Another ‘Lost’ Book Found: The Melo Haggadah, Amsterdam 1622

- Harm den Boer and Herman Prins Salomon

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, pinsoes, 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 Yorn 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, Trasladado en Español (...) Estampado por industria y despesa de David Abenatar mello .A. primero de suän de 5377 [June 4, 1617]. En Amstradam.a.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

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. Offenberg, ‘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.
was printed at Dordrecht in 1584. This, in turn, was a new edition of the *Sedur de Oraciones de mes* (...) printed at Ferrara in 1552.

Melo's last publication at Amsterdam was *Horden de Pesah Saber. Como se deve fazer el Haroseth y como se debe esconbrar la caza de leudo y la Hagadah. Em Amstradama, Estanpado por endustria y des peza de Dauid 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. 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.

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. Among the very few items missing was Melo's Haggadah.

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 bedtime prayer in Portuguese. Seeligmann makes no mention of this prayer, nor

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


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does his predecessor C.P. Burger. 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 people 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, poure, Bençaô, restaôraçaô), it is set in a type-face different from those of the Haggadah, precedes the latter's title-page and is not mentioned thereon.


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

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. 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. 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 seijaô 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 (batim)...’ 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 baldar does not have it (nor, for that matter, does the Portuguese baldar). Thus, Ferrara’s
baldar, while picturesque, is in reality a mistranslation.\textsuperscript{17} The author of the prayer may well have picked up baldar in the sense of ‘annull’ 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.\textsuperscript{18} This will be the first and last time that it occurs in a Portuguese text with that meaning.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{magnum opus}, the personalized rendition of the Psalms in Spanish verse, which appeared at Hamburg in 1626. There he writes:

\begin{quote}
... 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.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

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

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Cf. Israel S. Révah, ‘Hispanisme et judaisme des langues parlées et écrites par les Sefardim’, \textit{Actas del primer simposio de estudios sefardies} (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’.
\item The word also occurs in Ferrara Ex. 12,15, which deals precisely with the search for leaven before the Passover begins: \textit{Siete dias cencelas 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’ \textit{batil} (cf. Ferrara Lv. 2,13; 26,6 and Onkelos, \textit{ad loc.}) Ferrara also mistranslates the Hebrew verb ferar (‘to break’) by \textit{baldarin} all nine verses of Pentateuch occurrence although. Onkelos has \textit{batifin} but six of them. Cf. Haim Vidal Sephiha, \textit{Le Ladino, Judeo-Espagnol Calque} (Paris 1973) s.v. baldar.
\item J. Corominas (\textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{hapax legomenon} of \textit{batil} in Eccl. 12, 3 (\textit{e cessen las mueles}). Among the Jews of Amsterdam a «Dutch» verb \textit{battelen} referred specifically and exclusively to the «annulment of leaven» on the day before Passover. Cf. J. L. Voorzanger and J. E. Polak Jz., \textit{Het Joodsch in Nederland, aan het Hebreeuwsch en andere talen ontleende woorden en zegswijzen} (Amsterdam 1915) p. 93.
\item ‘Asi que te deues contentar, amiguo letor ... suplicandote que recibas my voluntad ... y su poco ofresido ... recibiblo por mucho, condicon y propiedad del Dios Bendito y atributo suo ... me baste el amparo de aquel Señor a quien dedico esta pequenba ofrenda, que conoce y ve my corazon ...’ Cf. H.P. Salomon, \textit{Portrait of a New Christian}, fig. 13j, p. 177. Cf. Mishnah, \textit{Menahot} 13, 11.
\item ‘el bien que nos tiene prometido’; cf. op. cit., fig. 13i, p. 177.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotes}
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. An autobiographical gloss following his Spanish version of Psalm 30 is indeed couched in Portuguese. 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 statutatory 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. We do not 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 *Horden 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.

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

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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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Rogo ati Senhor do mundo que feijaô baldados & anullados todos os maus sonhos que sonhar de noute, & feijaô revogadas todas as más sentenças de minha caza em decretos de Bençãô, & Deus Gracioso & Piadoso tu.

Senhor do mundo caza de todas as causas, único & Omnipotente Monarca de todo o universo, semente a ti he manifestado como dono dos pene mentos, o muyto que deixo servirte, e que a meu pesar me faltou as forças para cumprir com meu dever, pello que aviso em tua Summa Clemencia, que até breve oração feija taô aceita diante do Divino Tribunal como era

O sacrifício do povo, não reparando na quantidade do oferecimento, fez ao boa vontade de quem o trazia 

& Afli rogo a tua Divina Majestade que uses comigo de tuas piedadem em concederme teus auxilhos para te amar com coração perfeito. afasta de mim todo ruí pensamento, & feijaô anullados meus pecados diante tua corte Celeste, pois fábes que jamais cuidey ofenderete. & quando for tempo de partirmel deste Mundo, feija admitida minha alma com misericordia, guarda, ampara, & protege a todas as prendas de minha estimação, acrecentando os dias de fúas vidas em glória de teu Santo Nome, mezinha os enfermos de teu Povo, e delira com feliz parto as mulheres prenhas, abunda com a influência de tuas Ben-
facsimile. The earliest known separate Haggadah accompanied by a Spanish translation (printed in Hebrew characters) appeared at Venice in 1609 (Yaari 36). The first separate Haggadah entirely in Spanish (in Latin characters) appeared at Venice in 1619 (Yaari 38). It is entitled: seder haggadah sel pesah Orden de la agada de noche de Pascoa de Pesah, tradusida de la original Hebraica conforme la ordenaron nuestros sabios, con su bendicion de la mesa al postre, con licenza de los superiores en Venetia, MDCXIX. appresso Giacomo Sarzina. 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. 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. 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. 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

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

28 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 Misunderstanding of the original text also occurs, e.g., Ferrara’s ‘tu abre a el’ becomes ‘tu alba a el’.

31 The Sarzina Haggadah, as its title specifies, contains the Grace After Meals; the Melo Haggadah does not: a regrettable omission!
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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 *envolunta* faze.  
**Haggadah in Libro de Oracyones**
(3) y nuestro Dio en los cielos todo lo que *envolunta* faze.  
**Melo Haggadah**
(3) y nuestro dio en los cielos todo lo que *envolunto* fizo.  
**Ferrara Psalter**
(3) Y nuestro Dio en los cielos; todo lo que *envolunto*, 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, *naris* a ellos y no huen  
**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 *Psalterism de Daud* (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 Oracyones
(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 Oracyones
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 Oracyones
(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 Oracyones
(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 vuestras hijos.

Haggadah in Libro de Oracyones
(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 ‘halei 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! 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 versions). 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

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34 This amazing fact clinches the point made in the preceding footnote.
35 Due to the hallel of the New Moon being truncated.
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.\footnote{Cf. H.P. Salomon, \textit{Portrait of a New Christian}, p. 187-188; \textit{id., Deux études portugaises / Two Portuguese Studies} (Braga 1991) p. 53-55. An exhaustive comparison between the Ferrara Bible and the Ferrara \textit{Psalterium de David} is yet another desideratum. (We have consulted the \textit{unicum} of the latter in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.)} In his poetic masterpiece, Melo presents psalm 114 in two versions, one of which he
composed before his arrest by the Inquisition. Both contain the word *barvezes* ('rabs'), known in Spanish only from the Ferrara publications, followed by the gloss *corderos.* 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

Another ‘Lost’ Book Found

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

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

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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.

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

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 Oracyones 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 veder). 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 volver en sus cabezas/el conseio da las gentes,i la (?) de los pueblos ueda. Melo characteristically glosses the first baldar (volver en sus cabezas). His elimination of the second baldar is quite remarkable, even more so his substitution of the correct (as regards Ferrara) veder, which the Ferrara Psalter does not furnish. Cf., however, Ordenança de las Oraciones (Venice 1552): A. baldó consejo de gentios, védó pensamientos de pueblos (we cite the unrevised Venice 1622 reprint). (An exhaustive comparison between this prayer-book and the Libro de Oracyones – 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 Transition of Sephardi Prayers Before 1552?’, The American Sephardi 6, 1-2 (1973) p. 78-90.) Cf. Biblia de Alba: El Senor 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 (harás 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. Zahari 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).