Transcription and Translation
of
David Fresco’s Excommunication Order

Kolelüt de la Sivdad de Kosta(ndina)
Medjlis Ruhani
Mandamyneto

Kolelüt of the City of Kosta(ndina)
Religious Council
Order

Nozotros, Medjlis Ruhani i Umumi, sinyados abasho, syendo aklarado a nozotros ke David Fresko, redaktor del djurnal Telegrafo, menospresyo por eskritro al grande rav Moshe ha-Levi, Kaymakam efendi,
-sovere esta rebuelda, mos adjuntos i mos akonsejimos endjuntos en una seduta,
-i despues de traer alos shaetes delantre de nozotros i delantre de David Fresko,
-i ke izyeron shaetlik de eyos para eyos, kada uno kon su idea,
-ke ek la koza es vedra i djusta ke David Fresko menospresyo al gran rabbino,
-ke anst sigun el djuzgamyento de derechedad, David Fresko esta en herem i en nidduy, i esta separado i apartado de la comunidgad de Yisrael fin ke resive su pena, lo ke la Ley kondena.
-I ke esto plazga a los ke lo oyen, i ke les venga buena beraha sovre eyos.
-
Whereas, it has become clear to us, the under-signed of the Religious and General Council, that David Fresco of the newspaper Telegrafo has despised in writing the Kaymakam efendi, chief rabbi Moshe ha-Levi,
because of this uproar, we have met, and upon consultation with each other in a meeting,
and after bringing witnesses before us and before David Fresco,
and after the witnesses testified on their own free will and consent,
it has been established that David Fresco has despised the chief rabbi,
and that according to the strict requirement of the Law, David Fresco is placed under excommunication and ban, and is separated and severed from the congregation of Israel, so that he receives his punishment in accordance with the sentence of the Law.
-May it be pleasing to those who hear this, and may a good blessing come to them.
-Signed, and immediately enforced on the 29th day of the month of Iyyar 5647 of Creation, here, in the city of Kosta(ndina).
Everything is true, clear and well-established.

Refael Hezkiya   Yeoshua Sonsin o’o   Hayyim Yishak Menashe   Nissim Moshe (H)Amon o’o
Shelomo Fresko
Hayyim Mordchay o’o   SimanTov De Toledo   Yaakov Kalma
Merkado Moshe ha-Levi   Yeuda Ashkenazi   Shalom ha-Kohen
Refael Abolafya   Bebor Siva   Hayyim Nasi
While Fresco did not mind the excommunication *per se*, he did change his mind when he faced the real threat of internal exile (*sürgün*), and submitted to the degrading procedures required for the lifting of his excommunication.

**Ladino Text of the Lifting of David Fresco's Excommunication**

Dela seduta del Medjlis Ruhani-Umumí de dia de Martes, sinko del mez Av (5)647 [1887], en la kaza de morenu ha-rav ha-Kolel.

Prezentes morenu los rabbanim (Meir) Yaesh, (Shelomo) Fresko, haribbi (Hayyim) Menahem, haribbi (Hayyim) Sevi, haribbi SimonTov de Toledo, haribbi Merkado ha-Levi, haribbi Hayyim Nasi, haribbi Behor Abolafya, haribbi Yeuda Ashkenazi, haribbi Behor Siva.

La seduta se avre ala ora sinko ala turka. Los sinyores Avraham ha-Levi, Avraham Fresko, Yishak de Toledo e Elia Shuhami lo trusheron a David Fresko por ke le tomenhattara [dezataga] el Medjlis Ruhani-Umumí. Ma si kome el sinyor rav es avansado en edad e endispuesto, rogó de no desturvarlo muchno ke el estado de su salud no le permeta, i ke los sinyores hahamim nombraos arriva se rekojeren en su yeshiva (Yeshivat Fua), i detuvo solo a los sinyores rabbanim, haribbi Menahem i haribbi Sevi, myembros del Bet Din ha-Sedek, por serlo mattir [dezataga] al dito David [Fresko]. I enuto David Fresko i disho las palabras sigyentes:

Syendo me metyeron en herem, i so djudyo, rogo de serme mattir [dezataga].

Urne-ahar [i después] ke lo kondenaron, i ke fue holes mi-nealav [deskalgo de sus sapatos] uve-rihuk 4 amot [de leshor de 4 kovdós], demando mehila e izo vidduy, i después se le tomo hattara [dezatagura], i fue yevado el sr. David Fresko ala Yeshiva dicha delantre de todos los sinyores notados arriva, i demando mehila gemura [perdonara kumplida] de todos eyos a uno a uno, i por amor de paz fue tambyen su sinyor padre haribbi Shabbetay Fresko a la Yeshiva nombrada arriva i se fue meruse [perdonada] kon los sinyores hahamim eskritos arriva, i después fue haribbi Shabbetay el nombrado arriva a la kaza del morenu ha-rav ha-kolel a tomarle mehila, i fue akompanyado de todos los sinyores hahamim prezentes, i la seduta se serro a la ora sesh a la turka.

Por kopyas konformes a los orijinales,
el sekretario Flizkiya Hatem.

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51 Abraham Galanté, *ibid.*, p. 263.
In Galanté’s words,52 a harsh system of retributions was put in place to punish and silence those who denounced the mismanagement of communal affairs:

Profitant de la sympathy dont il jouissait auprès du Sultan, appuyé sur l'administration de son gendre Jacob Einécavé et du fils de ce dernier, Josué, qui tous les deux transformèrent le grand-rabbinat en une ferme d'exploitation, et, conseillé par les siens, Moshé Lévi inaugura un système de délation dirigé contre ses adversaires. Un takri adressé au Gouvernement d'Abdul Hamid suffisait pour les faire taire.

David Fresco’s ultimate vindication had to wait until July 1908, when the Second Constitution was proclaimed in Turkey, and Chief Rabbi Moshe ha-Levi had to resign.53

Galanté even describes for us earlier attempts to excommunicate Le Comte de Camondo as follows:54

....notons aussi que l'école primaire juive fondée en 1854, à Péri Pacha (Istanbul) et placée, plus tard, sous la protection du Comte Abraham de Camondo, fut l'objet d'attaques de la part des réactionnaires, qui considéraient l'enseignement du français comme un péché, ce qui les encouragea jusqu'à aller excommunier le Comte de Camondo. Les mêmes attaques furent répétées lors de la fondation en 1875, à Istanbul, de l'école de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle.

Thus, the impact of the Alliance schools did account for much turmoil, including adamant anti-clerical and anti-Zionist postures.55

Now, among the "upper" educated circles of society who spoke French, the word la judia, incredible as it may sound, was quite derogatory, denoting the ignorant, poor Jewish maid who came at 5 A.M. to start a fire under those huge cauldrons of water for the biweekly laundry, or to clean entire mansions by sheer muscle power. I oy no me vino yene la djudia, i.e. today, too, the maid cancelled on me, was the constant complaint of those upper-class women against their lower-class helpers.

Conversely, those lower-class helpers and their entire cultural turf were proud of their Djudezmo, a clear reference to their distinctly stricter observance of Jewish customs and ceremonies. Their perennial complaint was eyos son rikos, no kreyen en nada, i.e. they are wealthy, they believe in nothing. Thus, if la judia reflected an upper-class derogatory bias against the poor, Djudezmo was quite often a lower-class accusatory finger pointed at the lack

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52 Abraham Galanté, ibid., p. 137.
53 Abraham Galanté, ibid., p. 138, note 1, reports abuses in the provinces, such as the Island of Rhodes: Nous connaissons personnellement le cas d'un conflit surgi à propos de la nomination d'un grand-rabbin à Rhodes, conflit qui dura de 1890 à 1896 et qui fit dépenser, aux deux parties en cause, de fortes sommes d'argent envoyées au grand-rabbinat (lisez Einécavé père et fils) pour des soit-disant frais.
54 Abraham Galanté, La presse judéo-espagnole mondiale, Fratelli Haim, Istanbul 1935, p. 4.
of observance by the well-to-do. That some may have extended their accusatory intent from implying simple "religiosity" to the "language of that religiosity" is possible.\footnote{Even though my own family was upper middle-class, I owe my awareness of these deep-seated feelings on both sides of the fence to my having been for almost ten years a faithful "acolyte" of my beloved rabbi, Haribbi Shabbeyai Amon. During that time, I attended every circumcision, wedding, funeral or melda in my suburb of Kuzguncuk. With my frequent visits to most homes there, I established friendly and lasting relationships with bakkales (grocers), balukcis (fishermen), etc., etc. For years, my father served our Synagogue in every possible capacity, including long years as president. Very early, I became aware of all the squabbles, particularly those involving los rikos i los proves, the well-to-do and the indigent.} At any rate, the over-heated arguments against the word Djudezmo to describe Ladino\footnote{David N. Barocas to Marvin I. Herzog, November 1, 1977, in David N. Barocas correspondence, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio.} have, to my ears at least, all the overtones of a rivalry that began, if anything, in the context of a class struggle for primacy. We, Sephardim, are best served by never using this inappropriate, at times derogatory, and clearly misconstrued term.\footnote{I am aware of some people having even written lingua diudezma! Does sloppiness justify anything?}

\textit{Ladino}

This is the traditional and ideal name of our language. For centuries, Ladino has been used ostensibly by our hahamim all over the title-pages of their books, and in their writings, too. In her Introduction to the \textit{Me'am Lo'ez to the Song of Songs},\footnote{Rosette Barron Haim, \textit{Me'am Lo'ez to the Song of Songs}, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio 1988, p. XVII.} Rosette Barron Haim offers a partial sampling of these title-pages:

Rabbi M. Alkalay introduces his version of Ibn Verga's \textit{hidades} as a Ladino translation.
Rabbi Avraham Palaggi introduces his \textit{hidades} as a book \textit{ordenado en Ladino}.
Rabbis Avraham and Yoseph Palaggi introduce their book \textit{hidades} as \textit{ordenado en Ladino}.
Rabbi Yisrael Behor Hayyim introduces his translation of the \textit{hidades} as being in \textit{Ladino}.
Rabbi Eliezer Papo introduces his \textit{hidades} as containing \textit{dinim en Ladino}.
Rabbi Yeuda Papo introduces his \textit{hidades} as being \textit{tseledado en Ladino}.
Rabbi Yishak Behor Amaragi introduces his \textit{hidades} with the words: \textit{lo tseledado en Ladino}.
Rabbi Avraham Finzi introduces his \textit{hidades} as being in \textit{Ladino}.
Rabbi Hayyim Avraham Uziel introduces his \textit{hidades} as a book on \textit{misvot en Ladino}.
Rabbi Shabbegai Yaakov Vivas introduces his \textit{hidades} as a book written in \textit{Ladino}.
Rabbi Moshe Alkalay introduces his \textit{hidades} as a book on \textit{dinim menesterosos en Ladino}.
Rabbi Elia Shelomo ha-Kohen introduces his book \textit{hidades} as being written \textit{en Ladino}.

and the list could go on and on!!! With the verdict that Ladino is an "artificial language", lacking the characteristics of a "true language", the legitimate question that comes to mind is this: If all these Ladino books, with their predominantly slavish style, reflect mostly an artificial language, are they still worth reading? "No", would have to be the inescapable answer of those who have placed \textit{Ladino} in quarantine!
As the language of a very small group, Ladino made the-word-for-word, letter-for-letter rendition of our literary monuments the cornerstone for its continuity and its authenticity. The verb *enladinar* is not to produce a mechanical, interlinear translation in order to learn Hebrew! Neither is *enladinar* limited to the Passover *Haggada* or the liturgy. It covers all sacred texts, Bible, *Mishna, Talmud, Zohar*, the *Mussar* literature etc., outside which there was practically nothing else anyway. *Enladinar* is what someone, who being already familiar with Hebrew, does to recapture all the minutiae of our sacred texts, which permit him to draw added inspiration for beautifully edifying new sermons, or exciting legal vistas towards innovative halakhic decisions. *Enladinar* is bold and creative. It involves producing the next best thing to the Hebrew original in order to reach out, and touch the *Verdad Hebraica*, whatever the perimeters of that truth in the mind of a particular *enladinador*. In my view, *enladinar* is almost an act of voting with and for our cultural models, for their continuity and their natural evolution. But if we become estranged from our rich Ladino sources, we cut ourselves off from our best cultural models. And what is left is ignorance, nostalgia and hyphenated appellatives for linguistic cataloguing.

Recent shifts in attitude have tended to play down, and often to undo half a millennium of Ladino’s nurturing dependency on Hebrew-Aramaic and Turkish. Perhaps, this cursory défense et illustration of the Ladino language will bring a measure of balance to an otherwise tough puzzle!

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When the last boat carrying Sephardim dropped its anchor within sight of Ottoman piers, everybody sensed that this new world in the East, across the Mediterranean, would be for them as vital as that other New World discovered by Columbus in the extreme West. Situated in the heartland where Europe, Asia and Africa converge, today’s modern Turkey has counted its blessings of rich soil, plentiful water, and subterranean bounties; but also of a citizenry on the move, conditioned to do so for almost two hundred years, toward ever-promising horizons of knowledge and culture. May the world come to realize that this new Turkey, so energized by Atatürk’s lofty dreams of half a century ago, holds in its treasure-house beautiful keys ready to unlock, in generous association, gates, large and small, built over the centuries by the necessities of our human condition.
Grammatical Notes

The main lexical parallels between Ottoman Turkish and Ladino occurring in the Buen Dotrino have been listed in the two Ladino glossaries of this book. Here are some additional notes covering both Hebrew/Aramaic and Turkish grammatical points.

The -mente indicator

It is very important to remember that Judge Gabbay was not the product of the Alliance Schools. Therefore, when the Risâle was translated (1860), Ladino was not yet competing with French for supremacy. At that point, it is no exaggeration to describe Ladino, especially in the area of syntax, as a quasi-Semitic language with a Hispanic vocabulary!

As I indicated earlier, for almost five centuries the halakhic and midrashic needs of the Sephardic Community. No area of Ladino better mirrors this dependency on Hebrew/Aramaic models than the whole range of new adverbial substitutes it developed to fill in for the -mente type adverbs it had successfully eliminated from daily usage.

In the twenty-five pages of text contained in this book, I counted only 2 -mente type adverbs:

- derecha’mente (p. 1, line. 13) directly, immediately
- demazâyâda mente (p. 9, line. 3) excessively.

That is all! To anyone familiar with Italian, French or Spanish, where -mente adverbs are “a dime a dozen”, this situation is indeed baffling.

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60 All examples quoted in this essay have been culled from the Buen Dotrino.
61 For a discussion on the same topic in R. E. Yisrael, Traduksen Livre de las Poesias Ebreikas de Rosh ha-Shana i Kippur. Ladino Books, Cincinnati, 1989, see my Introduction, p. VII.
62 Ladino texts in Rashi characters spell these adverbs in two words, similar to the original Latin spelling verda mente, (with a true mind), truly.
63 As I write these words, fond memories of the late Isaac Habib, a dear friend of our family, come to my mind. Isaac Habib was one of the wittiest mansevos of my generation. He had gone to an Alliance school for a number of years, but had to make a living as a monument maker (taqța) in the Kuzguncuk cemetery. All of his friends had gone to study in foreign schools, turning into French speaking high-class individuals. On those rare occasions when they needed his services for the tombstone of a family member, they would try to advantage of their “old friend” to get favorable terms or to extend their payments.

While at work, carving Hebrew letters on marble, Isaac always sang Sephardic romansas for sheer pleasure. Upon spotting the approach of an old debtor friend, Isaac would continue singing his love songs, having already sensed from the demeanor of his friend the unleashing of pompous Ladino to overwhelm him, and to extract from him some concession. Finally, he would say:

Nal Sinyor mente ya vyene.
And yet, the reason for this otherwise puzzling avoidance of the *-mente* type adverbs becomes obvious when one considers the fact that Hebrew/Aramaic, unlike Romance languages, lack a single word pattern to express the adverbial idea. For a language like Ladino, engaged in approximating Hebrew/Aramaic models for the attainment of the *verdad Hebrayca*, *-mente* type adverbs soon turned into a burden. The language not knowing what to do with these hefty dinosaurs, decided to atrophy them, in favor of the more varied adverbial constructions favored by Hebrew/Aramaic (or Turkish), as follows:

**Preposition + Noun = Adverb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kon ley</th>
<th>legally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A punto</td>
<td>immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En su punto</td>
<td>immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A las verdades</td>
<td>truly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al kavo</td>
<td>finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En partikolar</td>
<td>particularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A la ley</td>
<td>religiously (dince)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al meyo</td>
<td>rationally (akiIca)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin apreto</td>
<td>comfortably (without constraint)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Repetition of Noun**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sof sof</th>
<th>finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mas i mas</td>
<td>especially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A po ko a po ko</td>
<td>slowly (yavas, yavas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Noun + ke**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syerto ke</th>
<th>certainly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siguro ke</td>
<td>surely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Paronomastic Construction:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avlar avlas feas</th>
<th>speak contemptuously</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitar se modos de vistidos</td>
<td>dress strangely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaminar en kaminos derechos</td>
<td>walk uprightly/honestly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke negra vida la esta bivyendo!</td>
<td>how miserably he is living!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two Verbs instead of Verb + Adverb:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korrer i azerlo</th>
<th>do it promptly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korrer i perkurar</td>
<td>try promptly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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as if to intimate that he was ready for a barrage of *-mente* adverbs, so unusual in the Ladino of uneducated people. But Isaac sat on both sides of the fence; he knew very well how to handle both types of people. Isaac’s rhymed response to every *naturalmente* he heard was:

*mi k..., en tu dyente!*

discreetly mumbled in the deep recesses of his heart. We know that this was so, as he would say it out loud when relating to us these same incidents, to the laughter and enjoyment of his admirers. And I had to get this out of my chest!

64 In addition to the *Paronomasia*, there is also a Pending Case in this phrase!
Agent of a Passive Verb

European languages have a passive verb. Hebrew/Aramaic, too, have a passive verb. The passive usually describes a situation such as:

*the house was destroyed.*

In this respect, both European languages and Hebrew/Aramaic have similar options, and that is where the analogy ends.

But a passive verb, without an agent to specify the author of that passive act, is incomplete, a kind of "crippled" passive. With an explicit agent, however, a passive verb can describe a fuller situation, as in

*the house was destroyed by the enemy.*

All European languages have a special preposition to introduce the agent of a passive verb. In Greek, ἔνο; in Latin, a, ab; in French, par; in Italian, per; in Spanish, por; in English, by; in German, von, etc. are precious prepositions routinely used to introduce the agent of a passive verb.

A passive verb without an agent, due to the lack of an appropriate preposition capable of introducing that agent, is a "crippled" passive, at least from the European point of view. Hebrew/Aramaic never developed an adequate preposition to introduce the agent of a passive verb.\(^{65}\) Thus in Hebrew/Aramaic, and therefore in Ladino, the only way out of this dilemma is to turn passive clauses with an agent into active clauses, with the agent becoming now the subject of the verb:

*the house was destroyed by the enemy*

*the enemy destroyed the house!*\(^{66}\)

In the entire Buen Dörtino, there is not a single case of por used with a passive verb.

*Por always means for, never by:*

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\(^{65}\) It is believed that under Greek influence in Hellenistic times, Syriac was the first to break away from the pack by clearly investing its preposition בְּ with the "new" meaning of by. The Arabs took a couple of millennia before they, too, probably under French influence in Napoleonic times, began using their نم as by. Hebrew יָתַן is of late vintage, and still somewhat clumsy, even though quite common in Modern Hebrew.

\(^{66}\) Thus Judge Gabbay would rephrase the sentence quoted in footnote 21

from *la sinagoga fue rovada por ladrones ke avyeron un orfisyo*

to *ladrones avyeron un burako i se rovaron la plata de la sinagoga...*
por el always means for him, never by him
por ti “” for you, “” by you
por eyos “” for them, “” by them
por tu amigo “” for your friend, “” by your friend
por el mundo “” for the world, “” by the world, etc.

And therefore, in most cases, por and para become interchangeable:

para el, para la djente, para el Dyo, etc.

Under these circumstances, Ladino's only preposition closest to English by is de, as in:

aborresido de la djente instead of aborresido por la djente
alavado del Dyo " " alavado por el Dyo
alavado de todo el ken te avlara " " alavado por todo el ken te avlara
seras kerido de toda la djente " " seras kerido por toda la djente,

similar to a Classical Hebrew Construct States in:

befined by a companion (Hosea 3:1)
slain by the Lord (Isaiah 66:16)
slain by the sword (Isaiah 22:2)

The Factitive Azer

The verb azer is commonly used in Ladino as a factitive, as well as a denominative:

azer adjile azele etmek
azer dalkaukluk dalkaukluk etmek
azer dikkat dikkat etmek
azer un echo " "
azer kayret gayret etmek
azer koradjo67 cesaret etmek
azer kumpiido küfretmek
azer kyifur kürmek
azer mal lûr
azer onor lûr
azer rezil rezil etmek
azer shukyur sukretmek
azer taadjis taaciz etmek
azer temenna temenna etmek
azer terbiet terbiye etmek
azerse nikâ verem olmak
azer uzar aHistîmâk, " 

67 This is different from it. far coraggio, encourage; or fr. prendre (but not faire) courage, take heart.
Nominalization of the Infinitive

The nominalization of the infinitive, already very common in Ladino, was also favored by both Hebrew/Aramaic and Turkish. These examples have been culled from the *Buen Dottino*:

el apartar  el comer  
el asentar  el mendar  
el alvar  el onrar  
el bever  el saver  
el entender  el ser  
el eskrivir  el tener

Pending Case

(Resumptive & Anticipatory Pronouns)

Of the many languages that have influenced Ladino, none is better known for its love of the Pending Case than Aramaic. Centuries of contact with the *Talmud, Zohar* and the Two *Iddera*’s have entrenched Ladino into this peculiar syntactic feature, used and abused, from high speech to daily gossip. We converse in Pending Cases (with Resumptive Pronouns or Anticipatory Pronouns), we lie down with them, we see them in our dreams. And when we learn a European language, that is the first thing for which we get clobbered!

*Pending Case with Resumptive Pronoun*

*komo atu padre o atu madre los enganyas?*  instead of  *komo enganyas atu padre i atu madre?*  
i ken aze esto, el kavo de su djuzgo es... instead of  *el kavo del djuzgo del ken aze esto es...*  
   
   *ke negra vida la esta bivyendo!*  instead of  *ke negra vida esta bivyendo!*

*Anticipatory Pronoun:*

   *sin darle avizo al patron*  instead of  *sin dar avizo al patron*  
   *la kontentes lo onra a su patron*  instead of  *la kontentes onra a su patron*  
   *el djaillik lo traie al ombre en verguensa*  instead of  *el djaillik trae al ombre en verguensa*  
   *esta manya lo aze al ombre tikia*  instead of  *esta manya aze al ombre tikia*