In the late nineteenth--early twentieth centuries, the text of the Passover *Haggadah* (or its portions) was often used as a basis for parodies satirizing various social and political events and movements.¹ These *haggadahs*--written in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Ladino--were never meant to be used at the Passover Seder, but served to entertain the reader and poke fun at the opponents. The *Haggadah* provided a convenient script for satirical purposes, because it was well-known to everybody, and its characters were easily identified in any guise. Thus, in the anonymous *Burnt Haggadah* (Istanbul, 1911), the worst enemy of Turkish Jews is Zionism, while their protector is the Ottoman government which takes the place of God, and Spain functions as "Mitsrayim." In Elia Karmona's *Haggadah de la gerra djeneral* (Istanbul, 1920), the savior is the Entente, and Pharaoh is Enver Pasha.

*Haggadah de la gerra* by Nissim Shem-Tov Eli (Istanbul, 1919), presented here in an abridged form, is similar to the latter in terms of message and material, but is much longer and more elaborate as a literary work. Besides, unlike Karmona's text, it contains most elements of the Passover Seder (though not all of them are included in this selection).

Some of Eli's allusions, all of which were obvious and amusing for his contemporaries, are unclear today. For instance, I was unable to identify the newspaper "quoted" in this text, because we do not know anything about the author.² The only thing we do know is that he was a Zionist. In fact, one of the Ottoman rabbis in his version of the all-night Haggadah discussion in Bnei Barak, is a Zionist and another a "proto-Zionist."

While the message of Eli's *Haggadah* is straightforward, its language requires some commentary, as it imitates the language of the traditional Ladino Seder, which is a word-for-word translation from Hebrew. Hence, we find in Eli's *Haggadah* numerous Hebrew calques (common to Bible translations³) such as *la gerra la esta, tus vidas, sufrir la sufryensa*, etc.
Instead of standard Ladino past tense (e.g., *komian i bebian*), the author consistently uses present participle forms (*komyentes i bebeyentes*), which calque Hebrew past tense forms. Eli achieves a comic effect by combining these archaic forms with Turkish technical terms.

In addition, this *Haggadah* contains several puns and riddles imitating the rabbinic style, which is often characterized by play on words of various kinds. One of the puns found in this text is *la Espanya i otro lugar*, where *otro lugar* is an imperfect anagram of *Portugal*, which in this context means the same thing.

The names of the Ottoman rabbis representing Mishnaic sages contain phonetic or semantic clues to the names of their famous predecessors. For instance, *musyu Bibas* (r. Judah Bibas) stands for r. Akiba, and *Josef Balatl* (Joseph of Balat) represents r. Jose of Galilee (*Jose ha-Glili*). The semantic connections are less obvious. Although it is clear from the context that r Benveniste stands for r Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, I am not certain about the terms of comparison. Perhaps, the connection is that the latter was unjustly accused of heresy and suspected of apostasy while the former was appointed by Sabbetay Zevi chief rabbi of Izmir but later returned to orthodoxy. All cases of play on words and riddles are, at least tentatively, explained in the notes.

The text contains many typos corrected in this transcription. Like most Ladino works, Eli’s *Haggadah* is almost unpunctuated, but punctuation marks have been added for the ease of reading. In the transcription, the Hebrew words are marked in bold, and Turkish ones are italicized.

Karmona, the editor of *El Jugeton*, directly mentions his own paper. His text appears to depend on Eli's *Haggadah*, but it is also possible that the images they use were current at the time.

Cf. Genesis 1 on this website.