et preguntol si sabia fazer alquimia. El et golfin, commo quier quel fizo muestra que se quería encobrir et que lo non sabia, al cabo diol a entender que lo sabia; pero dixo al rey quel conseiaua que deste fecho non fiasse de omne del mundo ni aventurasse mucho de su aver, pero si quisesse, que prouaria antel vn poco et quel amostraria lo que ende sabia. Esto le gradesçio el rey mucho, et paresçiol que, segund estas palabras, que non podia aver y ningun enganno.<sup>49</sup>

[And the news reached the king, and the king sent for him and asked if he knew how to perform alchemy. And the swindler, although he made a show of wanting to keep it quiet and pretended that he did not know anything about the subject, finally let it be done that he did; but he advised the king not to trust anyone with the fact, nor to risk much of his money on it, although if he wanted to, he would personally show him what he knew about it. And the king thanked him heartily, for he thought that since it was to be explained to him, there could be no trickery involved.<sup>50</sup>]

Juan Manuel's choice to adapt the version of his tale from Lull's source while distancing from *Caballero Çifar*'s might originate from two aspects: the author's noble origin and the deep respect he felt toward the physician's profession. Alchemy and medicine functioned as almost-identical activities, due to the medicinal component in the alchemy formulas and because most of the

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<sup>47</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), pp. 151-152.

<sup>48</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 152.

<sup>50</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

alchemists were also physicians.<sup>51</sup> For this reason, it was inconceivable for the writer to portray a knight carrying out misdeeds while being cloaked in a physician's role, as presented in the *Çifar's* version. On the other hand, the swindler is not really an alchemist, allowing Manuel to detach this character from the negative connotations attributed to the profession, but maintaining the protagonist's anonymous religious identity.

Grounded in Arabic, Greek and Jewish texts, nigromancy became the focus of much attention among the scholars and intellectuals of Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>52</sup> The interest in this art attracted a small elite of educated individuals constituted by the clerics who possessed the Latin literacy necessary to use such manuals.<sup>53</sup> However, the limited education system that prevailed in the Church and its lack of structure represented a challenge for clerical learning and mentoring. Many clerks at the service of the Church had minimal knowledge in the duties to perform as well as in theological terms:

Aspirants to the priesthood in medieval Europe did not go to seminaries, where they might have gotten theological education linked with spiritual guidance. Seminaries were virtually unknown. Those who could afford to go to universities might do so [...]. The less affluent and less ambitious would still have been trained in a kind of apprenticeship. They would serve under a parish priest in a town or village, learn from him how to perform the rituals, and then present themselves to the bishop for ordination.<sup>54</sup>

The ambition for knowledge motivated many members of the clergy to contact individuals who were able to help them in their endeavor for wisdom; this research for erudition got them in contact with manuals and experts in

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<sup>51</sup> PATAI, R., *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Medieval authors used both *necromantia* and *nigromantia* interchangeably. They both mean simple methods of spirit communication. Taken literally, the term *necromancy*, derived from the Greek roots *necro* [dead], and *mantia* [magic; divination], is the art of calling up the spirits of the dead for divinatory purposes. I use terms *nigromancy* and *nigromancer* in this context because it is a more accurate concept, and presents the connotations of learned magic, excluding the conjuring of spirits and demons. For a further discussion of these terms, see KLAASSEN, Frank. *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Latter Middle Ages and Renaissance*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2003, pp. 10-11.

<sup>53</sup> BAILEY, Michael. *Magic and Superstition in Europe: a Concise History from Antiquity to the Present*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, p. 105.

<sup>54</sup> KIECKHEFER, Richard. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 154.

this art. Nigromancy was perceived as a complementary source that helped them control and command demons towards a positive end.<sup>55</sup> Even if it was used only to heal or entertain by performing inoffensive illusions, nigromancy was condemned and illicit for Christians in all forms by the Church due to its shared similarities with pagan rites and demonic powers.<sup>56</sup>

In Judaism, necromancy / nigromancy played only a minor role in Jewish magic, due to the consistently condemnatory judgment of the leaders of Jewish thought, and the deeply ingrained sentiment of mingled fear, respect and affection for the dead.<sup>57</sup> Theories of what happened to the human being after death, though they provided a rich source for magic, did not become part of the body or religious ideas or practices, and were drastically forbidden and condemned.<sup>58</sup>

A depiction of a positive treatment of this occupation is portrayed in two *exempla* of the collection. *Exemplum XI 'De lo que contesçio a vn dean de Santiago con don Yllan, el grand maestro de Toledo'* [What Happened to a Dean of Santiago and Don Yllán, the Grand Master of Toledo] describes the interest of the Dean of Santiago in learning the art of nigromancy. He departs to Toledo and requests help from Don Yllán, a famous nigromancer of the city. The wise man agrees to teach the Dean the magic arts, under the condition that when the Dean is next promoted, he will recommend Don Yllán's own son to replace his vacant position in the Church. Once the Dean accepts these terms, Don Yllán takes him down a staircase to a hidden chamber under the Tagus River, where he begins to instruct the Dean in the art of nigromancy.

Meanwhile, Don Yllán asks his maid to prepare some partridges for dinner, but he orders her not to cook them until he tells her to. The story continues with the rise of the Dean to bishophood and later to papacy, and his constant disdain to fulfill the promise he made to Don Yllán. Then, Don Yllán decides

<sup>55</sup> BAILEY. M., *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

<sup>57</sup> TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939, p. 223. Prohibition against necromancy in the Hebrew Bible appear in: Deuteronomy 18:11; 1 Samuel 28:3-25; 2 Kings 21:6, 23:24; Isaiah 8:19, 19:3, and 29:4. One of the foremost examples is the story of the Witch of Endor, found in the First Book of Samuel 28: 3-25.

<sup>58</sup> KAPLAN, M. *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2010, p. 362.

it is time to cook the partridges, and in that moment, the Dean finds himself where he began, in his master's study secret room in Toledo, and realizes that his ascent to pope was only an illusion crafted by the nigromancer in order to put his promise to the test.

The story appeared previously in the Latin works of Dominicans Vincent of Beauvais (1190-1264) and Étienne de Bourbon (1180-1261), where the moral consequences caused by ingratitude and greed are reflected.<sup>59</sup> Juan Manuel's version stands out for its originality based on the depiction of its protagonists, particularly Don Yllán, and the geographical setting in which takes place. Although it is not confirmed that Don Yllán is a Jewish character, I argue to explain the resources used by Juan Manuel to conceal this character with some Jewish features but keep his religious identity unnamed:<sup>60</sup> the city of Toledo, Don Yllán's occupation, and his own name. Toledo boasted of having a prominent Jewish population, which had grown in number since its *Reconquista* by Alfonso VI in 1085. The city had the largest *aljama* in all Castile.<sup>61</sup> It was also an important cultural center and well known for its school of nigromancers during the thirteenth century, which led to the coining of the term *ars toletana*.<sup>62</sup>

Juan Manuel provides the magician with the name of Don Yllán, of Latin origin, meaning *jūlius*, the seventh month of the year, which gave rise to the Spanish names *Julián* and *Julio*.<sup>63</sup> However, this name is connected with a word of Hebrew origin, *ilán* [אילן], meaning 'oak tree', and it can refer to adjectives such as vigorous, robust, or tall.<sup>64</sup> When this name is applied to a person, it portrays the connotations of being protective, beneficent or solidary,

<sup>59</sup> AYERBE-CHAUX, Reinaldo (ed.). *El Conde Lucanor: Material tradicional y originalidad creadora*. Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1975, pp. 239-240.

<sup>60</sup> RUIZ, M. C., *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>61</sup> BAER, Y., *Op. cit.* (vol. 1), p. 192.

<sup>62</sup> WAXMAN, Samuel M. 'Chapters on Magic in Spanish Literature'. In: *Revue Hispanique*, 38, 1916, pp. 342-350. For a detailed description of the role of Toledo as a nigromancy center see, FERREIRO ALEMPARTE, J. 'La escuela de nigromancia de Toledo.' In: *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 13, 1983, pp. 205-68.

<sup>63</sup> COROMINAS, Joan. *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*. Berna: Francke, 1954, (vol. 2), p. 1075.

<sup>64</sup> SMITH, William. *The New Smith's Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1979, pp. 91, 94. This name is recorded in the Bible, referring to Elon, judge of Israel, who ruled for ten years. See, Judges 12:11.



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attributes that describe Don Yllán's behavior and his good deeds from his very first encounter with the Dean:

Et el día que llego a Toledo adereço luego a casa de don Yllan et fallolo que estaua lleyendo en vna camara muy apartada; et luego que lego a'el, reçioliolo muy bien et dixol que non queria quel dixiesse ninguna cosa de'lo por que venia fasta que oviese comido. Et pensó muy bien del et fizol dar muy buenas posadas, et todo lo que ovo mester, et diol a'entender quel plazia mucho con su venida.<sup>65</sup>

[And the day he arrived to Toledo he went straight to Don Yllán's house and found him reading in a secluded room. When he arrived he was greeted cordially, but Don Yllán said he did not wish to talk about his reason for coming until the Dean had eaten. And Don Yllán thought well of him and gave him comfortable lodgings and everything he needed, and let him know that he was glad to see him.<sup>66</sup>]

Don Yllán's conduct and acts become opposite forces to those of his disciple. The Dean's personality reflects features of greed and the sole personal interest to learn the practice of the art for his own benefit. His behavior is noticed by Don Yllán from the first conversation they hold, raising suspicion that the Dean will likely not keep his promise:

Et despues que ovieron comido, apartosse con'el, et contol la razon por que allí viniera, et rogol muy affincada mente quel mostrasse aquella sciencia que el avia muy grant talante de la aprender. Et don Yllan dixol que era dean et omne de grand guisa et que podia llegar a grand estado –et los omnes que grand estado tienen, de que todo lo suyo an librado a su voluntad, olvidan mucho ayna lo que otrie a fecho por ellos–et el que se reçelaua que de que el oviesse aprendido del aquello que el queria saber, que non le faria tanto bien commo el le prometia. Et el dean le prometio et le asseguro que de qual quier bien que el oviesse, que nunca faria sinon lo que el mandasse.<sup>67</sup>

[When they had eaten, the dean took him aside, told him his reason for coming, and urged him to teach him his science, for he was very anxious to learn it. Don Yllán replied that since he was a dean and a man of high estate he might go far, but that men of high standing, when they obtain all they want, are likely to forget what others have done for them. For this reason Don Yllán was

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<sup>65</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 99.

<sup>66</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 99.

afraid that as soon as he had learned what he wanted to know he would not keep his promises.<sup>68]</sup>

Juan Manuel emphasizes the contrary forms of behavior by both protagonists. Don Yllán keeps reminding the Dean to return the favor he agreed to; meanwhile, the Dean, who has finally reached the position of pope, maintains his self-interested attitude, threatening Don Yllán with imprisonment:

Et don Yllán se començo a quexar mucho, retrayendol quantas cosas le prometiera et que nunca le avia cumplido ninguna, et diziendol que aquello reçelaua en la primera vegada que con el fablara [...] Deste aquexamiento se quexo mucho el papa et començol a maltraer diziendol que si mas le affincasse, quel faria echar en vna cárcel, que era ereje et encantador, que bien sabia que non avia otra vida nin otro offiçio en Toledo, do el moraba, sinon biuir por aquella arte de nigromañcia.<sup>69</sup>

[Don Yllán complained loudly, recalling the many things he had promised yet had never done, saying that he had feared something like this would happen when he first talked to him [...]. The pope objected to this complaint and began to abuse him, saying that if he persisted he would put him in a prison as a heretic and a necromancer, for he well knew that he had no other life nor trade in Toledo where he lived than to exercise the art of magic.]<sup>70</sup>

The treatment of the nigromancer's role in the *exemplum* is not censored or misjudged by Juan Manuel, being parallel with the position that Judaism holds toward magic. Rabbinical authorities were not opposed generally to magic, but to the particular influx this practice could have on Jewish theology and its potential of becoming a particular 'idolatrous' form among its followers.<sup>71</sup> Though Mosaic Law prescribed the death penalty to practitioners of nigromancy, the warning was not always heeded.<sup>72</sup>

The Talmud broke up this practice into several divisions, establishing various degrees of guilt and two types of forbidden magic: that which produced a material effect, and that which created the illusion of such an act or its effect: *ahizāt 'ainayim* [capturing the eyesight]. While the first type was forbidden by

<sup>68</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B. E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>69</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 101.

<sup>70</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B. E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> CANTERA MONTENEGRO, Enrique. 'Los judíos y las ciencias ocultas en la España medieval.' In: *En la España Medieval*, 25, 2002, p. 48.

the Torah under penalty of death, the second was condemned, but not punished.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, Christianity associated nigromancy with the Devil, the forces of evil and heretics, which included Jews and Muslims.<sup>74</sup>

By examining Don Yllán's actions with his disciple and the outcome of the events in the story, it can be perceived that the wise master is dedicated to his work without hiding it nor creating negative effects; the use of this art is not perceived as a threat or with other negative connotations; Don Yllán represents not just a simple magician, but a fully trained specialist, respected by his clients, who performs 'simply his chosen profession, not a testimony of his sin or moral corruption'.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Don Yllán is performing nigromancy as an illusion, *aḥiẓat 'ainayim* that seems real only in his pupil's mind, since he does not trust the Dean's promise. As a result, the Dean's self-interested acts are punished in response to his arrogant behavior:

Desque don Yllan vio quanto mal le gualadornaua el papa lo que por el avia fecho, espediose del, et solammento nol quiso dar el papa que comiese por el camino. Estonce don Yllan dixo al papa que pues al non tenia de comer, que se avria de tornar a las perdizes que mandara assar aquella noche, et llamo a la muger et dixol que assasse las perdices. Cuando esto dixo don Yllan, fallo se el papa en Toledo dean de Sanctiago, commo lo era quando y bino, et tan grand fue la vergüença que ovo, que non sopo quel dezir. Et don Yllan dixol que fuesse en buena ventura et que assaz avia prouado lo que tenia en el, et que ternia por muy mal enpleado si comiesse su parte de las perdizes.<sup>76</sup>

[And when Don Yllán saw how badly the pope rewarded him for what he had done for him, he bade him farewell. And the pope would not even give him provisions for the journey. At this, Don Yllán told the pope that since he had nothing to eat, he would have to return to the partridges which he had ordered roasted that night, and he called the servant woman and told her to roast them. [...] Don Yllán told him to take his leave, for he had shown well enough what he was like and he would consider the partridges wasted if the dean had any share of them.<sup>77</sup>]

<sup>73</sup> TRACHTENBER, J., *Op. cit.*, 1939, p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> JOLLY, K., RAUDVERE, C. and PETERS, E. *The Middle Ages: Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001, (vol.3), p. 21.

<sup>75</sup> WACKS, David A. 'Don Yllán and the Egyptian Sorcerer: Vernacular commonality and literary diversity in medieval Castile.' In: *Sefarad*, 65.2, 2005, p. 431.

<sup>76</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), pp. 101-102.

<sup>77</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

The didactic purpose of the story relies ‘not on Don Yllán’s theological transgression as sorcerer, but on the Dean’s ethical transgression as egoist and hypocrite’.<sup>78</sup> By contrasting both protagonists’ actions and hiding Don Yllán’s religious background, Juan Manuel enhances a respectful view toward this profession applied to the Jew, transferring the attention of the story to the Dean’s self-centered behavior and the symbolic partridge dish.<sup>79</sup>

This scenario of revival of classical learning and of humanistic studies in which magic took an unparalleled position served to introduce the Devil as the ultimate source of magic.<sup>80</sup> Sorcery and magic were the techniques by which Satan became the ultimate source that tempted and promoted any individual to him against Christendom. The Christian conception of Satan underwent substantial changes during the Middle Ages. European folklore portrayed the figure of the Devil as a real character provided with physical features in the same manner as the Virgin Mary or the saints; with the development of homiletic and hagiographic works, the role of the Devil took on a heavier part in becoming a customary element of daily life. It projected the excesses and weaknesses of the individual and the fatal consequences of divine disobedience.

Many of these changes were matched by similar developments in the Christian perception of the Jew, applying these similarities to the Devil.<sup>81</sup> The responsibility of the Jew as Christ-killer made him a perfect prototype of sorcerer and Satan’s servant, resulting in false allegations that forced the Jews into exclusion and marginalization:

The accusation of sorcery did not derive from observed acts of Jews, except perhaps in isolated instances, but was rather an integral part of the medieval conception of the Jew, embracing the entire people. In fact, the magic which

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<sup>78</sup> WACKS, D., *Op. cit.*, 431.

<sup>79</sup> This culinary dish represents the borderline between the real and imaginary worlds; folklore associated partridge with greed and man’s fall. Juan Manuel’s audience, upon hearing the mention of this bird, were aware of the protagonist’s deeds and the outcome of the story, in this case, the Dean’s greed actions for not keeping his promise to Don Yllán. See, CIRLOT, Juan Eduardo C. *Dictionary of Symbols*, SAGE, J. (trans.). London: Routledge, 1983, p. 250.

<sup>80</sup> TRACHTENBERG, J., *Op. cit.*, 2002, p. 59.

<sup>81</sup> BONFIL, R. ‘The Devil and the Jews in the Christian Consciousness of the Middle Ages.’ In: ALMOG, Shmuel (ed.), *Antisemitism Through Ages*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1990, p. 93.

Christendom laid at the door of the Jew had very little relation to the magic current in Jewish circles; it was a reflection of beliefs and practices current among Christians.<sup>82</sup>

This belief was incorporated into chronicles and popular legends, strengthening the conviction of Jews as master magicians. The *Legend of Theophilus* sets the capstone of this portrayal of the Jew as sorcerer, depicting the Jew as the Devil's servant. The story was compiled by Christian tradition during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in several Marian compilations.<sup>83</sup> The legend is also adapted by Juan Manuel in *exemplum XLV 'De lo que contesçio a vn omne que se fizço amigo et vasallo del diablo'* [What Happened to a Man Who Became the Devil's Friend and Vassal] but it is configured with a different approach.

The main character is a rich man who loses his fortune and ends up in poverty; in order to escape from his precarious life, he signs himself a pact with the Devil, incarnated under the name of don Martín. The Devil promises to make him wealthy by helping him commit robberies and getting him out trouble when he encounters any difficulty or gets arrested:

Entonçe fizieron sus posturas en vno et el omne fue su vasallo. Et desque las avenençias fueron fechas, dixo el diablo al omne que dalli adellante que fuesse a furto, ca nunca fallaría puerta nin casa, por bien çerrada que fuesse [...] et si por aventura en alguna priesa se viesse o fuesse preso, que luego que lo llamasse et le dixiesse: 'Acorredme, don Martin', que luego fuesse con el et lo libraría de aquel periglo en que estudiesse.<sup>84</sup>

[And when all the conditions had been set up, the Devil told the man to steal henceforth, that he would never find a door or a house locked against him, [...]. And if ever by chance the man should find himself in difficulty, or should

<sup>82</sup> TRACHTENBERG, J., *Op. cit.*, 2002, p. 59.

<sup>83</sup> See miracle 25 'El milagro de Teófilo' [The Miracle of Theophilus] in Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* [Miracles of Our Lady]; *cantiga* 3 'Esta é como Santa Maria fez cobrar a Teofilo a carta que fezera cono demo, u se tornou seu vassal' [How Holy Mary Recovered the Letter that Theophilus Signed With the Devil to Become His Vassal] in Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa Maria*; see also 'Comment Theophilus vint à penitence' [How Theophilus Came to Penitence] in the French collection *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame* [Miracles of Our Lady] by Gautier de Coinci (1177-1235).

<sup>84</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 369.



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be arrested, he should call to him and say, ‘Help me, Don Martín,’ and he would come to him straightaway.]<sup>85</sup>

After sealing the agreement, the man starts to carry out many thefts, until he becomes so rich that he cannot remember the poverty he endured. But one day, the man is arrested, and don Martín refuses to give him any aid, claiming that he always helps his friends until they come to the gallows, and thus gives up their soul and life to the Devil. The protagonist’s name and origin are unknown, but it is likely that he belongs to nobility, as he is described to the reader as ‘un omne muy rico’ [a very wealthy man] who ends ‘a tan grand pobreza que non avia cosa de que se mantener’ [he fell into such a poverty that he had not the wherewithal to live].<sup>86</sup>

The story distinguishes itself for a greater realism than the rest of versions, since it does not represent a miracle, but an example of what happens to the individual when he is not committed to God in body and soul. To do so, Juan Manuel provides the character of the Devil with human attributes and a proper name: he talks, interacts with human beings, and has the power to mislead anyone who trusts in him. The importance of Don Martín’s role allows the author to show the reader that any individual can lead us to commit improper acts, and only through good deeds, faith, and service in God can human redemption be achieved. To emphasize the realism of the *exemplum*, the story does not culminate with a happy ending, but with the man’s death, hence highlighting its moralistic message through this tragic outcome and condemning a profession and those who confide or seek advice in sorcery:

Et assi perdió aquel omne el cuerpo et el alma, creyendo al diablo et fiando del. Et cierto sed que nunca omne del creyo nin fio que non llegase a uer mala postremeria; sinon, parad mientes a todos los agoreros o sorteros o adeuinos, o que fazen cercos o encantamientos et destas cosas quales quier, et veredes que sienpre ouvieron malos acabamientos.<sup>87</sup>

[So the man lost his body and soul, believing the Devil and trusting him. And be very certain that there is no man who trusts him who does not come to a bad end. But if you doubt it, consider all the augurers and soothsayers, and

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<sup>85</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>86</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 368; KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>87</sup> BLECUA, J. M., *Op. cit.*, (vol. 2), p. 371.

those who cast lots and those who weave spells and enchantments and other things of that sort, and you will observe that they always come to bad ends.<sup>88]</sup>

But most notable is the absence of the Jewish intermediary. While this character, portrayed as a sorcerer, appears as the third party responsible for the pact between man and the Devil in most versions of the *Legend of Theophilus*, in Juan Manuel's adaption it is removed from the story. This omission could have been seen by the author as an unnecessary character in the plot of the argument. As seen in the previous *exempla*, where the author portrays a Christian moneylender as a sinner, and hides the nigromancer and the false alchemist's religious identities, thus enhancing both professions, in this *exemplum*, Juan Manuel omits the character of the Jewish sorcerer completely. By doing so, he manages to avoid the popular association of the Jew as Devil's servant, which was propagated by the Church, and diverts the reader's attention to the human-devil act and the man's wrong free-will decision and tragic ending as a result.

### Final Remarks

The introduction and the four *exempla* in *Count Lucanor* analyzed here have helped establish a closer perspective of the personal interaction between Juan Manuel and the Jewish community. This religious group was not perceived by the author as the 'other', both in real life and in literature, but rather as a collective entity with whom he shared a similar approach to life, conduct, and objectives. Unlike other contemporary works, which adversely linked the Jew with some professions that devaluated Christians' conduct and deeds, this treatment is absent in *Count Lucanor*. After the close ties established first with his Jewish personal advisor (*re-fencing*), Juan Manuel illustrated the rest of the Jewish community by eliminating the negative attributes of the rest of the out-group members (*extended contact hypothesis*) and their occupations.

The tales analyzed stand out by not relating moneylending as a profession only held by Jews, defending the profession of the physician, maintaining the protagonists' religious identity in anonymity (in the case of alchemy and nigromancy), and silencing completely in the *exemplum* of the sorcerer. Juan Manuel seemed to show a personal favoritism toward individual Jews which consequently extended towards the Jewish people as a group struggling within

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<sup>88</sup> KELLER J., KEATING L. C. and GADDY B E. (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 196.



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an increasing hostile Christian environment. The analysis of these tales, and of the author's personal attitude towards his Jewish servants, aims to prove the esteem he had for this religious group. To do so, he refrains from representing them and their labeled professions in negative terms. Their roles are silenced in these stories, leaving to the reader an open question without answer, and transferring the attention to the moralistic message of the story.

By means of a discourse that advocated toward a more stable society, the author depicts a potential way to assure the *convivencia*, which although difficult and complex, was achievable. Juan Manuel attempts to support tolerance and eliminate stereotypes and inherited contradictions, predicting a kingdom subject to constant political changes and social upheavals, destabilizing the relative Christian and Jewish coexistence, which faded in a discouraging way at the turn of the fourteenth century.

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