

from
OTTOMAN TURKISH

to
LADINO

the case of
Mehmet Sadık Rifat Pasha's *Risâle-i Ahlâk*

and
Judge Yehezkel Gabbay's *Buen Dotrino*

Enlarged Original Texts
in
Ottoman Turkish and Rashi Scripts,
with face-to-face Transliterations, Glossaries and an Introduction

by
Dr. Isaac Jerusalmi



Cincinnati, OHIO
1990

Copyright © 1990 by Isaac Jerusalmi

All Rights Reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 90-91854

Dr. Isaac Jerusalmi
Hebrew Union College
3101 Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Dr. Isaac Jerusalmi
Sephardic Beth Shalom
P. O. Box 37431
Cincinnati, OH 45222

סִפְּרֵי קַעֲם | סוֹפֵר קוֹדֵר:

Bilgisayarım mâhir bir yazarın kalemi gibidir.

Zebur 45:2



hâtıralarını ta'zizen

*Muazzez Hocam
Halit Bey
Sâdiye Hanım
Şeref Bey*

ve ölmez
Mustafa Kemâl Atatürk

C O N T E N T S

English Section

Foreword	i
Introduction	1
Mehmet Sâdik Rifat Pasha (1807-1856)	3
Yehezkel Gabbay (1825-1898)	5
Ladino: the language	18
Abraham b. Isaac Asa	25
Ladino, our language	28
Grammatical Notes	38
Ladino-English Glossary of Select Lexical Items	47
Appendix: <i>Sarrafbası</i> Yehezkel Gabbay (d. 1826)	53
Bibliography	60

Turkish Section

(right to left)

Önsöz	i
Türk Ansiklopedisinden	v
Abdülkerim Paşanın babama verdiği hizmet vesikası	vi
Çatalca Tren İstasyonu Âmirinin olumlu duyguları	viii
<i>Risâle-i Ahlâk</i> : Ottoman Introduction and transcription	1
Ottoman Text of the <i>Risâle</i> and Transcription	2
Arabic-Persian words in the Ottoman Text of the <i>Risâle-i Ahlâk</i>	39

Ladino Section

(right to left)

Entroduksyon	i
<i>El Buen Dotrino</i> : Ladino Introduction by Yaakov Avigdor	2
Ladino Text of the <i>Buen Dotrino</i> and Transcription	3
Ladino-English Glossary of Turkish & Hebrew words in Yehezkel Gabbay's Ladino Translations	29

** The Turkish and Ladino transcribed texts have been printed on opposite sides to facilitate the comparative reading of these texts.

Calligraphic Quotations in the Turkish Section

The degree of perfection attained by Ottoman Turkish calligraphers in the graceful arrangement of writing (*istif*) remains unsurpassed in the entire Muslim world. A few specimens of this art form have been included in this book for visual enjoyment, but also for the appreciation of the messages they convey.

Before *yā hayy, yā kayyūm!* O Living One, O Existing One, *i.e.*

p.i O Living Existence!

These are two of God's ninety-nine beautiful names. Their Hebrew counterpart is אל חי וקיים, *Living Existence*.

p.iv *er-rahmān*, the Merciful.

Another one of God's ninety-nine beautiful names. The Hebrew counterpart of this word is הרחמן, the Merciful.

p. 9 *el-djevher fīn-nās, lā fīl hadjer*

People are the real jewels, not stones.

(top) *vel-gınā fīl kanā'ati, lā fīl māl*

Wealth is in contentment, not in possessions.

p.9 *tefekürü sa'atin hayrün min ibādeti senetin.*

(bottom) An hour's reflexion is better than a year's worship.

p. 38 *inne Allāhe djemīlün yühibbü l-djemāle*

(top) Verily, God is beautiful, loving beauty, *i.e.*

God is beauty enamored with beauty.

p.38 *yā gālib gayri mağlūb, yā gafūr er-rahīm*

(bottom) O unconquered Victor; O merciful Forgiver.

p. 48 *el-hamdü liLlāh* Praise to Allah.

Repeated four times in *makili* style.

In decorative style, tulips and carnations are favored flowers.

The Star of David, known as *Mührü Süleyman*, occurs on coins, but also as an ornament engraved on copper objects.

FOREWORD

The aim of this special publication is to bring together a nineteenth century Ottoman-Turkish text with its free translation into Ladino. I am writing primarily for laymen, their enjoyment in celebrating the Fifth Centennial of the arrival and welcome of the Sephardim to the Ottoman Empire in 1492. While nostalgia for matters passed is my starting point, my search is really for a sense of direction, as I express our collective gratitude for all the good that did take place on the blessed soil of our beloved Motherland. Surely, today's crimson dawn forecasts many more sunny centuries of hope and happiness for the bestowers of hospitality.

Casting Ottoman Turkish or Ladino words and concepts into Western molds is a gargantuan task. Admittedly, the transcriptions offered here are quite subjective. Had I not provided the original texts, these transcriptions might have to be more objective, *i.e.* more visually oriented. However, with the originals at hand, readers are free to choose their preferred alternatives.

In real life, transcriptions are meant primarily for the ears, not for the eyes! They are supposed to help people, who do not know a foreign language, write down a word, or a sentence, and, when the need arises, be able to say it as accurately as possible. If your name is *Malcolm*, and you are travelling through Greece, chances are it will be transcribed as Μάλκομ, not as Μάλλκομ, simply because the second *l* is irrelevant to anyone interested in how your name is pronounced, not how it is actually spelled in English back home.

Syriac may be the only language where defunct letters can be given "equal time", so to speak. Thanks to its *linea occultans* or "hiding line" option, Syriac can even surpass English in having its cake and eating it, too, as illustrated by the English word *half*, which Syriac could masterfully render as ܚܘܦܐ . How I wish that English had similar "hiding lines", one for *know*, one for *psychology*, one for *subtle*, and another one for *Lincoln*.

In transcribing Arabic ص or ط, we insist on that emphatic dot under the *s* or *t*, but we remain silent on the non-emphatic س as *s*, or the non-emphatic ت as *t*, both of which bear no resemblance to English *s* or *t*! And yet, Arabic *s* or *t* are definitely "thinner" than English *s* or *t*, precisely because Arabic has to allow sufficient room for the viability of the corresponding emphatic phonemes, which do not occur in English. If we were stricter in our transcriptions, not one of our comparative charts would survive the "real test of the ear", certainly not the English *l*, nor the English *r*, etc.

If transcribing Arabic is tough, transcribing Ottoman-Turkish is a nightmare, often for the opposite reasons. In Ottoman-Turkish ر , ن , ض and ظ are indistinguishable. Why

then insist on esoteric diacritical marks which do not reflect the reality of Turkish? Here, I had to make some hard choices, especially in view of what has now become Modern Turkish practice.

Mehmet Sadık Rifat Pasha was very well versed in Arabic and Persian. In his formative years, he must have memorized hundreds of pages of classical texts written in those two languages. Therefore, his pronunciation of Turkish may have somewhat tilted toward Arabic or Persian models. As he wrote *فُلَان*, did he say *fulân* or *filân*? Depending on circumstances, he may have used either pronunciation. Did he take every *shadda* seriously? He must have done so most of the time. I am also sure that he pronounced every long vowel as a long one. Today, as Arabic words have been replaced by Modern Turkish equivalents, the need for indicating long vowels has lost its urgency. But since we are dealing here with an older text, it was important that my transcriptions reflect the pronunciation of this nineteenth century *homme de lettres*, and the particular flavor of his words as they flowed from his pen. Admittedly, by today's standards, some of my transcriptions are still quite heavy.

The Ladino text is intended for Sephardic readers of Turkish-Jewish ancestry around the world who are increasingly frustrated by what their language has become through the use of strange transcription systems, which have all but disfigured it. As much as possible, I have tried to preserve the tradition of Turkish Jews, for whom the *Buen Dotrino* was initially written. Currently, the simplest transcription system involves the following:

<i>sh</i>	for	ש
<i>dj</i>	"	ד
<i>ch</i>	"	כ
<i>j</i>	"	י

On the other hand, my own *Ladino Introduction*, which was designed to illustrate the specific spelling and writing habits of Jews in Turkey, is based exclusively on the excellent resources of Modern Turkish. Hence, I have used:

<i>ş</i>	for	ש
<i>c</i>	"	כ
<i>ç</i>	"	כ
<i>ğ</i>	"	ג [with <i>rafé</i>]

* * * *

I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude as well as my warmest thanks to Dr. Michael Grunberger, Head of the Hebraica Division at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., for his interest and continued help in making these texts available to me.