

LADINO RABBINIC WORKS PUBLISHED IN BELGRADE: A RICH JEWISH PAST ON ITS WAY TO OBLIVION¹

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Abstract

Among the numerous Jewish books published in Belgrade between 1837 and 1905, there are approximately sixty Ladino works written by Sephardi authors scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean. Except for some novels, historical books, grammars of Hebrew language and a method for studying German, the majority of Ladino works published in Belgrade are of a religious character. The bulk of Ladino rabbinic literary production in the Balkans was printed in Hebrew Rashi letters which makes these works unique but not easy to access. Works of rabbinic content are a valuable source of information about the life and work of pious Sephardi writers, the religious life of the Sephardim scattered in different Jewish communities of the Balkans, and their local customs and differing ways of applying Jewish law.

While an important inventory and study of Ladino books was published in 1990 in Serbian by Ženi Lebl, titled *Jewish books published in Belgrade 1837-1905*, the works cited have not as yet received scholarly attention. The aim of this article is to revisit Lebl's catalogue to identify relevant halakhic and ethical rabbinic works, as well as prayerbooks, written in Judeo-Spanish and published in Belgrade, thereby shedding light on Jewish printing in Serbia and the literary production of the most salient nineteenth-century Sephardic rabbis from the Balkans and the surrounding area.

Keywords: Sephardim; Ladino; Rabbis; Jewish printing houses; Belgrade.

Ladino rabbinic literature

From the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, numerous religious works have been written by Ladino-speaking Sephardic rabbis and published in localities with Jewish population scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean. Almost the entire Ladino rabbinic literary production was printed in Hebrew Rashi script which makes these works

¹ This research has been done in the framework of the project “*Ginze Sefarad* (2013-2015): Edition and Study of Historical Documents and Hebrew and Halakhical Texts” (Ref. HAR2012-34338, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness) and supported by a Marie Curie Intra European Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme (2014-2016). Email: katja.smid1@mail.huji.ac.il

exceptional in their appearance, and complex to access because of their Jewish content expressed in a Romance vernacular spoken among the Sephardim of the Orient.

Thanks to the contributions of the following scholars we have some pioneer studies regarding Ladino rabbinic language and literature. Although many of them focused their research on the *Me'am lo'ez* (Constantinople, 1730-1899) – see, for example, Crews (1960: 13-106); Gonzalo Maeso and Pascual Recuero (1964, 1969, 1970, 1974); Romero (1992: 81-106); Hassán (1995: 321-324); Romeu Ferré (2000); Asenjo (2003); García Moreno (2004); Bunis and Adar-Bunis (2011: 412-505) – many research opportunities still remain within this extensive encyclopedic Bible commentary in Ladino. In addition, studies of other genres of rabbinic literature in Ladino include: Rodrigue Schwarzwald's study of the linguistic and literary features of the Ladino translations of *Pirke Avot* (1989), Passover *Hagadá* (1996, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a), prayer books (2010b, 2011, 2012) and halakhic guides (2014); Lazar published several editions of the Bible and its translations (1988, 1992), prayer books (1993a, 1995) and moral works (1993b) in Ladino; Lehmann's studies of historical and social features of the rabbinic moral literature in Ladino (2000, 2002, 2003, 2005); Bunis' broad research on the linguistic aspects of the rabbinical discourse of classical and modern Judeo-Spanish language (1984, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2011, 2012); Hassán's contributions to the study of the Ferrara Bible (1994) and different genres of rabbinic literature (1995, 2008); Romero's studies of moral (2003), halakhic (1998), and especially aggadic rabbinic works (1992, 2001); Benaim's recent contribution to the study of the Ladino language in the rabbinic *responsa* genre (2011); and, Albarral Albarral's edition of moral rabbinic works (2001) and Ladino translations of the Bible (2010).

Concerning Sephardic authors who published religious books in Belgrade, we are fortunate to have a first catalogue and study of Jewish books printed in Belgrade between 1837 and 1905, published by Lebl as a book in Serbian (1990) and as an article in Hebrew (1992). This pioneer work is an accurate and valuable aid but, unfortunately, has never reached a wide reading public. Thanks to Lebl's inventory of Ladino books published in Belgrade as well as other studies and bibliographic lists referring to Sephardi authors from the Balkans (see Mihailović, 1979: 39-52, and 1982; Vidaković, 1986; Nezirović, 1992; Štulić and Vučina, 2003: 195-298), we can better understand the important role the Jewish printing houses in Belgrade and its surroundings had throughout the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Jewish publishing in Belgrade and Ladino reading public in the Balkans

Compared to the biggest Ladino publishing centers like Constantinople, Salonika, Smyrna, Jerusalem, Sofia, Vienna and others (see Ben Na'eh, 2001: 73-96; Studemund-Halévy and Collin, 2008: 149-211; Hacker, 2012: 17-63), Belgrade played a minor but not irrelevant role in the publishing and dissemination of Judeo-Spanish works in the Balkans (Mihailović, 1979: 39-52; Lebl, 1990).

The publishing of Ladino works in Belgrade flourished soon after the foundation in 1831 of the first printing house in the town. The Principality of Serbia was an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire between 1817 and 1882. After 1830, it achieved semi-independent status under the supreme rule of the Sultan when Miloš Obrenović (1815-1839) became the Crown Prince of the Serbian Principality. As a result of reforms brought by this political change, the Serbian Principality had the right to establish schools, hospitals and printing houses.

According to Lebl (1990: 15-21), who offers valuable information about the foundation of the first printing house of Belgrade in 1831 based on local archival material, Prince Obrenović took the initiative and sent two of his representatives, Avram Petronijević and Cvetko Rajović, to buy the printing equipment in Saint Petersburg which was brought to Belgrade in May 1831. During the first years, the printing house was administered –under the supervision of Prince Obrenović – by the German worker Adolf Berman, who arrived in Belgrade together with the printing equipment from Saint Petersburg (Lebl, 1990: 15-21). After 1834, the Belgrade printing house started to publish numerous books in Serbian, Old Church Slavonic, Russian, German, Latin, French, Italian, English, Wallachian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew and Ladino.

Lebl (1990) makes an inventory and description of approximately twenty Hebrew and sixty Ladino books published in Belgrade in the period between 1837 and 1905.² Over the course of time, this state printing house, operating under the custody of the Prince, had several names (in Serbian): “Knjažeska Pečatnja”, “Knjažesko-Srbska Knjigopečatnja”, “Pravitelstvena Tipografija”, “Beogradska Tipografija”, “Tipografija Knjaževstva Srbskog” and “Državna Štamparija”.

Between 1837 and 1856, at least fourteen Ladino books were published in the printing house. This fact is acknowledged in their title page that reads ‘printed in the printing house of the Prince of Serbia’ (“estampado en la Estamparia del Príncipe de la Serþia”). On other Ladino books from this period, we only find the place of printing without specifying the details about the printing house.³

Between 1867 and 1872 at least six other Ladino books were published in the same printing house: in their title pages it is noted – during this period in Cyrillic script – that they were published in the state printing house of Belgrade (“U državnoj štampariji”).

After 1858, a new law came into force, permitting private printing houses in Serbia. Thus, between 1874 and 1890 (Lebl, 1990: 19-23), seven new printing houses were founded and started publishing Jewish books in Belgrade. We find data about some of these printing houses on the title pages of several Hebrew and Ladino books (reproduced in Lebl’s catalogue) published between 1875 and 1890: the printing house of N. Stefanović and

² Thanks to the development of various rare books digitalization projects, more Ladino books published in Belgrade have been found. It, therefore, seems necessary to update and complete Lebl’s inventory.

³ Probably, the printing house of the Prince of Serbia was at the time the only one which had Hebrew types. Nevertheless, to this point we cannot discard the possibility that these books were printed in other printing house(s) in Belgrade which might also have had Hebrew types.

Companion (“Štamparija N. Stefanovića i Druga”), the printing house of Moses David Alkalay (known better by his German name “Verlag von Moses David Alkalay’s Buchhandlung in Belgrad”), the commercial printing house of Đorđe Kimpanović (“Trgovačka štampa Đorđa Kimpanovića”), the commercial printing house of Lazar Isaković (“Trgovačka štamparija Lazara Isakovića”), and the printing house of P. S. Taušanović (“Štamparija P. S. Taušanovića”), among others.

After 1890, most of the Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish books were published in Belgrade in the printing house “Prosveta” [‘Education’] of Šmuel Horovic (in Ladino “Estamparía de Šemuel Ħorovic”), acquired in 1880 and successfully administered by him until 1914, and then by his son Kornel Horovic until 1941 (Lebl, 1990: 23-24).

Throughout their history, many Ladino books were damaged or lost and today we find Ladino publications from Belgrade held as rare books in several Ladino collections mostly in Israel, Europe and the United States. According to Lebl (1990: 47), Ladino books in the Belgrade printing house had print runs of 1,000-1,500 copies or less, sponsored by patrons who were mentioned and praised on the title page. During the nineteenth century, elsewhere many Ladino books were sponsored by the *prenumeranti* system (in Ladino “los aḥonados”), whereby individuals or institutions sponsored publications with subscription (Bunis, 1996: 155). The Sephardi authors acknowledged their support and thanked to the subscribers listed on the first (see, for example, Papo, 1862: 3ab, the first title page and 2b-3a, the second one) or the last pages of the book (see, for example, Papo, 1865: 112ab and Altaraç, 1904: 106-112).

These lists of donors are a rich testimony about the important members and institutions from Belgrade and other Sephardic communities in the Balkans. From the lists of subscribers in two Ladino books, *Séfer Damésec Eli ‘ézer: Oraḥ ḥayim* (Belgrade, 1862) and *Séfer Damésec Eli ‘ézer: Yoré de ‘á* (Belgrade, 1865), both written by the Sarajevan Rabbi Eli ‘ézer Šem Tov Papo, we find information about donors from the local Sephardic communities of Belgrade (Serbia), Sarajevo, Travnik (Bosnia), Monastir (Macedonia), and Split (Croatia) (Papo, 1862: 3a, the first title page, and 2b-3a, the second title page; Papo, 1865: 112ab), as well as from more distant ones like Vidin, Lom, Ruse, Nikopol (Bulgaria), Bucharest (Romania), and others (Papo, 1862: 3b, the first title page). Another excellent example is the long list of the *prenumeranti* we find at the end of the very popular prayer book *Qehilat Ya ‘acob* (Altaraç, 1904: 106-112) which was published mainly thanks to the generous support of numerous subscribers from Belgrade (listed on pages 106-111) as noted by the author:

Estos son los nombres de los señores aḥonados en este nuevo libro [...] que me ayudaron con sus aḥonemas adelantado por poder quitar mi libro a luz que las más grandes gracias merecen el kolél y los se’ yehidim de Belgrado que ellos me ayudaron lo más mucho asegún verán aquí sus nombres (Altaraç, 1904: 106-107).

These are the names of the honorable subscribers in this new book [...] who helped me with their subscriptions in advance to publish my book; the biggest appreciation is

deserved by the community and the important individuals from Belgrade who helped me the most as you will see here their names (Altař, 1904: 106-107).

On the last pages (111-112), we find lists of individuals and institutions from smaller Sephardic communities like Šabac (in Ladino Šapça), Smederevo (Semendra), Obrenovac (Obrenovça), Niš, and Zemun (Žemlin) from Serbia, as well as Sarajevo and Banja Luka (Saray and Bañaluca) from Bosnia, and Sofia from Bulgaria.

On the one hand, such details in Ladino books confirm that the Jewish publishing in the Belgrade printing houses was of great importance for both the Sephardi authors and readers from Serbia and other surrounding communities from the Balkans. On the other hand, they broaden our knowledge about the impact the printing activity had on the Ladino speaking public beyond this area in the nineteenth and the twentieth century when the Ladino book market was expanded and a new network of readers was created thanks to the common Jewish minority language, connecting several Sephardi communities from the Balkans with those of the Romanian United Principalities and the Ottoman Empire.

Sephardic rabbis and works from the Balkans

The majority of Ladino books published in Belgrade are of a religious character. Nevertheless, there are also some secular books like Hebrew language grammars (Lebl, 1990: 62-63; Bunis, 2002: 155-212; Gomel, 2006: 53-61), a method for learning German in Ladino (Lebl, 1990: 140), books dealing with history and geography, novels, and even some biographies (Lebl, 1990: 98, 130, 144), written by Sephardic authors who tried to catch up with modern European literary trends and satisfy the new interests of the Ladino reading public at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The authors of Ladino pious books were Sephardic rabbis from the Balkans who translated, adapted, and abbreviated from Hebrew sources or published original rabbinic writings for Ladino readers who were not able to access the rabbinic literature in the holy tongue. Ya'acob Mošë Hay Altař, author of the latest Ladino prayer book in Rashi script published in 1904 in Belgrade, praises the quality of the Jewish books printed in the Serbian capital and emphasizes the importance of works in the vernacular for the education of the Sephardic Jews in the area:

Y cierta-mente que estos sabios, con ansí unos libros que son como trešoros y cilleros de oraciones, abrieron los ojos de los ĵidiós del Oriente y el Balcán con darles en sus manos unos libros llenos de moral y oraciones del año y sus paragrafes lo_que es de demenester y obligo santo para cada ĵidió. Verdad-mente que la civdad de Belogrado siempre fue afamada en la Ley y la literatura ĵudeśma, y los más mejores libros con estampa clara y bien areglados se estamparon en Belogrado. (Altař, 1904: 3)

And certainly these sages, with such books which are like treasures and storehouses of prayers, opened the eyes of the Jews from the Orient and the Balkans, putting in their hands books full of morality and prayers for the year and their laws which is a mandatory and holy obligation for every Jew. The city of Belgrade has truly always been famous in the

Torah and Judezmo literature, and the best books with clear print and finely edited were published in Belgrade. (Altaraç, 1904: 3)

Prayer books

Among various genres of rabbinic books published in Belgrade (as well as in other places), prayer books in Hebrew and Ladino were indispensable among of the Sephardim to facilitate the daily synagogal services and the celebration of the festivals and other important events in the Jewish life-cycle. From 1837 to 1927, there were around ten Ladino prayerbooks published in Belgrade that have been used by many Sephardim over the course of time. The following four examples of Ladino prayer books from 1843, 1896, 1904 and 1927 will briefly illustrate the history and development of this particular genre among Sephardic authors who published in Belgrade over almost one century.

In the *Séder Tefilá mikol hašaná*, an order of prayers for the whole year (317 folios, published in Belgrade in 1842 by Yisrael Ḥayim, which apparently sold out (Lebl 1990: 69-70) and was reprinted in a revised edition in 1843, we can appreciate the author's attempt to offer to Sephardic users a comprehensive prayer book, including prayers in Hebrew and Ladino, accompanied by moral instructions.

Yisrael Ḥayim from Belgrade is one of the outstanding figures from the Balkans, involved in the publication of Jewish books before the existence of the Belgrade printing house. After 1813, he moved from Belgrade to Vienna where, at first, he became an editor of sacred books in Hebrew and, later on, he specialized in the translation of pious works into Ladino and re-editions of legal and moralistic books, prayers and didactic publications. Finally, he also carried out the second Ladino translation of the complete Bible that came out in the Habsburg metropole between 1813 and 1816 (Lebl, 1990: 27-28, 69-70; Bunis, 1996: 151-166; Quintana, 2013: 35-55). Around 1836, the experienced editor of Jewish books returned to Belgrade where he published two editions (1842 and 1843) of the mentioned prayer book, the only work printed in his hometown.

Séder Tefilá mikol hašaná begins with legal and moral instructions regarding commandments and laws related to praying, compiled from other Hebrew moral books and translated into Ladino by Ḥayim (1943: 1b). In the first one-hundred pages, we find the vocalized prayers in Hebrew entwined with short instructions and some prayers in Ladino. The situation changes in the last two-hundred pages which – with the exception of some Ladino instructions and prayers for Pésah and Šavu'ot performed according to the Sephardic rite (Ḥayim, 1943: 279a, 314a-315a, 316a-317b) – are mostly in Hebrew.

Yismah Yisrael, published in Belgrade in 1896, is another prayer book which combines laws in Ladino and Hebrew prayers, written by the Macedonian rabbi Ya'acob Yosef Yisrael and edited by his son Yosef Ya'acob Yisrael. Thanks to the introduction and the final pages, written by his son in Judeo-Spanish, besides its legal and moralistic content, this book is a rare source of valuable data about several synagogues, private study houses, and the local history of the yešivot (rabbinic accademies) from Monastir (Macedonia),

established by his father, as well as about several personalities and their role within the community (Yisrael, 1896: title page, 1-2, 283). During his stay as an emissary in Vienna, Yosef Ya'acob Yisrael didn't succeed in publishing his father's rabbinic writings, but, fortunately, managed to fulfill his wish in the printing house of Šemuel Ħorovič in Belgrade, which brought out two books, *Yismaḥ Yisrael* (1896) and *Séfer Yagel Ya'acob* (1900). His story tells us about the difficulties Jewish authors in the Balkans had in printing their works and, moreover, offers us a glimpse into religious life of the Sephardic community in Belgrade, describing vividly its religious customs and events such as sermons delivered in Judeo-Spanish and Serbian by the famous rabbis of the city (Yisrael, 1896: 1, 3, 283).

Much more systematic and elaborated than all the previous books, is a 464 page bilingual prayer book for the whole year, *El nuevo 'avodat hašaná nombrado Qehilat Ya'acob*, published in 1904 by Ya'acob Mošé Ħay Altaraç, who was much more successful in offering to the Sephardim of the Balkans a beautiful, comprehensive and up-to-date book of prayers. In the introduction (1904: 3-13), he makes a curious overview of the most important authors from the Balkans and their contribution to Ladino rabbinic literature. He mentions, too, all the previous editions of the prayer books from Belgrade (1904: 3) and gives credit to earlier authors who contributed to improve the quality of prayer books during the nineteenth century. The author calls it a 'Ladino book of prayers and laws' ("libro de oraciones y dinim ladino"; Altaraç, 1904: 463), being a successful compilation of Hebrew prayers, translated into Ladino (they are more numerous than those in Ħayim's prayer book from 1843), intertwined with instructions, laws, and moral considerations, as well as some moral and aggadic literary materials at the end (a 112 page supplement).

The most unusual prayer book published in Belgrade is without doubt *Lekute tefilot (Oraşjonis Eskuţidas)*, edited in 1927 by Hajim Mordehaj Koen, who compiled (in 25 pages) some selected prayers for the New Year and the Day of Atonement. This is one of the rarest examples of Ladino liturgical texts in Cyrillic script, which deserves scholarly attention because of its unique linguistic features and its Ladino-Serbian character.

Legal and moralistic books

Among the books of legal content published in Belgrade, the most popular ones were *Séfer Damésec Eli'ézer: Óraḥ ḥayim* (1862), an abridged version of laws related to the festivities (232 folios), as well as *Séfer Damésec Eli'ézer: Yoré de'á* (1865), a compendium of mourning laws and Sephardic customs (112 folios), both written by the prolific Sarajevo rabbi Eli'ézer Šem Tov Papo, who, besides legal and moral considerations, offers in his works numerous local references, describing the Sephardic communities in Bosnia and Serbia, making it especially attractive for readers from this region (Gaon, 1937: 535; Bunis, 1984: 151-195; Šmid, 2013a and 2013b).

Another useful book for the ritual slaughterers' guild is *Séfer Zovéaḥ todá*, a 105 folio guide of Jewish laws for animal ritual slaughtering published in 1860, written by Refael Yosef ben Sasón, a Sephardi slaughterer himself who was trained as šoḥet in Salonika, and

worked in Belgrade. In this work, Ben Sasón highlights the ignorance of these particular laws in the small communities located in the margins of the Ottoman Empire, and decided to write a practical guide to educate young men carrying out this important profession within every Jewish community (Ben Sasón, 1860: 2a-4b; Altaraç 1904: 10).

Rabbinic narratives

Aggadic literature has always been a popular literary genre among Ladino readers, published in collections of different kind of narratives, stories, parables, and legends. The most salient ones include: the 84 folio *Séfer Šivhé Bá'al Šem Tov* printed in 1852 in Belgrade which contains one hundred-sixty-five stories (Lebl, 1990: 78); *Mešalim de Šelomó haMélej 'a"h* (1854), edited by Naftalí Ya'acob Eškenazi (Lebl, 1990: 80; Romero, 1992: 213); and, *Séfer Midraš 'Aséret hadiḇerot*, which came out in two editions in 1855 and 1860 (Lebl, 1990: 81, 100).

Religious books for schools

As noted, Belgrade was an important center of Sephardic rabbis in the Balkans and, as expected, throughout the nineteenth century the Jewish printing house also played an important role in publishing books for religious education in schools. In 1886, the 40 page booklet *Yesodé haTorá. Cimientos de la Ley*, first written in Hebrew by the famous Belgrade Rabbi Šim'ón Bernfeld for the Sephardic schools ("fue compuesto por las școlas de los jidiós șpañoles de el Oriente en la lingua santa"), was translated into Ladino by the local teacher ("trešladado en ladino por mano del enseňador") Abraham Yisrael Bejarano. It contains fourteen chapters of short lessons for boys, expressed in a dialogue between the teacher ("el maestro") and the student ("el dišiplo"), teaching the basic doctrine and covenant of the Jewish people, including: the Ten Commandments, Talmud, festivals and fast-days, prayers, prohibited foods, religious obligations for men, honouring the parents and the teacher, etc.

Conclusion

This contribution is a modest attempt to draw attention to the most productive Sephardic rabbis who published in Belgrade and highlight some of their numerous Judeo-Spanish works of religious character which are a precious testimony about the rich Jewish life in the Balkans.

As noted, the primary goal of the Ladino books written by the Sephardic rabbis was to educate their readers about rulings of ritual and legal character and teach them about moral lessons illustrated with aggadic texts in a vernacular language they identify with. Moreover, the authors shared with readers their personal stories and the experience gained as spiritual leaders of Sephardic communities in the diaspora, their joys and inquietudes, depicting, along these lines, an extraordinary self-portrait of themselves and their world. The following

passage, written by Altaraç in the beginning of the twentieth century, is a beautiful description of the rabbis and other religious employees of the community, praising their devotion and serving as a reminder of the importance they have for the well-being of their congregants.

“Dear brothers, certainly, the Torah and Judaism, science and beauty of the Jewish people are in the hands of these men [who are] the instruments of holiness [...]. The entire Torah and Judaism depend on the honored rabbis and their beautiful sermons and teaching about the laws. Science and morality depend on the honored scholars, professors who teach science and morality to our children who will one day, too, become Jewish men [...]. The base of Judaism and its observance also depend on the honored slaughterers and examiners [of cattle before and after slaughter] who have to do their work according to the Torah and its laws. The beauty and the glory depend on the honored cantors with their sonorous voices and sweet tunes which brighten up those who are praying, and embellish the synagogue and its visitors and bring good will and enjoyment so that [people] would run and visit the house of God for every prayer, bringing moral and material benefit; and honored beadles, too, when they maintain all neat and serve everybody with a cheerful face. This is how the Torah, Judaism, science and the beauty of the Jewish people depend on the honored rabbi, cantor, scholar, slaughterer and examiner, beadle mentioned; for this reason we all have to take responsibility for them in time of our festivals and enjoyment for every religious event and award them with donations, since this is its store, for this provides a livelihood for them and their families, with such happiness and content they serve and fulfill their moral obligation to God and to people”⁴ (Altaraç, 1904: 14)

What lies ahead is the unearthing and study of other Ladino rabbinic genres and works and then the compilation of a more complete panoramic picture of rabbinic literary production of the region. Among the many potential areas of study would be to detect networks of influence among the rabbis and explore the regional differences of context regarding laws as well as of literary and linguistic features discovered in the rabbinic writings from the Balkans. As briefly illustrated, further study of rabbinic works from different

⁴ “Hermanos queridos, segura-mente es que la Ley y el júdeísmo, la cencia y la hermośura del pueblo de Yisrael está en mano de estos señores kelé hacodeš [...]. La Ley entera y el júdeísmo depende de los señores raḥanim de parte de sus hermośas prídigas, derašot, y de parte de sus amostramientos de dinim, paragrafes de la Ley. La cencia y el moral depende de los ḥajamim melamedim, profesores que ambežan cencia y moral a muestras criaturas, que y estos tienen que ser una vez jidiós ba'alé batim [...]. También la baža de el júdeísmo y su guadriya depende de los se' šohatim ubodequim que ellos deben haćer sus obras aseğún la Ley y sus dinim. La hermośura y la gloria depende de los se' hažanim siendo con sus sonantes voćes y sabrośos tones se alegran los oracionadores y afermośiguan al c"e y a sus vijitadores, y trayen veluntad buena y plaćer porque coran y vijiten la caśa del Dio en cada oración y trayen provecho moral y materiel; y los se' šamašim también cuando ellos detienen la limpieža y sierven a cada uno con cara alegre. Esto se llama que la Ley, el judesmo, la cencia y la hermośura del pueblo de Yisrael depende de los se' dichos rab, hažán, ḥajam, šv"b šamáš; por esto debemos todos llevar el cargo de ellos, en hora de muestras fiestas y alegriyas en cada ocasión religiośa y regarlos con nedavá, siendo esto es sus boticas, de esto yiven ellos junto sus familias, con cuanta alegriya y contentéz sierven y escapan sus obligos morales enfrente del Dio y de la ġente”. (Altaraç, 1904: 14)

regions would permit us to also understand better outside influences, both from the dominant religious culture of the region and from Jewish cultures of the neighboring regions throughout history.

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