Rabbis Jacob and Isaac Abendana (17th Century)

Rabbi Jacob Abendana **was born in Spain** in 1630. At some point in time, his family moved to Amsterdam where he studied at the De los Pintos famous Rabbinical academy. In 1655 he was appointed as the Rabbi of the city of Rotterdam. In 1660 he published the Biblical commentary *Mikhlal Yofi* by Rabbi Shelomo ben Meleklh **including his own commentary,** Lekket Shikcha.
in 1663, in response to questions about Judaism from Christian scholars, he translated Rabbi Yehuda haLevy **Kuzary** to Spanish (Spanish was the lingua franca at that period, in many intellectual circles, like English in our days).
In 1680, he was brought to London to succeed Joshua da Silva as Hakham (Chief rabbi) of London where he served for 15 years the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. **He completed a Spanish translation of the Mishna, with the commentaries of Maimonides and Bertinoro (Bartenura).** Jacob Abendana died childless in London in 1695.
He was succeeded by his brother Isaac Abendana (1640 – 1710). Besides being the Hakham of London, Isaac Abendana **taught Hebrew at Cambridge university (Isaac Newton, might have been one of his students)**. He completed an unpublished **Latin translation of the Mishna** for the university in 1671.
Rabbi Isaac Abendana wrote **the first book of Tora written in the English language**: "Discourses on the Ecclesiastical and civil Polity of the Jews" (1706), where he explained the basics of Judaism to gentile scholars. In this book he describes: the jewish judiciary system; laws concerning tithes (*ma'aser*), Priesthood; Jewish prayers; the Jewish educational system, Holidays, etc. Like his brother, **he maintained an extensive correspondence with leading Christian scholars of his time**, most notably with the philosopher Ralph Cudworth, the leader of the Cambridge Platonists.
The first Jewish book of Tora in English, by Google books.