

Two Stories of King Midas in the Judeo-Spanish Speaking World: Isak Papo and Matilda Koén-Sarano's Versions of the ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears», and ATU775 «Midas' Short-sighted Wish»*

Dos cuentos del rey Midas en la tradición oral judeoespañola: las versiones de Isak Papo y Matilda Koén-Sarano del ATU782 «Midas y las orejas de asno» y ATU775 «El rey Midas y el toque de oro»

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ABSTRACT. This paper examines two tale-types classified as ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears», and ATU775 «Midas' Short-sighted Wish» in the Judeo-Spanish speaking-world. The two examples, one from Bosnia recorded by Isak Papo and the other from Greece collected by Matilda Koén-Sarano, constitute rare examples of these tale-types in the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) language and clearly show how the Sephardic tradition continued to evolve in the late twentieth century by appropriating new elements hitherto unseen in the lore. I underscore how these two tales were domesticated to the Sephardic environment and in addition highlight the attempt made by the aforesaid tradition to introduce substantial changes in the core of both tales albeit with different outcomes.

KEYWORDS: King Midas; Sephardim; Judeo-Spanish; oral literature; folktale

RESUMEN. En este artículo se analizan los dos tipos de cuentos conocidos como ATU782 «Midas y las orejas de asno», y ATU775 «El rey Midas y el toque de oro» entre los hablantes de judeoespañol. Los dos ejemplos incluidos aquí —uno procedente de Bosnia y publicado por Isak Papo, y el otro de Grecia recogido por Matilda Koén-Sarano— representan ejemplos de estos cuentos, raros en la lengua judeoespañola, y muestran claramente cómo la tradición sefardí continuó su desarrollo hasta finales del siglo XX, incorporando nuevos elementos que no existían en la tradición anterior. Me centro en subrayar cómo estos cuentos han sido adaptados al entorno sefardí y cómo se han introducido cambios sustanciales en el núcleo de ambos, con resultados diferentes.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: rey Midas; sefardíes; judeoespañol; literatura oral; cuento folklórico

The two Judeo-Spanish narratives examined here from the late twentieth century are extremely interesting versions of widely spread folktales internationally known and classified as ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears», and ATU775 «Midas' Short-

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sighted Wish»¹. The first one comes from Bosnia and was recorded by Isak Papo, whereas the other is from Greece and was collected by Matilda Koén-Sarano. Both texts represent rare examples of these tale-types in the Judeo-Spanish speaking world². In fact, Papo's version of the ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears» is, to my knowledge, the only extant one in Ladino, whereas another version of the ATU775 «Midas' Short-sighted Wish» is known in addition to that of Koén-Sarano, a point to which I shall return later.

Folktales are in their nature fluid and flexible and thus adjust easily to the times, customs and beliefs of those who transmit them. In this paper, I examine how these two tales were domesticated to the Sephardic environment through a number of elements and changes introduced by the lore. Both tale-types are commonly classified as religious tales. I shall show how the Sephardic tradition attempted (and partly succeeded) to alter the nature of these stories by making them humorous tales. Furthermore, both tales illustrate how the Sephardic tradition continued to evolve in the late twentieth century by appropriating new elements hitherto unseen in the lore.

ISAK PAPO: THE LAST REMNANTS OF LADINO TRADITION IN BOSNIA

The writings of Isak Papo (1912-1996) from Sarajevo, Bosnia, represent the last traces of Sephardic literature from this region. Although works have been produced in relation to the history, literary criticism and culture of Spanish Jews from Bosnia (see Vidaković-Petrov, 1990; Vučina Simović, 2016; Jovanović, 2015; 2016), original creations in Ladino are no longer being produced there.

Papo was born in 1912 in Bosnia into a Sephardic family of which nothing is known (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 191). In addition to his mother tongue, Judeo-Spanish, he undoubtedly learned Serbian at an early age as at that time the Sephardim had already started acquiring an education in the Serbian language³. During World War II (hereafter WWII), Papo was taken along with his mother and sister to a forced labour camp on the island of Rab in Croatia, an ordeal which he not only survived but which also led him to join the Resistance⁴. His university degrees were gained in Zagreb, Croatia, and Imperial College, London. After the war he worked as a civil engineer and a university professor in Sarajevo until retiring (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 191).

Although his profession was scientific rather than literary, which is why the scope of his literary work is limited, Papo believed in the necessity of preserving and disseminating his native heritage and this conviction led him to write and collect Sephardic tales. Papo's most important work, which he also edited, is a collection of Judeo-Spanish tales *Cuentos sobre los sefardíes de Sarajevo* (hereafter *Cuentos*, 1994) which appeared just two years before his death. *Cuentos* was published in Split, Croatia, rather than Bosnia because contemporary Bosnia was being torn apart by the Civil War in the former Yugoslavia (1991-1995). It consists of four parts. The first part encompasses

¹ ATU stands for Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's tale-type classification numbers revised by Hans-Jörg Uther (2004).

² Although Ladino and Judeo-Spanish are today used interchangeably, and I shall be treating them as such in this work, the former referred to a literary method devised to translate the Bible and other holy texts to make them accessible to the believers in times when Hebrew ceased to be used, whilst the latter, *judeoespañol*, *djudesmo* or *djudió*, represented an everyday language. For more information, see Díaz-Mas (2006: 115-152).

³ On this issue, see Vučina Simović (2016).

⁴ I am very grateful to Eli Tauber, an independent researcher from Bosnia, for kindly sharing this information with me.

forty tales recorded or written by Papo. The other three parts contain the works of three Sephardic women authors: Gina Camhy (nine tales) and Rikica Ovadija (eighteen tales), both born and raised in Sarajevo, and Clarisse Nikoïdski (two tales), born in Lyons, France, into a Sephardic family originally from Sarajevo. All of these authors created their work in the aftermath of WWII: Papo and Ovadija in their community of origin, Bosnia, whereas the other two, Camhy and Nikoïdski did so separated from it, in France.

Cuentos was initially published as a bilingual Judeo-Spanish/Serbo-Croatian edition. The choice of publishing his literary works in both languages was not random. Papo did not aim to revitalise the Judeo-Spanish language and its heritage. His goal was to collect evidence and preserve the memory of a tradition that once existed in Bosnia. However, producing works only in Ladino would have reduced his readership to a minimum in Bosnia as the number of Judeo-Spanish speakers there was insignificant. Thus in order to ensure his work would reach the local readership, he himself translated the tales into Serbo-Croatian.

After examining his tales, it is clear that Papo's major success lies in recording a number of folk tales for a simple reason: enriching the corpus of folk narrative of Bosnian Sephardim. Unlike the *romancero* or chapbooks from Bosnia, where a considerable range of examples have been collected and recorded (Armistead, 1978: III, 86-99; Elazar, 1987), in the field of folk narrative only two examples were known until recently. The first one was a tale told by a certain *sinjora* Katan and published by Kalmi Baruh (1930: 140-45), and the second one was entitled «El sadrezán» ('The Grand Vizier'), compiled by Cynthia M. Crews in Sarajevo in 1929 from an anonymous seventy-year-old washerwoman (1979: 168-178). Papo's work, therefore, shows that the Bosnian Sephardic narrative tradition was as important as that of ballads and proverbs⁵. On this occasion, I shall focus my attention on a particular tale that Papo (1994: 34) entitled as «Il čuflet dil pastor» ('Shepherd's Flute'), which corresponds to an ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears» tale-type (Uther, 2004: I, 433-434).

ISAK PAPO'S «IL ČUFLET DIL PASTOR»: A COMIC TWIST TO THE ATU782 TALE-TYPE

A Sephardic example of the ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears» appears in Papo's *Cuentos* under the title «Il čuflet dil pastor» and, although signed by Papo, in all likelihood it is a folk tale written down from memory by the Bosnian author. The Sephardic version of the tale, as I shall show, seems to be a result of two influences: the Iberian one, as part of the Sephardim's medieval legacy, and the Balkan one, as part of their new heritage they started adopting after settling in the Balkans. This is the only version of this tale-type recorded among the Sephardim which, however, has not been documented in the Spanish folk narrative, a point to which I shall return shortly.

As previously stated, *Cuentos* comprises four sections, each dedicated to a different author. The first section contains the forty tales signed by Papo, some of which are in their nature authentic folk tales. There are several facts that indicate their folk background. Firstly, some of the tales («Il čuflet dil pastor», for example) use typical linguistic formulas found in Sephardic folk tales. *Avia de ser* would be the most usual opening to a Sephardic tale, while *Eyos tengan bien i mozotros tambien* is a common closing formula. Although these opening or closing formulae are typically found in fairy tales, in the Sephardic tradition they appear in any kind of folk tale, indicating not only

⁵ Similarly to Papo, Gina Camhy also collected and published under her name a number of folktales from Bosnia, thus enlarging the corpus of oral narrative of Bosnian Sephardim (see Jovanović, 2016).

its oral character but also suggesting a cultural adaptation of the story to the Judeo-Spanish tradition of storytelling:

When, because of the changing circumstances surrounding a storytelling event, an audience has little or no understanding of Judeo-Spanish, the storyteller must settle for the incorporation of expressions and proverbs into a narrative performance in the dominant language. When Judeo-Spanish expressions do not lend themselves to translation, they must be replaced by equivalent expressions, such as opening and closing formulae in the fairy tale: «Avia de ser» ('Once upon a time'), «Eyos tengan bien y mozotros tambien» ('May it go well for them, and also for us'). (Alexander-Frizer, 2008: 14-15)

Secondly, some of the tales in Papo's collection have been recorded either in the ATU catalogue as internationally known oral tales or in Reginetta Haboucha's catalogue of Judeo-Spanish folk tales («Il dukadu infurkadu», or «La vingansa di lus talimidim»; Haboucha, 1992: 622; 703-704). Lastly, some of these tales do not appear in either catalogue but have been collected and recorded as examples of oral narrative tradition by other Sephardic authors from Bosnia or outside of the former Yugoslavia («Il mas lindu fižiku», for example) (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 76).

The fact that Papo failed to mention any names or sources of the tales he published, but instead signed them with his own name, suggests that he most probably did not carry out any field work. He is likely to have reproduced these tales from memory, using his home environment as his immediate source: «Mi nona jemada Tija Rahelona, komu todas las nonas, vinjendu a vižitarmus, ahuera di lus asukritus ki mus trajija sjempri stava pronta di imbevisermus kun kunsizitjas» ('Whenever my grandmother, who was called Tija Rahelona, came to visit us, she, like all other grandmothers, would always bring us sweets and was always ready to tell us an entertaining story') (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 36).

«Il čuflet dil pastor» (hereafter «Il čuflet») opens the collection. It belongs to the ATU tale-type known as «Midas and the Donkey's Ears». The first testimonies of this tale appear in classical literature. Ovid's version, contained in his *Metamorphoses*, is the oldest known example with King Midas as a protagonist which is the reason why the tale-type also became known as Midas's Ears (see Álvarez & Iglesias, 2005: 595-599). The fact that Maja Bošković-Stulli (1967) gathered examples deriving from four continents shows the remarkable presence of this tale worldwide.

The story of king Midas can be summarised as follow: King Midas lived in the woods and pastures, and worshipped Pan. In a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, Midas preferred Pan's pipes. When it is Apollo with his lyre who is declared the winner, Midas expresses his dissatisfaction thereby offending Apollo who punishes him by making his ears grow into ass's ears. From that moment on, Midas attempts to cover his ears with an ample turban. Unfortunately, his ears are noticed by the servant who cuts his hair. Bowed down by the weight of this secret, the servant unburdens himself by confessing this knowledge to a hole that he dug in the ground. After describing his master's ears, he covers the hole and departs feeling relieved. However, some time later a patch of reeds grows where the hole was. When the wind rustles through them it reanimates the words uttered by the servant and the king's secret becomes common knowledge (Alvarez & Iglesias, 2005: 595-599).

Ovid's version contains the following series of folk motifs which constitute the body of the folk tale:

- the king has a secret which he endeavours to hide, killing those who discover it. Usually the secret is a physical defect consisting of a non-human feature typifying some kind of animal. The most frequent one being the ears or horns of an ass or horse (F511.2.2);
- he decides to pardon the life of the person who cuts his hair or shaves his face on the condition that he keeps the secret (N465);
- oppressed by the secret, the barber/servant falls ill and, following another's advice, decides to utter the secret in a deserted place (C420). By doing so, his oppression is alleviated (D2161.4.19.1);
- reeds grow where the barber has revealed the secret which, rustled by the wind, betray the secret (D1316.5); or the said reeds are used to make a musical instrument, which later betrays the secret (D1610.34); and,
- when the secret becomes common knowledge, the king forgives the barber believing that nothing in this world can remain hidden⁶.

Although these motifs constitute the basis of the story, and reappear from one version to the next, throughout the course of time the tale acquired new elements while simultaneously doing away with others, thereby adapting to the different cultures in which it was fostered⁷. A case in point is the mentioned tale by Papo which goes as follows:

Avia di ser un re in una tjera dil Orijente, atras mučas anjus. Esti re tinija un sjervu fidele ki lu akumpanjava di dija i di noče. Naturalmenti ki tuvo mučas okasjonis di verlu al re vistidu i diznudu.

Lus amidus i perjentis si interesavan a saver komu sta il re diznudu.

Ma, si komu il sjervu intrandu in la gvardija del re djuro di no alvar luke veji i oji nil palasjo, no kirija kitar palavra di boka i arispunder a estas dimandas.

No pudjendu sumpurtar estas kajades mas, un dija saljo dil palasju i si hue a la muntanja. Aji, akavo una foja in kvala intaro gritandu esta diča: «Jo vidi il kulu dil re blanku i kurladu».

Pasarun anjus i anjitjus, in il mizmu ligar krisjo un arvuli. Un dija paso pur aladu di esti arvuli un pastor ki biklijaba las uvežas in la muntanja. Kižendu fazer un čufletiku aranko una rama dil arvuli. Tumo su nuvažika i in muj kurtu tjempu il čuflet ja stuvu pruntu.

Suplava in il čuflet, prikurandu di ujir una di sus melodijas. Dil čuflet salija solamenti akeja diča: «Jo vidi il kulu dil re blanku i kurladu». Todus lus esforsus, ki fazija pur trukar il sunižu dil čuflet, li hue in baldis, no riušjo otru ki akeja famoza diča⁸. (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 34)

Thus the King has a loyal servant, who spends so much time by the King's side that he inevitably sees his master naked. Wanting to know what the King looks like naked, his friends and relatives persist in their demand for him to reveal this knowledge. Having sworn he would not say a word, at first the servant keeps his promise. However, before long he begins to feel the pressure of having to remain silent and therefore goes to the mountain, digs a hole and buries the following words: «Jo vidi il kulu dil re blanku i

⁶ All the references to folk motifs are taken from Stith Thompson's catalogue (1966).

⁷ For more information on this, see Bošković-Stulli (1967) and Jovanović (2014).

⁸ I have not changed the graphic system used by the author which clearly contains influences of the Serbo-Croatian graphic system.

kurladu» ('I saw the King's white and rosy bottom'). After a while a tree grows in this place, and one day a shepherd who is passing by takes a branch to make himself a flute. As fate would have it, the only thing to come out of the flute once he starts to play is the secret about the King's buttocks (Papo *et al.*, 1994: 34).

What makes this Sephardic version unique compared to other versions internationally is what constitutes the secrecy here, i.e. the source of the servant's problem. A comparison with the known versions of the tale, both older ones and those compiled throughout the twentieth century, indicates the dominant presence of ass's ears, from Ovid and other Roman authors, such as Gaius Petronius Arbiter (from the first century) and Fabius Planciades Fulgentius (from the late fifth century), to the modern versions of Korea, Tibet, India, Israel, Egypt, Russia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Chile, Argentina, Cuba and the Dominican Republic (Bošković-Stulli, 1967: 119). In fact, it is not uncommon for them to appear even in areas where another type of animal trait prevails as the secret. For example, in Ireland, Wales or Brittany, a horse's ears or head is the most common defect, and yet we find versions with ass's ears as well. The same can be said for versions collected from among Muslims in which, together with the horns that comprise the king's secret, examples of ass's ears are also found (Bošković-Stulli, 1967: 124). Therefore it can be supposed that 'Midas' ears' is one of the base elements of the tale.

In light of this, the issue arises of the type of secret which spurs all the action in the Sephardic version from Bosnia: «il kulu blanku i kurladu». In spite of the fact that ATU classifies the tale-type 782 as a religious one, the type of secret here seems to suggest that it is actually a comic one. The white and rosy backside cannot be considered either a physical defect of the King or a secret to be kept. The servant simply sees the King nude and then must not speak about it. Therefore the secret the servant needs to keep does not fit within the general type of secret found in other examples worldwide. The reason may well be the fact that this part of the tale does not conform to the ATU782 type, but rather to another type instead. The motif of seeing the king's bottom appears in tale-type ATU235C* «A Bird Had New Clothes Made» (Uther, 2004: I, 149)⁹.

This is a very rare tale-type of which only a few examples have been recorded internationally. In addition to Middle Eastern and Asian versions (Palestinian, Iranian, Indian, Uzbek), this tale has been collected in Spanish-speaking areas with examples from Spain (Andalusia, Catalonia) as well as from Latin America (Venezuela, Mexico) (Uther, 2004: I, 149). Some of these versions, particularly those from the south of Iberia (Seville, Murcia, Córdoba) were edited and published by José Manuel Pedrosa (2012: 127-152). In this tale, a bird has acquired new woolen clothes and has tricked the tailor in order not to pay him. The bird then goes to the court and mocks the Prince claiming it is more elegant than the Prince himself. After it is caught, the Prince insists on eating it, and after doing so gets a stomachache. Upon passing gas, the bird comes flying out, saying: «Eh, eh, eh..., que le he visto al hijo del rey el culo!» (Pedrosa, 2012: 133-134). Several more versions were collected in Andalusia, which indicates that it was precisely in this region where the tale was both known and popular (Pedrosa, 2012: 135). Bearing in mind that no example of ATU235C* has been recorded in the Balkans, it could very well be that the tale was known among the Sephardim there as part of their Hispanic heritage. By borrowing this new element from a different tale, the Sephardic ATU782 tale-type has changed its nature from a religious to a comic tale.

⁹ I would like to thank Dr José Manuel Pedrosa (Universidad de Alcalá) for drawing my attention to this fact.

However, the influence of the Balkan environment can be seen in the second part of the Sephardic tale. The element of revealing the secret by digging a hole from which a tree later grows is a common ending in the ATU782 tale-type in the Balkans where numerous examples of it have been collected. In the former Yugoslavia alone approximately 150 versions of the tale exist, edited by Bošković-Stulli (1967: 76-282; 297-299). The abundant presence of the tale in the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia, leads me to conclude that the Sephardic tale recorded by Papo was influenced by Serbo-Croatian versions of the ATU782 tale-type¹⁰.

Curiously, this tale-type has not been recorded in Spanish oral tradition. In the indexes and collections of Spanish folk tales (Boggs, 1930; Espinosa, 1946; Camarena & Chevalier, 2003), not a single example of the tale appears, while, on the contrary, versions have been compiled in nearby countries such as France, Portugal, Morocco and Algeria. The existence of Latin American versions of the tale (Laval, 1923: I, n. 7; Chertudi, 1969: n. 94; Almeida, 1951: n. 12; Rael, 1960: n. 270), on the other hand, might suggest that the tale was known in Spain from where it was taken to the new continent, as Robert Lehmann-Nitsche suggests (1936: 281-303)¹¹.

Whatever the case may be, Papo's version of the tale shows how the Bosnian Sephardic community, and Papo as a transmitter and collector of its folklore, combined various elements, maintaining the old while borrowing the new from other cultures in the local area, thereby enriching the Sephardic heritage. Unlike other known versions of this tale worldwide, the mixture of motifs from two different tale-types here has resulted in an original creation that distances itself from others of its kind thanks to its humorous tone. Papo's *Il čuflet*, as I show below, is not the only example.

MATILDA KOÉN-SARANO'S ATU775 TALE-TYPE: ATYPICAL DJOHÁ ROLE

King Midas is also the protagonist of another tale-type, ATU775 «Midas' Golden Touch» (Uther, 2004: I, 433-434), the oldest known version of which is again found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the Judeo-Spanish speaking-world, this tale-type was collected by Matilda Koén-Sarano.

Born in Italy into a Judeo-Spanish family originally from Turkey, Koén-Sarano emigrated to Israel in 1962. It was there, in this Hebrew-speaking society, that Koén-Sarano realised the significance of her mother tongue, Judeo-Spanish, and her Sephardic heritage. A familiar song in Judeo-Spanish heard on the radio, «simbolizó mi nostalgia i me reveló mi verdadera identidad» ('symbolised my nostalgia and revealed to me my true identity') (Koén-Sarano, 1986: xvii). This generated a sense of ethnic awareness in Koén-Sarano as she started dedicating all her efforts to maintaining and disseminating the Judeo-Spanish language and culture (Koén-Sarano, 1986: xvi-xvii). These efforts include her participating in radio programmes and festivals dedicated to the Judeo-Spanish language, culture and tradition; writing tales and poems in Judeo-Spanish; writing a

¹⁰ For more detail on this, see Jovanović 2014.

¹¹ We do know for fact that Ovid's version of the tale was known in Spain from medieval times through either translations or adaptations. A summary of it appears in the work of the great Alfonso X el Sabio, *La General Estoria* (Brancaforte 1990: 263). Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was widely used in Alfonso's time, and later on, as a historical source up to the point that Kenneth Quinn (1979: 70) suggested that it became a secular Bible in the Middle Ages. Likewise, Ovid's tale also appears in an unpublished manuscript *Los morales de Ovidio* (BNM, ms. 10144). The latter, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, is a Castilian translation of *Ovidius moralizatus* by Pierre Bersuire (c. 1290-1362). The translation is commonly attributed to Alfonso Zamorensis (Alfonso Gómez de Zamora?), and was probably ordered by Marquis of Santillana (Marqués de Santillana) (Carr 2005: 194).

Ladino textbook and a dictionary; and delivering courses in Ladino at Ben Gurion University in Israel. Perhaps her most important contribution, however, lies in her field work which has resulted in numerous publications¹².

Koén-Sarano's gathering of oral data started in the late 1970s among the members of the Sephardic community in Israel. She interviewed people from Judeo-Spanish families who, prior to settling in Israel, had lived in the Sephardic diaspora (the former Ottoman Empire and North Africa). She later expanded her activity to include members of the Sephardic community living in Europe, the USA, Canada and South America.

A Ladino version of the ATU775 «Midas' Golden Touch» tale-type was first published by Koén-Sarano in its original language, Judeo-Spanish (1996: 118), and subsequently in its translation into English in Koén-Sarano's *Joha: The Jewish Trickster* with the title «King Midas» (2003: 150). The story, as it appears in Ovid, recounts how King Midas asks Dionysius to grant him the ability to turn everything he touches into gold. His wish is fulfilled but King Midas soon realises that, rather than being a blessing, it is actually a curse. In the end, he begs Dionysius to rid him of this power (Álvarez & Iglesias 2005: 595-597).

The tale contains a number of universal folk motifs recorded in Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1966):

- Absurd short-sightedness (J2050)
- Short-sighted wish: Midas' touch. Everything to turn to gold (J2072.1.)
- Midas' golden touch. Everything touched turns to gold (D565.1.)
- Man given power of wishing (D1720.1.)
- Immoderate request punished (Q338)
- Overweening ambition punished (L420)

In 1988 Sara Yohay, born in Barcelona but raised in Kavala (Greece) into a Sephardic family from Turkey, told Koén-Sarano a story that she had heard from her grandfather and that fits well within this tale-type¹³. The tale reads as follows: one day King Midas, whose kingdom was in Thrace and who was known for his miserly nature and greed for gold, allowed Djohá, a famous magician, to spend the night in his castle. In return, he asked Djohá to give him the power to turn everything he touched into gold. His wish is granted but as a consequence he eventually dies of hunger (Koén-Sarano, 2003: 150)¹⁴.

According to Koén-Sarano, this tale most probably entered the Sephardic oral tradition from a written source because one of the protagonists here, King Midas, originated in Ovid (1996: 116). At the same time, there are number of elements which indicate that the tale went through a process of domestication to the Sephardic environment. Instead of the Dionysius of Ovid's version, here the famous comic character of the Sephardic world, Djohá, appears¹⁵. Furthermore, in Ovid's tale, King Midas comes

¹² For more information on Koén-Sarano's field work and her publications, see Jovanović 2015: 169-197.

¹³ For more information on the informant, see Koén-Sarano, 2003: 290.

¹⁴ Haboucha also recorded a version of this tale-type in 1975 in Israel from a seventy-five-year old storyteller, Mazal Tov Lazar, which, however, differs considerably from the one here. See Haboucha, 1995: 323-340.

¹⁵ On Djohá, see Jovanović 2015: 132-199; Bornes-Varol 1995: 61-74.

from Phrygia in Asia Minor. The Sephardic tale, by contrast, takes place in the north of Greece, the informant's native land, and has, hence, been localised.

What is interesting is that Koén-Sarano published this tale in her collection of comic tales dedicated to Djohá who is well known in the Sephardic world as a trickster and a fool. As Djohá appears only as a protagonist of comic tales, the fact that he is a main character in this tale leads me to assume that we are dealing with a comic tale. However, this tale, according to ATU, is a religious tale, and recorded international versions of it follow the pattern of Ovid's story where the main character is punished for his greed. The Sephardic version is in keeping with this philosophy and employs satire to convey its message and impart the intended lesson: the condemnation of greed¹⁶.

Moreover, the moral in the Sephardic version is taken even further because in the end due to his greedy wish King Midas dies whereas in other internationally known versions, including Ovid's, the King is forgiven after having learned a lesson. Therefore, this Sephardic tale cannot be classified as a comic tale in spite of the presence of Djohá as it contains no other comic elements apart from the presence of this character. However, here Djohá is stripped of his classic role of a trickster and a fool and is identified as a magician, someone who has supernatural powers. The oicotypification of the tale was not enough to change the core of the tale and make it comic¹⁷.

Worthy of note is the connection that exists between Papo's tale and this one. In each case, according to the ATU classification, we are dealing with religious tales, and in each the oldest known versions are from Ovid and have King Midas as the protagonist. But in each case the Sephardic versions have undergone an attempt to adapt a religious narrative to a comic one. In Papo's case this was achieved by changing the nature of the secret the servant knows from the king having ass's or horse's ears to having a white and rosy bottom. Here the adaptation to the comic element was achieved successfully. However, in the case of Koén-Sarano's tale, although an emblematic humorous character, Djohá, appears as one of the protagonists, the tale does not contain any comic elements and, thus, fits perfectly within the religious classification of this tale-type. Both of these examples show how the Sephardic tradition was enriched by the introduction of fresh elements.

CONCLUSION

I have examined here two well known, international tale-types, ATU782 «Midas and the Donkey's Ears», and ATU775 «Midas' Short-sighted Wish», in the Judeo-Spanish speaking-world. The first one, «Il čuflet dil pastor» represents a unique example of the ATU728 tale-type in the Ladino language and was written down by a Bosnian author, Isak Papo. It is an intriguing version of this tale-type for two reasons: first, instead of the traditional ass's or horse's ears, a white and rosy bottom appears as the king's secret thus introducing a new element which gives the tale a humorous tone; and second, the integration of elements from two tale-types has produced an original creation that displays influences of the old, Peninsular heritage and the new, Balkan environment in the Sephardic lore.

¹⁶ An exemplary satire, according to Haboucha (1995: 336), is particularly alive in Jewish tales.

¹⁷ The term *oicotype* was coined by Carl W. von Sydow who borrowed the word from botanical science. When applied to folklore, the term designates «local forms of a tale type, folksong, or a proverb, with "local" defined in either geographical or cultural terms. [...] The concept "oicotype" differs from the notion of subtype in that the "oicotype" is tied by definition to a very specific locale» (Von Sydow, 1965: 219-220).

The second tale was recorded by Matilda Koén-Sarano and is one of the rare examples of the ATU775 tale-type in Judeo-Spanish. In Koén-Sarano's version of the tale, a comic character Djohá appears as one of the protagonists. Due to the humorous nature of the character, one would assume that we are dealing with a comic tale. However, here the introduction of a comic figure such as Djohá has not changed the overall tone of the story which follows the pattern of most versions worldwide. In fact, the ending in Koén-Sarano's version is taken even further by punishing the greed of the main character with death. In most versions he is forgiven after having learned his lesson.

Both these Sephardic examples clearly show how Ladino tradition continued to develop in the late twentieth century by introducing new material in the lore, which came not only from oral but also written sources thereby expanding the repertoire of oral tales in the Ladino language and culture.

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