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Another 'Lost' Book Found: *The Melo Haggadah, Amsterdam 1622*

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IN 1982 APPEARED H.P. SALOMON'S BIOGRAPHY of Fernão Álvares Melo (1569-1632), a native of Fronteira, Portugal who adopted judaism at Amsterdam in 1612, and in his congregational activities used the name David Abenatar Melo.¹ He had fled Portugal after a two and a half year bout with the Inquisition from which he emerged physically broken but spiritually and financially intact. In 1616, with an outlay of Fl. 539:11: – he purchased Hebrew and Latin types, matrices, punches and cases (*letraz Ebraycas e Ladinaz, punsoes, matrizes, caixos*) for the purpose of catering to the devotional needs of the rapidly growing congregation Bet Yahacob, which he had joined. Altogether three volumes of liturgy, all in Spanish, issued from his press. Like earlier ones produced in the Netherlands, they closely conformed to the famous Ferrara prayer-books, produced by Yom Tob Atias and Abraham Usque in the mid-1500s.²

The first product of Melo's press was a new reprint of the Spanish High Holy Days prayer book: *Mahzor Orden de Roshasanah y Kipur, Tradladado en Español* (...) *Estampado por industria y despesa de David Abenatar mello .A. primero de siuan de 5377* [June 4, 1617]. *En Amstradama*.³ The following year the *Orden de Oraciones de Mes Arreo* (...) came off Melo's press. It contained the daily and Sabbath prayers for the whole year and part of the Festival liturgy in Spanish, but not the Haggadah.⁴ It was an improved and enlarged version of the first jewish book ever to appear in the Netherlands, the *Orden de Oraciones de Mes Arreo* ... , which

¹ Cf. H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian, Fernão Álvares Melo (1569-1632)* (Paris 1982).

² No less than six prayer-books in Spanish based upon those printed at Ferrara in 1552-1553 had appeared in Holland before the first of Melo's. Cf. Adri K. Offenber, 'Exame das tradições', *Éxodo. Portugezen in Amsterdam 1600-1680* (Amsterdam 1987) p. 56-63, nos. 1, 2, 3, 7a, 7b, 7c.

³ Only one copy is presently known. It is in the library of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati. This was the first jewish book printed at Amsterdam to display that city's name, and the following production from Melo's press the second one. The prayer-book in Spanish printed at Amsterdam by Paul van Ravesteyn on February 11 1622, of which apparently no copy survives – its title-page is however known from a Spanish Inquisitor's description – was actually the third to do so. Footnote 30, p. 14 of H.P. Salomon & I.S.D. Sassoon, *Uriel da Costa, Examination of Pharisaic Traditions* (Leiden 1993) should be emended accordingly.

⁴ Cf. H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian*, p. 139; A.K. Offenber, *art. cit.*, n° 13. Three copies are presently known of this book: one in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, one in the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg and one in the British Library.

was printed at Dordrecht in 1584.⁵ This, in turn, was a new edition of the *Sedur de Oraciones de mes (...)* printed at Ferrara in 1552.⁶

Melo's last publication at Amsterdam was *Horden de Pesah .Saber. Como se deve fazer el Haroseth y como se deve esconbrar la caza de leudo y la Hagadah. Em Amstradama, Estanpado por endustria y des peza de David Abenatar, melo, en Anno 5382. 24. de Nisan* [April 4, 1622]. It was the first separate edition of the Haggadah printed in the Netherlands. The 29-page booklet appeared just too late for Passover, and less than a month before the death of Melo's 15-year old only son Eliyahu (Duarte), who was buried at Ouderkerk on May 1, 1622.⁷ Only one copy of this *Horden de Pesah* was known before the Second World War. It belonged to the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana of the University of Amsterdam, where it was bibliographically described by Sigmund Seeligmann in 1927.⁸

During the German occupation of the Netherlands most of the Rosenthaliana was looted by the Nazis. On June 27-29, 1944 153 crates of books from the Rosenthaliana were packed for transport to Germany. Most of these crates were discovered, unopened, on April 8 1945 by the U.S. Army in a small village just north of Frankfurt-am-Main. One year later they were returned to Amsterdam.⁹ Among the very few items missing was Melo's Haggadah.¹⁰

In 1994 H. den Boer chanced upon a manuscript list of Spanish and Portuguese sephardi books in the possession of a private collector. The list included, *mirabile dictu*, Melo's Haggadah. Permission to photograph the entire booklet was kindly granted by the owner. That we are dealing with an hitherto unknown copy and not with the one which disappeared from the Rosenthaliana can be demonstrated by the absence of the Rosenthaliana stamp and by the presence of a feature unknown from the descriptions of the missing Rosenthaliana copy. This feature is a three-page bed-time prayer in Portuguese. Seeligmann makes no mention of this prayer, nor

⁵ H. den Boer discovered a copy of this book – previously unknown to Dutch bibliographers – in the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid in 1987.

⁶ A presently unavailable copy of this book belongs to the Ets Haim Library of Amsterdam. Cf. J.S. da Silva Rosa, 'Die Spanischen und Portugiesischen gedruckten Judaica in der Bibliothek der Jüd. Portug. Seminars 'Ets Haim' in Amsterdam', *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor de Joodsche Wetenschap in Nederland*, 5 (1933) n° 45.

⁷ Cf. H.P. Salomon, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁸ *Bibliographie en Historie, Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis der Eerste Sephardim in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1927) p. 53.

⁹ On the fate of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, cf. Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, 'De Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana tijdens de bezetting', *StRos* 14 (1980) p. 121-127; F. J. Hoogewoud, 'The Nazi Looting of Books and its American 'Antithesis'', *StRos* 26 (1992) p. 158-192; *id.*, 'The Return of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana – but not without damage', *Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana. Treasures of Jewish Booklore* (Amsterdam 1994) p. 116-117, 129.

¹⁰ On the disappearance of Melo's Haggadah from the Rosenthaliana collection, cf. Leo Fuks, Review of A. Yaari's *Bibliography of the Passover Haggadah from the Earliest Printed Edition to 1960* (Jerusalem 1960) in *StRos*, 1, January 1967, p. 129; Adri K. Offenber, 'Exame das tradições', n° 14; *id.*, 'Spanish and Portuguese Sephardi Books Published in the Northern Netherlands Before Menasseh Ben Israel, 1584-1627', *Dutch Jewish History*, 3 (Jerusalem 1993) p. 77-96: 86-87.

does his predecessor C.P. Burger.¹¹ It is hardly conceivable that Seeligmann could have overlooked such an original and unique appendage. And of the uniqueness of this prayer there can be no doubt! Before discussing it, we present a translation withal:

Before retiring say the following prayer every night

I pray Thee Lord of the world that all the bad dreams which I may have at night be null and void and that all the evil decrees on my household be transformed into decrees of blessing, for Thou art God, gracious and merciful.

Lord of the world, cause of all causes, sole and omnipotent Monarch of the entire universe, as Master of all thoughts only to Thee is manifest how much I desire to serve Thee and regret that I lack the strength to accomplish my duty. Wherefore I trust in Thy sovereign clemency that this brief prayer be as acceptable before Thy divine tribunal as was the sacrifice of the poor, taking no account of the quantity of the offering but rather of the bringer's goodwill.

And thus I pray Thy divine majesty to favour me with Thy mercies by granting me Thy succour to love Thee with a perfect heart. Remove from me every wicked thought and let my sins be annulled before Thy celestial court, for Thou knowest that I never intended to offend Thee. And when the time comes for me to leave this world, may my soul be accepted with mercy. Guard, protect and assist all the fine people¹² whom I esteem, lengthening the days of their life for the glory of Thy holy name. Heal the sick of Thy people and grant a happy delivery to all expectant mothers. Abundantly inspire those who merit Thy grace with Thy blessings and bring near the good that we await for the restoration of Israel.

AMEN

What is the relationship of this prayer to the Haggadah? While it was apparently bound together with the Haggadah during the 17th century and its spelling, like that of the Spanish Haggadah, is peculiar (e.g., *univerço, pobre, Benção, restaóração*), it is set in a type-face different from those of the Haggadah, precedes the latter's title-page and is not mentioned thereon.¹³

¹¹ Cf. *Het Boek*, 2, 5, (1916) p. 258. It is from here that Yaari copied his entry (n° 39). The bibliographical description of the volume is: a) (no titlepage) 'Antes de se recolher dira'. In 8°, 2 leaves, 4 pages. Contents: (1r-2r: *text*); (2v: *blank*). b) Horden de Pesah. Amstradama, f. David Abenatar Melo, 5382 (1622). In 8°, A-B⁸-B8 (\$5), 15 leaves, 30 unnumbered pages. Contents: A1r: *titlepage*; A1v: *blank*; A2r-B7v: *text*.

¹² The Portuguese word *prenda* never had, as far as we know, the meaning here intended; the Spanish word *prenda* does.

¹³ The binding does not appear to be contemporary with the printing of the Haggadah, but even if it were demonstrably later, this would not prove anything as regards the provenance of the prayer. Concerning the difficulty of dating Portuguese texts printed in Holland on the basis of spelling, cf. H.P. Salomon, *Deux études portugaises / Two Portuguese Studies* (Braga 1991) p. 142-143; *Uriel da Costa, Examination of Pharisaic Traditions*, p. 33.

Thus it is impossible to prove that the prayer was in fact composed by David Abenatar Melo, and a product of his printing-press. Yet, for reasons which we shall proceed to set out, that possibility should by no means be excluded.

We have here the only specimen presently known of non-canonical liturgy printed in the Portuguese Israelite Community of Amsterdam. The phenomenon of improvised liturgy in Portuguese by the New Christians of Portugal is well attested.¹⁴ Until now, however, it was believed that this creative vein dried up upon the former New Christians' entry into normative sephardic communities where the entire canonical liturgy was exclusively recited in Hebrew, though available in printed literal Spanish translation.¹⁵ Irrespective of who wrote it, the presence of a bedtime prayer before the Haggadah rather than after it, is somewhat puzzling. But let us look at the first line of the prayer in the original Portuguese:

Rogo a ti Senhor do mundo que sejaõ *baldados* & *anullados* todos os maus sonhos (...)

The words we have put in italics are intended synonyms, which we have translated 'null and void'. The first of these two words occurs twice in the Haggadah, not in the narrative proper, but in the respective Aramaic declarations made by the head of the household at the close of the statutory searches for leaven preceding the Passover: 'May all leaven in my domain ... be annulled (*batil*)...' The Aramaic *batil* is related to the Arabic *battala*, which has the same meaning. The declaration is translated into 'Ferrara Spanish' as follows: *Todo (el) leudo que ay en mi licencia ... sea baldado ...*, the Arabic word *battala* being not merely the source but the etymon of the Ferrara 'equivalent' *baldado*. Now it is in Aramaic and Arabic that the verb has the meaning 'to annul' (Spanish and Portuguese *anular*). The Spanish *balidar* does not have it (nor, for that matter, does the Portuguese *balidar*).¹⁶ Thus, Ferrara's

¹⁴ Cf. Samuel Schwarz, *Os Cristãos-Novos em Portugal no século XX* (Lisbon 1925) p. 47-110; Casimiro de Moraes Machado, 'Subsídios para a história de Mogadouro', *Douro Litoral*, 1 (1952) p.17-49; 22-49; Elvira Cunha Azevedo Mea, 'Orações judaicas na Inquisição portuguesa - século XVI', *Jews and Conversos, Studies in Society and the Inquisition* (ed. Y. Kaplan) (Jerusalem 1985) p. 149-178; H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian*, p. 313-315; *id.*, 'The Portuguese Background of Menasseh Ben Israel's Parents as Revealed Through the Inquisitorial Archives at Lisbon', *StRos* 17 (1983) p. 105-146; 119-123; Manuel da Costa Fontes, 'Orações criptojudias na tradição oral portuguesa', *Hispania* 74 (1991) p. 511-518.

¹⁵ An effort was made in early 16th century Italy to translate the canonical liturgy into Portuguese. A single fragmentary manuscript, now belonging to the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, survives. Cf. H.P. Salomon, 'The "Last Trial" in Portuguese', *Studi sull'Ebraismo Italiano in memoria di Cecil Roth* (Rome 1974) p. 161-183; *id.*, 'A Shield of Selomo in Portuguese and Spanish', *Philologica Hispaniensa in honorem Manuel Alvar*, 3 (1989) p. 501-515. No part of the canonical sephardic liturgy was ever printed in Portuguese until the twentieth century.

¹⁶ Cf. *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Madrid 1726); *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (Madrid 1970); Antonio Moraes Silva, *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguez* (Rio de Janeiro 1890) *s.v.*, *balidar*. The Spanish-English Dictionary by E.B. Williams gives 'to cripple, to incapacitate, to inconvenience'; the *Dicionário de Português-Ingês 'Escolar'* gives 'to frustrate, to disappoint, to balk, to hinder, to thwart'. The Aramaic word appears once in Hebrew Scriptures (Eccl. 12,3) with the intransitive sense of 'to cease', not with the transitive sense 'to annul'.

baldar, while picturesque, is in reality a mistranslation.¹⁷ The author of the prayer may well have picked up *baldar* in the sense of 'annul' from the Ferrara translation of the Aramaic material at the very beginning of the Haggadah, for nowhere in the Ferrara Bible or elsewhere in the Prayer Book does *baldar* have that precise meaning.¹⁸ This will be the first and last time that it occurs in a Portuguese text with that meaning.¹⁹ He seems to have sensed that his Portuguese readers would not understand it: hence his addition of the gloss *anulados*. Now we return to the question of the author's identity.

There are several arguments that may be adduced in favour of the hypothesis that the prayer was composed by David Abenatar Melo. The idea that the smallness of the offering is no impediment to its acceptance will be expressed once more in the 'Remarks to the Reader' of Melo's *magnum opus*, the personalized rendition of the Psalms in Spanish verse, which appeared at Hamburg in 1626. There he writes:

... Thus it is that you must be satisfied, Dear Reader ... imploring you to accept my good intention ... by accepting the little as if it were much ... This is a quality of the Blessed Lord and His attribute ... let the favour of that Lord to whom I dedicate this small offer be enough for me, for He knows and sees my heart.²⁰

The prose dedication 'to the congregation of Israel and Judah' which also precedes Melo's *Los 150 Psalmos de David*, refers to messianic deliverance as 'the good that He has promised us'²¹; the prayer as 'the good that we await'. While the language of his personalized adaptation of the Psalms is Spanish throughout, Melo

¹⁷ Cf. Israel S. Révah, 'Hispanisme et judaïsme des langues parlées et écrites par les Sefardim', *Actas del primer simposio de estudios sefardíes* (Jacob M. Hassan, ed.) (Madrid 1970) p. 233-242: 236. The word *licencia* is also a mistranslation, for the Aramaic word *resut* may mean 'permission' as well as 'domain', whereas Spanish *licencia* can never mean 'domain'.

¹⁸ The word also occurs in Ferrara Ex. 12,15, which deals precisely with the search for leaven before the Passover begins: *Siete dias cenceñas comeredes, de cierto en el dia el primero baldaredes leuadura de vuestras casas ...* (The Jewish commentators explain away 'on the first day' to mean 'the last day before Passover'.) Here *baldar* interprets the Hebrew verb *sabbat*, no doubt via Onkelos' Aramaic 'equivalent' *batil* (cf. Ferrara Lv. 2,13; 26,6 and Onkelos, *ad loc.*) Ferrara also mistranslates the Hebrew verb *ferrar* ('to break') by *baldarin* in all nine verses of Pentateuch occurrence although. Onkelos has *batilin* but six of them. Cf. Haim Vidal Sephiha, *Le Ladino, Judéo-Espagnol Calque* (Paris 1973) s.v. *baldar*.

¹⁹ J. Corominas (*Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* Madrid 1980) refers – via Menéndez y Pidal – to two medieval documents, dated 1219 and 1220, where *baldar* means «to annul» and specifies that Jews are being quoted. The *Biblia de Casa de Alba* (1422-1433?), A. Paz y Melia edition (1920-1922) does not translate any of the occurrences of the Hebrew verbs *sabbat* and *ferar* by *baldar*, nor even the *hapax legomenon* of *batil* in Eccl. 12, 3 (*e cessen las muelas*). Among the Jews of Amsterdam a «Dutch» verb *battelen* referred specifically and exclusively to the «annulment of leaven» on the day before Passover. Cf. J. L. Voorzanger and J. E. Polak Jz., *Het Joodsch in Nederland, aan het Hebreewsch en andere talen ontleende woorden en zegswijzen* (Amsterdam 1915) p. 93.

²⁰ 'Asi que te deues contentar, amigo lector ... suplicandote que recibas my voluntad ... y su poco oferesido ... recebirlo por mucho, condicion y propiedad del Dios Bendito y atributo sujo ... me baste el amparo de aquel Señor a quien dedico esta pequenha ofrenda, que conoce y ue my coraçon ...' Cf. H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian*, fig. 13j, p. 177. Cf. Mishnah, Menahot 13, 11.

²¹ 'el bien que nos tiene prometido'; cf. *op. cit.*, fig. 13i, p. 177.

confesses in his introductory 'Remarks to the Reader' that his knowledge of that language is imperfect and that he expresses himself more naturally in his mother tongue.²² An autobiographical gloss following his Spanish version of Psalm 30 is indeed couched in Portuguese.²³ We need not, therefore, be surprised that Melo should elect to pour out his heart to God in his own language when composing his own prayer. And, having composed it, to have it printed, seeing he had a print-shop at his disposal. What does remain a mystery, however, is why Melo or, if the hypothesis that Melo is the author should not be convincing, any other hypothetical author of the Portuguese prayer, should have been dissatisfied with the statutory night prayer beginning 'Blessed art Thou (...) who weighest down my eyes with the bonds of sleep', which has its own beauty, is approximately half the length, contains some of the same thoughts, and would have been readily available to him in the Ferrara Spanish translation.²⁴ We do note that the canonical prayer, as opposed to the improvised one, is entirely self-centred. We also note 'the evil decrees on my household', perhaps a direct reference to the fatal illness of Melo's young son who died, as stated above, just a few weeks after the Haggadah went to press.

The principal originality of the *Horde de Pesah*, found right at the beginning, is its recipe for making *haroset*, that sometimes delectable concoction symbolizing the mortar used by the Israelite slaves of the Egyptians for building the cities of Pithom and Raamses (Ex. 1,11). Among somewhat more digestible items (e.g., boiled apples or pears, hazelnuts, almonds, ground chestnuts or walnuts, figs or raisins, strong wine vinegar) the recipe also includes 'a little powder of brick, in memory of the bricks which our fathers made in Egypt'. This detrital ingredient was not, of course, thought up by Melo.²⁵

While Melo's Haggadah is, as stated above, the first separate edition printed in the Netherlands, it is by no means the first separate Haggadah ever. According to Abraham Yaari's *Bibliography of the Passover Haggadah from the Earliest Printed Edition to 1960* (Jerusalem, 1960, n° 1), that distinction goes to the Hebrew one printed in Guadalajara, Spain, in about 1482, of which he furnishes a complete

²² 'es no ser la lengua espanhola materna mya, sino muj diferente'; cf. *op. cit.*, fig. 13i, p. 177.

²³ Cf. *op. cit.*, fig. 13p, p. 194.

²⁴ It is contained in the *Orden de Oraciones de Mes Arreo* published by Melo in 1618 (p. 87v).

²⁵ The non-Scriptural word *haroset* is apparently related to the (Aramaic?) word *harsit* (= broken earthenware; cf. Mishnah, Maaser Sheni, 5, 1). Cf. Shemtob Gaguine, *Keter Shem Tob*, 3 (London 1948) p. 88-90. Melo's unusual recipe is literally reproduced in the Spanish Haggadah printed at Leghorn in 1654, of which a copy exists in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and is echoed in the Hebrew-Spanish *Orden de Bendiciones* (Amsterdam 1687) p. 138: 'y le misturan polvos de ladrillos muy bien molidos'. Still to be determined is whether his recipe represents common usage in the Amsterdam of his day and, if so, whether it survived until Hida (Hayyim Joseph David Azulai, 1724-1806) put paid to it. For it is known that this authority (following Menahem de Lonzano) considered the custom erroneous. Cf. *Talmudic Encyclopaedia* 17, col. 494, notes 143-144.

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1 Portuguese night prayer preceding Melo Haggadah (reduced)

*Oratio de Je recabar ábra
todas as noites a seguinte
Oratio*

Rogo a ti Senhor do mundo q̄ scijaõ
baldados & anullados todos os maus
sonhos q̄ sonhar de noure , & sejaõ
revogadas todas as más sentenças de
minha cauza em decretos de Benção,
q̄ Deus Gracioso & Piadoso tu .
Senhor do mundo cauza de todas
ascauzas, unico & Omnipotente Mo-
narca de todo o univerço, fomenta ti
he manifesto como deuo dos pen-
mentos, o muyto q̄ desejo servite, e
q̄ a meu pezar me faltaõ as forças pa-
ra cumprir com meu dever, pello que
confio em tua Summa Clemencia, q̄
esta breve oraçãõ seja taõ aceita di-
ante teu Divino Tribunal como era

O sacrificio do povo, não reparando
na quantidade do ofecimento, senão
na boa vontade de quem o trazia.
& Assim rogo a tua Divina Majes-
tade q̄ uzes conigo de tuas piedades
em concederme teus auxilhos para te
amar com coraçãõ perfeito . affasta
de mim todo ruim pensamento, & sei-
jaõ anullados meus pecados diante
tua corte Celeste, pois sabes que ja
mais cuidey offenderte . & quando for
tempo de partirme deste Mundo, sei-
ja admittida minha alma com miseri-
cordia . guarda, ampara, & proteje a
todas as prendas de minha estimaçãõ,
acrecentando os dias de suas vidas em
gloria de teu Santo Nome, mezinha
os enfermos de teu Povo, e delivra
com felis parto as mulheres prenhasdas,
abundia com a influencia de tuas Ben-

çoens a os que merecem tua graffa e
aproxima o bem q̄ aguardamos para
a restaõraçãõ de jsrael
AMEN

facsimile.²⁶ The earliest known separate Haggadah accompanied by a Spanish translation (printed in Hebrew characters) appeared at Venice in 1609 (Yaari 36).²⁷ The first separate Haggadah entirely in Spanish (in Latin characters) appeared at Venice in 1619 (Yaari 38).²⁸ It is entitled: *seder haggada sel pesah Orden de la agada de noche de Pascoa de Pesah, tradvsida de la original Hebraica conforme la ordenaron nuestros sabios, con su bendicion de la mesa al postre, con licenza de los superiores in Venetia, MDCXIX. appresso Giacomo Sarzina*.²⁹ Since Melo's Haggadah comes but three years later, one is tempted to suppose some relationship between the two. Yet such a relationship can be questioned, as we shall now proceed to do.

The Sarzina Haggadah (31 pages) is an exact, well-printed reproduction of the Haggadah in the *Libro de Oracyones* printed by Yom Tob Atias at Ferrara in June 1552.³⁰ The latter is in fact the earliest presently known Spanish version of the Haggadah. Melo's Haggadah, on the other hand, constantly diverges from the Ferrara morphology in an unsystematic manner (e.g., Ferrara's *bendicho* sometimes turns into *bendito*, sometimes *bendecido*, sometimes remains *bendicho*); the careful Ferrara paragraph division, maintained by Sarzina, becomes anarchic and confused. Omissions of strings of words, due to haplography, occur frequently in Melo's Haggadah.³¹ All of these corruptions or intended corrections could have been made by Melo while working from Sarzina's Haggadah, but this is not the case, as can be demonstrated from a textual comparison between the psalms preceding and following the Grace After Meals in the two Haggadahs.³² There are a number of textual variants which are not a result of improvement upon Sarzina by Melo. Instead, whereas Sarzina copied his text verbatim from the *Libro de Oracyones* (Ferrara, 1552), Melo's text more or less corresponds to the Spanish Bible and the Psalter of

²⁶ Doubt on the attribution of this Haggadah to the printer Selomo Ben Mose Alqabes of Guadalajara has been cast by H.P. Salomon (cf. 'A Fifteenth Century Haggada with Ritual Prescriptions in Portuguese Aljamiado', *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português* 15 (1980) p. 223-234; 226, n. 14). Opp. A. K. Offenber (who, however, considers this Haggadah part of a prayerbook), 'De eerste gedrukte uitgaven van Rasji's Pentateuch commentaar', in *Een Gulden Kleinood ... Liber Amicorum D. Goudsmit* (H. den Boer, J. Brombacher and P. Cohen, eds.) (Louvain / Apeldoorn 1991) p. 205-222; 209, 211.

²⁷ An exhaustive comparison of this aljamiado version with the one found in the Ferrara *Libro de Oraciones* of 1552 is a desideratum. Cf. Haim Vidal Sephiha, 'The "Real" Ladino', *The American Sephardi* 5, 1-2 (1971) p. 50-58; 57-58.

²⁸ Yaari carelessly attributes the date 1620 to this Haggadah. He herewith stands corrected.

²⁹ We are grateful to Mr. Yosef Goldman for kindly providing us with a complete xerox copy of this apparent unicum from the Hebrew University Library in Jerusalem. On Giacomo Sarzina, cf. David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy* (Philadelphia 1909; repr.: London 1963, 1988) p. 374 where, however, the printer's name is misspelled and the latter's complaint about printing errors mistranslated.

³⁰ Cf. H.P. Salomon, 'Was There a Traditional Spanish Translation of Sephardi Prayers Before 1552?', *The American Sephardi*, 6, 1-2 (1973) p. 78-90.

³¹ Misunderstanding of the original text also occurs, e.g., Ferrara's '*tu abre a el*' becomes '*tu abla a el*'.

³² The Sarzina Haggadah, as its title specifies, contains the Grace After Meals; the Melo Haggadah does not: a regrettable omission!

Ferrara (1553), wherein psalms 113-118 indeed read otherwise than in the Haggadah of the *Libro de Oracyones*.³³

As an example let us consider a few verses of Psalm 115 in Sarzina's and Melo's Haggadah respectively: (We highlight the variant readings.)

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(1) No por nos .A. no por nos *saluo por* tu nombre daa honrra ...

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(1) No por nos .A. no por nos *saluo por* tu nombre daa honrra ...

MELO HAGGADAH

(1) No por nos, .A. no por nos, *mas a* tu nombre da honrra ...

FERRARA PSALTER

(1) No por nos, .A., no por nos, *mas a* tu nombre daa honrra ...

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(3) y nuestro Dio en los cielos todo lo que *enuolunta* faze.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(3) y nuestro Dio en los cielos todo lo que *enuolunta* faze.

MELO HAGGADAH

(3) y nuestro dio en los cielos todo lo que *enuolunto* fizo.

FERRARA PSALTER

(3) Y nuestro Dio en los cielos; todo lo que *enuolunto*, fizo.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(6) orejas a ellos y no oyen; *narizes* a ellos y no huelen;

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(6) orejas a ellos y no oyen, *narizes* a ellos y no huelen;

MELO HAGGADAH

(6) orejas a ellos y no oyen, *nariz* a ellos y no huelen

FERRARA PSALTER

(6) Orejas a ellos, y no oyen; *nariz* a ellos, y no huelen.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(7) sus manos y no *apalpan*; sus pies y no andan, y no fablan con su garganta;

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(7) sus manos y no *apalpan*; sus pies y no andan; y no fablan con su garganta;

MELO HAGGADAH

³³ Variants between Scriptural material in the *Libro de Oracyones* (Ferrara 1552) and the Bible published at Ferrara (1553), and between the Psalms in the Ferrara Bible (March 1 1553) and the *Psalterium de David* (Ferrara, November 15 1553) confirm our hypothesis that the Spanish text was not 'traditional', but improvised and modified by different hands.

(7) manos a ellos y no *palpan*, pies a ellos y no andan, no fablan en su garganta.

FERRARA PSALTER

(7) Manos a ellos, y no *palpan*; pies a ellos y no andan; no fablan con su garganta.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(8) como ellos sean sus *obradores* todo que *confia* en ellos.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACIONES

(8) como ellos sean sus *obradores* todo que *confia* en ellos.

MELO HAGGADAH

(8) Como ellos sean sus *fazientes* todo el que *se en fiuza* en ellos.

FERRARA PSALTER

(8) Como ellos sean sus *fazientes*, todo el que *se enfiuza* en ellos.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(9) Ysrael *confian en .A.* su ayuda y su amparo el.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACIONES

9) Ysrael *confian en .A.* su ayuda y su amparo el.

MELO HAGGADAH

(9) Israel *confia .A.* su ayuda y su anparo el.

FERRARA PSALTER

(9) Ysrael *confia en .A.*, su ayuda y su amparo El.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(12) *.A. nos membro bendiga, bendiga* a casa de Ysrael, *bendiga* a casa de Aharon.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACIONES

(12) *.A. nos membro bendiga, bendiga* a casa de Ysrael, *bendiga* a casa de Aharon.

MELO HAGGADAH

(12) *.A. se membro de nos, bendezira bendezira* casa de Israel, *bendezira* casa de Harom.

FERRARA PSALTER

(12) *.A. se membro de nos, bendezira; bendezira* casa de Ysrael, *bendezira* casa de Aharon.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(13) *Bendiga* temientes de *.A.* los pequeños con los grandes.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACIONES

(13) *Bendiga* temientes de *.A.* los pequeños con los grandes.

MELO HAGGADAH

(13) *Bendezira* temientes de *.A.* los pequeños con los grandes.

FERRARA PSALTER

(13) *Bendezira* temientes en *.A.*, los pequeños con los grandes.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(14) *Añada .A.* sobre vos, sobre vos y sobre vuestros hijos.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACIONES

(14) *Añada* .A. sobre vos, sobre vos y sobre vuestros hijos

MELO HAGGADAH

(14) *Annadira* .A. *bendicion*, sobre vos, sobre vos y sobre Vuestros hijos.

FERRARA PSALTER

(14) *Añadira* .A. (*bendicion*) sobre vos, sobre vos y sobre vuestros hijos.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(15) *bendichos* vos a .A. *fazedor de cielos y tierra*.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(15) *bendichos* vos a .A. *fazedor de cielos y tierra*.

MELO HAGGADAH

(15) *Benditos* nos de .A. *que fizo cielos y tierra*.

FERRARA PSALTER

(15) *Benditos* vos de .A., *que fizo cielos y tierra*.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(16) Los cielos, cielos de .A. y la tierra dio *a los hijos del hombre*.

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(16) Los cielos, cielos de .A. y la tierra dio *a los hijos del hombre*.

MELO HAGGADAH

(16) Los cielos cielos de .A. y la tierra dio *a hijos de hombre*.

FERRARA PSALTER

(16) Los cielos, cielos de .A.; y la tierra dio *a hijos de hombre*.

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(17) No los muertos alabaran a .A. ...

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(17) No los muertos alabaran a .A. ...

MELO HAGGADAH

(17) No los muertos alabaran .A. ...

FERRARA PSALTER

(17) No los muertos alabaran *YAH* ...

SARZINA HAGGADAH

(18) Y nos bendeziremos a .A. ...

HAGGADAH IN LIBRO DE ORACYONES

(18) Y nos bendeziremos a .A. ...

MELO HAGGADAH

(18) y nos bendeziremos .A.

FERRARA PSALTER

(18) Y nos bendeziremos *YAH* ...

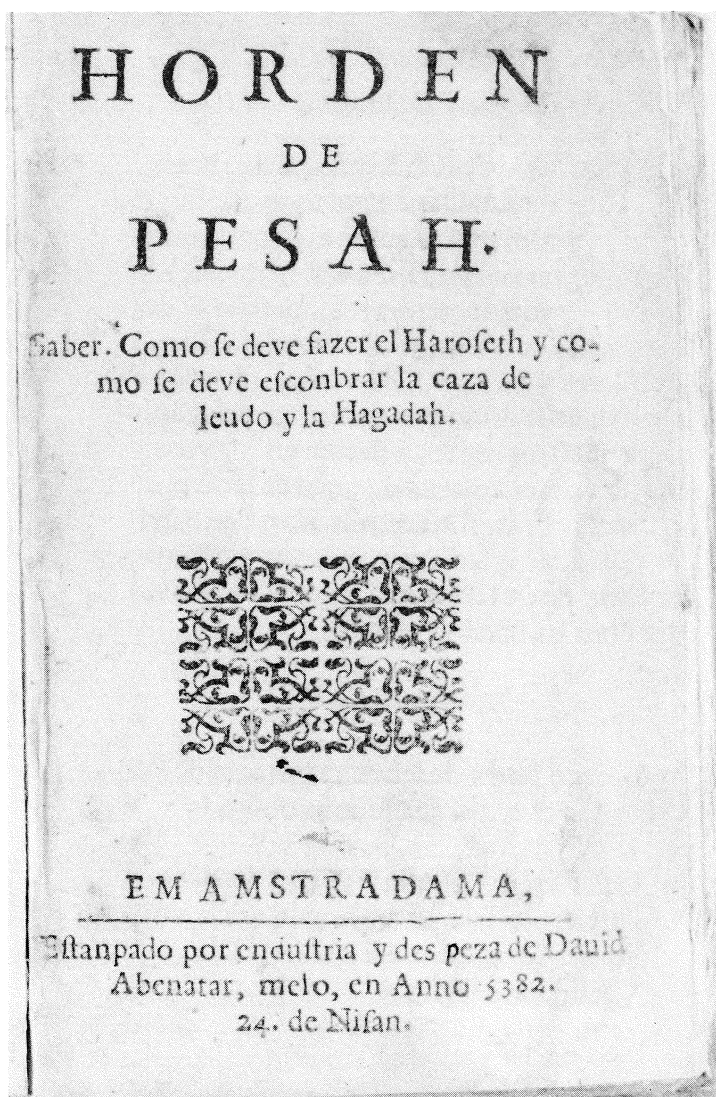
Even a cursory perusal of these comparisons makes it clear as daylight that Melo's Haggadah is not based on Sarzina's. Yet its narrative part is based, like Sarzina's, on the text in the *Libro de Oracyones* (Ferrara, 1552). We must, however, not jump to the conclusion that Melo copied the narrative part of his Haggadah from the *Libro de Oracyones* and then, dissatisfied for some reason with its version of the Psalms, turned to the Ferrara Psalter for that part of the Haggadah. Despite a general resemblance, there are discrepancies between the Melo version and the Ferrara Psalter's version of psalms 113-118. Moreover, as was pointed out above, this text was reprinted a number of times in the Netherlands. Turning first to the *Orden de Oraciones de Mes* which came off Melo's press in 1618, we note the similarity (though not total identity either) between its version of the *hallel* and the one in Melo's Haggadah. We turn next to the *Segunda Parte del Sedur*, the prayer book for the three festivals which was printed for Amsterdam's second sephardic congregation Neve Salom in 1612 and which contains the Spanish text of the Haggadah (the only printing of the Spanish text of the Haggadah in the Netherlands prior to Melo's) we note that it contains two distinct Spanish versions of the same psalms, one in the '*halel grande* recited in the synagogue before (*sic*) the evening service' on the first two nights of Passover and the other in the *hallel* of the Haggadah. It is the former which corresponds to the version in Melo's Haggadah. Finally we turn back to the *Libro de Oracyones* and ... lo and behold! it too contains these distinct Spanish translations of the *hallel*, one in the service for the New Moon and the other in the Haggadah!³⁴ We may be sure, however, that the direct source for the text of the psalms in Melo's Haggadah is not the *Libro de Oracyones* (which has only the second half of psalms 115 and 116 in two distinct versions³⁵). It stands to reason that Melo turned to the 1618 *Orden de Oraciones de Mes*: for instance, '*en su garganta*' (instead of '*con su garganta*', which makes no sense) in 115, 7 is found only in that *Orden de Oraciones de Mes*.

To sum up, we must credit David Abenatar Melo with some personal initiative in the redaction of his Haggadah. It is no small matter that he made a deliberate choice between two Ferrara Spanish versions of the *hallel* for inclusion in his Haggadah, and rejected the one included in the Haggadah of his predecessors: the *Libro de Oracyones* and the *Segunda Parte del Sedur*. The version he used is found, *grosso modo*, on other pages of both these books, as well as in the *Orden de Oraciones de Mes* which came off his own press four years earlier. The alternate version is close to but not identical with the one in the Ferrara Psalter.

Thus we have a visible link between the David Abenatar Melo of his 1622 Haggadah and the David Abenatar Melo of his 1626 'The 150 Psalms of David in the Spanish Language, in Various Rhymes, Composed by David Abenatar Melo in Accord with the True Translation of Ferrara (...)'. Melo's preoccupation with this

³⁴ This amazing fact clinches the point made in the preceding footnote.

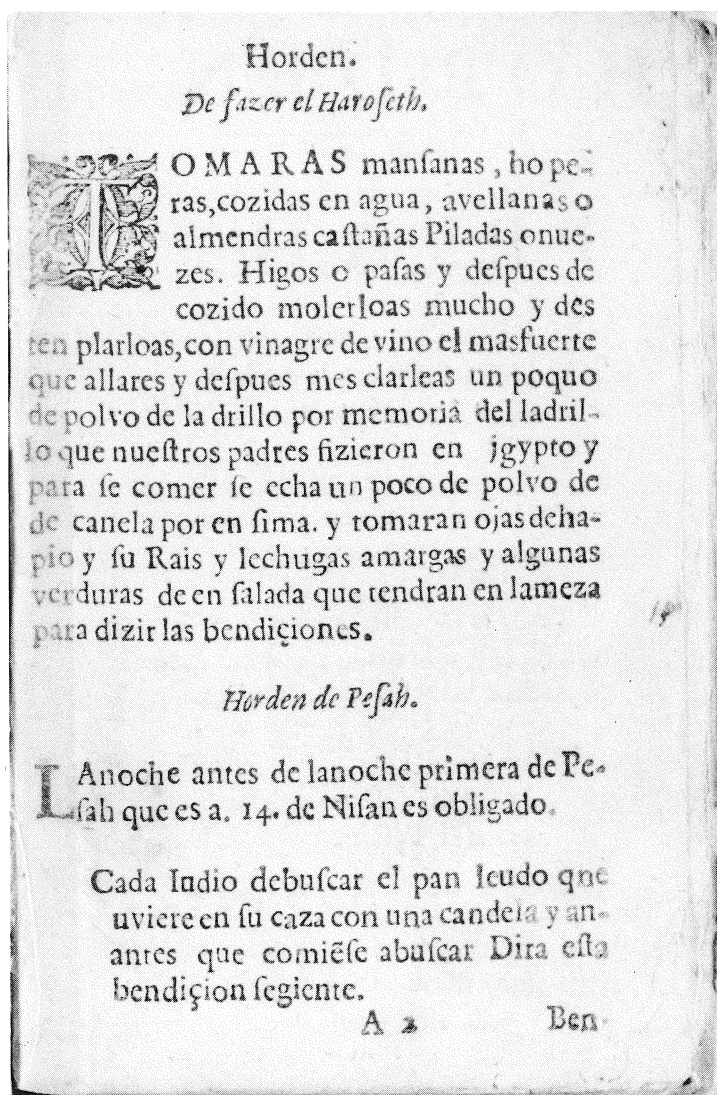
³⁵ Due to the *hallel* of the New Moon being truncated.



2 Title-page Melo Haggadah [1622]

sacred book accompanied him from Lisbon to Amsterdam, and from Amsterdam to Hamburg. There is clear-cut evidence that before his arrest by the Inquisition in 1609 he had in his possession the Ferrara pocket-edition of the Psalms in Spanish.³⁶ In his poetic masterpiece, Melo presents psalm 114 in two versions, one of which he

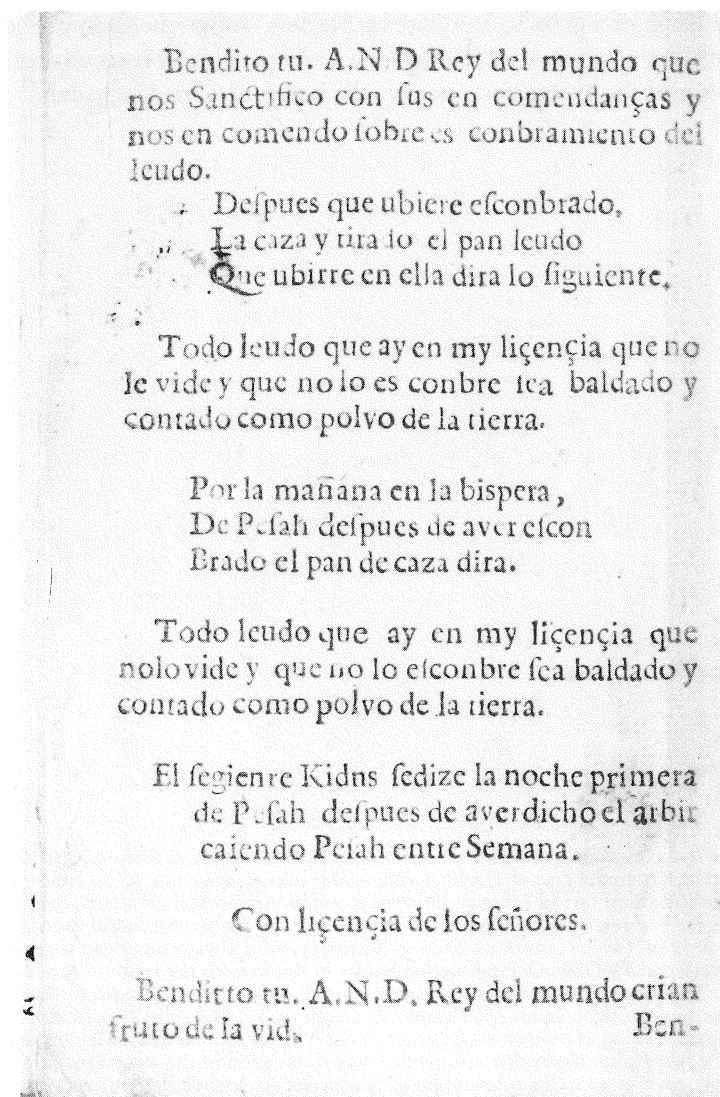
³⁶ Cf. H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian*, p. 187-188; *id.*, *Deux études portugaises / Two Portuguese Studies* (Braga 1991) p. 53-55. An exhaustive comparison between the Ferrara Bible and the Ferrara *Psalterium de David* is yet another desideratum. (We have consulted the *unicum* of the latter in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.)



3 Recipe for *haroset* in Melo Haggadah

composed before his arrest by the Inquisition. Both contain the word *barvezes* ('rams'), known in Spanish only from the Ferrara publications, followed by the gloss *corderos*.³⁷ Psalm 115 has grown at Melo's hands from 18 to 33 verses, but traces of the Ferrara Psalter are unmistakable, including the picturesque archaic verb

³⁷ Cf. Manuel Alvar, *La leyenda de Pascua, Tradición cultural y arcaísmo léxico en una Hagadá de Pesah en judeo-español* (Barcelona 1986) p. 60-63; H.P. Salomon, *Portrait of a New Christian*, p. 187-188, note 53.



4 Annulment of leaven on the Eve of Passover in Melo Haggadah

enfiuzar (115, 8), eliminated in the Haggadah of the *Libro de Oracyones*³⁸:

... Siendo que ellos los hazen, j en ellos *se enfiuzan*, y esperan ...³⁹

³⁸ *Libro de Oracyones* (p. 137r): ... *todo que confia en ellos*; Ferrara Bible: ... *todo el que se enfiuzia* (sic) *en ellos*. For another case of 'modernization' in the Haggadah of the *Libro de Oracyones*, cf. H.P. Salomon, 'A Fifteenth Century Haggada ...', p. 228, n. 21.

³⁹ Cf. *Los 150 Psalmos de David in lengua espannola, en uarias rimas, conpuestos por David Abenatar melo, conforme a la uerdadera Traduccion ferraresqua, con algunas aleguorias del Autor* (Frankfurt [i.e., Hamburg] 1626) p. 206-207.

The addition of a gloss to facilitate his readers' comprehension of the cherished 'Ferrara word' is, as it were, a Melo hallmark and provides yet another indication of his authorship of the Portuguese prayer which precedes his Haggadah.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ There are five occurrences of *baldar* in the Ferrara Bible's version of Psalms: 33,10 (2); 89, 34; 119,119; 119,126. In the case of 33,10 (*A. fizo baldar consejo de gentes, y fizo baldar pensamientos de pueblos*) (identical text in *Libro de Oraciones* and its Amsterdam offshoots) the first *baldar* translates the Hebrew verb *ferar* (as in the Pentateuch) and the second *baldar* translates the Hebrew verb *nu'* (which occurs six times in Numbers and is always translated there by the Spanish verb *vedar*). Obviously the second *baldar* in this verse is the result of carelessness or a misprint. The Ferrara Psalter makes the correction: *A. baldo consejo de gentes: y fizo dexar pensamientos de pueblos*. In his *150 Psalmos de David* (p. 51) Melo has: *Fizo baldar Adonai, / I bolver en sus cabeças, / el conseio da las gentes, / i la (?) de los pueblos ueda*. Melo characteristically glosses the first *baldar* (*bolver en sus cabeças*). His elimination of the second *baldar* is quite remarkable, even more so his substitution of the correct (as regards Ferrara) *vedar*, which the Ferrara Psalter does not furnish. Cf., however, *Ordenança de las Oraciones* (Venice 1552): *A. baldó consejo de gentios, vedó pensamientos de pueblos* (we cite the unrevised Venice 1622 reprint). (An exhaustive comparison between this prayer-book and the *Libro de Oraciones* – especially as regards the scriptural material – is a desideratum. Cf. M. Morreale, 'El Sidur Ladinado de 1552', *Romance Philology* 17, 2 (1963) p. 332-338; H.P. Salomon, 'Was There a Traditional Spanish Translton of Sephardi Prayers Before 1552?', *The American Sephardi* 6, 1-2 (1973) p. 78-90.) Cf. *Biblia de Alba: El Señor quebranta el conseio de las gentes: reprueva los pensamientos de los pueblos*. In Psalm 89,34 Ferrara *baldar* (maintained by Melo, *Los 150 Psalmos*, p. 156), corresponds to Hebrew *ferar*. In Psalm 119 the *baldar* of v. 119 corresponds to Hebrew *sabbat* and the *baldar* of v. 126 to Hebrew *ferar*. Again characteristically Melo glosses one (*barás deperder*) and keeps the other: *mira, Señor, que an baldado tus inimiguos tu ley* (*Los 150 Psalmos de David*, p. 223-224). We express our gratitude to our good friends C. Greenbaum, F. J. Hoogewoud, A.K. Offenberg, I.S.D. Sassoon and H. Zabari for their kind help with this article. A complete set of photocopies of the Melo Haggadah is held in the Bibliotheca Rosentaliana (press mark Ros. 19 C 9).