The Pronunciation of Hebrew in the Western Sephardic Settlements (XVIth-XXth Centuries). First Part: Early Modern Venice and Ferrara (1)

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To the blessed memory of Prof. Iacob M. Hassán, ז”ל

§ 1. THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In and around 1552, Isac Cavallero published in Venice three or more bilingual prayer-books (in Hebrew with Spanish translation). Simultaneously an anonymous scholar gave to light a translation of the selihot, penitential prayers, printed in Latin characters in the city of Lagoons. ¹

Around the same time in Ferrara Yomtob Atias and Abraham Usque published a complete translation of the Bible, several liturgical works in vernacular, and two editions of a Spanish Psalter. ² It is possible that other prayer-books (or reprints of the first ones) were published. If so they were lost without leaving any trace. The Spanish siddurim printed in both cities were clearly meant for synagogue use. Continuous annotations enabled the former Marranos, still unfamiliar with Hebrew, to follow step by step

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I have greatly benefited from the encouragement, guidance, precious and generous help of my teacher and friend, Prof. Iacob M. Hassán, ז”ל. This great scholar was the first to carry on a systematic study of the Sephardic idioms. It is thanks to his pioneristic studies that the present work could be accomplished.

¹ See infra, § 2.1.
² See infra, § 2.2.
a service conducted in that language. For this purpose, both Cavallero in Venice and Atias and Usque in Ferrara, transliterated some passages of the Hebrew ritual into Latin letters. By perusing these transcriptions, it was possible to study the features of Hebrew pronunciation in the XVIth century Sephardic settlements in Northern Italy.

A comparative study of the vulgarizations printed in Venice and in Ferrara led me to the conclusion that, not only the Spanish translations, but also the transliterations of Hebrew prayers were the original works of separate and independent authors who acted without knowledge of the work of the others. As a matter of fact, these authors pronounced Hebrew in an identical manner but sometimes represented the same sounds by different graphemes.

Additional research was carried out in order to ascertain when and where in Italy the pronunciation of the consonant ayin shifted towards the nasal sound represented by the graphemes ng, ngh, gn, n. It was possible to state that, in the Italian and Ashkenazi communities, this change took place during the course of one and a half centuries, roughly between the end of the XVIth and the beginning of the XVIIIth century. The Sephardim adopted this pronunciation later than the Italiani. We shall expose the results of this particular investigation in the second part of this work.

§ 2. THE AVAILABLE SOURCES

The present research is based on the analyses of:

– Hebrew names, words and texts transliterated into Latin letters by Jewish scholars in Spanish and Portuguese vulgarizations of the Bible, siddurim, mahazorim and haggadot.

– Spanish words and texts transcribed into Hebrew characters mainly by Jewish translators and compilers of siddurim and haggadot.

– Transcriptions of Jewish names and Hebrew words in deeds drawn up by the Chancellors of the Portuguese Nation of Ferrara, in contracts, letters, last wills and other documents written by Sephardic merchants in Ferrara, Venice and Ancona in the XVIth century.

– Jewish names and Hebrew words transcribed into Latin characters by Christian notaries and other public officers in several Italian cities as
well as similar transcriptions registered by Inquisition’s notaries and officers in Italy and in Portugal.

- Statements and annotations explicitly made by grammarians, scholars and rabbis.

- Transcriptions of Hebrew words in the XVIIth century Registers of Deliberations (ספרי הסכמות Livros das hordems) of Pisa, Leghorn, Reggio Emilia, Venice and of the Western Portuguese Nations).

In the following pages we provide a concise description of these sources.

§ 2.1. The Venetian Vulgarizations

Towards the middle of the XVIth century Venice was the capital of Jewish printing, not only for the quantity of its production, but especially for the hitherto unequalled typographical perfection reached by several printing houses.

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3 I borrow this expression from C. Roth, *EJ* 13, cols. 1096-1114, s.v. «Printing, Hebrew.»

Before dealing with the XVIth century vulgarizations of the Hebrew ritual, it is perhaps advisable to recall that the Spanish prayer-books were antecedent by several editions of Hebrew siddurim printed in Venice according to the Sephardic rite. In 1524, Cornelio Adelkind edited the volume "Images, Supplications and Prayers of Sepharad" for Daniel Bomberg who had it printed yet again in 1544. A new edition of this siddur was prepared in 1546 by A. Benveniste for M. A. Giustiniani with the title "Siddur for the whole Year". Zuan de Gara reprinted it in 1581 «with Bomberg types» (just to quote a few of the many editions).

In or around 1552 Isac Cavallero published in Venice, at least, three bilingual prayer-books with a literal Spanish translation printed side by side with the original text in Hebrew. Unfortunately for a long time these siddurim did not receive proper attention from scholars. Some authors found it easier to quote only the Spanish part of their titles without mentioning the Hebrew wording. Owing to these inaccuracies other scholars were induced to believe that the Venetian siddurim included only the Spanish translation (without the Hebrew text).

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6 The complete title is תמונות תחנות תפילות ספרד ערוך בתשלת ישראל מצומת ופיוט ופסנונם מנהר משדר בפשפ פרוש רווחו מתוכן נמס על ידו לריקללי ידך על הביט ודרואל ובנסכיה והיא השם פרס.
7 A copy of this siddur is preserved at the British Library (Sh.m. 1972.b.25). It was merely a reprint of the siddur published by Bomberg a few years before. From a legal point of view this was made possible by a parte issued by the Venetian Senate in 1517, according to which the validity of all the privileges and copy-rights was limited to a ten years period. See R. Fulin, *Documenti per servire alla storia della Tipografia Veneziana... ristampato dall' Archivio Veneto XXIII* (Venezia 1882), pp. 84-212, 111-112 and 130-131; Bloch, *Venetian Printers* p. 105.
9 A copy of this siddur is kept at the British Library (Sh.m: 1972.b.23).
10 Leoni, «La presenza Sefardita».
The first of these books, the *Orden de Oraciones*, was printed between 1550 and 1552, a short time after the expulsion of the Marranos from Venice and its dominions. As a consequence of political circumstances both the translator and the publisher of this book kept a low profile. Neither the name of Alvise Bragadini nor his printer’s mark appear on the title page. For some reasons the *siddur* was published without a *prologo* (introduction), without a *tabla* (index), without a colophon and without any expression of thanks for the completion of the work. Even the date of the edition was withheld. No explanation was provided on the style of the translation that followed word for word the form and order of the Hebrew text, even if the elegance of the modern Spanish language was lost in the process.

Other accidental circumstances withheld precious information from scholars. The Bodleian Library in Oxford owns a copy of the *Ordenança de Oraciones* published by Cavallero in 1552. This volume was however incomplete as the (first) title-page was lost. The exact title of this edi-

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11 I. Cavallero, *S дор תפילות כמנהג הספרדים הועתק מלשון עברי ללשון ספרד על ידי הרופא המובהק רבי יצחק ב”ר שם טוב קאבאלירו: Orden de oraciones / segundo el uso ebrèo en lengua / ebraica y vulguar español: / traduzido por el dotor Isac fijo / de Don Sem tob Cavallero: / EN VENECIA [versus 1552].

12 See Tamani, «Le edizioni ebraiche veneziane dei secoli XVI-XVIII»; Leoni, «La presenza Sefardita.»


15 On the different title pages of the *Ordenança de Oraciones*, see H. P. Salomon, «Was there a Traditional Spanish Translation of Sephardi Prayers before 1552?»
tion, its date and the name of the printer remained unknown. It was the
great merit of Cowley to understand that this siddur was printed in or
around 1550, and not towards the end of the XVIth century as formerly
believed. The incorrect dating of these prayer-books led many scholars
to underestimate the importance of the Sephardic Settlement in Venice in
the fifteen-fifties.

After the Second World War the Library of the Jewish Theological
Seminary of New York acquired a complete copy of the Ordenança de
Oraciones formerly belonging to E. N. Adler. Margherita Morreale, who
consulted it, described the style of the Spanish translation, but scarcely
paid any attention to the Hebrew text. She even neglected the Hebrew
title of the book and ignored the information therein supplied. Her inac-
curacies led some scholars to the wrong conclusion that Spanish was the
main language used by former Marranos for their prayers in Venice and
in Ferrara the XVIth century.

In 1552 Alvise Bragadini published also a Spanish vulgarization of the
selihot (penitential prayers) without the Hebrew text. The name of the print-
er was provided only in «Raši» characters. As the name of the translator
does not appear in the title page, he thus remains unknown.

American Sephardi 6 (1973), pp. 79-90. On the copy preserved at the Bodleian Library
see the discussion in Leoni, «La presenza Sefardita», pp. 38-40.

Library (Oxford 1929), p. 554. The Author did not state how he reached this conclusion.
Cfr. M. Steinschneider, Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana, 2

1967 [1715-33]), II, pp. 618-19, n. 1279b; vol. III p. 1459; M. Steinschneider, Catalogus
... Bodleiana, col. 360, no. 2404, col. 1100; M. Kayserling, Biblioteca Española
Portugueza Judaica. Dictionnaire Bibliographique des Auteurs Juifs, de leurs ouvrages
espagnoles et portugaises (Strasburg 1890), pp. 37-38 and 59-60.

18 Salomon, «Was there a translation» p. 80.

19 This volume is shelf-marked «La Cav. 1552» and bears the number 71.686.

20 Morreale did not realize that the book was printed by Alvise Bragadin.

21 [Anonymous Translator] Celihoth / Según la orden del uso / español hebraico. / De los quarenta días antes del / días de Quipur. / El qual va seguido de luengo sin / tornar
atrás. / NDPS BES BEI TAVAN TAVANIS TAVANIS EN VINECIA / MDLII.

22 Strangely enough Morreale did not pay attention to the short Hebrew wording. She
only stated that this text «was without vowels» and failed to identify the publisher.
By carrying out a comparative study of the vulgarizations of the bakašah\textsuperscript{23} made by Isac Cavallero (in Venice) and by Yomtob Atias (in Ferrara), Salomon could state that these translations were produced independently by two separate authors who acted without knowing about each other’s work. \textsuperscript{24}

By comparing the text of the Venetian Celihot\textsuperscript{25} with the analogous Orden de Silhoth\textsuperscript{26} published almost contemporaneously by Yomtob Atias in Ferrara, I came to the conclusion that these editions were also produced separately by different scholars.

In his bilingual prayer-books Cavallero gave a rigorous translation of the Hebrew text. In order to convey to the reader the exact meaning of every single Hebrew word he tried to maintain the structure of the sacred language even in the form of the verbs. This author arranged the Spanish translation opposite the Hebrew text in perfect symmetry, page by page, line by line, and word by word so that every Spanish word was facing its Hebrew counterpart. The reader could thus find an immediate explanation of every word of the original text. These siddurim provide a valuable instrument for the study of the Hebrew language and the Sephardic Liturgy.

In Cavallero’s Orden de oraciones the blessings for the reading of the Torah and the ברכת הגומל (to be said after having escaped a danger) are not translated into Spanish. Instead of the vulgarization, the Spanish side of the siddur bears a transliteration of the Hebrew text into Latin characters. \textsuperscript{27} Former Marranos, not familiar with their fathers’ language, were thus enabled to take an active part in the service.

The siddurim printed by Cavallero were meant for use in the synagogue. Continuous annotations, both in Hebrew and in Spanish, lead

\textsuperscript{23} Poetical supplication.
\textsuperscript{24} SALOMON, «Was There a Translation.»
\textsuperscript{25} For the complete title see note 21.
\textsuperscript{26} Y. ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth el cual / comienza en la luna nueva de / Elul que responde a Agosto y / dura fasta Kipur, q[n]e son quarenta / noches de contricion; y comen- / çarã a leuãñarse de madrugada / a dezirlo el otro dia despues de / Reshodes del dicho mes: porç / que en el primero de Elul sabio / Moseh al monte la ultima vez / y estuuo quarëta dias en cõ- / tinua contemplacion; / y descendio dia / de Kipur con / la ley, Ferrara 1552. The title page is reproduced in LEONI, «La presenza Sefardita» fig. 6a.
\textsuperscript{27} See doc. 1 in Appendix.
the worshipper throughout the book and explain which sections of the prayers are to be recited by the hazzan and which and when responses are to be given by the congregation.

These annotations are generally given in the Judeo-Spanish vernacular, both in Hebrew characters (on the Hebrew side of the text) and in Latin letters (alongside the Spanish vulgarization). They provide a precious instrument to appraise the phonetic value of Hebrew consonants in the XVIth century.

In the Orden de Oraciones, the annotations on the Hebrew side of the book are generally printed in small cursive «Raši» types. These texts are not immediately intelligible to readers unfamiliar with this particular writing. It is probably for this reason that some of the Hispanists who studied the style of these translations failed to note a fascinating feature: there are in these texts some characteristic archaisms probably derived from pre-expulsion liturgical literature. In effect these annotations include Hebraisms and expressions typical of the Judeo-Spanish jargon that found their origin back in ancient Sephardic traditions.

An analogous phenomenon can be noted in the Ferrara vulgarizations, in the Venetian Haggadah con su Ladino and in other works produced by Sephardic scholars. A few examples are provided here: Afilu [אףלו = even], teva / thevah [תבה = podium where the Torah is read], tesuvà [תשבות = repentance], hhehal [היכל = ark (lit. palace)], meldar [מילדר = to read, to study], llevdo, llevado

28 See, for instance, fig. 3 and docs. 5 and 6 in Appendix.
30 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 163.
31 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 226 and passim.
32 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., pp. 146, 163.
33 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 146; Ordenança, p. 151; Haggadah con su Ladino.
THE PRONUNCIATION OF HEBREW IN THE WESTERN SEPHARDIC SETTLEMENTS

§ 2.2. The Ferrara Vulgarizations

In or around 1550 don Samuel ben Askarah Sarfati 38 moved his press from Rome to Ferrara 39 where he printed the Ma’ ayane ha-Yešu’a (Sources

34 Y. ATIAS, LIBRO / DE ORACYONES / de todo el año traducido del / Hebrayco de verbo a ver / bo de antiguos exem / pales, por quanto / los ympressos / fasta a qui / estan errados, con muchas / cosas acrescentadas de / nuevo segun por la / siguiente tabla se / muestra / 5312 [=1552] De la Criacion / a 14 de Sivan [= ATIAS, Libro Or.], f. 134v; Haggadah con su Ladino, see doc. 7 in Appendix. The form Leudo was also used. Cfr. Ishaq ATIAS, Thesoro dos Preceptos, donde se encierran las joyas de los seycentos y treze preceptos que encomendo el Señor a su Pueblo Israel con su Declaracion, Razon y Dinim (Venetia 1627), f. 201r.

35 Haggadah con su Ladino, see doc. 7 in Appendix. Cfr. ATIAS, Orden Or., f.134v; ATIAS, Thesoro dos Preceptos, f. 88r.


37 [Anonymous Translator], Ordem de Orasois que se dizem em todo ho anno asaber: cutidiano, Sabat, Pascuas, Ros Sana Quipur e da qui [sic!] seque o Seliquo [sic!] que se diz quarenta dias antes de Quipur todas as madrugadas e no ultimo dia, que he Quipur descendê Mose do monte com a Lei [Form. belonging to G.B. Rossi who called it Ordo precum iudaicarum lingua lusitana versus ab anonimo Judaeo]. Biblioteca Comunale Passerini-Landi, Piacenza (Ms. Landi 11, f. 4r).


of salvation) by Yshac Abravanel. Samuel Sarfati was closely related to the Abravanel family. This link was strengthened when Yacob, the son of Don Samuel and Benvenida Abravanel, married Benvenida Sarfati, the daughter of Don Samuel Sarfati.

In 1552, shortly before handling his printing press over to Yomtob Atias, Samuel Sarfati produced a Hebrew mahzor for the penitential days. In 1552 Atias published a Spanish vulgarization of the Jewish prayer-book for the whole year: the Libro de Oraciones de todo el año. In the course of a few months this volume was followed by two other liturgical works in the vernacular: the Sedur de Oraciones de mes (comprising the daily and saturday service and the prayers for RoSh Hodesh, Hanuka, Purim and Fast days) and the Orden de Silhoth (penitential prayers). Between 1553 and 1555 Abraham Usque published a Spanish mahzor for the high holydays, a Psalter (in two editions) and the famous Orden de Oraciones de mes arréo.

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41 ASFe, notary C. Sacrati, pc. 1, April 4, 1549: Yacob Abravanel states that Yacob, the son of Samuel Sarfati was his brother in law. As Yacob was married to Allegra, the daughter of Abram Sarfati (ibid., March 4, 1552), it may hence be inferred that Benvenida, the wife of Yacob Abravanel, was Yacob Sarfati’s sister and Samuel Sarfati’s daughter. See the inventory of Yacob Abravanel’s estate in LEONI, «Nuove Notizie sugli Abravanel,» 202-206.
43 Y. ATIAS, Sedur de Oraciones de mes con mucha diligencia visto e emendado, ympresso por industria y despesa de Yon Tob Atias hijo de Levi Atias, en el mes de Sivan de 5312 [May-June 1552].
44 For the whole title see note 26.
46 The title of the second edition is PSALTERIO / de Dauid trasladado en / español cõ toda fidelidad verbo de verbo / de su verdadera / ra origen: y / Repartido / como se / deve / leer / Per cada dia del / mes segun vso / de los Anos / tigus. / Estampado en Ferrara a 15 / de Henero 1554.
Unlike the bilingual siddurim published in Venice by Isac Cavallero, the Spanish prayer-books printed in Ferrara by Yomtob Atias and Abraham Usque consisted only of the Spanish vulgarization with just a few occasional passages in Hebrew characters. For instance, in Atias’ Sedur de Oraciones de mes, the Hebrew text of the blessings for the reading of the Torah is provided alongside the Spanish translation «en hebreo y español». Some words in Hebrew characters occur also in Usque’s mahazor and in his Orden de mes.

Cecil Roth was perhaps the first modern scholar who paid extensive attention to the vulgarizations printed in Ferrara. Convinced as he was that all Conversos of Jewish origin had remained faithful to their fathers’ religion, Roth assumed that these translations were based on a (supposedly) widespread traditional vulgarization used in Spain by several generations of Marranos. Following Roth’s tracks, other scholars assumed that the translations of the Jewish ritual printed in Ferrara and in Venice were mainly meant for the benefit of those Marranos who did not know Hebrew and prayed in the privacy of their homes (rather than in synagogues).

According to some authors, Spanish had become a sort of sacred language that replaced Hebrew even in the religious ceremonies of the new Sephardic settlements. It was not so. It was the merit of Herman P. Salomon to state clearly that these vulgarizations were intended mainly for public use in the Sephardic synagogues of Italy and of the Levant.

48 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, ff. 172r-172v, where the Hebrew text and the Spanish translation are respectively in Hebrew characters and in Latin letters.
49 USQUE, Mahazor, f. 3v and passim.
50 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, Addendum with the «Osaanot».
51 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, Addendum with the «Osaanot».
52 C. ROTH, «The Marrano Press at Ferrara, 1552-1555» Modern Language Review 37 (1943), pp. 307-317. This Author accepted substantially the general opinion according to which the vulgarizations printed in Ferrara came to the light earlier than the ones printed in Venice. He was however the first scholar to point out that the Spanish translation of the Celihot was produced in Venice in 1552, in the same year as the Libro de Oraciones published by Yom Tob Atias in Ferrara.
In the Ferrara vulgarizations there are continuous references to the course of the synagogal service. In Yomtob Atias’ *Libro de Oracyones* (Ferrara 1552) the title (or the first words) of many prayers are given in Hebrew, transcribed into Latin letters and we can easily imagine that, in the synagogue of the Portuguese Nation of Ferrara, the ḥazzan stressed his voice at the beginning of each section for the benefit of those former Marranos who still encountered some difficulties in following a service conducted in their fathers’ language.

In his *siddurim* Yomtob Atias did not translate the initial passage of the *šema* but transcribed it into Latin letters, thus enabling all the worshippers to recite without difficulty the first words of this prayer in Hebrew. He also transcribed the main congregational response to the *Kaddiš*. These short transliterations were inserted also into Atias’ *Sedur de mes* and into his *Orden de Silhoth.*

Abraham Usque was well aware of this problem. In 1553, he transliterated, in his *maḥazor*, the first lines of the *Šema* and several other Hebrew words in Latin letters. Usque devoted a special chapter of this book to the repetition of the *’Amidot* where he explained the somewhat complicated order of these prayers and provided a transliteration of some of the main congregational responses to the *Kaddiš*.

A few years later, in 1555, Abraham Usque inserted at the end of his *Orden de oraciones de mes* the blessings for the Talit, the Tephilin, the Torah reading and the *Kaddiš* fully transcribed into Latin letters. It is from these and other similar transliterations that we can try to understand how the Sephardim in Venice and Ferrara read Hebrew at that time.

Beyond any doubt, the *Biblia en Lengua Española* represents the most important achievement of the Sephardic press in Ferrara.
ra. Several authors already described the merits of this precious volume and I shall not deal with them at this time.

No Hebrew passages are transliterated into Latin characters in the Biblia, nor there any liturgical reason for doing so. This volume is however a helpful source of information on the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew as it bears scores of personal and geographical names transliterated into Latin letters.

Alongside his vulgarizations of the Jewish ritual, Abraham Usque published also the famous Consolação as Tribulações de Israel of Samuel Usque and two other Hispanic books which were not of immediate Jewish interest, Alfonso de la Torre’s Visyon delectable de la philosophia and Bernardim Ribeiro’s Menina e Moça. Furthermore, Abraham Usque produced at least twenty-nine books in Hebrew. These included liturgical, philosophical, exegetical and apologetic as well as

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62   Y. H. YERUSHALMI, «A Jewish Classic in the Portuguese Language» introduction to Consolação as Tribulações de Israel. Composto por Samuel Usque, Empresso en Ferrara en casa de Abraham aben Vsque 5313 da criaçam, am d. 7 de Setembro [1553] (repr. Lisboa 1989), 15-123, pp. 87-89; SALOMON, Deux études, pp. 50-57; HASSÁN «Dos introducciones»; R. SIGRE, «Contribución documental a la historia de la imprenta Usque y de su edición de la Biblia» in HASSÁN (ed.), Introducción a la Biblia, pp. 205-226. This article must be consulted with caution as the authoress did not realize that Yom Tob Atias and Jerónimo de Vargas were two different persons: father and son. See also Aron di Leone LEONI, «New Information on Yomtob Atias alias Alvaro de Vargas» Sefarad 57 (1997), pp. 271-276.


64   USQUE, Consolação.


66   A. DE LA TORRE, Uysyon delectable de la philosophia y artes liberales. A do por muy sotyl artificio se declaran altos secretos. Y per fin las XXIII Coplas de don George Manrique, Estampado en Ferrara, Março 1554.

67   B. RIBEIRO, História de Menina e Moça (Ferrara 1554), now available in the Reprodução facsimilada com Estudo Introductorio por J. V. DE PINA MARTINS (Lisboa 2002).
literary and geographical works. The first Hebrew book ascribed to Usque, the *Hoshanot le-Succot* (Hymns for the Feast of Tabernacles) with a commentary by Simon ben Zemah Duran came out on August 19, 1553, a few days before the Spanish *mahazor, Orden de Roshasanah y Kipur*.

As a marginal remark, I would like to point out that I have not used the old and perhaps obsolete expression «Marrano Press of Ferrara» in this article. In effect the editors and the printers of the Ferrara vulgarization were former Marranos who had openly embraced their fathers’ religion. Most of the «Men of the Nation» living in Ferrara had returned to the official practice of Judaism. They had established an independent synagogue and enjoyed wide jurisdictional and administrative privileges.

§ 2.3. A XVIIth Century Portuguese Translation of the Siddur: The «Ordem de Orasois de Todo o Anno»

Of particular interest is a handwritten *Ordem de Orasois* formerly belonging to the hebraist G.B. de Rossi and now kept at the Municipal Library of Piacenza. The volume is incomplete as the title page is missing. The name of the translator as well as the date and place where this rare work was compiled remain unknown. De Rossi called it *Ordo Precum Iudaicarum lusitanice versus ab anonimo Judaeo* and ascribed it to the

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69 This might also be the last book published by Samuel Sarfati, before he delivered the Hebrew fonts to Usque. PIATTELLI «An Unknown Publication» has recently discovered a Hebrew *mahazor* printed by Sarfati in 1552.

70 The title p. of this book is framed by the design of a gate with two columns. The same engraving was used for the title p. of Usque’s Spanish *mahazor*.

71 See YERUSHALMI, «A Jewish Classic,» p. 93.


73 *Ordem de Orasois*, f. 272r.
XVIIth century. 74 I took up its Portuguese title from a note written by the anonymous compiler. 75

The siddur contains the translation of the daily and Saturday service and the essential part of the service for Roš Ḥodeš, Ḥanuka, Purim, and the Holydays. These prayers are followed by an Addendum 76 with the selihot. The manuscript is in Portuguese with no text in Hebrew characters. Several Hebrew words as well as the first two verses of the šema' are transliterated into Latin characters. 77 A few words, taken up from the Judeo-Spanish jargon, occur in the texts, e.g., asur [אסור = forbidden], 78 sedaqua [צדקה = righteous deed, charity], 79 misdrah [מזרח = Orient]. 80

§ 2.4. Government Decrees, Notarial Deeds, Inquisitorial Registers

In the course of the last few decades I carried out a systematic (even though incomplete) research in the archives of several Italian cities in order to find new evidence on the history of Sephardic settlements in Ferrara, Modena, Reggio Emilia (in the states of the House of Este), Ancona (under Papal rule), Pesaro (in the Duchy of Urbino) and Venice. The documents gathered so far offer a wealth of precious information on the legal status, communal organization, financial, commercial, industrial and cultural activities, as well as on the socio-economical structure of these communities.

Government decrees and judicial records provide names or lists of names of Spanish and Portuguese Jews compiled by chancellors and public officers who obviously did not know Hebrew and transcribed the sound of foreign words by ear.

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75 Ordem de Orasois, ff. 227v-228r.
76 Ordem de Orasois, ff. 232r-271v.
77 Ordem de Orasois, ff. 227v-228r.
78 Ordem de Orasois, f. 4r.
79 Ordem de Orasois, ff. 179r, 236r and passim.
80 Ordem de Orasois, f. 132v.
In Ancona the Levantine merchants used to draw up the terms of their commercial transactions in Hebrew and had them written by the chancellor of their community or by rabbis. The Portuguese merchants, still unfamiliar with Hebrew, made frequent recourse to city notaries. Both the Levantine and the Portuguese communities had their deliberations recorded by city notaries when they had to appoint delegates who would represent them in front of the Papal government in Rome. 81 These deeds contain scores of Jewish names transliterated into Latin letters.

In Ferrara, where the Sephardim felt safer and more free, the notarial archives preserve an incredible wealth of information on the history of several families, on their previous life as Marranos in Antwerp, in London and in Lyon and on the ties with their relatives and companions living in Portugal or in North European cities. Other deeds provide wide evidence about their commercial activities and their links with Portuguese, Italian and Ashkenazi merchants in Ferrara and in other cities. The last wills of several prominent people throw new light on the structure of their families, on their religious and emotional links with the schola (synagogue) of their Nation and its charitable institutions, and with the Spanish synagogues in Saphed and in Jerusalem that many of them regarded as the spiritual centre of the Sephardic Diaspora. These papers frequently contain the transcription of Hebrew words and several expressions of the Ladino jargon. Many deeds include an official Italian translation of other documents previously drawn up in Portuguese or in Hebrew by the Chancellors of the Portuguese Nation or directly by the concerned parties. Of special interest are the transcriptions of rabbinical sentences concerning marriages, doweries, divorces and inheritances. Some commercial transactions deal with the printing of Hebrew books.

The immense notarial archives of Venice have been only partially explored, so far. However it was possible to gather enough evidence on a hitherto unknown Portuguese community established in the Ghetto Nuovo in the middle of the XVIth century. 82 As in other cities, the Venetian deeds

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provide scores of Jewish names and the transcription of several Hebrew words.

Other lists of names are found in the records of the Inquisition. A fundamental contribution was provided by the papers of the Venetian Santo Uffizio relating to Jews and Judaizers, integrally published by Ioly Zorattini. 83 This author published also the texts of several proceedings of the Portuguese Inquisition. 84

I have traced and studied the depositions delivered in Portugal by several people who had belonged to, or had visited Sephardic communities in Italy. In many cases these witnesses described the Jewish ceremonies and sometimes recited passages of prayers, using Hebrew terms and words that the notaries of the Inquisition transcribed on the spot, by ear, into Latin letters.

§ 2.5. The Registers of the Deliberations of the Western Sephardic «Nations»

In 1542 Duke Hercules II granted the «University» 85 of the Spanish and Portuguese Merchants of Ferrara the privilege of dealing with any dispute which might arise between members of their Nations and to settle them by compromise (נוררות). 86

Thirteen years later the same Duke awarded the Spanish and Portuguese Nation 87 authority to elect Massari and Deputati (רמיסים ומסמנים, guardians and appointed officers) with power to enact ordinances, to deal with any dispute among the members of their Nation, to give judgement without appeal, to impose and collect taxes, to fine and excommunicate the


84 See, for instance, the famous Processo de Anrique Nunez (ANTT, Inquis. Lisboa, no. 2931) in Ioly Zorattini, Processi 1570-1572 (Firenze 1984), pp. 219-286.

85 University = Association, Corporation, Community, Cfr. G. Rezasco, Dizionario del linguaggio storico e amministrativo (Firenze 1881), s. v.


87 This was the name of the Sephardic community of Ferrara in 1555. It was later called «The Portuguese Nation.»
transgressors and to enforce punishments. However the jurisdictional autonomy of the Nation was not extended to criminal cases.

One of the first ordinances enacted by the Spanish and Portuguese community of Ferrara established the penalty of niddui (a form of excommunication) for those who infringed the jurisdictional autonomy of the Nation by appealing to non-Jewish courts. A plenary assembly unanimously agreed upon this provision which became a binding Ascamah (agreement, approved deliberation), as the Sephardim used to call their ordinances. Unfortunately the first Register of the Deliberations of the Spanish and Portuguese Nation of Ferrara was lost (or however is not available to scholars). We know about this Ascamah from a Responsa by R. Yehiel Trabot. 89

The Chancellors and Rabbis of the Portuguese Nation of Ferrara acted as public notaries and drew up deeds and statements, mainly in Portuguese but also in Hebrew, at the request of members of their community. Copies of some of these documents are preserved in the city archives, attached to Christian notaries’ deeds. These papers are important also from the linguistic point of view as they contain expressions lifted from Judeo-Spanish and many Jewish names and Hebrew words transcribed into Latin characters.

In the second half of the XVIth century, Portuguese former Marranos were allowed to settle in Pisa and in Leghorn (in Tuscany), in Savigliano (in Piedmont), in Nice (in Savoy), and in several minor Italian cities where they established new Jewish centres. They obtained from the Dukes of Savoy and from the Grand-Dukes of Tuscany the identical privileges that Hercules II had granted to the Spanish and Portuguese Nation of Ferrara in 1555. 90

The new communities enjoyed wide administrative and jurisdictional autonomy. Their communal organization was governed by statutes and ordinances (Escamot) drafted by the Mahamad (governing board) and

88 JTSA Library, Ms. Rab. 1355, responsa Mattanot ba-Adam, ff. 68a-69a (resp. 106); f. 99a (resp. 101), published in French translation by LEONI, «Document inédits» pp. 174-175.

89 See R. Bonfil, The Rabbinate in Renaissance Italy (Hebrew) (Jerusalem 1979), p. 153.

90 The texts of all these privileges are gathered in the Libro di Corame Rosso kept at the Archivio di Stato di Modena, Cancelleria Ducale, Ebrei, b. 14A, publ. in extenso in LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, pp. 212-248.
democratically approved by the plenary assembly of the yeḥidim. 91 These regulations became a binding code for all the Sephardim and encompassed the whole range of Jewish life. The Escamot stated the principles according to which the «Men of the Nation» had to behave inside the community, in the privacy of their homes and in their relations with Gentiles. The Mahamad had full authority to impose taxes for the upkeep of the Nation and to inflict punishments to transgressors and rebels. 92

In Ferrara the Portuguese Jews were proud of their religious, administrative and jurisdictional autonomy and regarded it as the most important of their privileges. The main, or at least the most conspicuous, duty of the Mahamad was to settle the disputes among the «Men of the Nation.» Three parnassim were always available (standing, עומדים) for this purpose at the Residence of the Nation, in the building of their synagogue. Thus, the Mahamad was metaphorically called «The Standing Residence». 93

The Spanish and Portuguese Nation of Reggio Emilia was perhaps the only Sephardic community in Italy who called its governing board Vaad [ particulière, committee, council]. 94

The Statutes of the «Levantine» 95 Nation of Pisa, 96 those of the Hebrew Nation of Leghorn 97 as well as the Livro das Hordems of the Portuguese Nation of Reggio Emilia and Modena 98 have been published

91 Yeḥidim (lit. individuals), members of the Community holding no official position at the moment.


95 On the name of the «Nazione Levantina» see R. TOAFF, La Nazione Ebre a a Livorno e a Pisa (Firenze 1990), pp. 57-64.


97 TOAFF, La Nazione Ebre a, pp. 555-638.

and can be easily compared with the escamot of Amsterdam, London, Recife (in Brazil), Bordeaux and other centres in South-Western France.

The tremendous importance of this documentary corpus cannot be overestimated. Strangely enough the scholars, who studied the minute books compiled in Italy, were mainly Hispanists interested in the peculiarities of the vernacular(s) spoken by the Portuguese Nations. A comprehensive study on the rendering of Hebrew words and names in this literary production is still among the desiderata.

These registers were compiled partly by the chancellors and officers of the different Nations and partly by the Parnas Presidente in charge, during his mandate. As these officers were not necessarily scholars or literates they generally had no academic interest in the rules of grammar. They drew up these minutes, and wrote the Hebrew terms therein occurring, transcribing the Hebrew (as well as the Portuguese) words by ear, according to their sound, as they heard it during the service in the synagogue or in current conversation, thus providing direct unamended evidence of the actual pronunciation.

Of great interest are also the Statutes of Charitable Confraternities such as, for instance, the Escamot of the «Santa Companhia de dotar Orfans e Donzelas» of Amsterdam and those of the similar institutions of Venice and Leghorn.

99 The forty two Escamod of the 1639 «merger agreement» of the three Sephardic Communities of Amsterdam were published by W. C. Pietersee, Daniel Levi de Barrios als Geschiedschrijver van de Portugese-Israelitische Gemeente te Amsterdam in zijn Triumpho del Governo Popular (Amsterdam 1968), pp. 156-167.


101 The Ascamot of Recife (1648) were published by A. Witznitzer, Anais da Biblioteca Nacional LXXIV (Rio de Janeiro 1954), pp. 58-73.


105 See Toaff, La Nazione Ebreo, pp. 9-12; Leoni, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, pp. 249-251.
§ 2.6. Grammar Books and Dictionaries

The importance of these instruments is obvious and does not need a special discussion. Of particular interest is a grammar book published in Spain in 1526 by the converso Alfonso de Zamora. This author claimed that he had access to the archives of the Jewish communities, seized at the time of the expulsion but still extant. Thus he stated, in rather explicit terms, that his grammar reflected the linguistic traditions—and the pronunciation—of the Spanish Jewry. The scientific value of this work was stated by S. D. Luzzatto.

A grammar book compiled at the beginning of the XVIIth century by the Catholic Humanist Blancuccio is particularly interesting as it proves that the /gn/ pronunciation of ayin was already taking place among Italian Jews. The author was a trustworthy witness of this phenomenon. As we shall see, the perusal of grammatical works is essential in documenting the progressive shift towards a nasal-guttural pronunciation of the ayin by the Italian Jews between the XVIIth and the XIXth Centuries.

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106 I. S. Réval, «Le Premier Règlement imprimé de la “Santa Companhia de dotar Orfans e Donzelas Pobres”» Boletim Internacional de Bibliografia Luso-Brasileira 4 (1963), 650-691, p. 666. We owe to this scholar a list of the Hebrew words, Hebraisms and expressions typical of the Judeo-Spanish jargon occurring in this precious document.

107 See, for instance, Capitulaciones del modo que se deve governar la Hebra de casar huerfanas y donzelladas, Instituidas en esta Ciudad de Liorne, Reformadas en el año 5442 per los Señores H. Jacob Jesurun Lopez, Gabriel de Medina... Y de nuevo reformadas, y acrecentadas este año 5466. In Livorno 1706. We reproduce the title page in fig. 16.

108 A. de Zamora, סדר דקדוק לשון הקדש ... Introductiones Artis Grammatice Hebraice nunc recentor edite, impressae in Academia complutensi in Edibus Michaelis de Egua (undated reprint [1526]) (Introduction, unnumb. p.): «ex hebraeorum archivis adytis – haec bona coepta sunt in Hispania.»

109 S. D. Luzzatto, Prolegomeni ad una grammatica ragionata della lingua ebraica del Professore S. D. Luzzatto (Padova 1836), pp. 42-43.

110 B. Blancuccio, Institutiones in linguam sanctam Hebraicam, Romae MDCVIII. On this Author, see Luzzatto, Prolegomeni.
§ 3. THE RENDERING OF HEBREW CONSONANTS AND VOWELS BY THE SEPHARDIC SCHOLARS IN THE XVIth CENTURY

Of paramount interest is Yomtob Atias’ translation of the book of Lamentations, which is read during the Yom Kippur service. As it is known, this book consists of five poetic compositions: the first four are alphabetic acrostics where every verse (or cluster of verses) begins with letters of the Hebrew alphabet in progressive sequence, from alef to taw. The repeated succession of verses in alphabetical order was meant to stress the manifold sufferings of the Jewish people. It was also a way of expressing the hope that the tribulations and misfortunes of the sons of Israel were completely fulfilled and had now come to an end. Yomtob Atias was well aware of the importance of this message. In order to convey it unaltered through the process of the vulgarization, he resorted to an expedient: he used the names of the Hebrew letters in Latin characters as headlines for each (cluster of) verse(s) in alphabetical order. Thus the names—and the pronunciation—of the Hebrew consonants are provided, one by one.

The same device was used in the Biblia Española, in the translation of Psalm 119, where each stanza is preceded by the name of the initial letter of the Hebrew text transcribed into Latin characters. The names of several Hebrew consonants provided in the Biblia are slightly different from the ones given by Yomtob Atias in his Libro de Oracyones. This adds new evidence to the fact that the translation of the Biblia was undertaken by a team of scholars rather than by a single unknown author.

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111 ATIAS, Libro de Oracyones, ff. 209-217v.
112 See J. H. TIGAY in EJ 10, cols. 1368-1375.
113 Deut. 28; cfr. USQUE, Consolação, «Dialogo Terceiro,» § 30. f. 204r.
115 See fig. 4.
116 Biblia, pp. 304v-306v (see fig. 7).
117 A. USQUE, Psalterium de Davud: Prológo al lector. Abraham Usque pointed out that he was a member of the team who translated the Bible alongside with eminent scholars. He also stated that all the previous Latin translations were consulted. Cfr. A. di Leone LEONI, «A hitherto unknown edition of the Spanish Psalter by Abraham Usque (Ferrara 1554)» Sefarad 61 (2001), 127-136, pp. 131-132.
In his Psalter (Ferrara 1553), Abraham Usque used the Hebrew consonants in alphabetical order as headlines for the stanzas of Psalm 119. However, for this purpose, he employed Hebrew fonts and did not transcribe the name of Hebrew letters into Latin characters.

In 1622 Abram Netto published an enlarged edition of Isac Cavallero’s bilingual Orden de Oraciones. The new volume\(^{119}\) presented a fascinating novelty. Netto inserted at the end of the siddur an appendix with a list of the Hebrew letters and vowels, giving their names in Latin characters. Furthermore he provided a short Declaration delos Puntos (Explanation of vowel-signs) where he explained how every diacritic symbol\(^{120}\) was to be pronounced.

Until now the Declaration delos Puntos was ascribed to Isac Cavallero\(^{122}\) along with his Orden de oraciones.\(^{123}\) However, I did not find any such explanation in the vulgarizations printed in Venice in the middle of the XVI\(^{th}\) century. Thus, in my opinion, the attribution of this «work» to Isac Cavallero is completely groundless. Moreover, in the appendix of the prayerbook sponsored by Abraham Netto, the names and the sounds of several consonants are not consistent with the pronunciation rules (tacitly) adopted by Cavallero seventy years before. The Declaration delos Puntos was therefore the work of an independent author: either the same Abram Netto or a scholar employed by him for this purpose.

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\(^{120}\) On the creation and development of this diacritic system see S. Morag, *The Vocalization Systems of Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic: Their Phonetic and Phonemic Principles* (S-Graevenhage 1962).

\(^{121}\) See fig. 15.


\(^{123}\) As we have pointed out, the title of the Ordenance de Oraciones was not available to scholars until the middle of the XX\(^{th}\) Century.
The names of the Hebrew consonants, given by several scholars in the XVIth century are shown in the Table to be published in the second part of this work. The changing names of some letters show the progressive variations occurred in their sound in the span of four centuries.

The pronunciation of each consonant is discussed in the following pages. Unless otherwise stated, these notes are related to the pronunciation of Hebrew by the Sephardim in Venice and in Ferrara in the XVIth century. In particular cases I paid attention to further developments in the rendering of specific Hebrew consonants.

Additional research was carried out in order to ascertain how the Italian communities of different origins pronounced the consonant ayin between the XVIth and the XXth century. The results will be presented in a following article to be published in a further issue of this journal.

§ 3.1. Alef

In the sixteenth century the phonetic value of this letter was zero. In most cases it was left without transcription, especially when it occurs at the beginning of a word, e.g. Aharon [אהרון, p.n.], 124 Abraham [אברהם, p.n.], 125 Abinu [אביינו, our Father], 126 Atah [אתה, you, Thou], 127 veimru [ואמרו, and will say], 128 anse emunah [אנשי אמונה, men of faith]. 129

However, alef was sometimes transliterated as <h>, e.g. harba [ארבע, four]. 130 It is worth noting that the same grapheme was used in this case to transliterate both ayin and alef. In the transcriptions of Spanish texts into Hebrew characters, alef was used as mater lectio-

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124 Celiboth, f. 35v.
125 Celiboth, f. 35v.
126 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 38v.
127 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 52v, 53r. See doc. 2 in Appendix.
128 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181v.
129 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 32v.
130 Biblia Española de Ferrara, [hereafter: Biblia] f. 9v: Kiriat harba.
nis, to indicate the vowel /a/\(^{131}\) as, for instance, acabara  
[acakara, he will complete], \(^{132}\) alçara [alçara, he will lift up], \(^{133}\) sacaran, they will extract], \(^{134}\) tomaran, they will take]. \(^{135}\)

§ 3.2. Bet

Hard (dotted) bet was regularly rendered as a plosive b. Both in Venice and in Ferrara soft (undotted) bet had frequently a sound identical to hard bet as, for instance, in kebob [כבוד, the honour], \(^{136}\) Abinu [אביינו, our Father], \(^{137}\) uba [עב, and He comes], \(^{138}\) Abimelech [אמלך, p.n.], \(^{139}\) habdalal [הבדלה, separation]. \(^{140}\) The Biblia de Ferrara provides many more examples: Hadebarim [מדברים, Deuteronomy], Nebiim [נביאים, Prophets], Hobadijah [حسبyal, p.n.], \(^{141}\) Reuben [ראובן, p.n.], \(^{142}\) Ribkah [רבקה, p.n.], \(^{143}\) Zebulun [zbek, Hagiographa]. \(^{144}\) In other, less frequent, instances the soft (undotted) bet was rendered as <v>, e.g vaya-


\(^{132}\) Cavallero, Orden Or., p. 176. See doc. 6 in Appendix.

\(^{133}\) Cavallero, Orden Or., p. 146.

\(^{134}\) Cavallero, Orden Or., p. 194.

\(^{135}\) Cavallero, Orden Or., p. 253.

\(^{136}\) Atias, Libro Or., p. 21r; Atias, Sedur de Or. de mes, p. 53v and passim; Usque, Mañor, f. 47r.

\(^{137}\) Atias, Libro Or., p. 38v. See doc. 2 in Appendix.

\(^{138}\) Atias, Libro Or., p. 40v. See doc. 2 in Appendix.

\(^{139}\) Usque, Psalterium, f. 45v.

\(^{140}\) Atias, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 200v.

\(^{141}\) Biblia, ff. *IIIr, 265r.

\(^{142}\) Biblia, f. 25v.

\(^{143}\) Biblia, f. 9v and ff.

\(^{144}\) Biblia, ff. 7v, 60v.

\(^{145}\) Biblia, Tabla.
havor [חובור, (He) passed], 146 arvit [ערבית, evening prayer], 147 kevod [כבוד, honour], 148 thevah [תבוח, podium]. 149 In some cases Yomtob Atias transcribed the hard (dotted) bet as <bb>, e.g., rabba [רבּא, (Aram.) great], 150 gibbor [גיבור, mighty], 151 Ribbon [ריבן, Master], 152 nibbeth [מדיח, from the house]. 153

In the following centuries the almost general lack of distinction between soft and hard bet remained a typical feature of the Sephardic pronunciation in Italy and in the Western Portuguese Nations, e.g., tebà, tebah [תבוח, podium], 154 nedabà [נדבה, donation, offer], 155 hebrà, haberim, 156 haberut [חברה, confraternity, members of the confraternity, membership], tesuba [תישובה, return, penitence], 159 yesiba [ישיבה, (in

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146 Celihoth, passim; ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth, ff. 14v-17r; USQUE, Maḥazar, f. 163r and ff.
147 CAVALLERO, Ordem Or., f. 208 and passim; IDEM, Ordenança, Tabla and passim, ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth, 14v and passim.
148 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 19v and passim; Usque, Maḥazar, f. 135v. See doc. 3 in Appendix.
149 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 171v.
150 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 19r.
151 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 23v and passim.
152 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 48v and passim.
153 ATIAS, Libro Or., ff. 184v, 234v.
156 Livro das Hordems, Reggio Emilia, ff. 11-12, 24, 25, LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, pp. 279-281, 307, 31; Escamot de Lirne (1655-94), TOAFF, La Nazione Ebra, pp. 569-638, 576, 580, 590 and passim; Registre des Deliberations de Bordeaux,Asc. no. 1 (May 11, 1710) and passim until Escamot 532, 533, 534 (April 7 and May 5, 1785), publ. SCHWARZFUCHS, Le Registre, pp. 556-558.
157 Livro das Hordems, Reggio Emilia, f.12; LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, p. 281.
158 Capitalaciones ... Hebra de Casar Huerfanas, Liorne, pp. 23, 33.
159 Livro das Hordems, Reggio Emilia, f. 35, LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, p. 331; ACE, Ve, Libro delle Parti, p. 3 and passim.
§ 3.3. Gimel

This consonant was realized as a hard /g/ (as in the English word gift) and generally transcribed by a simple g as in Gilhad [גילהד].


161 Y. YEHUDE LEON, Alabanças de Santidad / Traducion de los Psalmos de David por la misma phrasis y palabras del Hebrayco, en Amsterdam año 5431 [1670-71], unnumb. p. with the Approbacao do Haham Ishac Aboab.

162 Yoseph, Iacob and Abraam PROOPS תורו הכנאים והנוצבים בשני עמודים Biblia in dos colonas Hebrayco y Español ... en la primera columna el original Hebraico, con todas las perfecciones en las letras puntos y taamim con las annotationes de or Tora, poniendo cada cosa en su lugar ... en la segunda columna la traduccion en lengua Española; y buscamos las palabras mas proprias en aquella lengua, para exprimir el sentido del texto; נדפס באמסטרדם en casa e a costa de Yoseph, Iacob y Abraam de Salomon Proops estampadores y mercadores de Libros, Hebraicos y Españoles en Amsterdam [5522/1762], unnumb. p. of the introduction.

163 PROOPS, Biblia, ibid.


166 GASTER, Book of Prayer, p. 320.

167 GASTER, Book of Prayer, p. 254.

168 GASTER, Book of Prayer, p. 259.

169 Escamot de Liorne, 1655-1677, see TOAFF, La Nazione Ebraa, p. 571.

170 TOAFF, La Nazione Ebraa, p. 573.

171 TOAFF, La Nazione Ebraa, p. 598; NAHON, Les Nations, p. 156.
We also find the forms ghi, ghe and even ghı, ghı or ghı. The former graphemes were probably originated by their affinity and similarity to the Spanish forms que, qui, e.g.: Maguen [מגן, defender], 176 Guilgal [גילה, g.n.], 177 seguemalanu [ועסנלאן, who has delivered us], 178 Guedelha [געדלה, p.n.]. 179

The forms ghı, ghı were loans from Italian, probably due to the presence of local workers in the printing press, e.g. meghilah [מגילה, roll], 180 ghimel [גימל, consonant], 181 Ben Ghebirol [בן גבירול, p.n.], 182 Maghen [מגן, defender], 183 Meghido [מגדו, g.n.] Ghilhad [גירדה, g.n.], 184 Ghilboah [גילה, g.n.], 185 Ghemara [גемרא, tradition], 186 haghadah [הגדה, narration], 187 Gad 188 or Ghad 189 [גד, p.n.]. This is probably another symptom of the fact that several persons of different cultural extraction worked at the translation of the Biblia.
§ 3.4. Dalet

This letter was homogeneously transliterated as $d$ and does not call for any special remark. In word final position it was sometimes pronounced /t/, e.g.: Davit. 190 «Re Davit» [King David] was the name of a ship owned by Adam Arens, a Jewish merchant of Venice, in the first decade of the XVII\textsuperscript{th} century. 191 The form Davit was widespread also among the Italian Jews. 192

§ 3.5. He

Both in Ferrara and in Venice this consonant was either transcribed by $h$ or left without notation, for instance, cahal [congregation]. 193 teva 194 / thevah 195 [תבנה, podium where the Torah is read].

The problem of establishing the exact value of this letter and of other laryngeal consonants is complicated by the fact that both the Venetian and the Ferrarese scholars used the symbol <h> to represent not only consonants with a similar phonetic value, such as alef, he and ayin, but even the het and the soft kaf with their completely different palatal sound, e.g. Ahabat holam [אהבת עולם] 196 Pesah [פסח].

190 ASAn, not. B. Pavesi, reg. 963 (November 16, 1546); ASAn, not. G. B. Agli, reg. 224 (March 3, 1552); ASAn, not. A. Manfredi, reg. 735 (January 23 and November 30, 1553); ibid., reg. 754, ff. 264r-267r (July 1554); ibid., reg. 234 (June 19, 1555); ASAn, not. P.G. Senili, reg. 1153 (April 4, 1555); ASFe, not. A. Coccapani, pc. 5 (December 31, 1552); ibid., pc. 9 (May 27, 1558); ASPs, not. Francesco Fattori (January 5, 1557); ASFe, not. M. Taurino, Testamenti (June 21, 1563); ASVe, not. G.B. Monti, reg. 8252 (November 24, 1564); ibid., reg. 8257 (May 12, 1569); ibid., reg. 8261 (October 15, 1571); CHJP, HM 3147 (Venice 1580) f. 2.


193 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p 108.

194 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 160.

195 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 171v.

196 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 59v.
Passover], 197 Yeriho [יריחו, g.n.], 198 Melahim [מלכים, kings], 199 berahot [ברחות, blessings]. 200

§ 3.6. Consonantal waw

Consonantal waw,201 was regularly pronounced /v/. It calls for no special remark. In the transcription of Spanish texts into Hebrew characters, waw was used to represent the sound of the letter v, e.g., verano, [summer], 202 inverno, [winter], 203 vino, [wine], 204 verdura, [vegetables]. 205

§ 3.7. Zayin

This consonant deserves no particular comment. It was pronounced /z/ and graphically represented as з and less frequently as s. For instance: hazan [זנים, cantor], 206 oznecha [اذن, Your ear], 207 ezó [אוז, which?]. 208

197 ATIAS, Libro Or.Tabla (Index).
196 Celíhoth, 37v.
199 Biblia Española, Tabla.
200 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, Tabla, passim.
201 For a definition of the consonantal (or semivocalic) and vocalic values of this letter, see MORAG, Vocalization Systems, p. 21.
202 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 132 and passim.
203 CAVALLERO, Orden Or.
204 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 253.
205 Haggadah con su ladino, unnumb. p. with the vulgarization of «Mah Ništanah» [«in what is (this night) different?»]. See doc. 7 in Appendix.
206 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181v; CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 108, 140 and passim. See doc. 4 and 6 in Appendix.
207 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 42r.
208 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 154r.
§ 3.8. Ḥet

This consonant was pronounced as a voiceless pharyngeal fricative. Its sound was graphically represented as h, e.g., hazan [חずן, cantor], 209 Pinhas / Pinhaz [פינחס, p.n.], 210 Nahum [נחום, p.n.], 211 Rahel [רחל, p.n.]. 212

In notarial documents registered in various Italian cities, Ḥet was frequently transliterated as ch, e.g., Charavon [חרבון, f.n.], 213 Chaim / Chajim [חיים, life, used as p.n.], 214 Abenmenachem [انون מקסר, f.n.], 215 Giachia [ייחיה, f.n.], 216 Simecha or Simacha [שמחה, Joy (Gioia in Italian), used as p.n.]. 217

In the XVIIth century Livro das Hordems (Sefer Ascamot) of the Portuguese Nation of Reggio Emilia, Ḥet was occasionally transcribed as <g> as, for instance, gesban [month of the Jewish calendar]; 218 gebra [חברה, company, confraternity]. 219 This form occurred also in the XVIIIth century Register of Deliberations of the Portuguese Nation of Bordeaux where the Ḥet was transcribed also by <j>, e.g., hebra, 220 jebra or even jebera; 221 bedajaim

209 USQUE, Orden de mes, f 181v; CAVALIERO, Orden Or., p. 108, 140 and passim. See doc. 4 and 6 in Appendix.
210 Celihoth, f. 37r; ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth, f. 36r.
211 Biblia, Tabla.
212 Biblia, Tabla and passim.
214 ASAn, not. G. B. Agli, Reg. 221, ff. 368v-369r, September 15, 1552.
217 ASFe, not. G.B. Saracco, pc. 29S, January 13,1540 ; ASVe, not. G. B. Monti, reg. 8252, ff. 18r-18v, August 17, 1565.
218 Livro das Hordems, pp. 19, 24; see LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, pp. 295, 307.
219 Livro das Hordems, f. 24v; LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, p. 307.
220 Registre des Deliberations de Bordeaux, Asc. 25, May 12 1722, publ. SCHWARZFUCHS, Le Registre p. 103.
221 Registre des Deliberations de Bordeaux, Asc. 25, May 12 1722, publ. SCHWARZFUCHS, Le Registre p. 104.
§ 3.9. Tet

This consonant was uniformly pronounced /t/ identically with the tav. In the transcription of Spanish texts into Hebrew characters, the letter tet was used to graphically represent the sound of /t/, e.g. [ется, in the meantime].

§ 3.10.1 Consonantal Yod.

Both in the Venetian and in the Ferrarese vulgarizations, consonantal yod was transcribed by i, y or j as, for instance, Israel / Ysrael, yad [נָד, hand], jigmaleha [יִגמלך, He will deliver you]. We shall deal with the vocalic value of the yod below, in the paragraph devoted to the /i/ sounding vowels.

§ 3.10.2. The Use of Yod as Mater Lectionis in the Transcriptions of Spanish Texts

In the transcriptions of Spanish and Ladino texts into Hebrew letters, Yod was employed as mater lectionis after an /e/ sounding vowel but it was also used as graphic support for /i/ as for instance וּז [ vez, time].

222 Registre des Deliberations de Bordeaux, Asc. 26, September 29, 1722; Asc. 45, March 30, 1729; Asc. 50, April, 4 1730; Asc. 152, January 28, 1748; Asc. 159, June 8 1748, publ. SCHWARZFUCHS, Le Registre pp. 102, 120, 122, 200, 207.

223 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 80.

224 For a definition of the consonantal (or semivocalic) and vocalic values of this letter, see MORAG, Vocalization Systems, p. 21.

225 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., pp. 214, 217 and passim; ATIAS, Libro Or., pp. 21r, 49v and passim.

226 ATIAS, Libro Or., p. 36v.

227 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 147.

228 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 160, 194; Haggadah con su Ladino.

Sepharad, vol. 66: 1, enero-junio 2006, págs. 89-142. ISSN 0037-0894
§ 3.10.3. Yod as Mater Lectionis in the Transcriptions of Italian Texts by Italian and Italo-Sephardic Scholars.

In the transliterations of Italian texts into Hebrew characters, the letter yod was used as mater lectionis to denote an /e/ or /i/ sounding vowel. In the Tephillot Latini, an Italian vulgarization of the prayerbook in Hebrew characters, we find [Fattore di celi] < terra, Maker of skies and land>, [essendo costretto e pregato, as I was compelled and requested].

229 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 108 and passim; Haggadah con su Ladino, docs. 6 and 7 in Appendix.
230 CAVALLERO, Orden Or. unnumb. p. with the Ladino translation of [This is the bread of affliction].
231 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 76 and passim. See doc. 5 in Appendix.
232 Haggadah con su Ladino.
233 Haggadah con su Ladino, vulgarization of «Mah Ništanah.» See ab. note 205.
234 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 254.
235 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 301.
236 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 277.
237 Haggadah con su Ladino.
239 The Italian word «cieli» is transcribed according to its sound regardless of its exact spelling.
240 Tephillot Latini, p.2.
241 Tephillot Latini.
The sound of the Italian tritich <gli> was transcribed as <לי> or <לי> e.g. [figlioli, sons]. Double yod was used to graphically represent the sound of Italian soft /gi/, /ge/, e.g. [פליולי, figlioli, sons], 242 [[tagliar, to cut]). The Italian phoneme /gn/ was represented by means of a cluster of letters composed by a nun and one yod or –more frequently– two yods <ניי> as in [ביסוניגה, it is necessary], 245 [סיניוריה, signori, gentlemen].

§ 3.11. Kaf

Soft (undottet) kaf had a voiceless fricative sound identical with that of her, graphically represented as h or ch, e.g. hehal, hechal, 247 echal 248 [היכל, ark], Malachi [מלאכי, p.n.].

Hard kaf with a daggeš was pronounced as a voiced velar stop /k/ and variously represented as c, cc, k, q, e.g.: Kerubim [כּרובים, Cherubs], 250 haskivenu, make us lie down], 251 haccol [הכל, all, the whole thing].

Final kaf vocalized by ševa or kames was pronounced with a marked fricative sound. In Ferrara it was represented by ch as, for instance erech apaim [אפים, indulgent], 253 camocha [כּמך, like You], 254 banaych [בּנְךָ, your children].

244 Tephillot Latini, f. 2r.
247 CAVALLETTI, Orden Or., p. 163, 164, 206 and passim; ATIAS, Libro Or., p. 206.
248 USQUE, Consolação, f. 218r.
249 Biblia, ff. 276-277.
250 ATIAS, Libro Or., unnumb. p. of gathering “**”.
251 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 61v.
252 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 39v and passim.
253 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 39r and passim.
254 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 36r.
In Venice, Isaac Cavallero transcribed soft (undotted) kaf as <h> and final kaf as <c>, e.g. barehû [ברכה], baruc [ברוך]. 256

Samuel Usque represented final kaf as <ck>, e.g. Abimelech [אַבִּימלך, p.n.]. 257 Of particular interest is the form nakdisah [נָקְדִיָּה, we shall sanctify You], 258 occurring in the Kedušah [קדושה, sanctification]. In the Sephardic ritual the possessive suffix (for the second person masculine singular) is attached directly to the verb as against the form נַקְדֵּשׁ את [we shall sanctify Your Name] found in the Ashkenazic siddurim. 259

In or around 1526 Alfonso de Zamora called the soft kaf «chaf» and «caf». 260 In 1622 Abraam Netto gave the final kaf a special name «hcaf,» but in most cases he transcribed it as ch as for instance, Baruch [ברוך, Blessed], 261 but also Baruc. 262

§ 3.12. Lamed

This consonant does not require any discussion.

§ 3.13. Mem

The pronunciation of mem calls for no special comment as it was regularly rendered as m. However, at the end of the word mem was often pronounced as /n/, e.g. in the proper nouns Abrahin, 263 Abrain264 and

255 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 109v.
256 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., pp. 146-147. See doc. 1 in Appendix.
257 USQUE, Consolação, ff. 39v-40r.
258 ATIAS, Libro Or., p. 24r. See Doc. 2 in Appendix.
260 ZAMORA, Introducciones Artis Grammaticae, p. marked «הנ» with a prospect of the Alphabetum Hebraeum. See figure 1.
262 NETTO, Orden Or., p. 306.
264 ASVe, Notarile Testamenti, B. 348, not. G. A. Catti, April 22, 1589.
Abraham, Effrain, Yon Tob, Menahen, Menachin, Cain, Cayn and Hain [חיים], Yeoyachin, but also queducin [קדושים, marriage celebration].

Final mem was often merged with the preceding vowel and rendered by a velar nasal sound, as it appears from such Lusitanian forms as Abrahão, Abrahaõ. The final diptych of this word was undoubtably pronounced with a marked nasal accent by the Portuguese Jews of Ferrara.

§ 3.14. Nun

Nun was graphically represented as <n>. However, especially in final position, it was sometimes pronounced m, e.g., Choem, Coem, Cohem.
Caim, 276 Ziom [ציון, g.n.], 277 Harom [אחא, p.n.], 278 Jocanam [יוֹקָנָם, p.n.], 279 Cassam [כָּסָם, p.n.], 280 Natam [נתם, p.n.].

In Ladino the alternation between /m/ and /n/ occurred also in other word positions as it is shown by such transcriptions as empezar [escondaran, they will hide].

In the transliteration of Spanish words, final nun was frequently left untranscribed, e.g., llamaran, they will call. This happened occasionally in the transcription of Hebrew names, also when nun does not occur at the end of the word, e.g., Bejamin.

§ 3.15. Samekh

This consonant does not require particular attention. It was uniformly pronounced /s/ and variously transcribed as s, ç or ç', ç'. For instance:

reg. 8262, May 14, 1572; ASFe, not. A. Coccapani, p. 9, December 12 1555; ibid. not. de Vecchi, p. 1, December 30, 1564, March 17, 1578; ASFe, not. G. Conti, May 2, 1574; ANTT, Inquis. Lisboa, Processo 2931, ff. 81r-82r, March 8, 1581; ibid., Processo 5817, f. 17r, 20r, March 6, 1581; IOLY ZORATTINI, Processo 1570-1572, pp. 273, 274; ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Ebrei, 2, witness testimony by David Alvarez, publ. LEONI, «Documents inédits» p. 171.

276 USQUE, Consolação, f. 224r. 277 Usque, Consolação, ff. 251v, 254r, 257r, 258v, 281r and passim. 278 Usque, Consolação, f. 250r.


280 ASps, not. A. Allegri, October 24, 1548; not. G. Garatto, May 5 and May 13 1549, March 3 1550; ASAn, not. G.B. Agli, reg. 221, September 15, 1552; ASFe, not. A. Coccapani, pc. 5, December 12 1552.

281 ASFe, not. A. Coccapani, pc. 5, September 19, 1552.

282 Haggadah con su Ladino. See doc. 7 in Appendix. In later edition the form «escombraran» is found.

283 Haggadah con su Ladino.

284 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 146.

285 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 160.

286 Usque, Consolação, f. 68r and ff.

Sepharad, vol. 66: 1, enero-junio 2006, pág. 89-142. ISSN 0037-0894

§ 3.16.1 ‘Ayin

In Italy, in the first half of the XXth century, ‘ayin was realized as a voiced velar nasal phoneme commonly transcribed as gn. Its sound was similar to the Spanish ñ in the word España and to gn in the Italian word sognare or in French agneau. Typical was the rendering of Šema‘ as Scemang or Scemagn. According to popular belief, this particular sound was introduced by the Iberian exiles that arrived in Italy after the expulsion from Spain (1492) and the general forced conversion in Portugal (1497). We could ascertain that it was not so. In the second part of this work we shall deal with the progressive shift in the pronunciation of ‘ayin a process which took place in the course of a few centuries.

§ 3.16.2. The Pronunciation of ‘Ayin in the Early Modern Sephardic Settlements of Venice and Ferrara

The perusal of a wide range of transliterations of Hebrew words and (mainly liturgical) texts led me to the conclusion that, in the XVIth century Sephardic communities of Venice and Ferrara, the phonetic value of ‘ayin was zero or tending to zero.

In the vulgarizations of Hebrew prayers printed in Ferrara and in Venice this consonant was most frequently transcribed as <h>. For

287 Celihoth, f. 37r; ASFe, not. Fiornovelli, pc. 2 Undated [1565] letter of Abraam Benveniste to «Chia» [כיה] Barochas signed (among others) by «Yocef Cohen» member of a Venetian Bet Din.
288 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, Tabla.
289 CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 146.
290 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 147, 150.
291 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, tabla and passim.

Sepharad, vol. 66: 1, enero-junio 2006, págs. 89-142. ISSN 0037-0894
instance, in Semah [שמע hear!], harbith [ערבית evening prayer],
leholam vahed [לעולם ועד forever and ever], nehilah [נסע, closing (liturg.)], Kenahan [كنן, g.n.]. However, in many cases, 'ayin was not transcribed at all, e.g., vaed [ועד, forever], arvit / ar-bith [ערבית, evening prayer], Azaria [עזריה, p.n.], Jacob, hosaana [הושענה, Osanna].

[292] CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 89, 188 and passim; ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, Tabla (Unnumb. p.), f. 53v.
[293] ATIAS, Libro. Or., Tabla, f *IJ and passim.
[294] ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, pp.19r, 49v, 53v and passim; USQUE, Maḥazor, ff. 4r, 45r, 255v, 260r and passim.
[295] USQUE, Maḥazor, ff. 248r and passim.
[296] Biblia, f. 17r and passim.
[297] CAVALLERO, Orden Or., p. 146.
[298] CAVALLERO, Ordenança, Tabla and passim; ATIAS, Sedur de mes, Tabla and passim.
[299] Celihoth f. 38r; ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth 36v.
[300] CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 156.
[301] USQUE, Orden de mes, addendum for Succoth, f. 8v and passim.
[302] Biblia, ff. 138 r, 151r.
[304] CAVALLERO, Ordenança, Index.
[305] Sephirat ha-'Omer, the counting of the days comprised in the seven weeks between the first day of Passover and Savu 'ot.
[306] Biblia f. 9v.
[307] ANTT, Conselho Central do Santo Oficio, doc. no. 2542, f. 7r.
[309] ANTT, Conselho Central do Santo Oficio, doc. no. 2542, f. 7r.
[311] Ibid., p. 7.
The fact that in many cases the ‘ayin was left without notation cannot be assumed as an absolute proof that its ancient sound was completely lost and abandoned by all Sephardic scholars in early modern Northern Italy. According to H. P. Salomon, already in the fifties of the XVIth century there were examples of ayin represented as <hg>. 312 I did find one only similar case in the works published in Ferrara. In his Libro de Oracyones, Yom Tob Atias gave in 1552 the name of this consonant as hgain. 313 This perhaps implies at least a reminiscence of an ancient pronunciation. However, rather inconsistently, this author did not use this grapheme in his siddurim and he normally transcribed the ‘ayin as h or even ignored it. As far as I know the grapheme <hg> does not appear in other vulgarizations of the Sephardic liturgy printed in Italy during the XVIth century.

§ 3.17. Pe

The pronunciation of this consonant calls for no particular attention. Hard pe was regularly transcribed as p and soft pe as f or ph, e.g., sepher, 314 Parhoh / Parho [פַּרְעֹה, Pharaoh]. 315

§ 3.18. Sade

This letter was uniformly pronounced as a voiceless velate affricate and variously transcribed by several graphemes such as z, s, ç, or c as, for instance, zemach [צֶמַּך, scion], 316 razon 317 and rason 318 [רָזָן, will-
ingness], Zion, Cion, Cyon and Sion, zeboaot, cebaath, çveaot, and çevaath [צבאות, hosts].

It is worth noting that in the XVIth century transcription of Italian words, Jewish scholars used to transcribe the Italian triptychs cc\', cc\'e as צ\', צ\'י, e.g., אציו [acciaio, steel], ברציו [braccio, arm], [ac--
cennare, to make reference]. However, in some case a simple tsade was used, as for instance,産 [acciò, for the purpose].

§ 3.19. Qof

Both in Ferrara and in Venice this consonant was pronounced k (as a hard kaf) and variously represented as k, or q\(\text{o}^0\), q\(\text{o}^\text{ui}\) or even ch, for instance, Habakuk [חבוק, p.n.], bekirbi [בקרבּי, inside me], pasukim and pasuchim [פסוקים, verses]. The last form was obviously due to some Italian influence. The members of the Portuguese Nation of Ferrara usually transcribed the sound of qof as qu\(\text{o}^0\), for instance, quetuba [כתבה,}

319 ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth, p. 34v; Idem, Libro Or., f. 40v. See doc. 2 in Appendix.
320 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 323 ; USQUE, Orden de mes,Tabla.
321 USQUE, Orden de mes (Repr. Venice 1619), Tabla.
322 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 153.
323 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, p. 31v and passim; ATIAS, Orden de Silhoth, p. 30v; Biblia, p. 215v.
324 USQUE, Maḥazor, ff. 135v, 240r.
325 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 154.
326 CAVALLERO, Ordenança, p. 128, 155, 156 and passim.
327 David de POMIS, דוד פומיס, Dittionario Novo Hebraico, molto copioso, Dechiarato in tre lingue con bellissime annotationi e con l’indice latino e volgare de tutti li suoi si-
gificati... Venetiis, apud Ioannem de Gara 1587, s. v.
328 POMIS, Dittionario.
329 POMIS, Dittionario.
330 Yacob ben Naphtali HA-KOHEN, Tephillot Volgar [Italian version of the Prayerbook in Hebrew characters] (Mantova 1561), f. 182r.
331 Biblia, pp. 269r-270r.
332 ATIAS, Libro Or., p. 186v.
333 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, f. 172v; Biblia, f. 183r, 206r, 234r, and passim.
334 Ibid., f. 15v, 45v, 60r, 80v.

SEFARAD, vol. 66: 1, enero-junio 2006, pág. 89-142. ISSN 0037-0894
marriage contract], queducin [קדועסין, marriage celebration], Usque [אסף, p.n.]. 335 sedagua [זרקה, charity]. 336

Italian notaries transcribed the sound of the qof as c or ch, for instance, chetubbà, 337 cheducin. 338

§ 3.20. Reš

This consonant does not require any particular attention. It was uniformly rendered as r. According to the Converso Alfonso de Zamora, acquainted with Jewish traditions, Spanish Jews pronounced the reš in word initial position with a marked, doubled sound. 339

We are not in a position to confirm—or to exclude—that this characteristic was still present in the early modern Sephardic settlements of Venice and Ferrara. However in his Compendium Grammatices Lingue Hebrae (Amsterdam 1676) Spinoza stated that this consonant was «lene in medio, asperum in initio dictionis». 340

It is worth mentioning that when reš occurs immediately after a dorso dental fricative consonant, such as šin, sade or zayin, a dental plosive is inserted in the transcription, between the two phonetic elements, e.g. Isdrael, 341 Esdra, 342 Azdriel [עזריאל, p.n.], misdrah [מזרח,

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335 See, for instance, the colophon to Hasdai Crescas, Or ha-Šem, publ. 1555 by Abraham Usque. Cfr. LEONI. «La presenza Sefardita» plate 9.
336 Ms. Ordem de Oramos, f. 236r.
338 Ibid., August 17, 1574.
340 B. SPINOZA, Compendium Grammatices Lingue Hebrae (Amsterdam 1676) [reprint C. GEBHARDT (Herst.), Spinoza Opera (Heidelberg 1972)], p. 288.
341 ASVe, not. G.B. Monti, Reg. 8252, November 11, 1566; March 20, 1567; Isdrael Abensusen, ASVe, Notarile Testamenti not. D. de Adami, b. 71, f. 77r, November 18, 1616.
342 ASFe, not. M. Taurini, pc. 7, September 10 and 29, 1546; ASPs Notary Almerico Emilioni, August 10, 1552; ASFe, Notary G. Conti, pc. 9, January 5 1560; Ibid., notary Andrea Coccapani, pc. 9, March 24, 1557, January 5 1558; ASVe, notary G.B. Monti July 16, 1566; ASMo, Archivi Giudiziarii, Consiglio di Segnatura, reg. 19, no. 385 s.d. [1563];
We find similar forms also in the XVIIIth century Amsterdam siddurim, for instance, selos estré [שלש עשרה, thirteen].

This phenomenon, described by Irene Garbell in her study on the pronunciation of Hebrew in Medieval Spain, was widespread also among Italian Jews. As a matter of fact, we find «Esdra» even in the works of such scholars as Leon da Modena, Samuel Fiorentino and ŠaDaL.

§ 3.21. Šin

In XVIth century Sephardic siddurim and maḥazorim printed in Ferrara and Venice, both šin and ġin were uniformly transcribed as <s> without any distinction between the two forms, e. g., Semah [שׁמע, Hear], sephatay [שׂפתי, my lips], bakasah [בكاש, poetical suppli-
cation], 351 gerusim [גֵּרְוִים, expelled]. 352 parasah [פרֶשׁה, pericope], 353 sovah [שָׂבָע, abundance]. 354

The same feature is found also in the documents of the following centuries, e.g., sebuim [סרבים, prisoners], 355 samas [שֶׁמֶשׁ, beadle]. 356

§ 3.22. Taw

In the XVIth century both hard and soft taw were graphically represented as t or th and were uniformly pronounced /t/ identically with the emphatic fet. Isac Cavallero in Venice and Abraham Usque in Ferrara used indifferently the two graphemes, e.g., Torah 357 or Thorah; Torato or Thoratho [His Law]; 358 Torat emeth [תּורת אמת, Law of truth]; 359 noten or nothen [נתן, gives], 360 et [את, nota accusativi]. 361

In his Spanish siddurim, Yomtob Atias made an (almost) systematic distinction between hard and soft taw, and transcribed the former as t and the latter as th, as for instance, Vezoth hatorah [זאת התורה, and this is the Law], 362 sabath [שבת], 363 arbith [ערבית, evening prayer], 364 byotho [בּוֹתוֹ, while he was], 365 behotho [בוֹתוֹ, inside], 366 bath Zion [בת ציון, daughter of Zion]. 367

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351 Ibid., unnumb. pp. of gatherings marked «**» and «***.»
352 Ibid., f. 184v, 234v.
353 Biblia, ff. *ixa-*xb, 3r and passim.
354 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181v. See doc. 4 in Appendix.
355 ACE, Ve, Libro delle Parti, p. 1.
356 Livro das Hordems, Reggio Emilia, ff. 17r, 27r, 31r and passim. See LEONI, La Nazione Ebraica Spagnola e Portoghese, pp. 291, 313, 325, and passim.
357 Cavallero, Ordenança, Tabla.
358 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes., ff. 181r-181v. See doc. 4 in Appendix.
359 Cavallero, Orden de Or., p. 147.
360 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181r.
361 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181r.
362 ATIAS Libro Or. f. 40r. See doc. 2 in Appendix.
363 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, Tabla and passim.
364 ATIAS, Sedur de Or. de mes, Tabla and passim.
365 ATIAS, Libro Or. f. 58r.
366 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 55r.
As we have seen, Abraham Usque transcribed both hard and soft taw indifferently as t or th. However, in his Orden de Oraciones de mes (1555), he provided a transliteration of the Kaddiš where the soft taw was systematically represented as th. It is difficult to understand why Usque suddenly adopted new rules, inconsistent with those followed in the preceding pages. Probably the distinction between hard and soft taw in this section of his book was due to the presence of an Aškenazi proof-reader in the Ferrara printing press. We also wonder whether Usque lifted this transliteration from another siddur, perhaps no longer extant and unavailable to us.

In rare instances taw at the end of a word was left untrascribed. In his Orden de Oraciones de mes, Abraham Usque rendered טּלית as Tale. The same transcription is found in the 1519 Venetian edition of this siddur and in many later Amsterdam editions, as well as in the Orden de Oraciones published in Venice by Abraam Netto in 1622. We find «Tale» even in an inquisitorial document written in Rome in 1586.

In 1622 Abraam Netto transcribed the soft taw in final position as <d>. In a table published at the end of his Orden de oraciones, he gave the names of Hebrew letters as follows: Alef, bed,... daled,... ched, ted... He also declared the name of the vowel pataḥ as padach. Netto was not consistent with his own explanation. In the last pages of

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367 ATIAS, Libro Or. f. 178v.
368 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181v. See doc. 4 in Appendix.
369 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 181v.
370 In 1619 Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadin reprinted A. Usque’s Orden de Oraciones under the title ORDEN DE / ORACIONES DE MES / ARREO .S=[saber] SIN BOLTAR / de vna a otra parte. / Y LA ORDEN DE / Hanucah / Parim, y Pasquaes de Pesah, Se- / buoth, y Sucot, con / mucha dili- / gentia / emendada. / Y les añadimos en el las Osanod / IN VENETIA MCCXIX / Estampado por orden delli Illustriss. Sig. / Pietro e Lorenzo Bragadini. / Con licenza de los Superiores.
371 USQUE, Orden de Oraciones de mes, p. 251 (see fig. 14); NETTO, Orden de Or., p. 535.
373 NETTO, Orden Or., last, unnumb. p.
his prayerbook he provided several blessings transliterated into Latin letters and he transcribed both hard and soft taw indifferently as t or th, regardless of the presence or absence of a dageš. This was probably due to the fact that he lifted these transcriptions either out of Abraham Usque’s *Orden de Oraciones de mes*, \(^{374}\) or from the 1619 Venetian reprint of this extremely popular siddur.

Starting from the beginning of the XVII\(^{th}\) century, the pronunciation of soft gradually shifted from /t/ to /d/. In 1612 the famous Venetian rabbi Leone da Modena transcribed the soft taw as <d> as, for instance, *midngasser* [ماتנעזר, he makes himself rich]. \(^{375}\) In 1751 Simon Calimani, a Venetian rabbi, stated that «Italian Jews read taw without dagesh as d. Ashkenazi Jews pronounce it th as the Greek letter theta θ. Sephardi Jews do not make any distinction because of the dageš and always pronounce taw as a simple t». \(^{376}\) However, this was not always true as, already in the XVII\(^{th}\) century, several Sephardi scholars transcribed the soft taw as <d>, e.g., *taanid* [תעניות, fast], \(^{377}\) *masod* [מקודש, unleavened breads]. \(^{378}\)

In the transliterations of Spanish texts into Hebrew characters /t/ was graphically represented by means of a tet. Taw was not used for this purpose.

\(^{374}\) Usque, *Orden de oraciones de mes*, f. 181r; Netto, *Orden Or.* p. 535. See docs. 4 and 8 in Appendix.


\(^{377}\) MS *Ordem de Oraçöis*, f. 218v.

\(^{378}\) Ibid. f. 170v.
§ 3.23. The Pronunciation of Vowels and Half-Vowels by the Sephardim in XVI\textsuperscript{th} Century Venice and Ferrara

§ 3.23.1. The /a/ Sounding Vowels

\textit{Kameš} and \textit{Kameš batef} were generally pronounced /a/, identically with the \textit{pataḥ} (as in the English word \textit{far} or in the Spanish \textit{casa}), e.g., \textit{Gadol} [גָדוֹל, great], \textit{behalma} [בְּעָלְמָא (Aram.) in the world], \textit{cadam} [כָדָם (Aram.) ancient, original]. \textit{Kameš} was read /o/ (as in the English word \textit{bone}) only when it occurs in a closed unstressed syllable, i.e., when it is followed by a consonant without vowel or with a silent šewa, e.g., \textit{bekori} [בְּקָרְיָא, when I was calling], \textit{oznecha} [אָזְנְךָ, Your ear], \textit{korbanot} [קרבノות, sacrifices], \textit{vesoltane} [וְשָׁלְטָנֵה, and the domination]. As it is well known, the lack of phonetic difference between these two vowels was considered a typical feature of Sephardic pronunciation already in the Middle Ages. 386

In Ferrara there were a few exceptions and deviations. Abraham Usque regularly transcribed the \textit{kameš} as a. However in his \textit{Orden de Oraciones de mes}, in the transliteration of the \textit{Kaddiš}, we find \textit{sovah} [שׂבָע, abundance]. 387 In the index (\textit{Tabla}) of his \textit{Libro de Oracyones}, Yomtob Atias repeatedly transcribed \textit{kappahe} as \textit{aphtora}. Both in the \textit{Biblia de Ferrara} and in Abraham Usque’s \textit{siddurim}, the word \textit{kappahe} and its plural \textit{kappahe} were transcribed as \textit{Haphtara} and \textit{Haphtaroth}. However, the form \textit{aphtora} reappeared in later editions of the \textit{Biblia Española} and of the Hebrew liturgy. For

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 379 \textit{ATIAS}, \textit{Libro Or.}, f. 44r.
\item 380 \textit{USQUE}, \textit{Orden de Or. de mes}, f. 181v.
\item 381 \textit{USQUE}, \textit{Orden de Or. de mes}, f. 182r.
\item 382 \textit{ATIAS}, \textit{Libro Or.}, f. 30v.
\item 383 \textit{ATIAS}, \textit{Libro Or.}, f. 42r.
\item 384 \textit{ATIAS}, \textit{Libro Or.}, f. 51r.
\item 385 \textit{PROOPS}, \textit{Biblia in dos colunas, prefation}, unnumb p.
\item 387 \textit{USQUE}, \textit{Orden de Or. de mes}, f. 181v. See doc. 4 in Appendix.
\item 388 \textit{Biblia de Ferrara}, ff.*IXa-Xb (added gathering with the \textit{Tabla delas Haphtaroth de todo el año}; \textit{USQUE, Orden de oraciones de mes, Tabla}).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
instance, in the 1630 Amsterdam edition of the *Biblia* we find an «Orden delas Aphtoras». 389 This form has survived in Bayonne where the descendants of the first Portuguese émigrés still pronounce this word as *Aphtora*. 390

\section*{
§ 3.23.2. The /e/ Sounding Vowels
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In the XVI\textsuperscript{th} century Venetian and Ferrarese transcriptions of Hebrew texts no distinction was apparently made between «long» and «short» vowels. In any case, even if the authors did appreciate this difference, the typesetters were not equipped with fonts suitable to express the shades of phonetic values. As a matter of fact they had some difficulties even to cope with the accents of the Iberian languages.

No graphical distinction was made in the transcription of /e/ sounding vowels (segol, šere, šewa, segol hatef) were all transcribed as <e> 391 and pronounced as in the English word *set*. Šewa was always pronounced when it occurs at the beginng of a word, when it accompanies a letter with a dageš, as for instance, *rezech* [רְצֵה, be pleased], 392 *Sechinah* [שְׁכִּינָה, the Divine Immanence], 393 *gerusim* [גְּרוּשִׁים, expelled], 394 *hameborac* [党和政府, the Blessed]. 395 Šewa was pronounced also in other instances which we do not list here. In fact it is almost impossible to ascertain whether the authors of the Venetian and Ferrarese vulgarizations followed precise principles in distinguishing between a mobile (pronounced) šewa from a quiescent one. In any case, on the basis of the available documentation, we cannot state whether these authors were consistent in following

389 Biblia en lengua espaõola traducida palabra por palabra de la verdad Hebrayca por muy excellentes letrados, vista y examinada por el officio de la Inquisicion, con privilegio del yllustrissimo Señor Duque de Ferrara (Amsterdam 1630), f. ***2r.

390 This information was confirmed by Mr. Georges Dalmeyda, whom I thank for his courtesy.

391 In 1526 Alfonso de Zamora gave the phonetic value of these vowels as «e.» In 1622 Abraham Netto stated: «cere, segol, seva faran todos tres `e’». See figures 1 and 15.


393 Ibid., f. 228r.

394 Ibid., f. 234v.

395 CAVALLERO, *Orden Or.*, p. 146. See doc. 1 in Appendix.

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rigid grammatical rules. We provide a few other examples of vocal šewa: Halelu [הלל, praise!], 396 vesam eru [ותשרו, they shall celebrate]. 397 asere [אשרי, happy]. 398 but also asre. 399

According to grammarians, šewa is quiescent (silent), among other cases, when it follows a syllable with a long accented vowel. As we have pointed out, the difference between long and short vocalic sounds was not generally observed among Sephardim in Early Modern Italy. As a consequence, a clear distinction between quiescent and mobile (vocal) šewa, based on this principle, was not possible. Thus, Sephardic authors transcribed and read the šewa also in several instances when the Aškenazim regard it as silent.

According to Irene Garbell, in Medieval Spain, šewa, šere and even segol were sometimes pronounced as /ə/, especially in the case of personal names as, for instance, Samuel, Samaya, Salomon, Mair. 400 Similar transcriptions can be found in XVIth century vulgarizations and in notarial deeds, e.g., Mayr, 401 Salamon, 402 Salamão / Salamaô, 403 Samuel. 404 In the Biblia de Ferrara we find Beersabah [בער שבע, g.n.], 405 but also Samuel, 406 Selomoh 407.

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396 ATIAS, Libro Or., f. 74r.
397 Ibid., f. 65v.
398 Ibid., f. 51v.
399 Ibid., ff. 80r, 199r.
400 GARBELL, «The pronunciation» pp. 689-692.
403 USQUE, Consolação, ff. 43v, 68r, 75v, 136v and passim.
§ 3.23.3. The /i/ Sounding Vowels

Hireq was regularly pronounced /i/ (as in the English word big and in the Spanish vino) and does not call for any discussion. As we have stated, the consonantic yod was read /i/ and graphically represented as i, y or j. Vocalic yod was identically transcribed and pronounced /i/.

Yod quiesces and remains silent when it occurs after an /e/ or /i/ sounding vowel, which is not homogeneous with it. For instance, Bethel [בֵּית־אֵל, g.n.], en [אֵין, (there is) not], yosbe [יָושֵׂבָה, (c. s.) the dwellers of].

In rare instances, however, yod occurring after a şere at the end of a word was transcribed as y, e.g., Elohenu velohey [אֱלֹהֵנוּ וֵלוֹהֵי, our God and God of (our fathers)]. This was probably due to an occasional Aškenazi influence.

At the end of plural words, before the consonant waw, yod is used as mater lectionis to denote the possessive suffix for the third person masculine, and has no phonetic value, e.g., Panau [פָּנָיו, His countenance], bimromau [בִּמְרוֹמָיו, in His altitudes], berahamau [בְּרָחָם, in His mercy]. It is worth noting that, in this case, the Sephardim pronounced the final waw as /u/ (as in the English word bull) while the Aškenazim read it as /v/. In the XVIth century these features were common to both Sephardic and Italiani Jews.

405 Ibid., f. 12r.
406 Biblia, Tabla, f. 4Va.
407 Biblia, Tabla. and passim; ATIAS, Orden de Silhot, f. 14v.
408 See above, § 3.10.
409 Biblia, f. 5v.
410 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 36r.
411 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 51v.
412 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 270r.
413 USQUE, Maḥazor, f. 259v.
414 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 182r.
415 This word is used in the plural as it represents a continuous repeated action.
416 USQUE, Orden de Or. de mes, f. 182r.
Yod occurring after vowels sounding /a/, /o/, /u/ was transcribed as i or y, e.g., Sephatay [שְׂפָתַי, my lips], 417 henay [הֵנַי, my eyes], 418 oyebay [אוֹיְבַי, my enemies], 419 sinuy [שִׁנוּי, change]. 420 In the transcriptions of Spanish texts yod was used as mater lectionis to point out the presence of an /el/ sounding vowel, e.g., el que [אֵיל קֵוי, the one who]. 421

§ 3.22.4. The /u/ and /o/ Sounding Vowels

These vowels call for no special comment.

§. 4. Concluding Remarks

We carried out an extensive graphematic analysis of the transliterations of Hebrew texts published by Sephardic Scholars in Venice and in Ferrara towards the middle of XVIth century, as well as of later documents. We can state that both the XVIth century Spanish translations of Jewish liturgy and the transliterations of Hebrew prayers were the original works of separate scholars who acted independently from each other. These authors pronounced Hebrew in the same way but, due to the lack of graphic norms, they represented the same sounds in different ways. The same was true also for the vernacular works of the Sephardi émigrés who carefully respected the sounds of the Iberic languages but often represented them by different graphemes.

It was possible to ascertain the features of the Sephardi pronunciation of Hebrew in early modern Northern Italy, as follows:

417 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 52r.
418 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 62v.
419 ATIAS, Libro de Or., f. 200r.
420 Orden de oraciones de mes arreo sin bolar de vna à otra parte, y la orden de Hanveiah, Purim, y Pascuas de Pesah, Sebuoth, y Sucoth; con mucha diligentia emendada y las Bakassot al principio en ladino... Impresso a despesza de la Santa Hebra de Talmud Torah, del Kahal Kados Bet Yaahkob en Amstradama: Anno 5378 [1617/18], unumb. p. with the transliteration of the hymn Adon ‘Olam.
421 CAVALLERO, Orden de Or., p. 146.
a) The almost general lack of distinction between hard and soft *bet*. In most cases the latter was pronounced as a plosive /b/ in the same way as hard *bet*.

b) During the XVI\(^{th}\) century the phonetic value of the *'ayin* was zero or close to zero. This consonant was transcribed as *h* or even ignored.

c) There was almost no distinction between *šin* and *šin*. Both were transcribed as *s* or *ç* and pronounced /s/.

d) Both soft and hard *taw* were pronounced as *t*. As we shall see better in the second part of this article, in the course of the XVII\(^{th}\) century the pronunciation of soft *taw* started to shift towards /d/. This was due to the influence of Italian rabbis and scholars.

e) No distinction was made between *kames* and *pataḥ*. Both vowels were read as an open *a*. This feature was also common to the Italiani Jews.

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The Documentary Appendix and the Figures will be published in the next issue of *Sefarad*.

[Continuará]
Archival and Bibliographical Abbreviations

ACE, Ve Archivio Comunita Ebraica di Venezia
ANTT Archivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa
ASAn Archivio di Stato, Ancona
ASFe Archivio di Stato, Ferrara
ASMo Archivio di Stato, Modena
ASPs Archivio di Stato, Pescaro
ASVe Archivio di Stato, Venice
CAHJP Central Archives for the History of Jewish People, Jerusalem
LJTS Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

EJ Encyclopaedia Judaica, 16 vols. and Supplements (Jerusalem 1972- )
Italia Italia, Studi e Ricerche sulla Storia, la cultura e la Letteratura degli Ebrei d’Italia (Jerusalem)
RÉJ Revue des Études Juives (Paris)
RMI Rassegna Mensile di Israel (Rome)

Other Abbreviations

asc. Ascamah (deliberation)
b. Busta (file)
c.s. Contract state
f. Feminine
F.n. Family name
g.n. Geographical name
Liturg. Liturgical
n. Name
Matr. Matricola (registration number)
not. Notary, notarial
pc. Pacco (piece, bundle, box, boîte, file)
p.n. Personal name
reg. Register
s.d. Sine data