"The Two Voyages of Gulliver," a rewriting of Jonathan Swift’s novel, was produced in Izmir in 1903 or 1904 by a well-known Sephardi Journalist, Alexandre Benghiat (c.1863-1924), for his newspaper El Meseret.¹ Unlike all other extant Ladino novels, this book appears to be intended not only for adults, but also for children. In any case, it distinctly exposes the affinity between the strategies commonly adopted by Sephardi rewriters, and those used to produce children’s adaptations in the original language.

Although on the subject matter level, Benghiat’s work is a summary of the first two parts of Gulliver’s Travels (most likely based on a French version possibly adapted for children), the rewriter turned Swift’s novel—a political satire and the highest expression of the eighteenth-century English rationalism—into a medieval semi-religious travelogue in faraway countries populated with outlandish humanoids. This transformation is achieved by the additions, deletions, and other modifications aimed at making the story comprehensible and amusing for the Sephardi readers of all ages, but—no less important—at offering them a moral lesson. By means of a significant addition at the end, matched by a small adjustment earlier in the book, Benghiat radically modifies Swift’s message. Gulliver’s account of his praying in a wooden box on the way to the sea depths, as well as the earlier mention of a whale, is an obvious allusion to the Book of Jonah.
The Two Voyages of Gulliver is undoubtedly one of the most skillful adaptations of European fiction, matching the domestic Ladino production without differing from it in terms of ideology, genre, or poetics. The novel’s language is very simple, which might also suggest that it was meant for children.  

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1 The present translation and phonetic transcription are made from a later reprint: Los dos vyajes de Guliver: onde los lilipusyanos i onde los djigantes. Trezladado por Aleksander Ben Ghiat. Jerusalem: estamparia de Shelomo Yisrael Sherezli, 5672 [1911 or 1912] 20 p.

2 For a discussion of Ladino fiction and a close reading of The Two Voyages of Gulliver and Hasan-pasha, see Olga Borovaya, Modern Ladino Literature: Press, Belles Lettres, and Theater in the Late Ottoman Empire (Bloomington, 2011), chs. 3, 4.