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Intertextualities in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*": A Judeo-Spanish Paraliturgical *copla* for Shavuot

"La Ketubá de la Ley" or *"Kĕtubbat ha-Tora"* (Marriage Contract of the Torah), composed by Rabbi Yĕhuda Bar Leon Kalay (or Kalai/Qala'i, H. קלעי ליאון בר יהודה; d. 1782) of Salonika and first published around 1750 for use in the synagogue during the Shavuot services, is one of the most prominent *coplas* in Judeo-Spanish (Romero 1992c:168).[1] *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* is the first published *copla* for the festival of Shavuot, and was first printed as separate booklets. In the early nineteenth century it began to be included in the *maḥzor* or prayer book for the Three Festivals (*Šaloš Rĕgalim*)—Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot—which also included the Book of Ruth with Ladino translation (Romero 1992c:168). This indicates that, from the early nineteenth century—if not earlier—*"La Ketubá de la Ley"* was incorporated as part of the formal prayers of the Shavuot service in the synagogue in some Ottoman Judeo-Spanish-speaking communities, and especially in Salonika. Ethnographies such as *Usos y costumbres de los sefardíes de Salónica* (Molho 1950:258–259) highlight the importance of this paraliturgical *copla* as part of the morning service of Shavuot, even in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, in Salonika, and Judeo-Spanish communities in the Ottoman Empire and beyond. Rachel Amado Bortnick, founder of Ladinokomunita—a Facebook Judeo-Spanish-speaking global community—remembers how in the *Kal* (synagogue) of Bet Israel in early twentieth-century Izmir women went to the synagogue during the Shavuot service especially to hear *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* in Judeo-Spanish.[2] Likewise, David Bunis

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remembers participating in the Shavuot service in 2013 at Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, founded by Judeo-Spanish-speaking immigrants from the island of Rhodes, in Seattle during which, led by Hazzan Isaac Azose, some half dozen male congregants draped in white prayer shawls took turns chanting the verses of *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* to the haunting traditional melody.[3] While most of the Shavuot service was in Hebrew, a language that traditionally-educated Sephardic Jews mastered at varying levels, but that most Sephardim could not understand, paraliturgical *coplas* were a highpoint during the prayer service for the congregants.

To put this Shavuot *copla* in context, the "*Ketubá*" joins a roster of other "Kĕtubbot for the second day of Shavuot," composed by learned rabbis following the incorporation of the rabbinical scholar, poet and composer Israel Najara's (Safed C. 1550–Gaza C. 1625) *piyyuṭ "Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno"* into the formal Shavuot service, especially during the first half of the sixteenth century. Najara's *piyyuṭ* was first printed in the booklet *Zĕmirot Yisra'el* (Safed 1586; expanded Venice 1599–1600).[4] Gershon Cohen (1974:41–42) noted the existence of three more *Kĕtubba* hymns for the second day of Shavuot in Hebrew composed by Jews in the Ottoman Empire (Belgrade, Sarajevo), and Morocco (Sale). Those were composed after Najara's *piyyuṭ* became widely known, a phenomenon in which poets followed renowned poets or acclaimed *piyyuṭim* and composed poems that "imitated"—borrowing the term used by Joseph Yahalom—literary characteristics or expressions, sometimes creating new genres of liturgical or para-liturgical poetry.[5] There is also a satirical *Kĕtubba* of the daughter of Haman Ha-Rasha' (the Evil Haman of the Purim story). One version, "*Ketubá de la ija de Aman Arashá*," appears in the compendium *Koplas nuevas [de Purim]*, Constantinople, 1778, 18–19. However, Kalay's hymn is the only non-satirical "*Kĕtubba*" in Judeo-Spanish.

The present chapter zooms in on the Judeo-Spanish *copla "La Ketubá de la Ley"* in an attempt to understand its intertextualities, its various paraliturgical literary motifs and functions, and the use of literary strategies by a Sephardic rabbi from mid-eighteenth-century Salonika. For the analysis of the structure and content of the *copla* I employ the approaches used for the study of *piyyuṭ*, i.e., a close reading

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3 Personal communication, 27 May 2022.

4 For a study on the part Olat Ḥodeš where this *piyyuṭ* is located see Beeri (1990:311–324). On the music of Najara's *piyyuṭim* and its influence on Ottoman Jewish music, see Seroussi (1990:285–310). For a complete and updated compilation of She'erit Yisrael by Zemirot Yisrael, see Najara (2023), edited by Beeri and Seroussi.

5 Joseph Yahalom examines the multiple ways Jews have composed liturgical and para-liturgical poetry following the form and content of a 'role-model' poem or literary motifs employed by the medieval Spanish poet Yehuda Halevi. See, for example, the new genre of "Zionist" poems that followed Halevis' poem "Zion, will you not ask" in Yahalom (2009:8–15). See other types of later "imitations" following Halevi's contents and motifs in Yahalom (2009:173–179).

of the poem attempting to reveal its paraphrases of canonical texts in Hebrew, such as the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash. To examine the commonalities and differences, both in form and content between "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" and "*Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" I will offer a comparative analysis of them; and to understand the literary context in which this *copla* was written and performed, I will compare "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" with other early Judeo-Spanish *coplas* for the Shavuot festival. These diverse forms of analysis lead to a better understanding of the wide literary encounters of this *copla*. This study builds on and contributes to liturgical and paraliturgical studies, studies of Ottoman Jewry, Jewish languages and translation studies. Focusing on a particular *copla*, this research suggests that paraliturgical poetry in Hebrew and the vernacular embody different manifestations of the same *piyyuṭ* genre.

1 Paraliturgical *coplas* in Judeo-Spanish

Coplas, the contemporary Spanish term for this genre, or *komplas* or *konplas*, as it is often known in Judeo-Spanish, comprise one of the most important literary genres in Judeo-Spanish, transmitted both in written form and orally. It included both paraliturgical poetry and poetry about the everyday life of Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Most of the *coplas* were composed to be sung, and they would seem to be "the most genuine and authentic [Sephardic] poetic creation" of the Eastern Sephardic diaspora (Romero 2011:73). As is true of the other traditional Judeo-Spanish sung literary genres—the *romansas* (traditional ballads) and *kantigas* (popular songs)—the *coplas* had their origins deep in medieval Ibero-Romance culture (Romero 2011:73). However, the paraliturgical *coplas* are also based on and highly inspired by Hebrew *piyyuṭim* (Romero 1998:339–341; Refael 2004:12–3, 31–32). Paraliturgical *coplas* were sung both in the formal synagogue services as well as in the domestic space, on the Sabbath, Jewish festivals and life-cycle events, and in commemorations of historical events. Since the first studies on the classification of Judeo-Spanish *coplas*, researchers have pointed out the paraliturgical function of these compositions.[6] However, the study of the textual influences of rabbinic literature on the *coplas* is still far from complete.

In his research on the musical structure of the eighteenth-century *Coplas de Yosef Haṣadic*, musicologist Edwin Seroussi (1996) demonstrated the connection between Ottoman Sephardic sacred music and Ottoman liturgical music, explain-

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6 Romero (1981:69–98, 1988, 1992a, 1992b, 2011:72–83); Weich-Shahak (1994, 1998–99, 2006, 2009, 2011); Refael (2004); Perez (2005); Girón-Negrón and Minervini (2006).

ing, in his words, the process of *"Maqamization"* which included an exchange which "encompasses repertoire, music theory, and ideologies about the transformative powers of listening to and performing music" (Seroussi 2013:284). Seroussi also analyzed the features shared by the specific *coplas* genre and Ottoman liturgical music, i.e., typical rhythms, musical structures and musical motifs and argued that only by recognizing the connection between the Ottoman Sephardic *piyyuṭ* and the paraliturgical context of Muslim sacred music can the Jewish *copla* be classified correctly. He, therefore, proposed examining the *Coplas de Yosef Haṣadic* as part of the corpus of *piyyuṭim* and defining an Ottoman Judeo-Spanish *piyyuṭ* genre (Seroussi 1996). Following Seroussi's lead, I here analyze another *copla* employing a literary approach. Another study of Seroussi in collaboration with musicologist Rivka Havassi reveals the incipits of *coplas* and *piyyuṭim* of Ottoman Jews utilizing melodies that paraphrased older Ottoman, Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish and Ibero-Romance liturgical, paraliturgical and non-liturgical songs (Seroussi 2009).

Also from a musicological approach, Rivka Havassi (2017) studies a manuscript from Ottoman eighteenth-century Ragusa (today Dubrovnik), which contained *coplas* and *piyyuṭim*, sometimes in multiple languages, demonstrating its local, Italian, Sarajevan and Ottoman musical and liturgical features.

Paloma Díaz-Mas contributed to the study of the genre by defining the form and content of Jewish *coplas* before the expulsions from the Iberian Peninsula, which served as a basis for the literary paraliturgical compositions of the Eastern Sephardic diaspora through the *Coplas de Yosef Haṣadic*. Díaz-Mas (1993) observed that the early *coplas* generally included syllabic rhymes of the last syllable of the line, the equivalent of which Ezra Fleischer demonstrated in Hebrew *piyyuṭim* of the classical period (sixth-eighth centuries) as fixed tail rhyme (Fleischer 2007:115–123, 340–367). Also, the early *coplas* usually included acrostics, some alphabetical, others spelling out the author's name, which provided the structure; this offers a parallel to Biblical Hebrew poetry (e.g., *"Ešet ḥayil,"* Prov 31:10–31), and the *piyyuṭim* of the pre-classical period (before the sixth century), which included alphabetical acrostics, and since the classical period (sixth-eighth centuries), also incorporated the author's name (Fleischer 2007:77, 127–130).

These biblical, classical and medieval structural characteristics continued to develop during the period of expansion of the *coplas* corpus, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Jacob Hassán (1987), in a pioneering panoramic review of the *coplas* genre, and Elena Romero (1991, 1992c:147–155, 2011) further discovered the formal structure and thematic content of the *coplas* from this fruitful period. The structural characteristics they discussed included acrostics, of both the (Hebrew) alphabet and the author's name; and the strophic structure of the poems, made up of a variable number of stanzas, and frequently having a refrain sung by all the worshippers present (Weich-Shahak 2011:199), which served to actively

involve the worshippers at the synagogue or home rituals, while the cantor or a family member—usually its head—sang the rest of the hymn. Returning to Díaz-Mas's characterizations, Romero (1991) noted that the strophic scheme of the *coplas* is varied and goes back to patterns from medieval Spanish poetry.

While the strophic structure of the Jewish *coplas* seems to have its origins in medieval Ibero-Romance poetry, their specific rhyme scheme apparently originated among Judeo-Spanish speakers under the conditions of their own written culture: the Judeo-Spanish language written in the Hebrew alphabet made extensive use in religious poetry of the Hebrew component, at least until the second half of the nineteenth century.[7] Hassán (1988:11–13) characterized the rhyme as being based on the consonant rhyme which varies according to the last vowel or syllable, thus requiring the "phonetic equality of the last syllable independently of the tone," present also in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*"; and Romero (2011:74–75) concluded that the rhyme structure is an original poetic structure, *noneta octo-hexasílaba*.

Regarding contents and functions, the paraliturgical *coplas*, diverging from everyday narrative *coplas*, compressed canonical prose in Hebrew and adapted it to the Judeo-Spanish vernacular and a mostly non-educated, and non-(rabbinic)scholarly audience. In her numerous contributions, musicologist Susana Weich-Shahak (1994, 1998–1999 and 2011) highlighted the didactic purpose of the paraliturgical *copla* genre, demonstrating that one of its most important functions was to allow Jews who were unable to understand Hebrew source-texts to acquire some knowledge of Jewish tradition, and thus help the individual to participate actively in both communal and domestic Jewish life-cycle ceremonies, and in the varied festival and commemorative rites.

These studies may lead the reader to think that the sub-genre of liturgical and paraliturgical *coplas* has received considerable scholarly attention. However, contrary to the Judeo-Spanish *romansas* and *kantigas* oral genres, which have been grouped, catalogued, and systematically examined, there is no systematic study that examines Judeo-Spanish *piyyuṭim*, its literary contexts, and formal features, and helps integrate them in the broader liturgical and paraliturgical Jewish creation. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to create such a *magnum* recount and examination of Judeo-Spanish *piyyuṭim*. However, it joins these scholarly conversations by exposing and examining the multiple intertextualities of one such a vernacular *piyyuṭ*, its functions, and literary characteristics.

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7 As exemplified in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*," many of the Hebraisms used in Judeo-Spanish religious poetry were also used in traditional everyday Judeo-Spanish; for a rather comprehensive inventory see Bunis (1993).

2 Analysis of the Poem "*La Ketubá de la Ley*"

2.1 Form

More than thirty-five versions of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" have survived. The version upon which the present analysis is based is found in Šĕmu'el Ben Yiṣḥaq Modiliano, *Sefer rĕnanat mizmor*, Salonika, published by Mordĕḵay Naḥman, 1753, 1a–2b (JTS Library [RB, 100:4]).[8]

I have also consulted the version starting from "*Le dió el novio tosefet sovre el 'ikar*" in Rabbi Yĕhuda Kalay, "Kĕtubbat ha-Tora" (Salonika, around 1770) [Yad Ben-Zvi Library, L 1842];[9] and *Kĕtubbat ha-Tora bi-lšon la'az [. . .] huva lĕ-vet ha-dĕ-fus a[l]"yĕ[de] Natan Ṣĕvi* [*Kĕtubbat ha-Tora* in the (Judeo-Spanish) vernacular language [. . .] brought to the press by Natan Ṣĕvi], Salonika: Bĕṣal'el Ha-Lewi Aškĕnazi, 1832, 1b–4a. When necessary, I have also consulted other later versions, among them *Seder kĕtubbat ha-Tora*, printed in Salonika in 1878–79 by S. N. Barzillay, which forms part of the Rare Book Collection of the Israel National Library (R 0=55 A 159), and the version that appears in Michael Molho's book, *Literatura sefardita de Oriente* (1960:169–173). The various surviving versions contain slight variations in the way the Judeo-Spanish is written, and sometimes there are alterations in the wording and content. At times the variations influence the meaning of the poem, and I will refer to them while examining the content.

In formal terms, the poem consists of twenty-four stanzas arranged in chronological order of the narrative. As noted, the poem is written in Hebrew letters and the first letters of each stanza comprise an acrostic of the name of the poet: "אני יהודה בר ליאון קלעי" (I, Yĕhuda Bar Leon Qala'i), except for the second stanza, which repeats the letter *aleph*.

The rhyme scheme is a monorhyme, constant throughout the poem, with a strophic rhyme of the final syllable, or last two syllables, of each line. Here is the first stanza as an example:

> *Es razón de alavar a·el Dio grande i pode<u>rozo</u>*
> *kon temoridad de korasón i alegría i <u>gozo</u>*
> *en el día el este el santo i temer<u>ozo</u>.*[10]

Susana Weich-Shahak (2011:203) noted that the "irregularity of the length of the verses [serves] as evidence of the importance of the content over the form: the perfection of the structure is sacrificed in favor of the didactic message"—indeed, this preference or even Judeo-Spanish-speaking authors' *priority* of the content over the form, is one of the significant differences between the Judeo-Spanish *copla* and the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, to which I shall refer later.

2.1.1 The Hebrew Component of the Text

A sociolinguistic analysis of the poem reveals much about its form and function, exposing its literary characteristics and its social purpose in the liturgical context. It is beyond the scope of the present paper to explore all the linguistic features of this poem; instead, I concentrate on critical linguistic features within paraliturgical, didactic, and cultural contexts.

Previous scholarship has demonstrated that a main common feature of Jewish languages is the use of a "Hebrew component," including reflections of Hebrew phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax—the Hebrew-origin morphemes sometimes showing fusion with elements derived from other languages, such as the local non-Jewish language—due to the fact that the "diverse Jewish communities shared the use of Hebrew as a written and liturgical language" (Kahn and Rubin 2016:3). The poem under analysis contains features of rabbinical Judeo-Spanish during what David M. Bunis defined as the language's Middle Period (1492–1790), including the extensive use of Hebraizing syntax, as is typical of rabbinic texts in Judeo-Spanish and other Jewish languages (Bunis 2013a:423). An example of this can be found in the third line of the first stanza: "*En el día el este*" ('On this day'). The syntax corresponds exactly to the Hebrew ביום ההוא / *ba-yom ha-hu* (literally, 'on the–day the–that'), while in everyday Judeo-Spanish, as in Spanish, the word order would be reversed: "en este día." In addition, there are many occurrences of Hebrew words, especially nouns pregnant with Jewish content, a central characteristic of Judeo-Spanish as a Jewish language (Bunis 1981). A few examples of this feature are reflections of the Hebrew words: *Sinay*, *Miṣrayim* ('Egypt'), *Šĕḵina*, and other familiar Hebrew-origin expressions or terms that are used in Jewish contexts,

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10 The indication in bold in Hebrew letters and in underlining of these and all other underlined letters in Judeo-Spanish were added by the present author.

such as reflections of *'avoda zara* ('idolatry'), *ka'as* ('anger'), and *mal'aḵim* ('God's angels'). A close reading of the text suggests that the author, like most of the rabbinic elite of his time, wrote in Judeo-Spanish while *thinking* (studying, elaborating, processing, and writing) in Hebrew and *adapting* (Hebrew) aggadic and midrashic sources to the vernacular. I will refer to this process of translation and adaptation later in this chapter. To be sure, the form and structure contribute to the vernacular hymn as much as its content and teach us about its intended audience.

Another distinctive feature of the Middle Period of Judeo-Spanish is the use of Hebrew terms related to commercial matters and abstract concepts (Bunis 2013a:424). In "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" the word *tenaim* (H. *tĕna'im* 'conditions', referring to the wedding agreement and contract), which appears in stanza 9, paraphrasing the Jewish *kĕtubba* as a commercial transaction. In the poem, the context is the legal conditions of the *kĕtubba* and the commitment to it undertaken by each side, but the sense is metaphorical and revolves around the engagement of the Jewish people to its God and its Law. The same applies to the terms *tosefet* ('supplementary sum') and *'ikar* ('principal sum') in stanza 12, which also appear in the original Aramaic *kĕtubba* (Epstein 1927), and in Najara's *piyyuṭ*. Similarly, so do reflections of the words *'ereḵ* ('value'), which appears in stanza 19, and *aḥarayut* ('responsibility') in stanza 15, referring to the responsibility of one or the other party to the agreement in the *kĕtubba* vis-à-vis the other party. All these terms reinforce the central contractual metaphor of the poem, and the covenant between the parties, which the author wished to portray as *unbreakable.*

Bunis (2013a:424) has shown how Ottoman Jews in this Middle Period incorporated into Judeo-Spanish Hebrew verbs and traditional expressions having essential Jewish connotations by using them with a Hispanic-origin auxiliary verb, thus integrating these Jewish connotations in their everyday language. This is also present in our hymn; for example, in stanza 12 in the expression "*ser mehadesh peshatím i hidushím*" ('[a man's responsibility] to make new interpretations of the Torah'), with the Hispanic-origin auxiliary verb *ser* 'to be'.

Apart from incorporating Hebrew elements, Ottoman Jews also integrated into their language elements from Ottoman Turkish and other languages spoken in the Ottoman Empire, including commercial expressions and words from their local everyday life (Bunis 2013b). However, in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" that feature is represented only by the single word *yardán* or *yadrán* ('necklace'), depending on the version, borrowed into Turkish (*gerdan[lık]*) from Persian (*gardan*). The reason for this scarce use of Ottoman linguistic elements may be that the hymn was intended for use in the synagogue during the Shavuot service, and so the author may have preferred to use Hebrew elements as much as possible, while avoiding non-Jewish linguistic elements. It is reasonable to suggest that the lack of Turkish elements emphasizes the *coplas'* paraliturgical function.

These formal features enhance its content. The use of Hebrew elements and their incorporation into the poem served not merely as stylistic embellishments but were intended to emphasize the religion-centered message of the poem. The same is true of the acrostic, which is not usual in non-religious Hebrew or Judeo-Spanish poetry, but widespread in sacred poetry.

2.2 Content

2.2.1 Commentary on "*La Ketubá de la Ley*"

The hymn "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" narrates in poetic form the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai as described in Exodus, starting with chapter 19. The frame story at the beginning of the poem is God as the bridegroom, and *Kĕnesset Yisra'el*, the congregation or people of Israel, as the bride, while the giving of the Torah is interpreted as the sign of the covenant between the two. The metaphor developed in the poem is the Torah as *kĕtubba*, the legal contract signed by both parties. The bridegroom acquires his bride through the *kĕtubba*, and takes upon himself to supply her with clothing, matrimonial rights, and nourishment. In flowery passages, the author expressed the Jewish people's longing for the Torah and its Creator and the duties of the people laid down in the *kĕtubba*. The *kĕtubba* includes conditions, the principal and supplementary sums of money agreed upon, which metaphorically refer to Torah study and exegesis, and the fulfillment of God's commandments.

In stanza 9, however, the metaphor changes: from this point on the groom becomes the People of Israel, while the bride is transformed into the Torah itself. This motif is intensified during the central core of the poem; in stanza 18 it reaches its climax: "*Salvo kon eya se apegará / Eya será su mujer i kon eya se envejeserá*" ('Only to her [the Torah] will he [the people of Israel] cleave, / She [alone] will be his woman/wife and with her shall he mature'). The Judeo-Spanish word "*apegará*" (shall cleave) reflects the Hebrew verb ידבוק / *yidboq* ('he will cleave, cling'), an expression that embodies the economic, social and corporal union of the groom with his new wife.[11]

The eclecticism of the poem continues further: for example, the People of Israel sometimes appears in the singular form—a man—as in stanza 7, and sometimes in the plural—people—as in stanza 10.

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11 See especially in Gen 2:24: "[a man] clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh." All Bible translations cited here are from *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (1985).

The author relied on diverse Jewish sources—biblical, midrashic, aggadic and paraliturgical—on the basis of Najara's Hebrew *piyyuṭ*. A primary source is the text of the traditional *kĕtubba*. Kalay made use of central terms of the *kĕtubba* as a contract, transforming those technical legal terms into the Jewish people's spiritual responsibility to its Book of Books. For example, as noted in stanza 9, the term *tenaim*, which in the *kĕtubba* refers to the 'conditions' of the engagement between the two sides. In the poem, the technical conditions refer not to the commercial estimation of a sum of money but to the Jewish people's fundamental spiritual appreciation of its "sacred law." The same is true of the term *tosefet* in stanza 12, the 'supplementary sum' that the groom adds to the principal sum ('*ikar*), as part of the agreement. In the poem, the *tosefet* appears to be biblical exegesis and Torah novellae, to be undertaken from daybreak and into the night: *ser mehadesh peshatím i hidushím de prima i de madrugada.*

Another prominent source used by the author was biblical texts, especially that of the Song of Songs—recited by Sephardic Jews in Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish or both, at the inauguration of the Sabbath on Friday nights—which are present in almost every stanza. The author constructed throughout the poem an intense love and devotion of the Jewish people towards its Torah, expressed mainly through paraphrases of the Song of Songs, the *mĕgilla* ('scroll') that precisely articulates the most tangible love in the Bible. In stanza 4, for example, the three lines contain some content of this *mĕgilla*:

> *Yamó i disho el Dio Baruh Hu a·los djidiós: "Mi konpanyía ermoza,*
> *fazme veer a·tu vista enshenplada a·la roza*
> *ke tu boz savroza i tu vista donoza."*

"*Azme veer a·tu vista*" ('Let me behold your countenance') echoes Song of Songs 2:14; and the last line, "*Ke tu boz savroza i tu vista donoza*" is a literal translation of part of the same verse (2:14), "for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." All made, I suggest, to create, design, and renew this love. An exact Judeo-Spanish rendering can be found in an earlier translation of the Song of Songs, produced by the prolific Avraham Asa of eighteenth-century Istanbul. His translation of the Song of Songs was published in Istanbul, in 1744. There we find: "*Azme veer a tu vista [,] azme oyir a tu boz / ke tu boz savroza i tu vista donoza*" (folios 7b–8a).

The expression "*konpanyía ermoza*" ('My lovely companion') reflects Song of Songs 6:4, although additionally to the Judeo-Spanish version of the Song of Songs, eighteenth-century translations of this *mĕggila* included an Aramaic midrash for Passover, and sometimes Rashi's (Rabbi Šĕlomo Yiṣḥaqi) commentaries and their respective translations to Judeo-Spanish. The "five mĕggilot" of the noted Abraham Asa, for example, included the explanation of Rashi's commentary on verse 2:13

about the "firstborn figs," which are explained to be the *"konpanyía de Israel"* (Asa 1744:7b).[12]

Another Biblical reference that echoes here is the Book of Exodus, due to the principal theme of the poem: the Jewish people receiving the Torah from God at Mount Sinai. This is especially prominent in stanza 5, where every line refers to another verse from Exodus, as in the previous example:

> *Israel ke oyeron la boz del Dio Bendicho*
> *disheron: "Estaremos sienpre a·Su komando i a·Su dicho*
> *Aremos i oyiremos todo Su buen dicho."*

"Israel ke oyeron la boz del Dio Bendicho" may be a reference to Exod 20:14, "And all the people perceived the thunderings." The climax of the stanza, and the responsibility of the Jewish people to their God, comes in the last line: *"Aremos i oyiremos todo Su buen dicho,"* an adaptation of the Hebrew "כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע" ("All that the Lord hath spoken we will faithfully do"; Exod 24:7), which like previous examples, Kalay probably saw in Abraham Asa's translation of Exodus, printed in Istanbul in 1739. There, Asa translated Exod 24:7 *"todo lo ke avló Adonai aremos i oyiremos"* (Asa 1739:131b). Probably deliberately, the author of the Judeo-Spanish poem chose to end the stanza with this exclamation. Indeed, this is the most fundamental statement of the Jewish people's commitment, a declaration of allegiance to God: "And he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will faithfully do.'"

Other sources tapped by the Judeo-Spanish author are rabbinic sources, especially the Babylonian Talmud, with its rich store of midrashim and aggadot, but also later midrashim, such as Bereshit (Genesis) Rabbah, Shemot (Exodus) Rabbah, Bamidbar (Numbers) Rabbah, Tanḥuma and Pirke deRabbi Eliezer. A few examples of those references are to be found in stanza 3: *"Non kijo abashar sovre ningún monte alto, salvo en monte de Sinai ke se rebashó tanto"* ('He did not wish to descend upon any lofty peak, but rather upon the lowly mount of Sinai which humbled itself so'). In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah (Schreier 2022, 13:3) the sages illustrated the verse using Prov 29:23: "A man's pride will humiliate him; But a humble man will obtain honor." The midrashic author separated the verse into two sections and explained: "'A man's pride will humble him,' this is Tavor and Carmel, that came from the ends of the earth, haughtily saying: 'We are high, and upon us, the Holy One blessed be He is giving the Torah.' "And the lowly spirit will attain honor," this is Sinai, that humbled itself, saying: 'I am low.' As a result, the Holy One blessed

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12 See also the book *Sefer něqudot ha-kasef* (Laniado 1619:21a–21b), for another example of Song of Songs' translating the *"konpanyía de Israel"* associated with the same verses.

be He rested His glory upon it. The Torah was given upon it, and it merited all this honor [. . .]."[13] In this case, *ningún monte alto* might refer to Tabor and Carmel, while according to the hymn God descended to the humble mount of Sinai.

The last verse of this stanza ends with a moral comparing the humility of Mount Sinai to the attitude of modesty that a man should adopt, another commentary on the same midrash.

In stanza 20, the author declares that the eternal covenant, the wedding between the Jewish people and their law, the Torah, has already occurred. R. Kalay states that at this moment, 'all the [Jewish] souls were present at Mount Sinai, and they saw the clarity of the *Šĕḵina'*: "*todas las almas en monte de Sinay estuvieron, klaridad de la Shehiná kon sus ojos vieron.*" ('Appearing at Mount Sinai was every living[14] soul, with their own eyes the Divine Presence they witnessed whole'). Probably R. Kalay based these verses on Pirke deRabbi Eliezer:

> [. . .] and the dead who were in Sheol revived, and stood on their feet till the end of all the generations, as it is said, "But with him that standeth here with us this day" (Deut 29:15), and those (also) who in the future will be created, until the end of all the generations, there they stood with them at Mount Sinai [. . .] (Friedlander 1916, 41:12).

There, the commentary suggests that all souls, living and dead, and those yet to be born, were present at the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The noted rabbinic references, and these two examples in particular, elucidate the educational function of the sources as most of the Judeo-Spanish-speaking population had no direct access to the Hebrew rabbinic interpretative literature. As is true for other *piyyuṭim* in Hebrew and the vernacular, Kalay addressed his poetic writings to various recipients with distinct levels or dimensions of understanding: for the learned, who could recognize textual paraphrases, it introduced some amusement, entertainment and especially an intellectual experience into the formal prayer; while for those unfamiliar with the rabbinic sources, it served as a medium of education. In "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" this becomes even more significant since the hymn was sung during the synagogue service, close to the communal reading of the Book of Ruth, which in some Sephardic communities was read in Judeo-Spanish as well.

As I will elaborate in section 3, this hymn and other *piyyuṭim* for Shavuot in Hebrew, especially the abovementioned "Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno," and Shavuot *coplas* in Judeo-Spanish, have additional intertextual relationships. Section 2.2.2 presents the entire text of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" with its possible intertextual connections.

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13 The midrash translator relied on a different Bible translation than the author of the present chapter, but the meaning remains the same.

14 Note that the English translator added the word "living," lacking a correspondent in the original text, thereby changing the meaning of the sentence.

2.2.2 Annotated Text of *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* and Its Intertextual Interpretation

La Ketubá de la Ley[15]	Marriage Contract of the Law[20]
R. Yeudá Bar León Kalay[16]	*R. Yĕhudah Bar León Kalay*
Es razón de alavar a·el Dio grande i poderoso	It is fitting to praise the God of greatness and of might,
kon temoridad de korasón i alegría i gozo[17]	With fear in the heart and joy and delight,
en el día el este el santo i temerozo.	On this day of sanctity and awesome fright.
En este día abashó el Dio en Sinay i milarias de mal'ahim kon Él[18]	On this day God descended upon Sinai with minions of angels of the Lord,
a dar la Ley a·su puevlo kaza de Israel	To this people, the House of Yisrael, the Torah He did afford,
por mano de Moshé pastor fiel.	Through the hand of *Moshe Rabbenu*, His faithful shepherd, adored.
Non kijo abashar sovre ningún monte alto	He did not wish to descend upon any lofty peak,
salvo en monte de Sinai ke se rebashó tanto	But rather upon the lowly mount of Sinai did He seek,
por ke deprenda el onbre i tome la anavá por manto.[19]	So as to impress upon man and gird him with the virtues of the meek.

(continued)

Yamó i disho el Dio Baruh Hu a·los djidiós:[21] *"Mi konpanyía ermoza,*[22]	"My lovely companion," blessed God to the Jews did announce and declare,
fazme veer a tu vista[23] *enshenplada a·la roza*[24]	Let me behold your countenance, to which the rose does compare,
ke tu boz savroza i tu vista donoza."[25]	For your voice is delightful and your appearance is fair.
Israel ke oyeron la boz del Dio Bendicho disheron: "Estaremos siempre a·Su komando i a·Su dicho	Yisrael upon hearing the voice of God, be blessed, Rejoined, "We will ever hearken to Your word and Your behest,
aremos i oyiremos todo Su buen dicho."[26]	'We will do and we will listen' fully to Your benevolent request."
Izo partido kon eyos de darles la Ley konke le diera fiansa	He achieved to give them the Torah, with which they gave Him a guarantee,
eyos dieron a·los ijos ke es la más inportansa	That of utmost importance, they pledged their posterity,
de afirmar la Ley tanto kon proveza komo kon tener mucha bonansa.	To affirm the Torah amid privation just as amid prosperity.
Viendo el Dio Baruh Hu ke lo amimos aavá rabá	Blessed God, upon seeing the manner of our immense adoration,
también Él mos aplazó komo novia[27]	Likewise adored us as a bride with
kon grande hibá:	boundless adulation,
"Esta es la ketubá."[28]	"Behold here is the marriage documentation."

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21 This version of the *copla* incorporates a few features typical of the Salonika dialect of Judeo-Spanish, which was presumably the author's native dialect: e.g., *djidió* ('Jew') rather than *djudió*; *fazme* ('make me') rather than *azme*; *tredje* ('thirteen') rather than *treze*, and other variants.
22 Song 6:4. The earlier editions have *konpanyía*, while others have *kompanya*; in addition to the meaning 'companion' *konpanyía* means 'cohort'.
23 Song 2:14.
24 Song 2:2.
25 Song 2:14.
26 Exod 24:7.
27 *Novia* (bride) appears only in the first version, cited here; in all other version I consulted, *novio* (groom) appears.
28 According to the *qiddušin* ritual (ceremony under the matrimonial canopy), before reading the contract the rabbi or the conductor of the wedding declares: "And this is the *kĕtubba*." The hymn's author wrote the additional lines as a paraphrase of the contract, using the same structure: Date, the responsibilities of each party to the agreement, and the sum accorded to each party.

(continued)

Día de Shabat resivieron los djidiós la Ley de·la mano de el Dio	On the Shabbat day, the Jews' reception of the Torah from God's hand was celebrated,
a diez de siván en·el mez tresero ke Israel de Mitsrayim salió[29]	On the tenth of Sivan, in the third month whence Yisrael from Mitzrayim vacated,
en anyo de dos mil i kuatrosientos i kuarenta i sesh ke el mundo se krió.[30]	In the year two thousand four hundred and forty-six, from when the world was created.
Izieron estos tenaim los djidiós kon la Ley Santa:[31]	The Jews forged these conditions upon the holy decree,
"Te tomaré komo novia ke sos de vanda alta	"I shall take you as a bride, one of truly high degree,
te estimaré komo se estima el yadrán[32] *en la garganta.*	As a necklace upon the throat, I do reckon thee.
Besiatá dishmayá sienpre en tí mis mientes meteré	With the aid of Heaven, in you my thoughts shall lie,
i todas tus demandas yo kunpliré	To all your demands as well, shall I ever comply,
de día i de noche kon ti me apegaré".	During the day and at night, to you I cleave hereby."
Respondió la Ley tamá temimá:[33]	Replied the Torah of wholesome probity,
"Yo también te amí ke sos novio de mishpahá ramá.	"Surely I love you so, as a groom of high pedigree,
ke en ti enveluntí más ke todo lashón i umá."	I desire you more than any language or society."

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29 The exact date of the receiving of the Torah is a topic of discussion and dispute among the Talmudic sages. See Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat (87b); Yoma (4b); and Pirke deRabbi Eliezer (see Friedlander 1916, 46:1). The author of the Judeo-Spanish hymn adopted the Talmudic opinions.

30 In other versions, a different year is mentioned: 2448.

31 The *tena'im* are a metaphor for the conditions the Jewish people took upon itself in order to receive the Torah, based on the conditions of the two sides of the kĕtubba agreement.

32 The Judeo-Spanish word *yadrán*, or *yardán* (the former with *-rd- > -ðr-* metathesis characteristic of Southeastern Judeo-Spanish dialects such as that of Salonika) comes from the Turkish word *gerdan* 'neck' (from Persian *gardan*), cf. Tk. *gerdanlık* 'necklace.'

33 The Hebrew expression *Tamma tĕmima* ('perfect and complete') alludes to the Torah; see Ps 19:8.

(continued)

Le dió el novio toséfet sovre el ikar de·la ketubá de su dezpozada[34]	The bridegroom attached additions withal the principle was borne,
de ser mehadesh peshatím i hidushím de prima i de madrugada[35]	To uncover new expositions and novellae from dust till early morn,
i kon kaas i pereza[36] *non ser deshada.*	And even in anger or in laziness, it shall not be left forlorn.
Yevó kon eya la ashugar ke trusho de kaza de su padre	She carried with her the dowry that she brought from her Father's estate,
sheshientas i tredje mitsvot para ke se afirmen manyana i tadre	613 commands shall be affirmed from morning until late,
para ke el novio las faga i las guadre.[37]	So that the bridegroom's grasp and care of it shall nevermore abate.
Enportó todos entre ashugar i toséfet i kontado	All were of import among the dowry, the additions and the Father's bequest,
ke trusho la novia a·su novio amado	That the bride brought before the groom, whose love was professed,
las mitsvot afirmar i temer en·el Dio i azer Su mandado.	To affirm the *mitzvot* and fear God and upon His obligations to attest.
Viendo el novio la ashugar ke trusho la sinyora kon eya	The groom, upon seeing the dowry brought by his fiancée,
resivió el aharayut[38] *de lo·ke mankara en·eya*	Accepted obligations that it may not convey,
i yevar pena si en su dicho reveya.	To bear a penalty lest its words shall he betray.
Ni ke pueda vender ni enpenyar ningún livro de la Ley amada	No book of the dear Torah shall he pawn nor tender,
si·no estimarlos komo djoya presyada	But regard them as a jewel of precious splendor,
sienpre ir merkando i de eyos no vender nada.	He shall always acquire for them, but for sale shall never render.

34 Another paraphrase of the *kĕtubba* agreement. *Toséfet sovre el ikar* means the supplementary sum added to the principal sum by the groom. This is part of the main metaphor adorning the poem.
35 The supplementary sum is the promise of the groom to study the Torah by day and by night.
36 In this early edition we find the word פיריזה (*pereza*) which means laziness, while in all the other versions I consulted there is another word, close in its sound but not in its meaning: פריסה (*prisa*), haste.
37 The bride took with her the *ashugar* (dowry), that is, the 613 commandments to be observed by the People. At this point in the hymn, the author reveals the obligations of the Jewish people in this marriage, the groom (the People) should care for those commandments, meaning observing the *Mitsvot*.
38 The term *aharayut* (H. *aḥarayut* 'responsibility') is taken from the *kĕtubba* document.

(continued)

Komo ya resivió el novio de azer sus mitsvot i sus hukim	When the groom agreed to keep its every command and every measure,
le prometió eya de darle su yerushá ke está bashehakim	She promised to give him his inheritance which is in heaven,
de el bien ke está guadrado en 'olam abá para los tsadikim.	The good reserved for the righteous in *Olam Habba* [the Next World] and all its pleasure.
Lo akavidó más ke·no la troke por otra ley ni ke sierva avodá zará	She warned him not to change it for any other law, nor to serve false gods impure,
salvo kon eya se apegará eya sea su mujer i kon eya envejeserá.[39]	But rather to it alone shall he cleave secure, She is his only woman and with her shall he mature.
Éreh[40] *para eya no ay, ke es estimada más ke el oro fino*	Finer than the finest gold, there is no estimation to its value,
ke la melde i·la yeve en su pecho de kontino	He shall study it and at his chest shall he hold it fast thereto,
i ke·no la deshe aún ke vaya por kamino.	Whilst even on a journey it he must never eschew.
Ya se kumplió el kazamiento ke los djidiós kon la Ley izieron	At last, consummated was the wedding of the Jews to their Torah scroll,
todas las almas en monte de Sinay estuvieron[41]	Appearing at Mount Sinai was every living soul,
klaridad de·la Shehiná kon sus ojos vieron.	With their own eyes the Divine Presence they witnessed whole.
Zahut tengamos nos i todos los ke en el Dio temen	Together with those who fear in God we have commendation,
ke·la afirmemos mozotros[42] *i muestro semen*	For we affirm it along with every future generation,
veamos vengansa en los enemigos ke presto se atemen.	To its enemies, may they be quickly destroyed, we train our indignation.

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39 Gen 2:24.

40 The term *'ereh* ('value') is again a term taken from the *kĕtubba* document. The author used this technical term to refer to the opposite of what is written in the traditional *kĕtubba*: the Torah is above any sum.

41 Pirke deRabbi Eliezer; see Friedlander (1916, 41:12).

42 Spelled in the text מושאוטרוש (*mos'otros*), meant to be read *mozotros*.

(continued)

Los djidiós ke resivieron la Ley a ojos de todos los puevlos	The Jews received the Torah before the eyes of all peoples, worldwide,
fueron eskapados de todos los males i los duelos	They were assured that upon them no illness of grief would betide,
los 'edim de·la Ley fueron la tierra i los sielos.	To the occasion, both the earth and heaven testified.
Apiade el Dio sovre nos i mos dé buen fadario	God have mercy upon us and bring us a good end,
de apretos ke avemos yevado mos page el buen salario[43]	Give us good fortune, Lord and *Mashiah* [Messiah] hastily send,
aína i presto mos frague el santuvario.	The building of Your Holy Temple, speedily attend.
Él se venge de todos los ke sierven ídolo	May God take revenge upon all those who serve gods of stone,
i bendiga a Su puevlo 'am goraló	And bless His people, the nation whose lot is His own,
digan todos auna mente: "Ashré aam shekaha lo."	Thus shall all utter together, "Happy is the nation about whom this is known."

The great number of subtexts shows the intertextual wealth of this hymn. Yet, its wealth and intertextuality would be better understood by analyzing this poem not as an individual example but rather as a case study that represents a broader inter-textual phenomenon. The next section examines these intertextual relations with other Hebrew and vernacular Shavuot poems.

3 *Piyyuṭim* for Shavuot and Their Connection to "*La Ketubá de la Ley*"

3.1 Between "*Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" and "*La Ketubá de la Ley*"

The Hebrew *piyyuṭ* "*Kĕtubba lĕ-Ḥag Šavu'ot [. . .] Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" composed by Rabbi Israel Najara, which had first been incorporated in his sixteenth-century song collection, *Zĕmirot Yisra'el*,[44] was included in a siddur published in Istanbul in

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43 In later versions there are slight differences in this sentence: *Mos mande a el Untado i tengamos buen salario*.
44 For the text, see https://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/Song/Pages/SongPicture.aspx?SongMateri-alID=101 [Accessed 21.01.2025].

1737, but not as an integrative part of the prayer service;[45] while in 1752 the complete text was incorporated into the *Maḥzor lĕ-Šaloš Rĕgalim* (Mahzor for the Three festivals) for Sephardic communities printed in Venice (Cohen 1974:39). From the instructions in the prayer books containing the poem it was meant to be sung when the Torah scroll is removed from the synagogue ark. This is the first clear evidence that this paraliturgical hymn was expected to be recited as part of the formal prayer service in the synagogue, although it is probable that the *piyyuṭ* was widespread among Sephardic communities even before it appeared in the *maḥzor*.

"La Ketubá de la Ley" is highly inspired in both form and content by Najara's *piyyuṭ "Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno."* Cohen (1974:41–42), while speculating on the possible author of our vernacular *copla*, concluded that the vernacular hymn was a translation of Najara's Hebrew *piyyuṭ*; however, as I will argue, a comparative analysis of the two texts reveals a more complex explanation.

In 1998, Elena Romero conducted another pioneering study about *coplas* and translated *piyyuṭim* from Hebrew to Judeo-Spanish and asked if these translated compositions could be considered part of the Judeo-Spanish *coplas* corpus (Romero 1998). Romero answered by analyzing the formal settings of the translated *piyyuṭim* and by comparing them principally to those formal characteristics she and Hassán previously identified and defined. In a way, the present section offers an opposite move. It aims to examine how the specific vernacular *copla* shares formalistic and content features with other examples of vernacular and Hebrew paraliturgical poetry and how it diverges from them. Some concepts from translation studies can help to elucidate the literary and cultural relationship between the texts, which interests me more than the question of ownership.

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45 There is another version printed in *Sefer Ben Oni* (Izmir, 1738); see David (1738). However, the book is not a prayer book and the *piyyuṭ* is inserted in its last pages. Thus, this version does not indicate whether Izmir Jews used to sing the *piyyuṭ* during the Shavuot service. Another version of the *piyyuṭ* was printed, apparently in Constantinople (Istanbul), around 1570–73; the booklet offers *Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno* for the first day of Shavuot and another *piyyuṭ* also composed by Najara, for the second day. However, even if it is specified what *piyyuṭ* was to be recited in each service, this version also does not prove that Sephardic Jews included the *piyyuṭ* in their service. The specification could have been written by the author of the *piyyuṭ*. See *Kĕtubba šel Šavuʻot*, JTS Digital Objects, https://primo-tc-na01.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=JTS_ISLANDORAjts_25521&context=L&vid=JTS&lang=en_US&search_scope=JTS&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=default_tab&query=any,contains,%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%91%D7%94%20%D7%A9%D7%9C%20%D7%A9%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%AA&offset=0 [Accessed 23.10.2021].

Itamar Even-Zohar's theory on what he termed a "polysystem translated literature," defined the various positions of translated literature (Even-Zohar 1990). He emphasized the "primary" positions this literature can have in its receptor culture. In his words:

> To say that translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem means that it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem. In such a situation it is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place. This implies that in this situation no clear-cut distinction is maintained between "original" and "translated" writings, and that often it is the leading writers [. . .] who produce the most important translations (Even-Zohar 1990:46).

In considering Even-Zohar's concept of "polysystem" we have to take into account that Jewish communities in the early modern into the modern period were "multiglossic" communities, that is, the members of the community used various languages that had varied functions and roles known by all and each language was mastered at different levels (Sáenz-Badillos and Pearce 2021:635).[46] In the case of Ottoman Jews originating from the Iberian Peninsula, Judeo-Spanish was the language of daily life among Jews, while they used basic Hebrew for worship and synagogal service (understood by very few and not at the same level), and basic—if any—Turkish for trade and business and specific local needs. Depending on the area they inhabited, they sometimes mastered languages prominent among other Ottoman ethnic groups and/or European languages at some level.

Moreover, as Even-Zohar (1990:47) claimed, "in such a state when new literary models are emerging, translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating the new repertoire." As Yahalom (2009) demonstrated through the literary aftermath of Halevi's poetry, some pieces of literature function as role model literature. This is the case with "Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno" in Hebrew. Perhaps Kalay perceived that his community did not have enough liturgical poems for the Shavuot festival or more than that, he needed a vernacular hymn to engage those who could not understand Hebrew during the synagogue service.

Furthermore, this Judeo-Spanish hymn should be considered in the context of early-modern understandings of practicing translations. As historian Iris Idelson-Shein shows in her recent study, in contrast to modern demands for accuracy, and authorship credit, early modern Jewish translators especially in Ashkenaz unacknowledged their sources entirely or partially and "often made no mention of their works being translations at all" (Idelson-Shein 2024:90, 90-105). However,

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46 See, for example, Elaine R. Miller's study of multiglossia among Jews in Medieval Spain in Miller (2000).

Idelson-Shein's work delves into literatures produced by non-Jews that were translated by Jews for Jewish audiences and thus adapted or "domesticated" to Judaic cultures (2024:105-117).[47] In contrast, the pieces under scrutiny are from within Jewish cultures. Indeed, while most works in the field of translation studies have examined the multiplicity and complexities of textual translation between societies, cultures, nations, colonial settings and languages, here the adaptation is from close cultures in terms of religious practice and rite, and even language. Israel Najara and Yĕhuda Leon Kalay were both Ottoman Jewish scholars who mastered the Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish languages. Moreover, some of Kalay's intended Judeo-Spanish-speaking worshippers could understand the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* as well. More than that, contrary to regular translations, where readers often do not master the language of the literature it was translated from, and the "original" text is not always available to them, in these inner-Ottoman Jewish translations, both texts were reachable. Concretely here, some versions of the Judeo-Spanish *"La Ketuba de la Ley"* which were printed in stand-alone booklets appeared right before the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, indicating that both poems are directly related.

On the one hand, it is reasonable to suggest that in cases when the "original" texts were available and the communities continued reciting them, the translator could create adaptations that were not expected to be entirely equivalent to the source. More than that, the translator could have felt at liberty to produce a new composition taking the original as a source of inspiration. On the other hand, some of the terms, expressions and words from the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* also appear in the Judeo-Spanish hymn, indicating that the latter could "contain" the Hebrew, not only in terms of Hebrew components and linguistics but also in its contents. In these cases as well, however, Kalay could opt to stick with the accurate significance Najara gave to the word, or to use the same Hebrew words and rabbinic references to express meanings divergent from the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, and thus add amusement to those who could recognize the contexts of Najara's composition, or alternatively, provide simpler meanings to those unfamiliar with Najara's rabbinic references.

Moreover, scholars of translation studies have devoted considerable attention to texts that were intended to be read. However, this is not the case with texts intended to be recited. Unlike many other types of literatures, "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" had a devotional function and was a performative text. Thus, combining translation studies with theoretical concepts and methodology from other sub-disciplines, such as liturgical, paraliturgical and *piyyuṭ* studies, provides more apposite analyt-

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[47] Idelson-Shein's book was published when this chapter was in its final version before publication. I hope to engage in more significant scholarly conversation with "Between the Bridge and the Barricade" in future contributions.

ical tools. Using this framework, I suggest that it is more useful and specific-histori-cal-situated to deviate from the question of authorship and whether "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" is a translation or not, to the text's multiple intertextualities, and the *elaboration* strategies used by Kalay, i.e., the approaches and methods Kalay employed to create a composition that fitted his various audiences of mid-eighteenth-century Salonika Jewry, using Najara's composition as a role model.

It is worth beginning with the central metaphor of both compositions. In "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" as in "*Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" the *kĕtubba*—the technical legal marriage agreement—plays a central role as the symbol of unification between the bride and groom: the covenant between God and His people. As far as we know, there are no other paraliturgical compositions in which the *kĕtubba* motif is as central as in these for the Shavuot festival.

Meyer Nezrit argued that in Najara's *piyyuṭ* two marriages are arranged in parallel: the *ḥuppa* of the people of Israel and God, and that of the people and the Torah. Moreover, he pointed out that the identity of the groom and the bride is not always clear, nor is the place of the *ḥuppa*, nor the dowry provided by the bride's side to the groom.[48] It is this uncertainty of space and time that helps create this simultaneous union (Nezrit 1989:47–67, 102–103, 171–205). Moreover, it seems that this "blurring" condition throughout the *piyyuṭ* can be explained as participating in the compositions' idea. According to it, since the time and place can be moved, and the identities of the various subjects are "hybrid," the author created an eternal dimension where the act of Israel receiving the Law could happen in various times and in Mount Sinai as in other places. This is one of the literary constructions used by Najara to express the legendary desire for the people's redemption (Nezrit 1989:47), reawakened every year during Shavuot.

A careful reading of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" reveals that Kalay may have adopted and developed this fundamental idea. In his hymn, the early covenant between the People of Israel and God, and the People and its Law is not reduced to an event of the remote past nor situated in the ancient event at Sinai. Instead, Kalay portrayed it as an eternal truth for all generations. The author emphasized the receiving of the Torah as a current celebration, and one which renews itself every year during Shavuot, when the People receive the Law once again, reinforcing a present commitment. Its relevancy is in the past, but also in the present and future. This is emphasized by the author's phrase "*en este día*" ('on this day') (stanza 2), which in

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48 Nezrit (1989:47–62) maintained that three "pictures" are presented in parallel throughout the *piyyuṭ*. The first is the marriage of the *dod* (groom) and *ra'ya* (bride) as inspired by Song of Songs; the second is the marriage of Israel and God in Mount Sinai; and the third is the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. The three "pictures" interlace and create a reality of different events in time and place representing the redemption of the people of Israel.

Judeo-Spanish denotes "this day" in the past and present tenses; and is expressed in stanza 10 as well, where a pause in the course of the wedding frame-story serves to accentuate the People of Israel's promise to comply with all that the Law demands and to cleave to "Her" [the Torah] both by day and at night.

However, the identity of both bride and groom diverges in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" from those in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*. In Kalay's hymn, the Jewish people are the bridegroom and God is the father of the bride, which is the Torah. At some points in the latter text, the Torah itself is the *kĕtubba*. Although Kalay adopted the multiple identities of the "actors," he possibly preferred to express himself more literally, rather than presenting a complex metaphor to an audience insufficiently familiar with Jewish traditional sources that might misunderstand the metaphor.

The Hebrew *piyyuṭ* starts with the description of God descending from His heavenly chariot to unite with His beloved, *Kĕnesset Yisra'el*. God abandons all the hosts of heaven who serve Him to reconcile His love. The first verses include the following lines:

יָרַד דּוֹדִי לְגַנּוֹ לַעֲרֻגוֹת בְּשָׂמוֹ
לְהִתְעַלֵּס עִם בַּת נָדִיב וְלִפְרוֹשׂ עָלֶיהָ סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמוֹ
אַפִּרְיוֹן עָשָׂה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה[49]

שְׂרָפִים וְאוֹפַנִּים נָטַשׁ וּפָרָשָׁיו וְרִכְבּוֹ
וּבֵין שָׁדֵי אַיֶּלֶת אֲהָבִים שָׁם מְסִבּוֹ
בְּיוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ

In "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" Kalay preserved the same motif of God's descending from the heavens, but made major alterations in the content. While in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* God leaves behind all His warriors and servants and descends alone, in "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" God descends to Mount Sinai escorted by His chariots of angels, based on Exod 19:20 and Midrash Tanḥuma *Wa-yišlaḥ* 2: *"En este día abashó el Dio en Sinay i milarias de malahim kon Él"* (stanza 2) ('On this day God descended upon Sinai with minions of his angels'). Moreover, in Najara's *piyyuṭ* God descended in order to couple with His beloved, while in Kalay's hymn, God descends to "bring the Law to His People" and not to realize or consummate His love. In this case, and in others that will be treated later, Kalay expressed his ideas more subtly and chastely,

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49 The words of "*Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" presented here are from the Piyut and Tefillah website managed by the Snunit Association and the National Library of Israel, https://www.nli.org.il/he/piyut/Piyut1song_010086800000005171/NLI [Accessed 21.01.2025].

perhaps out of concern that the audience would wrongly understand this carnal allegory that—at least partially—alluded to divine love.

However, like his fellow writers and poets of devotional songs in Hebrew, Kalay used metaphors from the Song of Songs for the seeking of love to refer to divine love, locating his composition in a long-established paraliturgical tradition. For example, in the fourth stanza, where following Najara's third stanza, God approaches the people, in the Judeo-Spanish, allegorizing them as a rose. Both compositions show God's direct approach to the Jewish people. In Najara's *piyyuṭ*, God calls and speaks directly to His beloved, asking her to marry Him.

רַעְיָתִי יוֹנָתִי בֹּאִי אִתִּי לִדְבִיר וְאוּלָם
כִּי לְמַעֲנֵךְ אֶעֱזֹב כָּל הֲמוֹנֵי מַעְלָה וְחֵילָם
וְאַרְשְׂתִּיךְ לִי לְעוֹלָם

So, too, in stanza 4 of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*":

Yamó i disho el Dio Baruh Hu a·los djidiós: "Mi konpanyía ermoza,
fazme veer a tu vista enshenplada a·la roza
ke tu boz savroza i tu vista donoza.

Stanza 5 of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" parallels stanzas 4 and 5 of "*Yarad dodi lě-ganno*," which presents the response of *Kĕnesset Yisra'el* to God's proposal, expressing love and commitment. In both cases, the response is the same, paraphrasing the response of the Jewish people at Mount Sinai according to Exod 24:7: ‏"וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה‎ ‏**נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**"‎, ('And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will faithfully do"').

In the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* Najara writes:

לְחֶפָּה נִתְרַצְּתָה מְחוֹלַת הַמַּחֲנָיִם
וּכְנֶגֶד **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע** לְקָחָה שִׁשִּׁים רִבּוֹא עֲדִי עֲדָיִים

The Judeo-Spanish text reads:

Israel ke oyeron la boz del Dio Bendicho
disheron: "Estaremos siempre a·Su komando i a·Su dicho
<u>*aremos i oyiremos*</u> *todo Su buen dicho.*

However, while in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* the answer comes from a female bride, *mĕḥolat ha-Maḥanayim*, 'dancer of the Maḥanayim (or two companies) dance' paraphrasing Song 7:1, the People of Israel are the respondents in the plural in the Judeo-Spanish poem. Moreover, as in the previous example, those verses are written without any allegory in the vernacular hymn, retelling the history of the

Law-giving at Mount Sinai. The dialog between God and the people of Israel continues with increasing intensity and comes to a climax with the public presentation of the *kĕtubba*. In both poems, the *kĕtubba* symbolizes the Torah. God gives the Torah to the people on Sinai as a sign of the covenant between Him and them, like the marriage agreement between husband and wife, the *kĕtubba.* Both stanzas end with the declaration of the *kĕtubba*. After announcing the agreements between the sides, in each composition the narrator starts reading the document, beginning with the day of the marriage, that is, the exact day on which the people received the Torah from God (stanzas 7 and 8 in the Hebrew version):

בְּשִׁשִּׁי בַּשַּׁבָּת אַגִּיד אֶת הָרָשׁוּם בִּכְתָב הַנִּשְׁתְּוָן
יוֹם לְהַנְחִיל אוֹהֲבָיו תּוֹרָה אֵל חַי נְתָכֵּוָן
שִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְחֹדֶשׁ סִיוָן

בְּיוֹם מִסִּינַי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשֵּׂעִיר אֵל נֶעְלָם
הוֹפִיעַ מֵהַר פָּארָן עַל מַלְכֵי גוֹיִם כֻּלָּם
בִּשְׁנַת אַלְפַּיִם וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת וְאַרְבָּעִים וְשֵׁשׁ לִבְרִיאַת עוֹלָם

The same is expressed in Judeo-Spanish, but the agreement is condensed into one stanza (stanza 8):

> *Día de Shabat* resivieron los djidiós la Ley de·la mano de el Dio
> *a diez de siván el mez tresero* ke Israel de Mitsrayim salió
> *en anyo de dos mil i kuatrosientos i kuarenta i sesh ke el mundo se krió.*

And although the parallelism between the compositions is noticeable, both in structure and content, the two poems rely on different textual traditions. In the Hebrew, the people receive the Torah on Friday, reflecting Pirke deRabbi Eliezer, on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan, while in the earliest surviving Judeo-Spanish version this happens on Saturday, relying on the Babylonian Talmud.[50]

In the following stanzas, Kalay elaborated on the "negotiation" between the parties, or the conditions of the nuptial agreement. The groom promises to his beloved, the Torah, always to think only about her and fulfill all her commandments, while he shall cleave to her (stanza 11). The eleventh stanza is very close to the content of stanzas 11–12 in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*; however, while Najara introduced words of seduction meant to convince the bride to marry the groom, Kalay concentrated on the marital requirements and limitations that, as in previous examples, suggest that he preferred to avoid his audience's possible misinterpreta-

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50 See the commentary on the Judeo-Spanish hymn in section 2.2.1 above. In later versions, the people receive the Torah on the sixth of Sivan, as in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*.

tions of mundane and divine love, even if in the Hebrew version those manifesta-
tions of emotion were not always absolutely divided.

Stanzas 12 and 13 in *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* follow numbers 16 and 17 in *"Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno,"* continuing with the marriage contract. The groom is pleasing to the bride, and is pleased by her, and he decides to increase the financial conditions on behalf of the bride, symbolizing the People's commitment to study the Torah. In the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* Najara specifies that exegesis includes the Torah (in Aramaic *orayta*), Sifra (the halakhic midrash to Leviticus), Sifre (the halakhic midrash to Numbers and Deuteronomy), Aggadah (non-legalistic exegetical texts) and Tosefta (Jewish oral law and traditions from the late second century). This is entirely absent in the vernacular text, where Kalay simply wrote "to study during the day and night" without specifying the contents or books of this study. Through this simple but simultaneously astonishing example, we see not only Kalay's strategies of elaboration and adaptation but also that he intended his composition for a very different audience, than Najara's rabbinically-learned one. The Judeo-Spanish hymn was intended for a multifaceted community that was familiar with textual rabbinic sources and oral traditions at various levels, most of them with no ability to read and study Hebrew and Aramaic commentaries.

Le dió el novio <u>toséfet sovre el ikar</u> de·la ketubá de su dezpozada *de <u>ser mehadesh peshatím i hidushím</u> de prima i de madrugada* *i kon kaas i pereza non ser deshada.*	הַקְדִּים לָהּ בְּתוֹרַת מָקְדָּם **רְמַ"ח מִצְוֹת** עֲשֵׂה מֵהֶן לֹא יְמִישׁוּן **כִּי אוֹתָם יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרוֹשׁוּן**
Yevó kon eya la ashugar ke trusho de kaza de su padre *<u>sheshientas i tredje mitsvot para ke se afirmen manyana i tadre</u>* *para ke el novio las faga i las guadre.*	אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָהּ וְאֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן וּצְבִי חַתְנָא דְּנָא **וְהוֹסִיף עַל עִקַר כְּתֻבָּתָהּ** **מַה שֶׁתַּלְמִיד וָתִיק עָתִיד לְחַדֵּשׁ** בְּאוֹרַיְיתָא אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָהּ וְאֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן

The final lines elucidate that the bride's dowry contains all 613 mitzvot (commandments) that are intended for her bridegroom so that he will perform them with dedication "each day," in the Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, and "morning and evening," in the vernacular hymn.

In the following stanzas, we read the full conditions of the marriage agreement:

Enportó todo entre ashugar i toséfet i kontado	נִמְצָא סָךְ הַכֹּל בֵּין כְּתֻבָּה **וּנְדוּנְיָא** וְחֵקֶר כְּבוֹדָם
ke trusho la novia a·su novio amado	**וְתוֹסֶפֶת** וּמְאָחָר וּמֻקְדָם
las mitsvot afirmar i temer en·el Dio i azer su mandado	**אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא וְאֶת מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמוֹר** כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם

These stanzas contain the complete listing of the bridegroom's wealth, incorporating his own property and the bride's contribution to their joint possessions. After the listing, the bridegroom commits to upholding his part of the agreement: to keep the Torah commandments, and to honor and revere the bride's father, God. Here, as in other parts of the Judeo-Spanish hymn, the parallelism between those stanzas is evident in the content and even in the terminology used by the two poets.

Stanzas 17 and 18 in the vernacular follow 25 and 27 in the Hebrew. There, the motifs are similar; however, while the Hebrew *piyyuṭ* is more concise, does not contain many explanations, and is tighter and perhaps more poetic, the Judeo-Spanish hymn includes many descriptions and clarifications. In stanza 27 this becomes especially clear. The Hebrew *piyyuṭ* paraphrases Isa 2:6: "כִּי נָטַשְׁתָּה, עַמְּךָ בֵּית יַעֲקֹב--כִּי מָלְאוּ מִקֶּדֶם, וְעֹנְנִים כַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים; וּבְיַלְדֵי נָכְרִים, יַשְׂפִּיקוּ" ('For you have forsaken [the ways of] your people, O House of Jacob, For they are full [of practices] from the East, And of soothsaying like the Philistines; They please themselves in the customs of the aliens'). The verse describes the people of Israel abandoning God, but Najara's intention was just the opposite: that the people shall never betray and defraud the Torah, and God. Those who learned to memorize and recite the entire Bible will recognize the verse and its context, so the significance of the act of *opposing* will be an intellectual exercise, or experience, for them. The vernacular author instead chose to use the term *'avodá zará* ('idolatry'), which is more elementary and understandable, and part of the everyday spoken language of its audience.

Komo ya resivió el novio de azer sus mitsvot i sus hukim	וְהַיָּרְשָׁה כְּמִנְהַג דָּת וְדִין עַל לוּחַ חֲרוּתָה
le prometió eya de darle su yerushá ke está bashehakim	מְטוֹבָה הַצְּפוּנָה לַצַּדִּיקִים עַיִן לֹא רָאָתָה
de el bien ke está quadrado en 'olam abá para los tsadikim.	עָלָה נַעֲלֶה וְיָרַשְׁנוּ אוֹתָה
	וְשֶׁלֹּא יִשָּׂא אִשָּׁה אַחֶרֶת עָלֶיהָ מִיַּלְדֵי נָכְרִים הַנִּלּוֹזוֹת
Lo akavidó más ke·no la troke por otra ley ni ke sierva 'avodá zará	כִּי אִם בְּבַת שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים יִדְבָּק וְאוֹתָהּ יָשִׂים בַּלֵּב
salvo kon eya se apegará	וּבֶחָזוֹת
eya sea su mujer i kon eya envejeserá.	לָזֹאת יִקָּרֵא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקֳחָה זֹאת

Moving to the end of both poems, noticeably, the vernacular author chose to use the same terminology, especially the vocable *goraló* 'his destiny' from Ps 144:15: "אַשְׁרֵי הָעָם שֶׁכָּכָה לּוֹ" ('Happy is the nation about whom this is known'); but a close examination of their semantics show them to be far from identical. The Hebrew composition celebrates the union between the groom and his bride, whom he took *lĕ-goralo*, to live his life with. Instead, the Judeo-Spanish hymn emphasizes the expectation of the Jewish people, *'am goralo*, to be redeemed by their God, avoiding any other metaphors.

Él se venge de todos los ke sierven ídolo	יִשְׂמַח חָתָן עִם כַּלָּה לְקָחָהּ לוֹ **לְגוֹרָלוֹ**
i bendiga a Su puevlo <u>am goraló</u>	וְיִשְׂמַח לֵב כַּלָּה בְּבַעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ וְתֹאמַר לְמַהֲלָלוֹ
digan todos auna mente: "<u>Ashré aam shekaha lo.</u>"	**אַשְׁרֵי הָעָם שֶׁכָּכָה לּוֹ**

A comparison of the two works reveals the multiple approaches and strategies that Kalay employed to create "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" using "*Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno*" as a model. To do so, Kalay simplified the language and the literary motifs of the Hebrew poem as well as metaphors and allegories. Kalay added explanations and preferred minimal literary features to avoid misinterpretations. Like Najara, Kalay based his composition on rabbinic literature; however, he sometimes paraphrased the same sources to provide another interpretation or relied on different textual and oral traditions.

A major divergence of the poems is their intended audiences and the linguistic and literary consequences that derive from this. It is significant to note that the Hebrew author embedded the sources for the amusement of his rabbinically-learned audience in a kind of intellectual adventure. An essential function of liturgical and paraliturgical compositions from their very beginnings was to entertain the audience at the synagogue. The prayer service, being repetitive, could fail to hold the worshippers' interest, so these complementary poems were composed to enrich the prayers and delight the worshippers. In the case of the *piyyuṭ* in Hebrew, the composer displayed his virtuosity, both poetic and intellectual. Undoubtedly, the authors and their audiences had to be erudite in the biblical and exegetical sources. However, the Judeo-Spanish *coplas*, and "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" in particular, had a double role. Although Kalay, too, wished to entertain his audience, his hymn also had a precise didactic aim: to teach his people about the history of Shavuot and to make the Jewish Bible and commentaries accessible to them. For that reason, he relied on different textual traditions, making his hymn more accessible.

While Najara's poetry was composed to be tight, literary sophisticated, less explicative, and more metaphorical, and thus leaving the interpretation to his learned audience, Kalay saw the need to re-narrate the history, to describe the events and illustrate the covenant between God and His people, and the respon-

sibility of the people towards its legendary and sacred Torah. I do not assume that most Sephardim of Najara's time were learned in Hebrew and understood his poem. Instead, it would be more reasonable to estimate that Ottoman Sephardic literacy rates did not change much from Safed to Salonika in the approximately 150 years separating the two compositions. However, when Najara composed his *piyyuṭ*, he intended it for the learned, as was true of most Hebrew rabbinic literature.

However, as noted, Kalay took upon himself the task of amusing, engaging and encouraging those who could understand Hebrew and recognize the textual paraphrases. In that case, he sometimes utilized the same Hebrew words and expressions of Najara's *piyyuṭ*, however, altering the meanings of the original.

I have tried to show that the question of translation is not the most important in this context. Instead, I suggested that what is more relevant is the context and intertextuality of the text in Judeo-Spanish, through the concepts of polysystem and polyglossia. When applying these concepts together, we can better understand the linguistic, cultural and textual modifications, rewritings, and creations Kalay initiated to transfer and adapt from a Hebrew written literary tradition to a Judeo-Spanish-speaking reality. At the micro level, the contexts of the hymn show how much a glance at one poem can teach us about the author's sources of inspiration, his expectations of the reciting audience, and his goals. At the macro level, the analysis of the hymn and its comparison with Najara's Hebrew *piyyuṭ* show how the Judeo-Spanish hymn "corresponds" with its role model composition, and more broadly, with the genre of *piyyuṭim* in Hebrew.

3.2 "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" as Part of the Early Judeo-Spanish Paraliturgical Corpus for Shavuot

Thanks to the *Bibliografía analítica de ediciones de coplas sefardíes* (Romero 1992a), nine other Hebrew-letter Judeo-Spanish *coplas* for Shavuot are known today,[51] two of which (entitled by their recent Spanish editor "*Los judíos en el Sinaí*" and "*La santidad de la ley*") have been transcribed in Romanization and critically edited by Ignacio Ceballos Viro (2005, 2015). Another printed *copla* was published in Salonika in 1832 in a booklet named *Kĕtubbat ha-Tora bi-lšon laʿaz* ['Kĕtubbat ha-Tora in the (Judeo-Spanish) vernacular'], starting with the verse: "*Enshemplaron hahamim el*

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51 For the complete list of the nine *coplas* for Shavuot, see Ceballos Viro (2005:42–43).

kuento de la Ley kon los djidiós a el kazamiento [. . .]." Romero entitled it in Spanish *"El ajuar de la Ley"* and published a critical edition of the text (1988:75–80).[52]

There are at least five other *coplas* (numbered six to ten by Ceballos Viro 2005:43) that appear to be modern compositions in structure and form; therefore, I will not include them in my analysis.

In the following paragraphs I will compare *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* with the *coplas* beginning. I will call these coplas by the names given by Romero and Ceballos Viro to continue this scholarly conversation.

1) *"En día del mez tresero ke de Ayifto salieron [. . .],"* called by Ceballos Viro (2005) *"Los judíos en el Sinaí,"* having only one edition: *Konplas de Shavuot* (Salonika, 1786).

2) *"Bendicho sea el muestro Dio ke en la mar no mos undió [...],"* named by Romero *"La santidad de la Ley"*; it underwent three printings: *Konplas de Shavuot* (Salonika, 1786); *Sefer Šira wĕ-Zimra* (Izmir, 1866); *Kĕtubbat ha-Tora* (Izmir, 1879), with versions also appearing in two manuscripts, from 1837 and 1910 (Ceballos Viro 2015).[53]

3) *"Enshemplaron hahamim el kuento de la Ley kon los djidiós a el kazamiento [. . .],"* called by Romero *"El ajuar de la Ley,"* with eight printed editions, the first from Salonika, 1832.

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52 There is a fourth *copla,* starting with the sentence *"Moše 'ala la-šamayim [...],"* referred to by Romero as "Las tablas de la ley" (Romero 1992a:35). It was printed in Amsterdam in 1793 in a booklet called *Sefer Šir Emunim wĕ-hu asefat baqqašot u-fizmonim qadmonim* ('*Shir Emunim* [Song of Belief]: a compilation of supplicatory prayers and ancient hymns'). A close reading of this specific *copla* reveals that the language seems to be essentially Renaissance Spanish with a large component derived from Hebrew, rather than Judeo-Spanish, like other *coplas* or *piyyuṭim* translated or adapted from the Hebrew original and constituting new works composed in the Low Countries after the arrival of Spanish and Portuguese conversos there. Ceballos Viro, when examining the *copla "Los judíos en el Sinay,"* noted that the incipit follows the hymn *"Moshé suvió a los sielos,"* the Spanish or Judeo-Spanish equivalent of the Hebrew *Moše 'ala la-šamayim* ('Moses ascended to heaven'). It is reasonable that those two hymns are indeed the same, with different names; however, we cannot ignore the fact that one bears a Hebrew name, while the name of the other is in Spanish or Judeo-Spanish. Therefore, I will not analyze this hymn in depth, but only consult it and relate to it when relevant. A striking example marking the language as Spanish rather than Judeo-Spanish is the preference for the Spanish term דייוס (*Dios*) instead of Judeo-Spanish דייו (*Dio*) [God]. In addition, the author used the letter *ḥet*, ח, corresponding in sound among most Ottoman Sephardim to Modern Spanish *j*, instead of *sh*: e.g., the word טרוחו (Sp. *trujo*) ['brought'] instead of Judeo-Spanish טרושו (*trusho*, O.Sp. *truxo*).

53 In the following comparison I do not refer to the last six stanzas composed and added by the printer of the version published in Salonika 1786. For an examination of the entire hymn see Ceballos Viro (2015).

In terms of form and structure, *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* shares some characteristics with the other hymns for Shavuot, starting with the fact that all these hymns are written in tercets (each stanza contains three lines), having the same syllabic rhyme throughout the verses. The hymns are quite long, containing thirty-five (*"La Ketubá de la Ley"*), thirty-one (*"Los judíos en el Sinay"*) and seventeen (*"El ajuar de la Ley"*) stanzas. Only *"La santidad de la Ley"* contains but four or five stanzas, depending on the edition, and contains a refrain after each stanza. These long hymns were not supposed to be memorized, and the refrain, for example in *"La santidad de la Ley"* functioned as the sentence that the entire audience sang together, while the stanzas were sung by the cantors or rabbis.

Acrostics are not always present. As noted, in *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* the acrostic forms the name of the author. In *"Los judíos en el Sinay"* the acrostic consists of the relatively complex intercalation of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, with the alphabet divided into two; as pointed out by the printer, the structure is known in Hebrew poetry as על סדר א"ל ב"ם *'al seder a[lef]-l[amed] b[et]-m[em]*, or *al-bam* 'in the order A-L B-M.' This structure continues for twenty-two stanzas; the rest constitute an acrostic indicating the name of the author *"Ani* (stanzas 23–25) *Yĕsha'ya* (stanzas 26–30)," the last stanza beginning with the words, חזקנו בתורתך (*ḥazzĕqenu bĕ-torateḵa* 'strengthen us with your Law'); thus together forming the acrostic: אני ישעיה חזק (*ani Yĕša'ya ḥazaq* 'I am Yĕša'ya, strength').

Both *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* and *"Los judíos en el Sinay"* end with verses in Hebrew instead of Judeo-Spanish. This is not a Hebrew component of the language, but a clear shift from one language to another. In both hymns the verses express the highest exaltation of God but also ask for a blessing for His people, ubiquitous in all paraliturgical compositions, in Hebrew as well as Judeo-Spanish. This language shift is not a coincidence but may be a product of the author's deep understanding of the function and significance of the Jewish people's earliest "mother tongue," Hebrew. While all the parts of the hymns are written in the vernacular, the very end, i.e., the elevated climax of the hymns, is written in the 'holy tongue'.

In terms of content, the hymns narrate different stages of the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Because of their use as Shavuot paraliturgical hymns, all of them include a reference to the moment of the people's receiving the Torah from God. *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* focuses on the specific day of the event and the responsibility of the people to adhere to its Torah; *"El ajuar de la Ley"* concentrates on the commandments of God written in the Bible; *"Los judíos en el Sinay"* narrates in general terms the story of the Jews in Egypt, and the giving of the Law. The author dedicates several stanzas to the Ten Commandments written on the two stone tablets which, according to Jewish tradition, Moses received from God. In *"La santidad de la Ley"* there is not a specific topic but rather a general paraphrase of the story. All the hymns emphasize the covenant between God and His people, and

the people and its Torah; however, as noted, only *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* uses the marriage contract as its primary metaphor.

Examining the literary intentions of the hymns, *"Los judíos en el Sinay"* is a narrative hymn that retells a moment in the history of the Jewish people. However, in some stanzas (8, 9 and 10) God is the speaker, dispensing His authority. A close reading of the hymn reveals that the author compressed a vernacular translation of the Bible into a hymn, with the intention of retelling by this means the story of Shavuot to the congregants. *"La santidad de la Ley"* seems to be an expressive hymn, intending to exalter God's giving of the Law (Ceballos Viro 2015:389). Praising God and the Law serves as the primary intention of the hymn. *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* combines narrative characteristics with expressive exaltation; the hymn tries, like other paraliturgical compositions, to elevate the worshippers' spirit by the metaphorical portrayal of a genuine passion between Israel and its Law. The two poetic levels, the realia and the interpretative, are intertwined in the vernacular *piyyuṭ*. In *"El ajuar de la Ley,"* however, the central core of the hymn is the metaphoric dowry that the bride—the Law—brings to her beloved, the Jewish People. Thus, the hymn is expressive and focuses on the union between the People and its Law. This union enables the commitment of the people, even the poorest and commonest of them, to their Torah, reiterated over the course of all the hymns.

There is no evidence that the four other *coplas* were introduced to be part of the formal service of Shavuot in the synagogues; they only appear in stand-alone booklets for Shavuot. Therefore, it is probable that they were sung in the domestic space, in contrast to *"La Ketubá de la Ley,"* for which there is clear evidence, both oral and written, that its recitation was central in the morning prayer of the second day of the holiday.

The metaphorical level of the hymns is another characteristic worth noting in the two hymns *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* and *"El ajuar de la Ley."* The core of *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* is the *kĕtubba* document agreed upon by both parties. The People and the Law express their mutual love and appreciation throughout the hymn, while the climax occurs with the proclamation of the document, its conditions and responsibilities, symbolizing the unbreakable bond and covenant between the two. In contrast, the central metaphor of *"El ajuar de la Ley"* is the bride's dowry (Romero 1988:75–76). The bride provides the People with: *"lĕvuš malḵut"* ('royal dress') according to the Scroll of Esther (15:8) (stanza 3); the Law, which redeems from any sin; 310 worlds, according to Mishnah ʿOqṣin 3 (stanza 8); and the care of being always under halakhic jurisdiction (stanza 9). After the joining of the bride and groom is recognized in general terms by the heavens (stanza 13), the author explicitly names the groom, the People of Israel (stanza 14), and the bride, the Law, God's daughter (stanza 15). The declaration of the Torah as the daughter of God is undoubtedly very extraordinary. In none of the vernacular hymns is this explicitly

written. In *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* it may be understood from the context, but it is only implied. Certainly, the responsibility of both sides to the covenant is part of the construction of the metaphors and allegories in each hymn. Both hymns reflect the fundamental oneness of the People of Israel and its Law.

Another common feature of these vernacular hymns is their intentions and the authors' purposes and expectations when composing them. I dare to reduce these to two main purposes: exaltation, which includes devotion, and education. Like most paraliturgical compositions, these hymns served to help the worshippers feel the grandeur of the Shavuot festival and to be uplifted. While the first purpose is incorporated in most Hebrew *piyyuṭim* and vernacular hymns, the close reading of the Judeo-Spanish hymns analyzed here makes clear that the second purpose is particular to the vernacular. Unlike the Hebrew *piyyuṭim,* here the retelling demonstrates that in the vernacular the authors condensed into hymns almost entire books of the Hebrew Bible, and sometimes portions of the midrash and aggadah. The hymns serve as an instrument connecting the people to the festival and to early Hebrew literature.

4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the Judeo-Spanish *copla* "La Ketubá de la Ley" for Shavuot, written in the second half of the eighteenth century by Rabbi Yĕhuda Leon Kalay in Salonika. Employing theory and methodology of translation studies, *piyyuṭ* studies and Jewish languages, this study zoomed in on one of the most important productions within the *copla* genre, exploring its various paraliturgical connections. I have analyzed the wide intertextuality which the author introduced into his poem, i.e., biblical, mishnaic, talmudic and midrashic sources; as was demonstrated, the author used intertextuality not only to adorn his poem, but especially for didactic reasons. After studying the sources from which *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* draws, this study examined the vernacular *copla* in the light of the Hebrew *piyyuṭ "Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno"* by Rabbi Israel Najara. Indeed, *"Yarad dodi lĕ-ganno"* was Kalay's model in all aspects; yet, I concluded that the question of whether the Judeo-Spanish hymn was a translation of the Hebrew—considering how translators viewed their task in early modern periods—or a novel creation, is a matter of definitions and parameters. Taking that into consideration, I suggested deviating this question into a broad understanding of the intertextualies of the text, that is, how the Judeo-Spanish hymn relates to its prototype "kĕtubba" *piyyuṭ* in Hebrew and other Judeo-Spanish hymns for the festival of Shavuot.

Reading *"La Ketubá de la Ley"* in comparison with other early Shavuot *coplas* in Judeo-Spanish reveals that similar topics were treated throughout the corpus.

This should not surprise us since they all serve the same purpose: retelling the story of the giving of the Law by God on Mount Sinai. Still, each composition focuses on a different part of the biblical story, or a different aspect of the Law. The poems highlight the union between the people of Israel and the Torah, as part of the legendary commitment between the Jewish people and God. The authors' intentions of making this ancient covenant actual to their time and place are present in all the hymns.

Piyyutim are usually considered to be *Hebrew* liturgical and paraliturgical poems, while when referring to vernacular liturgical and paraliturgical compositions different terms are suggested, such as the Yiddish *tkhines* (H. *tĕḥinot*), the Hassidic *nigunim* or the Judeo-Spanish *coplas, konplas* or *komplas*. Concentrating on one Judeo-Spanish *copla*, this paper has shown how the *piyyuṭ-copla* comparative analysis helps us re-contextualize the latter. The analysis of the Judeo-Spanish paraliturgical *copla* suggests that paraliturgical poetry in Hebrew and in the vernacular are different manifestations of the same genre. Future systematic analysis of other translated/adapted or original paraliturgical *coplas* (and paraliturgical poems in other Jewish languages) would reveal useful examples serving to relocate paraliturgical compositions in the vernacular within the larger *piyyuṭ* corpus.

Appendix: The Original Text of the *copla Kĕtubbat ha-tora* ("La Ketubá de la Ley") in Šĕmu'el Ben Yiṣḥaq Modiliano, *Sefer rĕnanat mizmor* (Salonika: Mordĕkay Naḥman, 1753), 1a–2b

כתובת התורה ליום חג השבועות לאומרה בשעת הוצאת ס"ת [=ספר תורה] לחן אלהים אלי
אתה סי' [=סימן] אני יאודה בר ליאון קלעי זלה"ה

איש ראזון די אלאב'אר אאיל דייו גראנדי אי פודירוזו
קון טימורידאד די קוראשון אי אליגריאה אי גוזו
אין איל דיאה איל אישטי איל שאנטו אי טימירוזו:

אין אישטי דיאה אבאש'ו איל דייו אין סיני אי מילארייאש די מלאכים קון איל
אה דאר לה ליי אשו פואיב'לו קאזה די ישראל
פור מאנו די משה פאשטור פ'יא[י]ל:

נון קיג'ו אבאש'אר שוב'רי נינגון מונטי אלטו
שאלב'ו אין מונטי די סיני קי סי ריבאש'ו טאנטו
פורקי דיפרינדה איל אונברי אי טומי לה ענוה פור מאנטו:

ייאמו אי דיש'ו איל דייו ברוך הוא אלוש ג'[י]דייוש מי קונפנייא אירמוזה
פ'אזמי ויאיר אטו וישטה אינשינפלאדה אלה רוזה
קי טו בוז שאב'רוזה אי טו וישטה דונוזה:

ישראל קי אולייירון לה בוז דיל דייו בי נדיג'ו
דיש'ירון אישטארימוש שיינפרי אשו קומאנדו אי אשו דיג'ו
ארימוש אי אואירימוש טודו שו בואין דיג'ו:

איזו פארטידו קון איל[י]ין וש די דארליש לה לי לי קונקי לי דיירא פ'יאנשה
איליייוס דיירון אלוש איג'וש קי איש לה מאש אינפורטאנשה
די אפ'ירמאר לה לי טאנטו קון פרוב'יזה קומו קון טיניר מוג'ה בונאנשה:
ויינדו אל דייו ב"ה [=ברוך הוא] קי לו אמימוס אהבה רבה
טאנביין איל מוש אפלאזו קומו נוב'ייה קון גראנדי חיבה
אישטה איש לה כתובה:

דיאה די שבת רישיב'יירון לוש ג'ידייוש לה לי דילה מאנו די איל דייו
אה דייו די סיון אינ יל מיז איל טרישירו קי ישראל די מצרים שאלייו
אין אנייו די דוש מיל אי קואטרושיינטוש אי קוארינטה אי שיש קי איל מונדו שי קרילייו:

איזיירון אישטוש תנאים לוש ג'ידייוש קון לה לי שאנטה
טי טומארי קומו נוב'ייה קי שוש די ואנדה אלטה
טי אישטימארי קומו סי אישטימה איל יאדראן אין לה גארגאנטה:

ב "ד [=בסיעתא דשמיא] שיינפרי אין טי מיש מיינטיש מיטירי
אי טודאש טוש דימאנדאש לייו קונפלירי
די דיאה אי די נוג'י קון טי קון מי אפיגארי:

רישפונדייו לה לי תמה תמימה
לייו טאנביין טי אמי קי שוש נוב'ייו די משפחה רמה
קי אין טי אינוילונטי מאש קי טודו לשון אי אומה:

לי דייו איל נוב'ייו תוספת סוב'רי איל עיקר דילה כתובה די סו דיזפוזאדה
די שיר מחדש פשטים אי חידושים די פרימה אי די מאדרוגאדה
אי קון כעס אי פיריזה נון סיר דיש'אדה:

ייב'ו קון אילייה לה אש'וגאר קי טרוש'ו די קאזה די שו פאדרי
ש'ישיינטאש אי טריג'י מצות פארה קי שי אפ'ירמין מאנייאנה אי טאדרי
פארה קי איל נוב'יו לאש פ'אגה אי לאש ג'ואדרי:

אינפורטו טודו אינטרי אשוגאר אי תוספת אי קונטאדו
קי טרוש'ו לה נוב'ייה אשו נוב'יו אמאדו
לאש מצות אפ'ירמאר אי טימיר איניל דיו אי אזיר שו מאנדאדו:

ויינדו אל נוב'ייו לה אש'וגאר קי טרושו לה שינייורה קון איליייה
רישא[י]וויי איל אחריות דילוקי מאנקארה איניליייה
אי ייב'אר פינה סי אין סו דיג'ו ריב'יליייה:

ני קי פ'ואידה ויינדיר ני אינפינייאר נינגון ליב'רו דילה ליי אמאדה
שינו אישטימארלוש קומו ג'ויייה פרישייאדה
שיינפרי איר מירקאנדו אי די אילייוש נו ויינדיר נאדה:

קומו לייה רישיב'ייו איל נוב'ייו די אזיר שוש מצות אי שוש חוקים
לי פרומיטייו איליייה די דארלי שו ירושה קי אישטה בשחקים
די איל ביין קי אישטה ג'ואדראדו אין עולם הבא פארה לוש צדיקים:

לו אקאוידו מאש קינו לה טרוקי פור אוטרה ליי ני קי שיירב'ה ע"ז [=עבודה זרה]
שאלב'ו קון איליייא סי אפיגארה
איליייא שיאה שו מוג'יר אי קון איליייה אינויג'ישירה:

ערך פארה איליייא נו איי קי איש אישטימאדה מאש קי איל אורו פ'ינו
קי לה מילדי אילה לייב'י אין שו פיג'ו די קונטינו
אי קינו לה דיש'י אאון קי ב'אליייה פור קאמינו:

ייה שי קומפלייו איל קאזאמיינטו קי לוש ג'ידייוש קון לה ליי איזיירון
טודאש לאש אלמאש אין מונטי די סיני אישטוב'יירון
קלאריד'אד דילה שכינה קון שוש אוג'וש וויירון:

זכות טינגאמוש נוש אי טודוש לוש קי אין איל דייו טימין
קילה אפ'ירמימוש מושאוטרוש אי מואישטרו שימין
וויאמוש וינגאנשה אין לוש אינימיגוש קי פרישטו שי אטימין:

לוש ג'ידייוש קי רישיב'יירון לה ליי אה אוג'וש די טודוש לוס פואיב'לוש
פ'ואירון אישקאפאדוס די טודוש לוש מאליש אי לוש דואילוש
לוס עדים דילה ליי פ'וא[י]רון לה טיירה אי לוש שיילוש:

אפיאדי איל דייו שוב'רי נוש אי מוש די בואין פ'אדארייו
די אפריטוש קי אוימוש לייב'אדו מוש פאגי איל בואין שאלארייו
אאינה אי פרישטו מוש פ'ראגואי איל שאנטוב'ארייו:

איל שי וינגי די טודוש לוש קי שיירב'ין אידולו
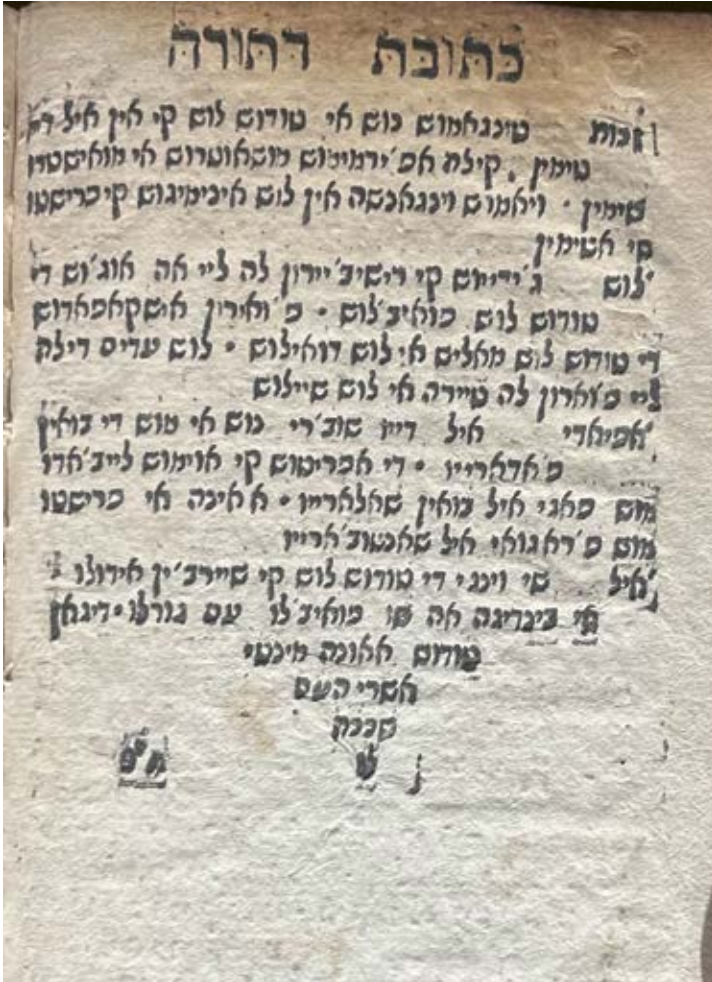אי בינדיגה אה שו פואיב'לו עם גורלו
דיגאן טודוש אאונה מינטי אשרי העם שככה לו:

Photographic Reproduction of "*La Ketubá de la Ley*" in Šĕmu'el Ben Yiṣḥaq Modiliano, *Sefer rĕnanat mizmor* (Salonika: Mordĕḵay Naḥman, 1753), RB 100:4, 1a-2b. Courtesy of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

ח׳ כתיבת התורה ב
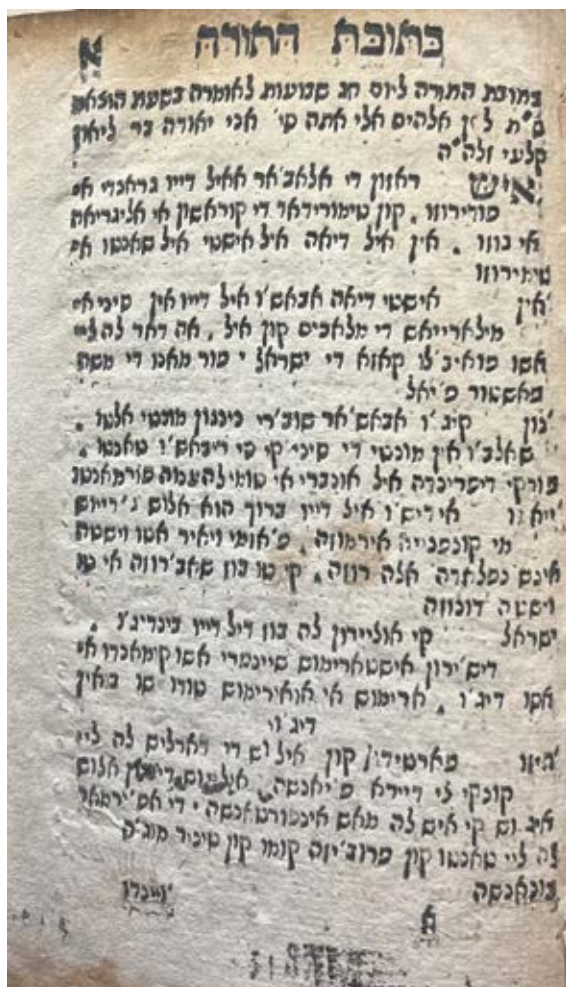
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