

Musar Literature in Ladino

We may get a first impression of what *musar*¹ books are about from the brief descriptions we find on the title pages of the most representative Ladino musar works, written by Sephardic authors or the translators of the works into the vernacular to inform readers of their content. Rě'uven Ben Avraham, author of *Sefer Tiqqune ha-Nefeš* published in two volumes (Salonika, 1765 and 1775), states that the reader of his book “will find in it the remedy for his soul” (Ben Avraham 1765:[i]a).² The anonymous translator of *Sefer Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Constantinople, 1824), the Ladino version of Yēhī'el Bar Yēquti'el Bar Binyamin Harofeh's *Bet Middot* from the thirteenth century, claims that “musar makes the man tremble [and leads him] to repair his body and his soul with good virtues and to be good in this world and in the world to come” (Bar Yēquti'el 1824:[i]a).³ On the title page of *Sefer Ben ha-Meleḵ wě-ha-Nazir* (Salonika, 1849), its translator, Yiṣḥaq Bēḵor Amarachi, says: “Since I saw that a lot of morality and good manners can be learned from this book, as well as many beautiful stories from the old times, I thought it would be good to translate it into Ladino” (Ibn Ḥasday 1849:[i]a).⁴ *Sefer Ševeṭ Musar* (Izmir, 1860) is described as “an illuminating

1 H. *musar* ‘ethics, morals.’

2 אין איל אליארה איל אומברי רימידיו פארה סו אלמה.
En el ayara el ombre remedyo para su alma.

All translations from Ladino into English were made by the author of this article. Many thanks to David Markovits Farkas for the English revision of my manuscript.

3 מוסר קי לו איסטרימיסי אאיל אומברי אה קי סיאה מתקן סו גוף אי סו נשמה קון לאס מדות בואינאס אה קי טיינה.
איל אומברי בואינו סי אין איסטי עולם סי אין עולם הבה.

Musar ke lo estremese a_el ombre a_ke sea metaken su guf i su neshama kon las midot buenas a ke tenga el ombre bueno si en este 'olam si en 'olam aba.

4 סיינדרו ב'ידי קי די דיטו ליברו סי אינביזה די איל מוג'ו מוסר אי דרך ארץ טאמביין מוג'וס מעשיות אירמוזוס די טיינפו
אנטיגואו מי פאריסיו בואינו די טריולאדארלו אין לאדינו.

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and esteemed book [. . .] that teaches a man and [helps him] to get to know the Holy One, Blessed be He, and its merit will be a shield to us, the holy congregation of Israel, and will open our closed heart to repentance" (Hakohen 1860:[i]a).⁵

The title page of *Pele Yo'eš*, a best-selling moralistic book, written in Hebrew by Eli'ezer Ben Yišḥaq Papo (Sarajevo, 1785–Silistria, 1828) and translated into Ladino by his son Yē'uda Papo (Vienna, 1870–1872, 2 vols.), states: "This book contains fear and morality sweeter than honey [. . .]. Everyone who reads it and puts it into practice will prosper in all the deeds along his path" (Papo 1870:[i]a).⁶ As we read in its introduction, "this book, *Pele Yo'eš*, was published three times in the holy tongue, it was distributed everywhere and it has turned, is turning and will turn many people into good Jews" (Papo 1870:3).⁷ The text says that "it is necessary to obey the orders found in this book more than those of a physician since the one who follows everything written in this book lives in health in this world and goes to Paradise with his boots on" (Papo 1870:6–7).⁸ Papo also mentions one of the advantages of reading musar books in general: "the evil inclination covers the eyes of a person and does not permit one to walk on the righteous path [. . .]; and the real cure for the evil impulse is to read ethics books and this is clearly stated in the books" (Papo 1870:2).⁹

Syendo vide ke de dito libro se enbeza de el mucho musar i dereh erets, tambyen muchos ma'asiyot ermozos de tyenpo antiguo, me paresio bueno de trezladarlo en ladino.

ליב'רו לווזיו אי איסטימאד'ו [...] פארה קי סי קאסטיגו איל אומברי אי סי אינביי פארה קונסיר אאיל שי"ת אי סו זכות סירה מגן אנוחוטרס קומפאניא סאנטה די ישראל קי מו סי אב'רה איל קוראסון איל סיראד'ו פארה טורנאר אין תשובה.

Livro luzyo i estimado [. . .] para ke se kastige el ombre i se enbeze para konoser a_el Sh[em]y[i]"t[ba-rah] i su zehut sera magen a_nozotros, kompanya santa de Yisrael, ke mo se avra el korason el serado para tornar en teshuva.

דיטו ליב'רו קונטייני טימור אי מוראל דולסי מאס קי מייל [...] טודו קיין אין איל מילדארה אי לו אפ'ירמארה אין 6 טודוס סוס איג'וס אי קאריראס פרוספירארה.

Dito libro kontyene temor i moral dulce mas ke myel [. . .]. Todo ken en el meldara i lo afirmara en todos sus echos i kareras prosperara.

איסטי ליב'רו פלא יועץ ייאה סי איסטאנפו אין לשון הקדש טריס ב'זיס אי סי איספארזיו פור טודוס לוס לוגאריס, 7 אי ייאה איזו אי אזי אי ארה אה מונג'ה ג'ינטי בואינוס ג'דייוס.

Este libro *Pele Yo'ets* ya se estanpo en leshon akodesh tres vezes i se esparzio por todos los lugares, i ya izo i aze i ara a muncha djente buenos djidios.

איס מיניסטיר די אקאב'דאר אין לוס אורדיניס די איסטי ליב'רו מאס די לוקי סי אקאב'ידה אין לוס אורדיניס 8 דיל מדיקו. פורקי איל קי אפ'ירמה טודו לוקי דיזי איסטי ליב'רו, ביב'י סאנו אין איסטי מונדו. אי סי ב'ה קו ג'זימיס אה גן עדן.

Es menester de akavidar en los ordenes de este libro mas de lo_ke se akavida en los ordenes del mediko; porke el ke afirma todo lo_ke dize este libro, bive sano en este mundo i se va kon chizmes a Gan eden.

איל יצר הרע לי טאפה לוס אוז'וס די לה פריסונה, אי נו לו דישה איר אין איל קאמינו דיריג'ו [...] קי לה קורה 9 ב'ירדאדירה פור איל יצר הרע איס איל מילדאר ליב'רוס די מוסר. אי אנסי לו דיזין קלארו לוס ליב'רוס.

1 How Do We Define Musar Literature?

On the one hand, musar literature is considered by scholars of Jewish literature to be a literary genre *per se*. The present article aims to draw attention to the production of Judeo-Spanish musar works that have an exclusively ethical content (see Ladino musar works in chronological order in Appendix). As already defined by Tishby and Dan (1970:12), ethical literature is a literary genre in prose “that presents to a wide public views, ideas, and ways of life in order to shape the everyday behavior, thought, and beliefs of this public,” and can be distinguished from other forms of Jewish ethical literature in Hebrew such as aggadic narrative and halakhic literature.

On the other hand, in the Ladino ethical works there are numerous teachings, commentaries and passages on varied subject matter which do not deal with morality exclusively. The best example of this is *Sefer Me'am Lo'ez*, a broad Biblical commentary in Ladino initiated in 1730 by Ya'aqov Kuli, continued by several other Sephardic rabbis and published in numerous volumes between 1730 and 1899, which some scholars consider as a book on morality (Romero 1992a:93–94; Lehmann 2005a:33), though it also contains miscellaneous materials that deal with Jewish law, history, popular knowledge and other topics.¹⁰ In many other Ladino works the rabbinic discourse consists of different genres and subgenres that are intertwined, and it is not surprising to read a halakhic compendium which contains numerous aggadic narratives and moralistic passages such as Eli'ezer Ben Šem Țov Papo's *Sefer Mešeq Beti* (Sarajevo, 1872–74) (Šmid 2012:64–91); or prayer books with extensive halakhic and moralistic commentaries, as for instance Ya'aqov Ben Yosef Yisra'el's *Yismaḥ Yisra'el* (Belgrade, 1896), and Ya'aqov Moše Ḥay Altaraš's *El nuevo avodat ashana nombrado Qēhillat Ya'aqov* (Belgrade, 1904). In these cases it is difficult to delimitate between different genres, but the purpose of these works is undoubtedly to educate the reader, guide him in his beliefs, behavior and way of life, and strengthen his ethical values.

Thus, a relevant question is whether musar texts can be defined by their ethical content, independently of their literary form or genre. If that is the case, besides books that are essentially musar works, many other Ladino rabbinic texts, written and read as instructive and edifying literature between the sixteenth and

El yetser ara' le tapa los ojos de la presona i no lo desha ir en el kamino derecho [. . .]; ke la kura verdadera por el yetser ara' es el meldar livros de musar i ansi lo dizen klaro los livros.

¹⁰ Gaon (1933); Molho (1945); Crews (1960); Gonzalo Maeso and Pascual Recuero (1964, 1969, 1970); Goldberg (1984); Romero (1992a:81–106); Hassán (1995:321–324); Romeu Ferré (2000); Asenjo (2003); García Moreno (2004); Meyuhas-Ginio (2007); Munch (2009); and Bunis and Adar-Bunis (2011).

the nineteenth century, can be considered musar books or works that contain notions of Jewish ethical literature. The forms or genres which, broadly speaking, could also be designated as musar literature are the following: narratives (*ma'asiyot*, *meshalim*, *kuentos*), such as *Pēṭirat Moše Rabbenu* (Constantinople, 1763; Salonika, 1900), *Meshalim de Shelomo Ameleh* (Constantinople, 1766 and 1880; Salonika, 1806; Belgrade, 1854), *Sefer Ben ha-Meleḵ wē-ha-Nazir* (Salonika, 1849 and 1880), just to give a few examples of an extremely rich corpus of stories in Judeo-Spanish;¹¹ the hagiographic literature (*šēvaḥim*) as, for instance, *Sefer Šivḥe ha-Ari* (Constantinople, 1766; Salonika, 1812 and 1883; Izmir, 1856 and 1878; Jerusalem, 1876 and 1911); *Sefer Šivḥe Ba'al Šem Ṭov* (Belgrade, 1852; Salonika, 1867 and 1872; New York, 1987); *Šivḥe Rabbi Šim'on Ben Yoḥay* (Izmir, 1880; Salonika, 1888);¹² as well as very popular Ladino texts in verse or rhymed prose, such as *ko[m]plas* (coplets) of moral content such as *Las malas kostumbres*, *Los extremos de la vida* or *Las edades del ombre* (Romero 2003).

2 Musar Literature in Ladino

I use the terms Ladino, Judeo-Spanish and Judezmo as synonyms for the language spoken and written by the Sephardim after the expulsions and migrations from the Iberian Peninsula, in which a rich literature was written between the sixteenth century and the mid-twentieth century in the most important centers of Ottoman Jewish printing (Salonika, Constantinople, Izmir, Jerusalem), as well as outside the Ottoman Empire (Venice, Livorno, Vienna, Belgrade).¹³ Nearly all the Ladino literary production between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century is of a religious character and was printed in Rashi-font Hebrew script.¹⁴ Vernacular Rabbis,¹⁵ or rabbis who wrote in the local Jewish vernacular rather than or in addition to Hebrew, provided the Sephardic reading public with numerous works in Judeo-Spanish,

11 Romero (1992a:120–132, 1992b, 1993, 2017); Romeu Ferré (1999); and Martínez Bautista (2022).

12 Riaño López (1993); and Lazar (1999:727–779).

13 In this article, I do not refer to the ethical books in Spanish and Portuguese produced in the Western Sephardic diaspora, mostly published in Amsterdam, and printed in Latin letters. See, for example, Den Boer (1996, 2003).

14 A notable exception is David M. Atias' *La guerra de oro* (Livorno, 1778), the first Ladino book of secular content. See, for example, Romero (1992a:209–211, 2002); Bunis (1993:33–39) on elements of Hebrew origin; Bunis (1997) on satirical elements; Lehmann (2005b); and Berenguer Amador (2017).

15 Term coined by Lehmann (2005a:32, 35, 37, 38, 44 and elsewhere).

either original compositions or translations and adaptations of some of the most representative Jewish works.

Regarding the classification of Ladino musar works, Ladino bibliographies have traditionally been enumerative, mere listings of titles, authors, publication dates and publishers (Ben-Ur 2002). To give some examples: Kayserling (1890) listed some 20 Ladino ethical works; and Grünbaum (1896:75–121) published illustrative passages from 16 Ladino works in his chapter on ethical religious Ladino books (“Bücher ethisch-religiösen Inhalts”).

Yaari (1934), author of the first bibliography devoted exclusively to Ladino books held at The National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, published a comprehensive list of some 33 Ladino musar works including brief descriptions of their contents, in the fourth chapter, on *musar* and *dinim* (מוסר ודינים).

Another source where, among many other books printed in Hebrew letters between the years 1474–1950, we also find some titles of Ladino musar books classified by place of publication, authors or translators, literary genre (מוסר) and language (לִאדִינִי), is Friedberg’s (1951–56) bibliographical lexicon which also includes a register of the authors and a table of contents.

Molho (1960:139–142) mentioned 11 Judeo-Spanish *musar* works in the second chapter, Written popular literature (“Literatura popular escrita”), and in the fourth chapter (1960:225–231), covering *Dinim*, Ethics and *Me’am Lo’ez* (“*Dinim*, ética, *Me’am lo’ez*”). Molho (1960:233–241, 346, 362–363) also published some excerpts from *Rejimyento de la vida*, *Ovligasyon de los korasones*, *Pele Yo’eş*, and *Şevet Yēhuda*.

Besso (1963:2–3, 11, 13, 16, 19, 25, 27, 34, 36) offered a bibliography in English and Ladino, entirely in Latin letters, with short bibliographical references to some 16 Ladino ethical works held at the Library of Congress.

More recently, and probably based on Yaari’s musar books list, Romero (1992a:111–119) in her significant contribution on Ladino literature offered a list of approximately 35 musar titles with some excerpts from the most representative Ladino ethical books in her chapter dealing with morality. According to this author, Ladino musar books may be divided into three groups: 1) Works of general content, 2) Works of specific content, and 3) Morality for children.¹⁶

¹⁶ Examples of Ladino ethical works for children include *Sefer Tov wē-Yafe* (Bucharest, 1860), and *Livriko de primera klasa para kriyaturas chikas* (Pressburg, 1873; Constantinople, 1880) by Moše David Alkalay; *Rekontos morales* (Salonika, 1880); *Katesismo de la relijyon djudia* (Sofia, 1893) by Mordēkay Grünwald; *Livro de moral al uzo de las eskolas del Oryente* (Izmir, 1897 and 1913); *Lekturas diversas* (Salonika, ca. 1900, 1910, 1920) by Ya’aqov Eliyyahu Hakohen; *Livro de instruksyon relijyoza* (Izmir, 1910 and 1924) by Ya’aqov Kabuli; and *Moral i edukasyon djudia. Livro de lektura* (Salonika, 1920) by Ben Ya’aqov and Aharon Baruk.

Another important bibliographical source listing musar books in Ladino is Vinograd's *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book* (1993–1995), a catalogue of books printed in Hebrew letters between circa 1469 and 1863, with helpful indexes of books, authors, subjects, printers and languages.

Lately, Cohen (2011:5–6, 9, 26, 36, 44, 48–49, 50, 61, 72, 90, 145–146, 160, 164, 166–167) has updated the bibliography and mapping of Ladino works in general, first, in his doctoral dissertation where he mentioned Judeo-Spanish rabbinic literature of ethical content under the categories of halakhah and musar (הלכה ומוסר), books of musar and dinim (ספרי מוסר ודינים) and ethical literature (ספרות מוסר). Interestingly, in his recent book, Cohen (2021:193–210) lists Ladino ethical works only in the category of musar (מוסר) and offers a description of 91 books.

A central publication is Lehmann's overview of Ladino rabbinic literature and Ottoman Sephardic culture (2005a:1) in which he “reads the transformation of Ottoman Sephardic society through the lens of popular rabbinic ethical literature.” According to Lehmann, this genre was “conceived as a medium of rabbinic instruction and education directed not only at a reading audience of rabbinic peers but also, and perhaps primarily, at a popular readership, musar literature mediates between rabbinic elite and popular discourses” (see also Lehmann 2000, 2002 and 2003).

In the first part of his book (“Vernacular Musar Literature as a Cultural Factor”) Lehmann (2005a:2–3) briefly offers some historical background on the Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire, pointing out some of the challenges they encountered in the nineteenth century and some of the changes their society underwent as a result. He focuses on those issues that establish Judeo-Spanish musar literature as a cultural factor, striking a path between continuity and change in the transformation of nineteenth century Ottoman Sephardic Jewry. Lehmann discusses the emergence and development of Ladino print culture, establishing in broad terms its impact on Ottoman Sephardic culture.

In the second part of his book (“Authors, Translators, Readers”) Lehmann explores the interrelation between authors, translators, and readers, tracing the translation patterns of Hebrew rabbinic discourse to Judeo-Spanish, how the authors and translators foresaw the reception of their books, and what this tells us about the Judeo-Spanish reading culture. He also examines different forms of sociability as represented in Ladino musar—suggesting an opposition between *meldar* or ‘religious study’, and leisure—and he assesses the place of vernacular musar literature in this context. In the third part of his book (“Musar Literature and the Social Order”), Lehmann (2005a:15–120) deals with the representation of the Ottoman Sephardic social order, asking how the rabbis represent and legitimize the social order of their times, real and ideal. He offers a close reading of three social types—the wealthy, the poor, and the learned—as portrayed in musar literature,

showing how the stability of the social order is a central concern of the rabbinic educational effort to perpetuate the traditional symbolic universe.

Lehmann also provides a textual analysis of nine musar texts,¹⁷ mostly from the nineteenth century, the period during which the transformation of Ottoman Sephardic society was most pronounced, which is crucial for a sound understanding of rabbinic ethical literature in Ladino.

Although musar works and digests of religious law are often discussed together in the published histories of Judeo-Spanish literature, as already noted above, Lehmann maintains the distinction between Ladino legal literature (practical halakhic manuals) and musar works. However, he draws attention to the fact that guides to halakhic practice sometimes include musar material and vice-versa.

This same classification is expressed in another relevant contribution dealing with Ladino musar texts, the article on Ladino Rabbinical prose by Hassán (2008:272–279), who gives a brief definition of musar and discusses several relevant Ladino musar texts, presenting some of them for the first time.

3 Musar Works Translated or Adapted for Sephardic Readers

Bunis (1999) focuses on the literary encounters between Sephardim and Ashkenazim and the translation of Ashkenazic rabbinic works into Judezmo and Sephardic works into Yiddish. Baumgarten (2004:269–270) attributes to Jews a major role in the circulation of knowledge in the Sephardic and Ashkenazic worlds and considers them transmitters of cultural artefacts or cultural *shifters*. He speaks about two main methods of cultural transmission: a horizontal one, from world literature to Jewish literature; and a vertical one, from Hebrew literature to the vernacular.

In the case of Ladino literature, by the 1730s, with the appearance of *Me'am Lo'ez*, a new wave of rabbinic literature in Judeo-Spanish vernacular emerged after the pioneering works of the sixteenth century, and throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries numerous rabbinic musar works, both original and translated, were published throughout the Ottoman Sephardic diaspora. Many Judeo-Spanish works translated from Hebrew were, in most cases, abridged or rewritten. Consequently, the scholarly task is to study each case and find out if we are dealing with

¹⁷ Lehmann does not include in his corpus the following Ladino musar books translated from Hebrew: Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Ḥovat ha-Lēvavot* (Constantinople, 1569; Venice, 1713), Yiṣḥaq Aboav's *Mēnorat ha-Ma'or* (Constantinople, 1762), and Yeḥi'el Bar Yeḡuti'el's *Bet Middot*, published in Judeo-Spanish as *Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Constantinople, 1824).

a translation or an adaptation. As noted by Lehmann (2005a:5–6): “Sometimes, it is impossible to distinguish clearly between cases in which Ladino works refer to a Hebrew source and those in which they are ‘original’ (to the degree that the notion of originality makes sense in an intertextually interrelated literary field).”

Sephardic rabbis decided which Hebrew works to translate to Ladino, and they shaped their content taking into consideration the mentality and taste of the Sephardic reading public. In some cases, they omitted some parts of the Hebrew original which they did not think would be interesting for the Sephardic readers, altered the content of the original text in their translations, or added new parts to the book to make it more attractive for the Ladino readership.

Thanks to a note written in 1847 by Ḥayyim Avraham Benveniste Gategno, translator of *Sefer ha-Bērit* from Hebrew into Judeo-Spanish, printed in Rashi-font Hebrew letters and published in Salonika in two extensive volumes, we learn about the importance translators’ decisions could have had for the Ladino texts which reached Sephardic readers. Benveniste Gategno (Hurwitz 1847:171a) explains in a note that in the first volume of his Ladino translation of *Sefer ha-Bērit* (chapters 1–10) by the Ashkenazi rabbi Pinḥas Eliyyahu Hurwitz, he did not translate the passages dealing with Kabbalah because—in his opinion—most readers would not understand them. He then clarifies that he started translating and printing the first volume of the book and, afterwards, he read Hurwitz’s first and second introductions, and only then did he learn about the author’s instructions regarding the printing of his book.¹⁸ Benveniste Gategno (Hurwitz 1847:171a–175a) thereafter honoured Hurwitz’s wishes, and supplied the omitted passages related to the Kabbalah in Hebrew at the end of the first volume of the book, indicating the corresponding chapters and pages. In a note he also promised that he would obey the author’s instructions and include the whole text in the remaining part of *Sefer ha-Bērit* to be translated:

Note

Until the end of Chapter 10, all the places where the esteemed Rabbi, the author of this book, talked about the secrets of the Kabbalah, are omitted because, except for the esteemed Kabbalists, nobody understands them. And now, looking at what he says in the second introduction, that anyone who publishes the book should do it without omitting anything, and says some harsh words about one who does not obey his order; therefore, from Chapter 11 on, everything that is a secret of the Kabbalah will be published in its place as it is in the book in the Holy Tongue. And for everything that we have omitted from its previous place, we publish it here, at the end of Chapter 10, with indications, and we ask the esteemed Rabbi to forgive us; we

¹⁸ The fourth condition says: “One should not add nor subtract anything from the book, neither from the first nor from the second introductions, not anything, nor half of anything.” (Ruderman 2014:130).

did not do it in rebellion, but we had already printed [the book] up to here before we read the second introduction (Hurwitz 1847:171a).¹⁹

On the one hand, this note gives unusual insights into the exceptional process of translating and printing *Sefer ha-Bērit* in Ladino and explains that the two introductions—which indeed have independent pagination—were printed after the first volume of *Sefer ha-Bērit* itself. On the other hand, the fact that Benveniste Gategno had not originally translated the kabbalistic passages into Ladino shows us how the Ladino text can be read on two levels: in the vernacular for the masses of Sephardic readers who did not understand Hebrew, and in Ladino and Hebrew, for the rabbinic elite who could follow the notes and indications in both languages.²⁰

Borovaya (2001, 2002, 2003 and 2012) upgraded Lehmann's idea and defined translations broadly as the transfer from one literary system to another and as an act of rewriting. She focused on some secular Ladino works as adaptations of literary classics (mostly in French) to the Judeo-Spanish cultural context, and has offered an interesting theory about the translation of modern Ladino books which emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As argued by Lehmann (2005a:51), "the westernizing strategy of Sephardic intellectuals in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, adapting works from one literary system (mostly French) to another (Ladino), continued in a certain sense what the vernacular rabbis had done since the early eighteenth [i.e., mid-sixteenth] century when they rewrote rabbinic knowledge as a non-elite discourse for a broad public. Works of Ladino rabbinic literature [...] can be seen as cultural adapta-

19 אב"יו. אסטה קאב'ו די מאמר יוד אין טודוס לוס לוגאריס קי אב'לו איל ס'י חכם פאטרון די איסטי ליב'רו אין 19 סיקריטוס די לה קבלה לוס סאלטימוס סינדו נו לוס אינטיינדין אוטרו קי לוס ס'י מקובלים. אי אגורה ב'ינדו לוקי דיין אין לה הקדמה סיגונדה קי טודו איל קי איסטאנפארה איסטי ליב'רו דיב'י סיאייר סין קי לי מאנקי קוזה אי דיין אב'לאס פ'ואירטיס סוב'רי איל קי פאסארה סו קומאנדו. אנסי די מאמר י"א אינדילאנטרי טודו לוקי איס סיקריטו די קבלה לו ב'אמוס אה איסטאנפארה אין סוס לוגאריס סיגון איסטה אין איל ליב'רו די לשון הקודש. אי פור לו פאסאדו קי ייה לו סאלטימוס דיסו לוגאר איסטו איזימוס די איסטאנפארלוס אקי אין קאב'ו די מאמר יוד קון אסיניאלאר אי דימאנדאמוס די איל ס'י חכם קי מוס פידרוני קי נו לו איזימוס במרד סינדו אסטה אקי איסטאנפאמוס סין מילדאר לה הקדמה סיגונדה.

Avizo. Asta kavo de maamar 10 en todos los lugares ke avlo el se[nyor]' haham patron de este livro en sekretos de la kabala los saltimos syendo no los entyenden otro ke los se[nyores]' mekubalim. I agora vyendo lo ke dize en la akdama segunda ke todo el ke estanpara este livro deve seer sin ke le manke koza i dize avlas fuertes sovre el ke pasara su komando; ansi de maamar 11 endelantre todo lo ke es sekreto de kabala lo vamos a estanpar en sus lugares segun esta en el livro de lashon akodesh. I por lo pasado ke ya lo saltimos de su lugar, esto izimos de estanparlos aki en kavo de maamar 10 kon asinyalar i demandamos de el se[nyor]' haham ke mos pedrone ke no lo izimos bemered syendo asta aki estanpimos sin meldar la akdama segunda.

20 In many other Ladino religious books the rabbinic sources are indicated in Hebrew, not in Ladino; see, for example, Šmid (2012:54–55, 62–64).

tions that follow patterns similar to those of the literary adaptations studied by Borovaya. Rabbinic vernacular literature, meant to educate and enlighten the masses, arguably provided the model for and legitimized the later efforts of westernizing intellectuals who translated and rewrote European literature into Ladino.”

As might be expected, Ladino translations of Hispano-Jewish medieval classical musar works received more attention by modern scholars. *Sefer Hovot ha-Lěvavot*, composed originally in Arabic by Baḥya Ibn Paquda (Zaragoza, eleventh century) and first published in Hebrew in Naples in 1490, was published in Judezmo four times (Salonika, 1568; Venice 1713; Vienna, 1822; Constantinople, 1898).²¹ As noted in the first comparative studies, by Bunis (1996)²² and Albarral Albarral (2015), the first three versions are somewhat different, but have much in common: the oldest translation, by Ṣadik Ben Yosef Formon, has only a Hebrew title, *Sefer Hovot ha-Lěvavot bē-La‘az* (Constantinople, 1568) (149 folios); the second, published in Venice (1713), has a Hebrew title, *Sefer Hovot ha-Lěvavot*, as well as a second title in Ladino, *Ovligasyon de los korasones* (160 folios);²³ and the third one, translated and published a century later in Vienna (1822) by Yisra‘el B. Ḥayyim with the titles *Sefer Hovot ha-Lěvavot* and *Ovligasyon de los korasones* (264 folios).²⁴ However, the fourth one, entitled *Sefer Hovot ha-Lěvavot. Ša‘ar ha-Bittāḥon* [‘The Gate of Trust’], is different in that it is only a partial version, translated by Šelomo ‘Uzzi‘el (Constantinople, 1898) (138 pages). It consists of just the fourth chapter of Ibn Paquda’s work, dealing with what the author regards as the most necessary thing for the service of God (Albarral Albarral 2015).²⁵

Again, in the case of *Sefer Mēnorat ha-Ma‘or* by Yiṣḥaq Aboav (Aragon?–Toledo, early fourteenth century) the first Hebrew edition of which was published in Constantinople in 1514 and was followed by three Ladino versions (Constantinople, 1762; Izmir, 1877; and Constantinople, 1893),²⁶ some comparative studies between the Hebrew original and different Ladino translations have been carried out. As noted by Albarral Albarral (1993, 2001, 2006) and Riaño López (1998), the first Ladino translation of *Sefer Mēnorat ha-Ma‘or* was made by Avraham Asa (Constantinople, 1762) (170 folios), and contains some additions to the Hebrew text

21 Grünbaum (1896:75–76); Molho (1960:243); Romero (1992a:112); Bunis (1993:20–32); Lazar (1999:501–523); and (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald (2008).

22 For a comparison of a parallel passage in the 1569 and 1822 editions see Bunis (1996:156–158).

23 ליברו לייאמאדו אין לאדינו אובליגאסיון די לוש קוראסוניש

Livro yamado en ladino *Ovligasyon de los korasones*.

24 איסטי ליברו איס ייאמאדו אינלאדינו אובליגאסיון די לוש קוראסוניש

Este libro es yamado en ladino *Ovligasyon de los korasones*.

25 As noted in Albarral Albarral (2015), she is working on a detailed comparison of Judeo-Spanish translations of this important classical musar work.

26 Grünbaum (1896:114–115); Molho (1960:230); and Romero (1992a:112, 1998:167–203).

accompanied by the translator's interpretations. The second Ladino version (Izmir, 1877) is a partial translation of this work, and so is the third, published in two volumes (Constantinople, 1893), in which an anonymous translator selected some chapters, changed the structure and abridged the content.

The Ladino translations of Hebrew musar works were not limited, of course, to works by Hispano-Jewish authors. A completely different example is another classical Hebrew musar work, *Bet Middot* (Constantinople, 1512), later published under the title *Sefer Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Cremona, 1556), written by Yēḥi'el Bar Yēquti'el Bar Binyamin Harofeh of late thirteenth-century Italy. We only know of one edition in Ladino of this precious ethical anthology, which is essentially an analysis of important Jewish values, entitled *Sefer Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Constantinople, 1824) (148 folios) and rendered into Ladino by an anonymous translator. Except for brief mentions by some scholars,²⁷ this interesting work, unfortunately, has been overlooked until now.

Among the best-selling musar Ladino translations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we find *Sefer Ševeṭ Musar*, originally written in Hebrew (Constantinople, 1712) by Eliyyahu Hakohen of Izmir and translated into Judeo-Spanish by Avraham Asa (Constantinople, 1742), which was reprinted several times (Constantinople, 1766; Salonika, 1800; Izmir, 1860 and 1889). Although many scholars quoted textual passages from *Ševeṭ Musar* in Ladino,²⁸ and referred to its content, we still lack a systematic study of this relevant musar work and, especially, information about its reception among Ladino readers throughout the Ottoman Empire.

Yiṣḥaq Farḥi of Safed and Jerusalem authored three musar works in Judeo-Spanish: *Sefer Musar Haskel* (Constantinople, 1830), dealing with the commandments against killing and taking God's name in vain,²⁹ *Sefer Imre Bina* (Belgrade, 1836; Salonika, 1863 and 1887),³⁰ and *Sefer Zēkut u-Mišor* (Izmir, 1850; Salonika, 1850 and 1887), a commentary on the excellence of the commandments which he translated from his book in Hebrew, *Šuf Dēvaš* (Livorno, 1849).³¹ Lehmann commented on *Imre Bina* and *Zēkut u-Mišor*, and offered numerous passages of Ladino text in English translation; however, we still lack a systematic study of all Farḥi's works in

27 Molho (1960:230–231); Romero (1992a:112); and Hassán (2008:290).

28 See, for example, Grünbaum (1896:84–88); Molho (1960:230–231); Romero (1992a:113); Lazar (1999:613–619); and Lehmann (2005a:6–9, 11, 33–34, 45, 52, 64–66, 68, 71, 85, 98–99, 103, 109–110, 115, 119, 121–123, 125, 127–129, 131, 133, 140, 176–177, 180–181).

29 See Romero (1992a:118); and Hassán (2008:291).

30 See Grünbaum (1896:154); Molho (1960:231); Lebl (1990:36–37, 58); Romero (1992a:113); and Lehmann (2005a:7, 65, 95–96, 143–144, 162–165, 182–183).

31 See Romero (1992a:113); Lehmann (2005a:7, 61, 70, 99–100, 112–114, 139–140, 145–146, 173–174); and Hassán (2008:294–296).

Ladino. Since he also authored numerous works in Hebrew, a comparative study of his ethical works in the Holy Tongue³² and the vernacular would certainly shed light on this prolific Sephardic writer.

Lehmann (2005a:7, 9, 61–64, 66, 76, 79, 81, 91–92, 98, 104–106, 115, 119, 123–125, 142–143, 175) also sheds light on other ethical texts, translated or adapted for Ladino readers, for example, Avraham Palacci's *Sefer wē-Hokiah Avraham* (Salonika, 1853, vol. 1; Izmir, 1862, vol. 2; Izmir, 1877, in one volume),³³ and highlights the strong Hebrew component of this Ladino text in its lexicon and syntax which make the vernacular text difficult for the masses of Sephardic readers to understand fully.³⁴ He explains that it was directed toward the limited readership of those who could be expected to understand it and that it probably served as the basis for disseminating musar orally, either in sermons or in study sessions known as *meldados* (Lehmann 2005a:61, 98).

One of the most successful musar books among Sephardic readers was *Pele Yo'eš*, originally written in Hebrew by Eli'ezer Ben Yišḥaq Papo (Constantinople, 1824), translated into Judeo-Spanish by the author's son, Yē'uda Ben Eli'ezer Papo, and published in two volumes (Vienna, 1870–1872 and Salonika 1899–1900).³⁵ Romero (1992a:114–116; 1998:205–206) discusses some passages on the dissemination of the book in Hebrew, the reasons for translating it into Ladino, the difficulties of the translation, the translator's advice that the book should be read out loud and in the presence of other family members, and the financial problems that arose in connection with the expenses of the publication. Lehmann writes extensively on Papo's *Pele Yo'eš*,³⁶ and remarks that “the Ladino version of *Pele Yo'ets* represents the cultural values of the Ottoman Sephardic rabbinate in the nineteenth century in a particularly eloquent way, and its captivating Judeo-Spanish style and its breadth of subjects make it an especially rewarding source” (Lehmann 2005a:9). He discloses important data on the publication and distribution of *Pele Yo'eš*, describes

³² See, for example, Lebl (1990:36–37, 59); Zohar (2009); and Ben-Naeh (2010).

³³ On Palacci's work, see also Grünbaum (1896:91–94); Romero (1992a:114); and Hassán (2008:292–293); for a reproduction, transcription, English translation and linguistic analysis of the introduction to Palacci 1877 see Bunis (2021a:426–442).

³⁴ The Hebrew and Aramaic component in *Wē-Hokiah Avraham* is completely inventorized in Bunis (1993).

³⁵ Grünbaum (1896:100–109); Molho (1960:230–231); and Angel (1991). The Hebrew and Aramaic component in the Ladino edition of *Pele Yo'eš* is completely inventorized in Bunis (1993).

³⁶ Lehmann (2003:299–324; 2005a:9, 10, 11, 52–60, 63, 67–69, 71–72, 77, 81–82, 93–98, 106–108, 110, 113–115, 117–118, 122, 124–125, 128–129, 130–133, 137–138, 146–147, 149–151, 157–158, 160–161, 166, 168–169, 193, 198).

its organization in thematic sections arranged in alphabetical order, highlights the importance of the index and brings up interesting facts about the difficulties the translator encountered while doing his job. As noted by Lehmann (2005a:54–61), Papo abbreviated some chapters of the original Hebrew text and expanded others, freely rearranged the material from the original source text, and even included other pieces of his father's writings unrelated to the *Pele Yo'eş*. He analyses some chapters the younger Papo added to the original Hebrew version of this work, points to the omission of some passages of Kabbalistic content, the different use of the stories or *exempla* (*ma'asiyyot*, *meshalim*) used in the Ladino version and mentions other differences in content, length and style between the two texts. He highlights the fact that Papo calls his *Pele Yo'eş* in Ladino a translation, but nevertheless changes the Hebrew text and adds material of his own, thus it seems that the term rewriting would be more suitable. Lehmann (2005a:59) finds the reason for doing this to be that he is addressing two entirely different publics: the Hebrew version's readership includes a learned rabbinic reading public while the Ladino version is meant for a "popular," non-learned, non-rabbinic and non-elite readership (Lehmann 2002:283–307). He briefly contrasts some aspects between the Ladino and Yiddish version (Paks, 1886) of this classic work of Sephardic musar literature. Hassán (2008:289–300) published Papo's section on printing houses, which was not included in the Hebrew original but was added by its translator, and commented on the changes introduced in the text as a result of the more modern times during which the translation was written; Lehmann (2000:95–122), too, touches on this and considers *Pele Yo'eş* in Ladino to be an Ottoman-Sephardic rabbi's response to modernity. In connection with the Ladino translation of *Pele Yo'eş* Hassán (2008:280–281) highlights the activity of printing Ladino books and the emergence of other genres in Ladino literature such as a periodical press and other secular sources of knowledge.

Another challenging and thus far neglected Ladino musar publication is the translation of *Sefer Qav ha-Yaşar* (Constantinople, 1823 and 1857), one of the most popular works of musar literature, authored by the Ashkenazi rabbi Şewi Hirsh Koidanover and first published in Hebrew in 1705 in Frankfurt am Main.³⁷ Although Baumgarten (2004) has already offered some comparisons between the Hebrew and some Yiddish versions, there are still many possibilities for further comparative studies of the Hebrew, Ladino and Yiddish editions of this interesting work.

37 Grünbaum (1896:81–84); Molho (1960:231); Romero (1992a:114, 1998:207–215); and Bunis (1999:147). On perhaps the earliest systematic use of the grapheme *dalet* + diacritic to denote the Judezmo phoneme /d/ [ð] see Bunis (2005:140, footnote 98).

4 Original Musar Works in Ladino

Sefer Hanhagat ha-Ḥayyim or *Rejimyento de la vida* [‘The Regimen of Living’] (Salonika, 1564) is a Jewish philosophical-ethical treatise in the vernacular, which was written by Moše Almosnino as a guide to how one should live his life.³⁸ He dedicated it to his nephew and it deals with, among other things, the origin of good and evil, the influence of the stars, Providence, how to lead a moral life, the education of children, and free will. Another disquisition entitled “El tratado de los suenyos” [‘A treatise of Dreams’] was appended, written, as stated, at the request of Don Joseph Nasi, Duke of Naxos (Almosnino 1564:139a–162b). The earliest original musar work in Ladino, it has been studied by several scholars. Borovaya (2017:66, 71–74), for example, studied Almosnino’s Ladino works and focused on a new literary sub-genre, the scholarly Ladino epistle, that Almosnino created. It was accompanied by a collection of religious precepts, called *hanhagat ha-ḥayyim*, that are a discussion of small details that concern practice rather than ethical or philosophical principles, since the objective of *hanhagot* literature is to “instruct the individual in the minutest details of daily behavior.” Other scholars (Gichev 1987; Romeu Ferré 1999–2000; Bunis 2004:112–114; Romeu Ferré 2004; Zemke 2004) examined literary, linguistic, historical and other aspects of this work. Although it was printed in Rashi script, according to many authors the language of this and other books written by Almosnino cannot be called Ladino since hardly any differences from the Peninsular Spanish of the time can be found (Bunis 1913:19–20), and which can best be considered as pre-Ladino (Romero 1992a:18, 84, 2014:852; Lehmann 2005a:33–34).

Besides the already mentioned *Me-‘am Lo‘ez*, essentially a compendium of biblical exegesis but which also contains rich ethical material, there are some more purely musar works printed in the eighteenth century, such as the above-mentioned *Sefer Tiqqune ha-Nefeš* by Rē’uven Ben Avraham from Shtip (Štip), a small Jewish community in the eastern part of North Macedonia, published in two parts (Salonika, 1765 and 1775), which contains moralistic admonitions and supplications for the ill (Friedberg 1951–56, vol. 2:1127), which has not been studied enough so far.³⁹

The genre of musar literature in Ladino reached its peak of popularity during the nineteenth century when—as shown by Romero (1992a:111–119) and Lehmann (2005a:4–9)—over twenty original or translated musar works were published. Among several original compositions, still awaiting close study, I will focus in this section on three musar publications in Ladino, all of them compilations incorpo-

³⁸ Grünbaum (1896:115–117); Molho (1960:140, 228–229, 233–235, 244); Romero (1992a:18, 84); Lazar (1999:501–523); and Borovaya (2017).

³⁹ Romero (1992a:114); and Bunis (1997, 2006–2007, 2007, 2009), in which many of its lexemes with a Hebrew-origin element are analyzed.

rating material from classical Hebrew and Ladino sources, as well as non-Jewish works; their Ladino versions had a clear didactic and moralistic purpose.

In the mid-nineteenth century, two popular musar works in Ladino, *Sefer Darke ha-Adam* and *Sefer Musar Haskel*, published together in Salonika (1843, 1849 and 1892) by authors Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor Amarachi and Yosef Ben Me'ir Sason. The fact that three editions of these two books, printed in Rashi script, were published in Salonika within a period of only 50 years, testifies to the success these works had among the Ladino readership in the mid-nineteenth century.

Sefer Darke ha-Adam ['Book of the Ways of Man'] is an original Ladino book with moralistic and entertaining purposes.⁴⁰ It was inspired by three Hebrew works, two by Ashkenazi authors, *Sefer ha-Bērit* by Pinḥas Eliyyahu Hurwitz (Brno/Brünn, 1797) and *Seder ha-Dorot* by Yeḥi'el Heilprin (Karlsruhe, 1768), and the earlier *Ševeṭ Yēhuda*, by the Sephardi Šelomo Ibn Verga (Adrianople, 1550). As noted on the title page, it combines moralistic, scientific and historical content: "Most of its words are from *Sefer ha-Bērit* [. . .] and a little bit of morality and a few stories from *Seder ha-Dorot* and *Ševeṭ Yēhuda*."⁴¹ In their *Darke ha-Adam* Amarachi and Sason present Ladino versions of a selection of the best chapters from the mentioned sources. In their 'Notice to the readers' in the Introduction (Amarachi and Sason 1843:[i]b), they openly acknowledge that they copied materials from these books but note that they also added original material of their own:

Since there are many people who would like to know about the new things [happening] in the world, it seemed appropriate to us to compose this booklet [. . .], which contains things taken from some precious books which are not available to everyone, like the *Sefer ha-Bērit* and the *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* and the *Seder ha-Dorot* and other books; and we have translated it to Ladino, so that everyone can understand it and we only added a few small things of our own, and these are entertaining things that ease the anxiety in our hearts and the sadness by letting us know of what happened to us in the times of Spain.⁴²

⁴⁰ See Romero (1992a:113); Lehmann (2005a:7, 45, 67, 103–104, 121–122, 156, 177–181, 189–192, 196, 200); Muñoz Molina (2014); and Šmid (2023).

⁴¹ איל רוב די שוש פאלאב'ראש סון די אל ספר הברית ... אי און פוקו די מוסר אי אונס קואנטוס מעשיות די איל סדר הדורות אי די איל שבט יאודה.

El rov de sus palavras son de el *Sefer aBerit* [. . .] i un poko de musar i unos kuantos ma'asiyot de el *Seder aDorot* i de el *Shevet Yeuda*.

⁴² אביוו אלום סי'. סינדו איי ג'ינטי קי דיויאן די סאור חידושים די אל עולם פור דיטה ראזון מוס פארישיין מונאסופ די אינג'יניאר אישטי ליב'ריקו [...] קי שון קואס אקו'ידאש די אונש ליב'רוש פריסיידוש קי נו סי טופאן אין מאנו די קואל שיקייר פרישונה קומו איל ספר הברית אי איל שבט יאודה אי די איל סדר הדורות אי רישטו די ליב'רוש אי לו פ'ואימוש מעתיק אין לאדינו קי לו אינטינדאן טודוש אי נו אינייאדימוש די מואיסטרו מיאוליו אוטרו אלגונה קוה פוקה אי שון קואש גראשיחאש קי קיטה לה אנסייה די איל קוראשון אי לה טרישטיוה די שאב'ר לוקי מוש אקונטישיין אין טיינפו די לה אישפאנייה.

Avizo a los se'. Syendo ay djente ke dezean de saver hidushim de el 'olam, por dita razon mos pare-syo monasup de endjenyar este livriko [. . .], ke son kozas akojidas de unos livros presyados ke no

Darke ha-Adam consists of six chapters. The first one (1a–14a) opens with a moralistic discussion on the bad things which might happen to a man; it includes some stories (*ma'asiyot*) and brief references to *Sefer ha-Bērit* and *Seder ha-Dorot*. The second chapter (14a–25a) brings a story (*ma'ase*) about a dream of King Alfonso, taken from *Ševeṭ Yēhuda*.⁴³ The third chapter (25a–29b) describes some fascinating episodes regarding the discovery of the New World (Lehmann 2005a:189–190, 195–196; Šmid 2017), inspired by *Sefer ha-Bērit* and *Sefer Divre ha-Yamim lē-Malke Šarēfat wē-Otoman* ['Chronicles of the Kings of France and the Ottoman Empire'] (Sabbioneta, 1554), a chronicle written by Yosef Hakohen, which according to Jacobs (2004:69), deals “with gentile history in which relatively few instances of the Jewish past—mainly massacres and persecutions—are included,” and in its second part speaks about, among other things, the discovery of America (Jacobs 2004:70, 76). The fourth (29b–52a) and fifth chapters (52a–72a) incorporate the thirteenth chapter from *Sefer ha-Bērit*, one of the most powerful moralistic lessons on loving one's neighbor, love and friendship, and adapt this universal moralistic topic for Ladino readers for the very first time. The last chapter (72a–92b) concludes with some narratives from *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* on blood libels against Jews and references to *Seder ha-Dorot*.

As pointed out by Lehmann (2005a:189–192), Amarachi and Sason introduce, for the first time, scientific knowledge and historiographic topics taken from general, non-Jewish history, as adapted from Haskalah sources and incorporate them into Ladino musar literature, an important novelty in the Judeo-Spanish rabbinic literature in the mid-nineteenth century. They are the first Sephardic authors who, in *Sefer Darke ha-Adam*, a didactic, moralistic and entertaining work, offer some of the most fascinating excerpts from *Sefer ha-Bērit*. The latter work was translated to Ladino some years later (Salonika, 1847) by Ḥayyim Avraham Benveniste Gategno and published at the printing house operated during these years by Yiṣḥaq Bēkor Amarachi (Šmid 2019).

Sefer Musar Haskel ['Moral Lesson'] (Salonika, 1843, 1849 and 1892) is another musar work of varied content by Sason and Amarachi, which opens with an extraordinary chapter on scientific knowledge, and compiles some moralistic as well as historiographical chapters, all of them based on classical and more recent

se topan en mano de kual-sekyer presona, komo el *Sefer aBerit* i el *Shevet Yeuda* i de el *Seder aDorot* i resto de livros i lo fuimos ma'atik en ladino ke lo entyendan todos i no enyadimos de nuestro meoyo otro alguna koza poka, i son kozas grasiozas ke kita la ansya de el korason i la tristeza de saver lo ke mos akontesyo en tyenpo de la Espanya.

43 Lehmann (2005a:104, 156, 173, 177–180, 189–190, 200, 206); and Muñoz Molina (2014).

Hebrew scientific, literary and historical sources.⁴⁴ As noted on the cover page, “[the purpose of *Sefer Musar Haskel*] is to be read by the Sons of Israel at night in order to know the ways of God, blessed be He.”⁴⁵

Sason and Amarachi cite all the Hebrew sources they use in a very clear way at the beginning of each paragraph, for example, *Talmud*; *Tanak*; *Pirque Avot*; *Mišne Tora* by Maimonides, especially citing his *Hilḳot De’ot* on proper general behavior; *Eṣ ha-Ḥayyim* by Ḥayyim Vital; *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* by Šelomo Ibn Verga (Adrianople, 1550); *Me’il Šēdaqa* (Izmir, 1731), a treatise on charity by Rabbi Eliyyahu Hakohen, author of *Ševeṭ Musar* (Izmir, 1712); *Seder ha-Dorot* (completed in 1725 and published in 1768) by Lithuanian Rabbi Yeḥi’el Heilprin (1660–1746); *Sefer ha-Bērit* (Brno/Brünn, 1797), written by Pinḥas Eliyyahu Hurwitz; and others.

Chapter one (1a–4a), which begins with a scientific discussion on the smallpox vaccine after the deaths caused by the disease of “more than a thousand children” in Salonika a year before, looks for rational explanations and remedies (1b–4a), and it is inspired by *Sefer ha-Bērit* (Romero 1992a:114; Ruderman 2002; Lehmann 2005a:189–190). Chapter two (4a–6a) cites *Sefer ha-Bērit* among many other classical Hebrew literary sources and makes comments on moralistic issues concerning the use and abuse of one’s body and soul, and discusses the importance of chastity for one’s physical health. Chapter three (6a–12b) incorporates some parables from the Mishnah, a story of Rabbi Mēšullam from *Seder ha-Dorot* and the story of Bustanay. Chapter four (12b–17b) is of moralistic content, based on Maimonides’ *Hilḳot De’ot* and Me’ir Ibn Aldabi’s *Šēvile Emuna* (1360), an extensive treatise on philosophical, scientific, and theological subjects. It explains the importance of being healthy to serve God and gives spiritual advice and tips on how to lead a healthy life with regard to eating, drinking, sleeping, bathing, washing and sexual relations. Chapter five (17b–27a) is of didactic and moralistic content. It

44 See Romero (1992a:113–114); Lehmann (2005a:7, 45, 104, 177–181, 189–193, 200); Muñoz Molina (2012); and Šmid (2023). The 1849 edition of *Sefer Musar Haskel* (65b) is one of the earliest rabbinic works exemplifying the use of *djudezmo* ‘Jewish’ as the name of the language of the Sephardim:

אי אסטאב'ה דילאנטרי איל ריי און מדיקו קי אירה ג'דייו אי סי איוו טורקו אי לי דישו אה שבתי צבי אין ג'דיזמו סאבראס קי אסטאס אין סכנה טו אי לוס ג'דייוס אי סיידו אנסי מי קונסי'ו איס קי טי אגאס טורקו אי קי סאלגאן לוס ג'דייוס די סכנה.

I estava delante el rey un mediko ke era djidyoy i se izo turko i le disho a Shabetay Sevi en djudezmo: “Savras ke estas en sekana tu i los djidyos, i syendo ansi, mi consejo es ke te agas turko i ke salgan los djidyos de sekana.”

‘And there stood before the sultan a physician who had been a Jew and became a Muslim, and he said to Šabbēṭay Šēwi in Judezmo: “Know that you and the Jews are in danger, and this being the case, my advice is that you become a Muslim and thus the Jews will be out of danger.”’

45 פור קי מילדין איז'וש די ישראל אין לאש נג'יש אשאביר קאמינעש די איל דייו ברוך הוא
Por ke melden ijós de Yisrael en las noches a_saver kaminós de el Dyo baruh U.

gives advice on how to educate Jewish youth. It is mostly dedicated to boys, but briefly also addresses the education of girls, to whom one of its ten recommendations is directed. In this interesting chapter, Sason and Amarachi give advice on health issues, among other things recommending vaccinating children against smallpox in order to prevent the disease, described in the first chapter, and to stop breast-feeding at the age of two. The authors, however, dedicate most of the chapter to the education and knowledge Jewish sons should receive (languages, books, a good profession, etc.). Among the recommended readings, besides the traditional halakhic and moralistic Hebrew sources, we find books on science, which are recommended by the authors, in order to teach sons about the natural sciences, *Sefer ha-Bērit* being one of the most cited in this chapter. Chapter six (27a–33a) brings three stories taken from *Ševeṭ Yēhuda*, which relate the experience of Jews in Spain and France. Chapter seven (33a–52b), which consists of quotations of Maimonides, passages from *Sefer ha-Bērit*, *Šemaḥ Sedeq* (Altdorf, 1775), a collection of responsa by Mēnaḥem Mendel Ben Avraham Krochmal (ca. 1600–1661), and other sources, is of moralistic content, dealing with man’s soul, the power of speech, jealousy, peace, charity and other virtues which distinguish human beings from animals, exemplified by several stories. Chapter eight (52b–58a) speaks about the attributes of a wise man contrasted with the defects of a stupid man; exemplified by a story from *Šemaḥ Sedeq*, it quotes *Pirke Avot* and makes references to other works. Chapter nine (58a–64b) discusses the benefits of science and brings two stories from *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* about the tensions between Christians and Jews in Spain. Chapter ten (64b–71b), exclusively of scientific content, discusses geography, meteorology (using Europe and America as examples), and basic astronomy and describes and explains solar and lunar eclipses, two illustrations of which are included (68a, 69a) in *Musar Haskel* (Lehmann 2005a:190–193). Chapter eleven (71b–77a) brings several stories about important Rabbis, taken from *Seder ha-Dorot*. Chapter twelve (77a–92b), entitled *Pereq ha-Mašiah* [‘The Chapter about the Messiah’], brings an account of the various messianic movements that have disrupted Jewish history, accompanied by many stories and legends (*ma’asiyot*) about false messiahs, mainly taken from *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* and *Sefer ha-Bērit*.

The use of both traditional and contemporary Hebrew sources that Sason and Amarachi quote in *Sefer Musar Haskel* is much more numerous and diverse than those in *Darke ha-Adam*, their first work, in which they incorporated material mainly from three works: *Seder ha-Dorot*, *Ševeṭ Yēhuda* and *Sefer ha-Bērit*. The combination of scientific, moralistic, and historical passages in *Musar Haskel* incorporates secular knowledge into Sephardic musar literature, and make of Sason and Amarachi two of the first Sephardic rabbis to have a maskilic [‘enlightenment’] agenda and their rabbinic discourse diverse, innovative and unique.

An extremely interesting Ladino publication with the title *Bēraḳa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes* ['Triple Blessing or The Three Lights'], was edited for the first time by Rafa'el Yiṣḥaq Ben Veniste and published in Salonika in 1881 (Šmid 2019, 2022). The first edition compiles four different works in Judeo-Spanish, placed one above the other on every page, on large folio-size paper, which is the only example of this kind in the history of Ladino books that we know of until now. The four literary works are separated by a line and appear in the following order on each page from top to bottom: 1) Ḥayyim Avraham Benveniste Gategno's Ladino translation of *Sefer ha-Bērit* ['Book of Covenant'] (1a–88b),⁴⁶ 2) *El rijo de la vida* ['Government of Life'] (1a–60b), is a moral work on habits regarding food, health, and good manners; 3) *Ba'al Tēšuva* ['The Penitent'] (1a–39b), a novel about repentance;⁴⁷ and 4) *El asolado en la izla* ['The Lone Survivor on the Island'] (40a–88b), Daniel Defoe's story of Robinson Crusoe adapted for Ladino readers (Lazar 1999:849–881; Borovaya 2003:42, 63).⁴⁸ In the second edition of this work, dated the same year (Salonika, 1881), *El rijo de la vida* is omitted, so we only find the other three works mentioned above. The same occurs in the third edition of *Bēraḳa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes* (Constantinople, 1900), which was edited by Eliyyahu Lewi Ben Naḥmias as what seems to be the literary supplement of a newspaper (Šmid 2019, 2022).

At first sight it looks as if these four works don't have much in common; however, in spite of their diverse content, morality and repentance are the *leitmotifs* in all of them. Two works which continue the rabbinic tradition of moralistic works, *Sefer ha-Bērit*, which combines science, kabbalah and morality, and *El rijo de la vida*, a guide to good manners, appear together with two novels, a secular genre, adopted to Ladino literature from the Western European literary traditions: *Ba'al Tēšuva*, of Jewish content, and *El asolado en la izla*, one of the most widely published English books in history. In a similar way as Amarachi and Sason's *Darḳe ha-Adam* and Musar Haskel, *Bēraḳa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes* is a compilation of existing Jewish and non-Jewish sources with a clear moralistic and entertaining purpose, but it also incorporates two novels, a secular Western literary genre which appeared in Ladino literature only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Even if the three books are compilations of some chapters of already existing works in Hebrew, their originality lies in the combination of different sources which

46 The Ladino translation of *Sefer ha-Bērit* in *Bēraḳa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes* is not complete: it comprises only nine chapters (1–9) of the first volume and does not include the famous chapter on loving one's neighbor. Fortunately, the Ladino version of this universal moralistic lesson appears in the aforementioned *Sefer Darḳe ha-Adam*, written by Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor Amarachi and Yosef Ben Me'ir Sason.

47 See López Ortiz (2022).

48 See Kacprzak (2020, 2022 and 2023).

finally result in a completely new work in Judeo-Spanish. Lacking familiarity with Hebrew, the popular Sephardic reader could only have profited from these works in their Judeo-Spanish translation.

In the twentieth century the production of Ladino musar literature decreases. There are, however, a few modern writers who deal with moral themes. One such writer is Şemaḥ Rabbiner, an Ashkenazi rabbi who wrote the book which appeared in Ladino as *Las madres djudias de la epoka biblika* ['Jewish mothers of the Biblical era'] (Constantinople, 1913); it is dedicated especially to women, and deals with a psychological description of the religious, moral and national virtues which distinguish Jewish women from others. The work speaks briefly about the lives and deeds of 52 women in the Bible, portrayed as examples of morality.⁴⁹ Another such example is Alexandre Ben-Guiat (or Benghiat), who wrote *Perlas del Talmud* ['The Pearls of the Talmud'] (Izmir, 1921), "or a collection of the best sayings and advice found in the Talmud, preceded by the history of our religion, followed by some pieces and legends",⁵⁰ and accompanied by the author's commentaries (Romero 1992a:116; and Bunis 2021b).

5 Conclusions

Although there is a significant corpus of Ladino ethical works published in Rashi-font Hebrew letters between the sixteenth and twentieth century, as has been relatively well established by the researchers mentioned over the course of the present article, almost none of the works have been systematically and comprehensively studied; thus a great deal of musar literature written in Judeo-Spanish is still to be explored. The study of this popular rabbinic genre among Sephardim is important in order to obtain a complete picture of Ladino religious and secular literature as well as to better understand the role the Sephardic authors of musar works had as educators of their readers throughout the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

The aim of this contribution has been to call attention to this popular and extensively utilized genre in Ladino literature, and to juxtapose some classical musar works that were either complete translations from Hebrew to Judeo-Spanish or partial adaptations of them for a Sephardic readership, with some original Ladino

⁴⁹ Romero (1992a:118); Rodríguez Ramírez and Rivlin (2009); Ayala (2014); and Rivlin (2016).

⁵⁰ From the title page *פירלאס דיל תלמוד : או ריקח'ימינו די לאס מיז'וריס פאלאב'ראס אי קונסיו'ס דיג'וס* אין איל תלמוד : פריסידיו פור לה איסטוריה די נואיסטרה ריליג'יון אי סגיידו די אלגונס פידאסוס אי לחינדאס. *Perlas del Talmud: o rekojimento de las mijores palavras i consejos dichos en el Talmud: presedido por la istorya de nuestra relidjyon i segyido de algunos pedasos i lejendas.*

musar works. As illustrated in this article, translations, adaptation and rewritings of the musar works written in Hebrew offer a wide range of possibilities to carry out comparative studies between the Hebrew originals and the existing Ladino versions in order to find out how different they are from each other and to explore the question that has been raised: are we dealing with translations, abridged versions or adaptations. An additional, broader challenge is to compare the Ladino versions with their counterparts in other vernaculars, for example, in other Jewish languages such as Yiddish and Judeo-Arabic, in order to be able to analyze the differences regarding the form, content, context, and reception of musar works in different Jewish literary traditions.

Appendix: Ladino musar Works in Chronological Order

- Almosnino, Moše. *Sefer Hanhagat ha-Ḥayyim. Rejimyento de la vida*. Salonika, 1564.
- Ibn Paquda, Baḥya. *Sefer Ḥovat ha-Lēvavot bē-La'az*. Constantinople, 1569. Trans. Yosef Formon.
- Ibn Paquda, Baḥya. *Sefer Ḥovat ha-Lēvavot. Ovligasyon de los korasones*. Venice, 1713. Trans. Yosef Formon.
- Hakohen, Eliyyahu. *Sefer Šveṭ Musar*. Constantinople, 1742; Izmir, 1766; Salonika, 1800; Izmir, 1860. Trans. Avraham Asa.
- Aboav, Yiṣḥaq. *Sefer Mēnorat ha-Ma'or*. Constantinople, 1762. Trans. Avraham Asa.
- Ben Avraham, Rē'uven. *Sefer Tiqqune ha-Nefesh*. Salonika, 1765 and 1775. 2 vols.
- Ibn Paquda, Baḥya. *Sefer Ḥovat ha-Lēvavot. Ovligasyon de los korasones*. Vienna, 1822. Trans. Yisra'el B. Ḥayyim.
- Koidanover, Šēwi Hirsh. *Sefer Qav ha-Yašar*. Constantinople, 1823 and 1857.
- Bar Yēquti'el, Yehi'el. *Sefer Ma'alot ha-Middot*. Constantinople, 1824. Trans. anonymous.
- Farḥi, Yiṣḥaq. *Sefer Musar Haskel*. Constantinople, 1830.
- Farḥi, Yiṣḥaq. *Sefer Imre Bina*. Belgrade, 1836; Salonika, 1863 and 1887.
- Amarachi, Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor, and Yosef Ben Me'ir Sason. *Sefer Darḳe ha-Adam*. Salonika, 1843, 1849 and 1892.
- Sason, Yosef Ben Me'ir, and Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor Amarachi. *Sefer Musar Haskel*. Salonika, 1843, 1849 and 1892.
- Hurwitz, Pinḥas Eliyyahu. *Sefer ha-Bērit*. Salonika, 1847. Trans. Ḥayyim Avraham Benveniste Gategno.
- Ibn Ḥasday, Avraham. *Ben ha-Meleḳ wē-ha-Nazir*. Salonika, 1849. Trans. Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor Amarachi.
- Farḥi, Yiṣḥaq. *Zēkut u-Mišor*. Izmir, 1850; Salonika, 1868 and 1887. Trans. Yiṣḥaq Farḥi from his Hebrew work *Šuf Dēvaš* (Livorno, 1849).
- Palacci, Avraham. *Wē-Hoḳiah Avraham*. Salonika, 1853 or 1859; Izmir, 1862, 2 vols. and Izmir, 1877.
- Papo, Eli'ezer. *Pele Yo'eš*. Vienna 1870 and 1872, 2 vols. Salonika 1899–1900, 2 vols. Trans. Yē'uda Papo.
- Aboav, Yiṣḥaq. *Sefer Mēnorat ha-Ma'or*. Izmir, 1877; Constantinople, 1893. Trans. Avraham Asa.
- Ibn Ḥasday, Avraham. *Ben ha-Meleḳ wē-ha-Nazir*. Salonika, 1880. Trans. Yiṣḥaq Bēḳor Amarachi. Ed. Ya'aqov Yona.
- Ben Veniste, Rafa'el Yiṣḥaq, ed. *Bēraḳa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes*. Salonika, 1881¹ and 1881².

Ibn Paquda, Baḥya. *Sefer Ḥovav ha-Lēvavot, Ša'ar ha-Biṭṭaḥon*. Constantinople, 1898. Trans. Šelomo 'Uzzi'el.

Ben Naḥmias, Eliyahu Lewi, ed. *Bēraḡa ha-Mēšullešet o Las tres luzes*. Constantinople, 1900.

Rabbiner, Šemaḡ. *Las madres djudias de la epoka biblika*. Constantinople, 1913.

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