



THE SELIHOTH

of the

SEPHARADIM

Hebrew Text and Ladino Translation

of the Vienna 1865 Alschech Edition

Text Enlarged and Transcribed

with an Introduction and a Ladino-English Glossary

of Select Lexical Items

by

Haham Isaac JERUSALMI



LADINO BOOKS

3

CINCINNATI, OHIO
1990



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ISBN 1-878191-02-0

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יש ליזהר שלא להפוך המקורע למלעיל,
שלא יהיה כשיר־הפסילים: (יוסף אלישיך)

Ay por akaviḡar muncho

Ke non por aboltar de millera' a mille'el,

Por ke non seya komo kante de los lokos:

Be very careful

Not to switch from *millera'* to *mille'el*,

Lest your song become that of a madman!

וזכרתים נאָמאָ!
החזן מיכאל די נסים עבור, ע"ה
החזן משה די יעקב חזן, ע"ה.
בימיהם ענו לה בקררה-קרש:

I continue to recall:

Michael Abut, ע"ה

Moshe Hazzan, ע"ה

Sweet singers of Israel

The best first-class working library ever is at HUC!
My gratitude to its Director and Staff for making and keeping it so.

לתמים זכרון!

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INTRODUCTION

For over a quarter of a century, it has been my joy and delight to conduct *Yamim Noraim* services at our Sephardic Beth Shalom Congregation in Cincinnati. At my side stood *Hazzan* Moshe de Yaakov Hazzan, אב, who had welcomed me to the *teva* of his youth with kindness and consideration. Though he was my senior by more than thirty years, he always addressed me in the third person in his Salonican Ladino. A man of good taste, he placed me in his debt for many a superb lesson in matters liturgical.

Back home, in Kuzguncuk, the *hazzan* of my youth was the broad-minded Michael Abut, אב, on whose *teva* I first touched the reality of my Jewishness with songs of praise, *selihot*, *pizmonim*, and ultimately Tora expositions. That jewel of a synagogue had been my father's, my grandfather's and my great-grandfather's *kal*. Leading my four American-born children through the portals of our memorable *kal* to stand in front of the Ark filled with *sefarim* my great-grandfather, the *Maré de-Atra* of Kuzguncuk, had certainly touched and read from, stretched our lives to where theirs had ended in a rare time-continuum only humans can savor.

And now, the time has come to move to the task of streamlining our prime literary monuments, so that tomorrow's youth will be comfortable with, and even proud of their advocacy. Unfortunately, the slogan that Ladino is nothing but a calque language, *i.e.* a slavish imitation of Hebrew, mixed with half a dozen other languages, and that therefore Ladino is not a worthy model for practically anything, has permeated and infected the very fabric of our

cultural treasures. That the corollary of this slogan translates to a practical disdain for Ladino books and what they stood for, *i.e.* the very essence of what it is that we call Sephardic culture, is a grave position to defend. Stripped of our Ladino books, we are condemned to perpetually glean through proverbs, *refranes*, etc., all in multiple versions that convey the same message, catalogued and re-catalogued by people who a mere decade ago felt contempt for these cute sayings, whose mention in public was deemed socially degrading!

In those days, what counted was French: The more of it, the better. Ladino was the stuff only the downtrodden used in their conversation with God. With such an elitist posture, these quasi-enlightened folks had crossed the point of no return: Ladino had been left behind for ever.

Recently, an easy way out has been the wholesale hispanization of Ladino. Class and respectability might be regained by complying with the norms--so strange to us, the natives--of those who had tried to choke us. Personally, I have nothing against Spanish. I have gorged myself with Latin, French and Italian. I do, however, know that the hispanization of Ladino through ingenious, "scientific" transcription systems, or farfetched vocabulary choices and grammatical recipes is an impossible transmutation whose simplistic appeal can only consolidate our alienation from the last vestiges of our religious and cultural past.

* * *

Josef Alschech's 1865 first ever bilingual edition of the Hebrew-Ladino *Selihot* in the *Rashi* script is a milestone in the history of Sephardic liturgy. Its language is undeniably archaic, with plenty of rough edges in need of urgent smoothing. Having said that, however, I must take strong exception with the

L I B R O DE ORACIONES

de todo el año traduzido del

Hebrayco de verbo a verbo de antiguos exemplares: por quanto los ympressos fasta a qui estan errados: con muchas cosas acrescentadas de nuevo segun por la siguiente tabla se muestra.



5312 De la Criacion
a 14 de Sivan.

Ympresso por yndustria y despesa
de Yom Tob Atias hijo
de Levi Atias.

L I B R O

DE ORACIONES

de todo el año traduzido del

Hebrayco de verbo a verbo de antiguos exemplares: por quanto los ympressos fasta a qui estan errados: con muchas cosas acrescentadas de nuevo segun por la siguiente tabla se muestra.

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fasta a qui

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cosas acrescentadas de

nuevo segun por la

siguiente tabla se

muestra.



5312 De la Criacion
a 14 de Sivan.

Ympresso por yndustria y despesa
de Yom Tob Atias hijo
de Levi Atias.

Courtesy HUC Library

Ferrara 5312 (1552)

First Spanish prayer-book published by Yom Tob Atias son of Levi Atias



Courtesy ITUC Library

Salonica 5687 (1927) *Minhag K"K KATALAN*
 Probably the last Sephardic *Machzor* (3 volumes) published before the Holocaust
 Haham R' David Sa'di Saltiel

absurd claim that this Ladino was utterly incomprehensible to its readers. In fact, in my experience the opposite was true, as people relished hearing:

Varones de vedrad se depedreyeron
Vinyentes kon fuersa de sus echas.

Movyeronse eyos a olgansas,
Desharon a nos a las ansyas.

By my time

Nos, expandidos por kuarto arinkones,
Melizina non ayamos

had spontaneously turned into:

Nos, esparzidos por kuarto vandas,
Melizina no topimos!

And people did cry their hearts out, as they heard the entire litany of:

Padre piyadozo.....

My 1990 edition of Alschech's *Selihoṯ* is not a new prayer-book. No attempt has been made to change its language. Its only agenda is to unlock the Ladino text, first through a simple romanization, and then with a basic glossary of special lexical items as used and understood by Alschech and his generation. Sympathetic readers should not only see for themselves that Ladino is not the monster it is depicted to be, but could emerge from this experience discovering the grace of Alschech's style with its underlying Ferrara Bible and Ferrara Sephardic prayer-book phraseology, a four hundred and fifty year old connection embedded in every Sephardic heart and mind.

To participate in the shaping of a fresh version of an old prayer-book is every rabbi's latent longing. To the extent that I learned the Hebrew alphabet (and the *Rashi* script for Ladino) even before I was introduced to the Roman

alphabet, the *Siddur* and the *Machzor* have been my first books and my primary literary models. To the extent also that I was born in 1928, that crucial year when the great Atatürk moved Turkish into its third¹ linguistic metamorphosis from Arabic to the Roman script, my fascination with matters of language, transcription and variety in verbal expression has endured unabated.

In those formative years of my childhood, our prayer-books in Turkey always came from Vienna. All of them displayed on their title page the imprint of the famous printer Josef Schlesinger in that typical Gothic script no one liked or could fully read. But we loved the format of those Vienna books, reassured by a feeling that the substantial Sephardic community of Turkish ancestry in the Austrian capital must have had something to do with their production and publication. However, when our rabbis discussed textual variants--and they did so all the time, to the tiniest *dagesh*--they would, on occasion, mention "Livorno" editions as being more reliable. But no one ever made any reference to Amsterdam or Venice as possible sources for older editions. By and large, we knew nothing about Western Sepharadim.

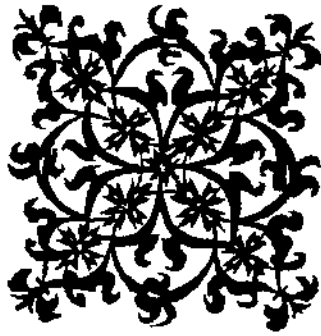
In his Introduction to the 1901 edition of the Sephardic Prayer-Book published in London, Haham Moses Gaster² briefly outlines the evolution of that *minhag*, leading to the bilingual Hebrew-English prayer-book. The first Sephardic prayer-book in Hebrew was printed in Venice in 1522, and

¹ Turkish is perhaps the only major language in the history of human civilization to have used in the course of its recorded history three totally different, and yet basically related alphabets. Being a *Uralo-Altaic* language from Central Asia, akin to Finnish and Hungarian, the earliest Turkish documents were written in the *Uygur* script (*Uygur yazısı*), an offshoot of the Aramaic alphabet commonly used in the Tibet. With their move toward the Middle East, the Turks accepted Islam, and adopted the Arabic alphabet, itself derived from the Aramaic script in its Nabatean form. All Ottoman-Turkish texts were written in that Arabic script. Finally in 1928, a third change took place when the Roman alphabet, derived from the Phoenician alphabet *via* Greek, became the official writing system of Modern Turkish.

² Haham Moses Gaster, *The Book of Prayer and Order of Service according to the custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, Humphrey Milford, London 1939, vol. 1, pp. xi-xx.

מקור

O R D E N
DE ROSHASANAH Y
KIPUR, TRASLADADO
en Español, y de nuevo emēda
do: Yañadido el Selihoth, el qual
se dize quarēta dias ātes del dia
de Kipur en las madrugadas.
Talmud Torah bet Yaahkob.



Elampado por industria y despesa de
David Abenatar mello .A. primero
de suan, de § 377. En Amstradama.

Courtesy HUC Library

Amsterdam 5377 (1617)
David Abenatar

קדר

סליחות לליל אשכורות ותפלות
ראש השנה וכופור :

O R D E N
DE SELIHOTH
Y ORACIONES DE
Roshafanah y Kipur.

Traduſido en eſpañol, y de nuevo
bien reglado : Con añaadirle el
Harbith de ſaliente Kipur
Cofa mui neſefaria.



I N V E N E T I A , 1 6 2 3 .

Apreſſo Gioanne Caleoni.
Con licenza de' Superiori.

Courtesy HUC Library

Venice 1623

O R D E N
D E R O S
A S A N A H
Y

K Y P U R.

Traduzido en Español, y de nuevo em-
mendado, y añadido el

K E T E R M A L C H U T ,
Y O T R A S C O S A S .



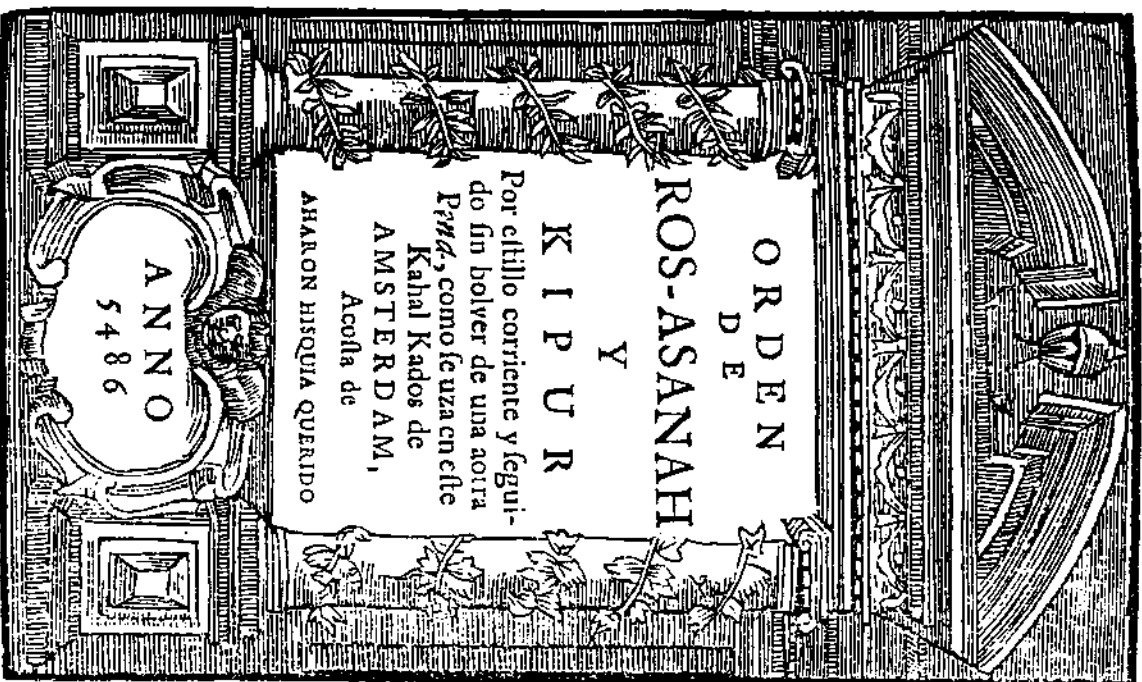
A M S T E R D A M .

En casa de J O R I S T R I E G . A . 5 4 1 2 .

Estampado por Industria y despesa del D.
E F R A I M B R A V A N E L Y J O N A
A B R A V A N E L .

Courtesy HUC Library

Amsterdam 5412 (1652)
Efraim Bueno y Jona Abrevanel



Courtesy HUC Library

Amsterdam 5486 (1726)
Aharon Hisquia Querido

סדר סדר 124

לימים נוראים

כמה קין הספרים יזיח

כונה בשבע תקירות. ושבע דישוה. על פי הנסחאות האמיתיות. מכמה שגיאות. שנמצאו בקדמוניות. הן באותיות. הן בשלוח.

וגם בסדר התפלות :

על יד המגיה הנאמן הנביר הנעלה כמזהר שמואל דורדיגז מינרין יצו: עיני ומיכות יטלל בקין תוכך בעיר המהלה הזאת

אמשמדרם

בשנה שמואל הלך וגדל וטוב לפי: בשעות הבחור הנחמד המשכיל ונכון אברהם חוקירו ו' יקר כראגרוז נע אשר נפטר בשם טוב מעולמו ביום המשי שנים לארבע טבת בשנה התיא :

בבית וכדפוס החרש אשר הוקם

על ידי הרופא המובהק בהי"ד ופתלי הירין בפי' כהור אלכסנדר זסקער לוי מעמרין;

Courtesy HUC Library

Amsterdam 5486 (1726)

Rabbi Shemuel Rodriguez Mendez

מחרזר ספרהים לימים נוראים

וסדר שלוחות ללילי אשמורות

וסדר תפלות לראש השנה וליום המנוח

מסודרים בחופן עמוד נדיד לקור לאחוריה ולפניו כיום דבר אלה הכל מסודר בכל תפלה ותפלה כפי עומת כמותה כמות כמטר ענין מחויבה משרים ממשך לקץ בנקות הנכר המעולה להי זכרן ובאי וילאריאלי וחיוו ה' ישמדם אמרו :



כדפס פה פירינצי מתת מסגל רוקמת ארזתו הדפוס כמול יואן גאסטובי די מיריצי

היום כוכב המנוחיו ארזו שגן ודעו את לבכם מ' א' אלה ישראל :

פה פירינצי כדפוס המנוח שלפרנציסקו מורין

קון ליננא ל' ספרינדי
ופריולינזו די סואה אלשיצא ריאלי.

Courtesy HUC Library

Florence 5495 (1735)

Rabbi Yosef Gabbay Villareale

Notice the coat of arms of the House of Medici in the center and the mention of *Giovan Gastone di Medici*

GEBEDEN

DER

PORTUGEESESCHE JOODEN,

DOOR EEN

JOODSCH GENOOTSCHAP

UIT HET HEBREWWSCH VERTAALT.

VIERDE DEEL.



'S GRAAVENTHAAGE,
BY LION COHEN.
M D C C X C I I I.

Met Ofspraak.

Courtesy HUC Library

's Graavenhaage (Amsterdam) 1793
Sephardic *Machzor* in Dutch only, by Lion Cohen

PRIERES

DES JOURS

DE ROS-HASCHANA

ET

DU JOUR DE KIPPOUR,

A L'USAGE

DES JUIFS

PORTUGAIS OU ESPAGNOIS.

TRADUITES DE L'HÉBREU,

Auxquelles on a ajouté des notes élémentaires, pour
en faciliter l'intelligence;

Par M ARDOCHÉE VENTURE.

NOUVELLE ÉDITION.

TOME SECONDE.

A PARIS,

Chez LÉVY aîné, rue Saint-André-des-
Arcs, n^o. 53.

1807.

Courtesy HUC Library

Paris 1807
Sephardic *Machzor* in French only, by Mardochée Venture

reprinted there in 1524. The first translation into Spanish appeared in Ferrara in 1552,³ while the first Hebrew-Spanish bilingual prayer-book appeared again in Venice in 1622.⁴

In Amsterdam, a reprint of only the Ferrara Spanish text appeared in 1617, even before the first Hebrew text was published by Manasse ben Israel in 1626. Also in Amsterdam, a Dutch version of the Sephardic prayer-book appeared in 1791-93⁵. Later on, a bilingual Hebrew-Dutch edition was published by S. I. Mulder.⁶

In France, Mardochée Venture⁷ seems to have been the first to translate the *Machzor* into French in 1807. A decline of sorts seems to have taken place in Italy, the birthplace of Hebrew/Ladino printing and translations. In 1843, a bilingual Hebrew-Italian *Machzor* appeared in Livorno, but the Italian part was based on a French translation, instead of being directly from the Hebrew! ⁸

In England, A. Alexander published the first Hebrew-English Sephardic Prayer-Book in 1771-76, followed by David Levi's revised edition in 1789-93, and a second edition in 1810. The whole project was revised by Rev. D. A. de Sola in 1836-38, before being revised again by Haham Gaster in 1901.

³ Yom Tob Atias, *Lybro de Oracyones de todo el anno, traducydo del Hebrayco de verbo à verbo, de antiguos exemplares, por quanto los impresos hasta à qui estan errados, con muchas cosas acrescentadas de nuevo*, Ferrara 1552.

⁴ Ysac de Don Semtob Cavallero, *Orden de Oraciones segundo el uso ebreo, en lengua Ebraica y en Español*, traduzido por el Doctor Yshac de Don Semtob Cavallero. Estampado por industria de Abraam Netto, hijo de Josef Netto, Venetia 1622.

⁵ *Gebeden der Portugeesche Jooden* by Lion Cohen, 's Graavenhage 1791-93.

⁶ S. I. Mulder, *Orde voor den Verzoendag*, S. L. Salzedo & Co., Amsterdam 1850

⁷ Mardoché Venture, *Prières des jours de Ros-Haschana et du jour de Kippour à l'usage des juifs portuguais ou espagnols*, Lévy aîné, Paris 1807.

⁸ A. Orvieto, *Orazioni per il Capo d'Anno, trasportate dalla versione Francese in Lingua Italiana*, Salomone Belforte e Moisè ed Israel Palagi, Livorno 1843.

The history of the Eastern Sephardic Liturgy, however, is still to be written. In spite of the majestic sounding name of our Sephardic Rite, *ק' ק ספרדים קונשטאנטינה ומדינות מזרח ומערב ואיטליא*, according to the *Minhag of the Congregations of Constantinople, the East and the West and Italy*, there is no clear evidence that an equally universal prayer-book backed that prestigious sounding name. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Salonica did print locally some of its prayer-books,⁹ while also importing some from Livorno. No comparable activity took place in Istanbul, where strict business concerns always carried the day: Whatever the local needs were, it must have been consistently less expensive not to compete with the Austrian and Italian printing "mini-conglomerates"! Thus the famous *Minhag Konstantina* was not backed by actual prayer-books that went forth from Constantinople, the capital of the Ottomans, to the various localities which prayed according to that *Minhag* with pride and devotion.¹⁰ In fact, quite the opposite was always the case: To this very day, Istanbul is a net importer of its prayer-books from abroad!

We saw that the first bilingual Hebrew-Spanish edition of the prayer-book in *Roman* characters appeared in Venice in 1622. The first ever attempt to publish an Eastern version of a Hebrew-Ladino prayer-book in the *Rashi* script had to wait almost two and a half centuries until 1865, when the **Alschech** [אלשיך - الشيخ] family espoused the same idea. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Alschech's successfully carried out two such projects, as follows:

⁹ See their *לראש השנה ויום כפור* in 3 volumes, A. Brudo, Salonica 1927, according to the *Minhag K"K Catalan*, one of the many *minhagim* used in that great Jewish metropolis.

¹⁰ In 1924, Hilal Farhi published in Cairo, Egypt, a Sephardic prayer-book with explanatory notes in Arabic. By then the *Minhag Konstantina* had been further expanded by him to include *مصر وسورية*, Egypt and Syria.

השינוי ה' אליך (נשוכה הרש ימינו)

מחזור לראש השנה

כמנת ק"ק ספרדים שבקונסטנטינא
ומדינות מורח ומערב ואיטאליא
בנוסף בזה

החפלות מכתבי האור המופלא האר"י וצוק"ל
ומספר המדרש הימים עם התנחות מוה"ר חיים
מועד צוק"ל, וגם הדיני' בלע"ז ובקשות מוה"ר
דוד פארדו וצוק"ל בסוף המחזור למען
לא יבזיזו ממנו כל טוב הצגנוגם הבקשות
מס' אוצר נחמד במקומו להיות
דבר דבור על אופניו :

כדכס בקנינה מדוייקת כלום כמס סלס סננד כ"ס.
ישראל בכל חיים ה"י מעידו בולגולדו סוסק
במלכאם קקוס בלמנה ילסס ה' פעלו ותמי ממנו
סלמס מעס ה' אלמנו :

שנת שומע חפלה עריך כל בשר זכואו לפ"ק

MACHSOR. (Gezetzte.)

אוסטריאני אוניול אוסטריאניא דיל סיניר
אנטון שמיד קון לוינביאח די אל סניר
אמפיראטור אי די או ביניח.

WIEN, 1836.

Bey ANTON Edlen von SCHMID, k. k. pr.
Buchdrucker und Buchhändler.

ל' לא זואו סילס סכא וול

סיסא זקלף סוסוס לויס יס : ליא סוסא סולקטו ויסלס יספסס : סלסס



וביום שמחתכם ובמועדיכם

מחזור לראש השנה

כמנת ק"ק ספרדים שבקונסטנטינא
ומדינות מורח ומערב ואיטאליא
עם החפלות מכתבי

האור המופלא האר"י וצוק"ל ומספר
המדרש ימים עם התנחות מוה"ר חיים מודעו
ו"ל והדיני' בלע"ז ובסוף המחזור בקשות מוה"ר
דוד פארדו ו"ל ובקשות מס' אוצר נחמד
במקומו לה"ל דבר דבור על אופניו

ונסף עוד ראה זה הרש בתהלה הספר הירושני
דינים השייכים לאלו הימים והנה מצויינים
ועוד הוספו סדר התרת נדרים ומודעות וס'
ותשלך כאשר נסדרו בס' עליון מהגאון הרב
חיד"א וצ"ל. ויחר ענינים. בקשות ותחנונים.
ומוסר נאות קודם תקיעת שופר מרוב החסד
המקובל האלקי מוה"ר שלום מרחי ידיע
שרעבי וצוק"ל

נדפס

ברפוס החדש והמשובח של פרחי שושנים
נמטע נעמנים. האחים המבורכים כו"ר יעקב
ואחיו דו"ר בני הרב כוהר"ר יהודה שמואל
אשכנזי נר"ו

בליודונו

שנת וירם קרן משחו לפ"ג

אול סאקלמ וסא וול

לס לטח לפי ללזס לל זלזס :

סאקלמ ל סאקלמ סלסל סלסל יסלס

Vienna 5597 (1836)

Livorno 5606 (1846)

Both editions mention: According to the minhag of Constantinople, the East and the West and Italy

מחזור
למים גוראים

ORAZIONI

PER IL
CAPO D' ANNO

Trasportate dalla versione Francese in
Lingua Italiana

da

A. ORVIETO.

Rivedute coll' originale Ebraico da
A. TOIOSA, e T. COSTA.

TOMO I

שנה קורה לה וישעך לך לפ"ז

in Livorno per i Tipi di

Salomone Belforte , e Moisè ed Israel Palagi.

Vendibili presso i suddetti Tipografi , e dai
Erastelli Benacci Cartolai.

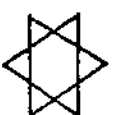
1843

Courtesy HUC Library

Livorno 1843

Italian Machzor translated from the French by A. Orvieto

وفي يوم فرحكم وأعيادكم



محזור فارحي

كتاب الصلوات لأجل عيد رأس السنة

حسب طقس السفاراديم في التسمطينية ومصر

وسورية والعراق والنزب وإيطاليا

تصريف

الدكتور هلال فارحي

سنة ١٩٨٤ عبرية و ١٩٢٤ غربية

حقوق إعادة طبعه محفوظة

طبع بالمطبعة الرحمانية بمصر

من مكتبة كتبخانة خزانة

Courtesy HUC Library

Cairo, Egypt 1924

Sephardic Machzor in Hebrew and Arabic by Dr. Hlal Farhi,

according to the Minhag of Constantinople, the East and the West, Egypt, Syria and Italy

סדר
ליום כפור
במנהג ק"ק ספרדים יז"א
עם תרגום הללגדית.

מ א ח
שמואל ב"ה עזריאל לבית מולדר.

ORDE VOOR DEN
VERZOENDAG,

NAAR DEN RITUS DER
NEDERLANDSCH- PORTUGEEISCHE ISRAËLITEN.

OP NIEUW IN HET NEDERDUITSCH VERTAALD,

DOOR

S. I. MULDER,

*Doctor in de Wijsbegeerte, en Inspecteur der Gods-
dienstige Israëlitische scholen.*

HET KERKELIJKE GOEDKEURING.

AMSTERDAM,

BY S. L. SALZEDO & C°.

5610=1850.

Courtesy HUC Library

Amsterdam 5610 (1850)
Bilingual Hebrew-Dutch *Machzor* by Dr. S. I. Mulder

THE ORDER
OF THE
FORM OF PRAYERS,
FOR THE
NEW YEAR,
IN
HEBREW AND ENGLISH,
According to the Custom of the
Spanish and Portuguese Jews;
AS
READ IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES,
AND
USED IN THEIR FAMILIES.

Translated and Printed into English from the Hebrew,
By DAVID LEVI.

VOL. II.

CAREFULLY REVISED AND CORRECTED.

SECOND EDITION, WITH AMENDMENTS.

London :

Printed and Sold by E. JUSTINS, at his Hebrew Printing Office, 34, Brick Lane,
Spitalfields.

A. M. 5570.

Courtesy HUC Library

London 5570 (1810)
David Levi

1. סליחות - *Selichoṭ kon Ladino*, a bilingual publication by Yosef Alschech and his wife Rebecca.

The first edition in 1865 was a *Selbstverlag des Herausgebers*, a self-publication, whose *rekavdo es en favor de gemilutṭ hasadim*, whose proceeds were in favor of *Gemilutṭ Hasadim*. The book is dedicated to Yishak Alschech and Yishak Ya'akov Eliyyahu, the fathers of Josef Alschech and his wife Rebecca, respectively.

This Hebrew-Ladino book with 49 pages in each language remained essentially unchanged through its second edition in 1880 and its third edition in 1923. Both second and third editions, however, were taken over and published by Josef Schlesinger.

2. חפלה כל פה - *Livro de Tefilla kon Ladino*, a bilingual Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayer-Book by the brothers Ya'akov and Josef Alschech.

I have not seen the first edition of this book, but the second edition is dated 1868. It, too, bears the rubric *Selbstverlag des Herausgebers*. By this time, there is no mention of proceeds going to *Gemilutṭ Hasadim*. This book is not only dedicated to the authors' mother, Roza Alschech, but contains, on the page following the title-page, a very touching dedicatory letter in Ladino printed in square characters and addressed to her, in which both sons praise their mother who, though a widow, spared no effort in raising well her children and in providing them with a good Jewish education.

All editions of this book which I have examined contain the same 276 pages of Hebrew and 276 pages of Ladino text, for a total of 552 pages. And again, the subsequent 1874, 1884 and 1891 editions were taken over and published by the same Josef Schlesinger.

קירינס'יארה אי אונרארה סינייורה מאדרי מב"ת .

אגראדיסקה איל פריזינטי קי לי אזימוס קון איסטי
ליברו סאנטו אי שומילו פור שיסטימוניו די נואיסטרה
קירינס'יארה אי גראנדי איסטימה:

אגראדיסקה אין איסטי פריזינטי אונה פריב'ה פי-
קינייאה קי ריקונוסימוס קואנטו גראנדי אים איל אוב-
ליגו קי לי שינימוס נון סולאמינטי פור לאס אמורים
דיזמיזוראדאם די מאדרי קי נוס דימוסטרן סינון שאנ-
ביין פור איל אינשימפלו די אונרה די פאדרי אי די
מאדרי קומו לו בימוס די אייאה אה סוס גיניטורים ע"ה
אי מאס קי שודו פור לוס גראנדיסימוס סאקריפיסיוס
קי איזו אין אפריטו די סו ביב'דיז פור גיארנוס אין
קארירה בואינה אי אין ליי אי שימור דיל דייו ב"ה:
קירידה סינייורה מאדרי . נוזאטרוס ריקוניסימוס קי נון
פודימוס פאגארלי ני אונה די שאנטאס מירסידים
אפילו קון שודוס לוס שריזורוס די איסטי מונדו:

מה אפוקארימוס נואיסטרה דיבדה קון לה רוגא-
שיב'ה אל שי"ת . איל קי סיאה פאגאדור די שודאם
סוס אימינסאס בונדאדים איל קיריסיב'ה סוס אוראם
יונים אי קי קומפלה לוס דיזיאוס די סו קוראסון פור
ביין אמן:

קונסירב'י סיימפרי סו אמור קומו אסטה היום אה
סוס מויי קירינס'יוזוס אי מויי ריספיקטוזוס איזוזוס:

יעקב אי יוסף יצחק אלשיך הי"י

Kerensyada i Onrada Sinyora Madre, א'מב'ח¹¹

Agradeska el presente ke le azemos kon este livro santo, i tomelo por testimonyo de nuestra kerensya i grande estima:

Agradeska en este presente una preva pekenya ke rekonosemos kuantto grande es el ovligo ke le tenemos, non solamente por las amores dezmezuradas de madre ke nos demostro, sinon tanbyen por el enshemplo de onra de padre i de madre komo lo vimos de eya a sus djenitores, א'ע, i mas ke todo por los grandisimos sakrifisyos ke izo en apreto de su bivdez por giarnos en karera buena i en Ley i temor del Dyo, *baruh hu*:

Kerida Sinyora madre, nozotros rekonosemos ke non podemos pagarle ni una de tantas mercedes *afillu* kon todos los trezoros de este mundo:

Ma apokaremos nuestra devda kon la rogativa al *Shem Yitbarah*. El ke sea pagador de todas sus imensas bondades. El ke risiva sus orasyones i ke kumpla los dezeos de su korason por byen, Amen.

KonsERVE syempre su amor komo asta *ha-yom* a sus muy kerensyozos i muy respektozos ijos.

Ya'akov i Josef Yishak Alschech

Transcription of the dedicatory letter

¹¹ *Seder Tefillat kol Pe ke-Minhag K"K Sefaradim 'im Targum Ladino, Livro de Tefilla kon Ladino para los Sefaradim Levantinos*, Verlag von Josef Schlesinger, Wien 1891, p. 1.

STRUCTURE OF THE SELIHOT

Opening of the Selihot:

While the broad structure of the Sephardic *Selihot* service is quite old and uniform, not all *Selihot* services start with the same textual selections:

- In the earlier editions (Amsterdam 1617, Venice 1623, Amsterdam 1652 and 1726) the *Selihot* service began with Psalm 17, and then continued with Psalms 51, 65, 85, 32, 102, the אֱשֶׁרִי and *Kaddish*.

- Psalm 32 is not found in every edition (Amsterdam 1652 and 1726 don't have it).

- The Amsterdam 1725 Hebrew edition starts with בְּרִאֲדָם and then skips all the way to אֱשֶׁרִי, while all British editions actually start the *Selihot* service with אֱשֶׁרִי.

- The first *Machzor* which comes closest to Alschech's Vienna 1865 text is Vienna 1836, where Psalms 126, 27, 33 and קַמְהֵי בְּאִשְׁמֹרֶת appear for the first time.

Body of the Selihot:

Most printed editions have basically the same features. Salient differences are:

אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת and שְׁבַט יְהוּדָה appear for the first time in the Florence 1735 edition.

רַחֲמֵי אֱדִבְרָה can comprise anywhere from 32, 33, 37, 38, up to 50 lines.

אֲנִי כְּעֵב וְדוֹנִי appears for the first time in the Amsterdam 1728 and Florence 1735 editions. It is missing from all British editions.

רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם אֲתוֹרָה appears for the first time in the Amsterdam 1652 edition.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ can have from 42 (Ferrara 1552), 48 (Florence 1735) to 50

(Amsterdam 1728), 51 (Venice 1623), 55 (Paris 1807), 60 (Vienna 1836) and even up to 62 lines (Italy 1843).

The special תְּחִלָּה for each day of the week (pp. 29-31) appear for the first time in the Amsterdam 1728 edition.

אִם אָפֶס and בְּזִכְרֵי appear for the first time in the Amsterdam 1728 Hebrew *Machzor*. Initially printed in small type, these gained "recognition" later on, and appeared in standard type in the 1735 edition. The Dutch 1790, the Italian 1843, and all the British editions don't have these two popular compositions. De Sola Pool, however, has only the בְּזִכְרֵי passage, still in small type.

מְחֵי וּמְסֵי is found in Ferrara 1552, and in all subsequent editions. Earlier ones have it before the concluding *kaddish*. Most others place it right after מְחֵי וּמְסֵי.

Conclusion of the Selihot:

Lack of uniformity is again the norm.

- After the concluding *kaddish* תְּחִלָּה, all editions have Psalm 130 מִמַּעַמְקִים, and that is where the service ends in the Amsterdam Hebrew 1726, Dutch 1790, Italian 1843 and in all British editions.
 - Other editions, such as Ferrara 1552, Venice 1623, Amsterdam 1617, Amsterdam 1728, add a few *pizmonim* or *bakkashot* such as בֵּית אֶהוּבָה and מְבִית מְלוֹנֵי.
 - To these, some add נְפֹשֵׁי בְּלִילָה (Florence 1735).
 - Amsterdam 1726, Paris 1807 and De Sola Pool skip בֵּית אֶהוּבָה.
- Similar to Ferrara 1552, their service, too, ends with Ibn Ezra's beautiful מְבִית מְלוֹנֵי, which was never included in our Eastern prayer-books.

-Vienna 1836, which apparently served as a model for Alschech 1865, skips *מִבֵּית מְלוֹנֵי*, but adds David Pardo's¹² *בֵּן אֲדָם* right after *בֵּית אֲהוּבָה*.

The New 1990 Edition of the Alschech *Selihot*

Initially, a major factor in my decision to work on this book was its manageable size. Thanks to modern technology, the beauty of the original typography was further enhanced by the enlargement process which uncovered before my eyes a gorgeous text, radiating with an extraordinarily divine dialogue of compassion, but also of daring reasonableness.

In retrospect, it is easy to blame yesteryear's prayer-book publishers for cutting corners in order to save on expensive paper. Outwardly, their legacy to us may have the appearance of an endless sequence of utterances couched in an ordinary prose format. Some tender care can reshape this old material into sublime expressions of divine discourse, for the mind as well as for the eye to relish.

In his Introduction to the Sephardic *Book of Prayer* he published in New York in 1941, Rev. David de Sola Pool writes:¹³

The resources of modern typography have been drawn upon for bringing the construction and the emphasis of the prayers visually before the reader, and to facilitate congregational participation. Plentiful paragraphing, indications of parallelism and other poetic forms, marking verses from the Bible with quotation marks, and similar devices, have been drawn on to help the worshiper to a clearer understanding of the message of the liturgy.

¹² David Pardo was a rabbi in Bosna Saray, today's Sarajevo in Yugoslavia. I checked his book *שִׁפְעָה רַבִּיבִים* for a possible clue to the *בֵּן אֲדָם* composition, but found none. Of kabbalistic bent, he wrote religious poetry in both Hebrew and Aramaic.

¹³ David de Sola Pool, *Book of Prayer*, Volume One, Second Edition, Union of Sephardic Congregations, New York 1974, p. VIII.

Accustomed as I was to prayer-books in which little attention was paid to the layout of poetic pieces, I remember my own surprise and sense of discovery the first time I used Rev. de Sola Pool's *Book of Prayer*, and also the exhilaration I felt whenever I attended services at his Synagogue in New York City back in the Fifties. My many conversations with him invariably confirmed to me his deep sense of decorum in every aspect of worship, as epitomized in the saying *הַשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרָתוֹ קִדְשׁ*, *worship the Almighty in the beauty of holiness!*

Transcription Guidelines

Layout:

On the assumption that the Hebrew and Ladino texts would be left intact, inserting one double-sided sheet for every single page of Ladino text implied:

1) either using a very small type simply to satisfy the "one page of transcription for one page of *Rashi* text requirement". But this would still not provide the kind of ample spacing needed for certain poetic pieces. There was also the matter of deciding if page *a* or page *b* was best suited for the romanized text. A possible solution was to have the same text appear twice, both on pages *a* and *b*, so that readers could at will compare the Hebrew with the romanized text, or the *Rashi* text with its romanized version.

2) or using a large type and spreading the content of *one Rashi* page over the *two* sides of the inserted sheet. This would provide ample room for the kind of layout I had in mind for all poetic pieces, but had the disadvantage of limiting any given page to only half of the original text found on either side.

As the first option was tried, the disproportionality of an enlarged Hebrew text standing side by side with a small, 10-point romanized transcription became apparent! Furthermore, this would leave no room for the adequate spacing of some poetic compositions. Thus by default, the second solution was my only alternative.¹⁴

Punctuation:

Question marks are almost never used in Ladino texts printed in the *Rashi* script. There is often a period where we would have a comma! In my transcription, the original punctuation has been maintained. However, commas and questions marks etc. were also added to facilitate comprehension at first reading.¹⁵

Transcription System:

In this book, too, I have continued to use the simple transcription system I have utilized in my earlier publications which seems to please most native readers:

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

As Ladino does not indicate *gemination*, in cases where gemination was involved, the second consonant was typed in italics. Thus

אינאלטיסיר was transcribed as *ennalteser*

¹⁴ Readers who are familiar with Rev. David De Sola Pool's *Machzor* will readily recognize my dependency on *his* layout.

¹⁵ Most titles are followed by a page number in brackets, such as [p. 2], which is a cross-reference to Rev. De Sola Pool's *Machzor* where an English translation may be found.

GRAMMATICAL NOTES

In a work of this kind, it is not my intention to draw lists of parallel structures between Ladino and Hebrew/Aramaic. Such structures occur on almost every line. Their review would constitute an extremely cumbersome task.

As my primary goal is to assist in reading and understanding the *Selihot*, I have prepared a Ladino-English-Hebrew glossary of select lexical items which should provide answers to most lexical questions. It is crucial to remember that this glossary reflects primarily *Alschech's* understanding of the words therein listed. Obviously, *gota*, 'drop' for רַבָּבִים, 'showers' does not make *gota*, 'showers'! But my job is to note what *Alschech* wrote, not to redo *Alschech*. Thus:

- if two or three different Hebrew roots, such as קָרַר הַטְּטִין, קָרַר end up having an identical *atorser* rendition in Ladino--especially when קָרַר means *to be rebellious*-- that reflects *Alschech's* choice!

In general, when I have two English renditions, the one on the left may be closer to the Ladino, while the one on the right may reflect correct Hebrew usage. But even this is not always the case.

Therefore this list is to be used cautiously and for its intended purpose. It does not reflect the last word in Ladino-English lexicography, but is a simple key to *Alschech's Selihot*.

Even with this list, it may still be difficult to look up certain words in the glossary due to Ladino's spelling habits of favoring the contraction of small particles by joining them with whatever precedes or follows them in a

"package deal" approach, totally alien to European languages, but perfectly normal in Ladino. I hesitate to call them proclitics or enclitics in view of their unpredictability. Thus

amos	is not	uncapitalized	Amos (!)	but	a mos
ida	is not	"	Ida (!)	"	i da
keen	has nothing to do with English		keen (!)	but is for	ke en, etc.

Most of these are simple to figure out. A few will elude the uninitiate. Here is a list of the most common ones encountered in this book:

aazer	for	a azer	asu	for	a su
aazyen	"	a azyen	asus	"	a sus
adjerenansyo	"	a djerenansyo	aTi	"	a Ti
aEl	"	a El	atodos	"	a todos
ael	"	a el	atomansa	"	a tornansa
aeskuentra	"	a eskuentra	aTu	"	a Tu
aeya	"	a eya	auna	"	a una
aeyos	"	a eyos	deel	"	de el
aguadrantes	"	a cuadrantes	dekontino	"	de kontino
akarera	"	a karera	delos	"	de los
akavanya	"	a kavanya	demi	"	de mi
alos	"	a los	desu	"	de su
ameldar	"	a meldar	desyerto	"	de syerto
ami	"	a mi	deTi	"	de Ti
amos	"	a mos	deTu	"	de Tu
amozotros	"	a mozotros	elke	"	el ke
amuestrs	"	a muestrs	enbaldes	"	en baldes
anbozeyos	"	anboz eyos	enel	"	en el
anos	"	a nos	enlas	"	en las
aoras	"	a oras	enlos	"	en los
aorasyon	"	a orasyon	enluego	"	en luego
apuevlo	"	a puevlo	enmi	"	en mi

ensu	for	en su	iyo	for	i yo
en tal	"	en tal	keen	"	ke en
enti	"	en ti	kekon	"	ke kon
entu	"	en tu	kelo	"	ke lo
iainda	"	i ainda	kemi	"	ke mi
iaz	"	i az	kemos	"	ke mos
ida	"	i da	kenon	"	ke non
ide	"	i de	kenosde	"	ke nos de
ikon	"	i kon	konmi	"	kon mi
imis	"	i mis	kepor	"	ke por
ino	"	i no	konTu	"	kon Tu
inon	"	i non	kontus	"	kon tus
ipor	"	i por	loke	"	lo ke
ise	"	i se	mise	"	mi se
isi	"	i si	sedespertan	"	se despertan
isu	"	i su	situ	"	si tu

Reflexive verbs or compound tenses involving the archaic auxiliary verb *aver* display a similar behavior. Here is a partial list of their peculiarities:

aflakose	for	se aflako	atarmec	for	e de atarme
akayaronse	"	se akayaron	artarmosemos	"	emos de artarmos
alevantose	"	se levanto	artarsean	"	an de artarsen
enforteskase	"	se enforteska	azermeas	"	as de azerme
paranse	"	se paran	azertee	"	e de azerte
sekose	"	se seko	ennaltesertee	"	e de annalteserte
abevrastezla	"	la abevrastez	eredarmosas	"	as de eredarmos
agozarsean	"	se an de agozar	lavarmeas	"	as de lavarme
alegrarsea	"	se a de alegrar	loartean	"	an de loarte
alimpyarmes	"	as de alimpyarme	mudarsean	"	an de mudarsen
alimpyarmec	"	e de alimpyarme	muchiguarte	"	a de muchiguarte
amostrarloa	"	a de amostarlarlo	tirse	"	a de tirarse
apiyadarte	"	a de apiyadarte			

Special phonetic features different from today's Ladino include loss of *d*, as follows:

porna	for	pondra	sosterna	for	sostendra
pornas	"	pondras	sosternas	"	sostendras
porne	"	pondre	verna	"	vendra
sarla	"	saldra	vernan	"	vendran

It should also be noted that Alschech, as well as many other Ladino writers, lengthen the middle *e* vowel of the verbs *ser*, 'to be' and *ver*, 'to see', as follows:

סיאר	seer	for	ser
ביאר	veer	"	ver
ביאי	vee	"	ve

The *-mente* indicator

I keep monitoring this 'indicator'¹⁶ with added vigilance. In the 49 pages of Alschech's *Selihot*, I am proud to say that there isn't a single *-mente* type adverb, not one!. Here are some of Alschech's substitutes:

<i>de kontino</i>	for	<i>kontinualmente</i>
<i>kon altiguezua</i>	"	<i>orgolyozamente</i>
<i>de presa</i>	"	<i>prestamente</i>
<i>kon estremesyon</i>	"	<i>aravyadamente</i>
<i>de adolme</i> ¹⁷	"	<i>violentemente</i>

¹⁶ See my comments in R. E. Yisrael, *Traduksyon Livre de las Poezias Ebraikas*, Ladino Books, Cincinnati, Ohio 1989, p. vii, and Isaac Jerusalemi, *From Ottoman Turkish to Ladino*, Ladino Books, Cincinnati, Ohio 1990, p. 38.

¹⁷ The full phrase is *aborresyon de adolme me aborresyeron*, i.e. they abhorred me violently.

to which the following *adverbial* use of certain verbs can be added:

דָּרַב כַּבְּסוּי	<i>muncho lavame</i>
הִסְכֵּלְתִי עָשָׂה	<i>enlokesi azer</i>
הָשׁוּב הִחַיֵּינוּ	<i>tornaras mos abidiguaras</i>

Also, the *Nominalization* of the Infinitive is well entrenched in Ladino with routine forms such as:

בְּשִׁפְטֵךְ	<i>en Tu djuzgar</i>
בְּהַכִּינוּ	<i>en su konponer</i>
בְּדַבְּרֵךְ	<i>en Tu avlar</i>
שְׁבִתִי	<i>mi estar</i>

Alschech has just *one* word of obvious foreign origin, *i.e.* Turkish *bozeado*, spoiled; blotted out, destroyed.¹⁸

I cannot ignore flaws in gender/number agreement, especially when they result from a needless imitation of, or a wrong interpretation of the Hebrew:

- Because הַחֵבֶל אֲוִינִי is *masculine* in Hebrew, there was no need to force Ladino into the impossible

danyado muestra morada.

- In אֲשֶׁרִי יֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, failure to evaluate אֲשֶׁרִי as a *plural construct*, resulted unnecessarily in the impossible Ladino structure

bien aventurado estantes.

Of course, *bien aventurados estantes* would have been the correct Ladino rendition of אֲשֶׁרִי יֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ !

¹⁸ But conversely, in a standard Hebrew-Turkish dictionary, *bozmak* would not be used for מַחֵק whose only Turkish counterpart is *silmek*, 'erase', with the connotation of 'wipe out' and 'obliterate'.

TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS IN THE ORIGINAL *RASHI* TEXT

	<i>wrong</i>	<i>right</i>
p. 1, line 11	karrkanyales	karkanyales
p. 1, line 23	desyert	desyerto
p. 3, line 10	trastonada	trastornada
p. 6, line 1	mudarasean	mudarsean
p. 10, line 22	i i	i de
p. 10, line 23	enfouzyados	enfeuzyados
p. 11, line 14	ti nombre	tu nombre
p. 12, line 11	ormozura	ermozura
p. 13, line 26	reyno	Rey [no]
p. 13, last line	a	i
p. 14, line 3	ssu	sus
p. 25, last line	non te non te	non te
p. 26, line 18	rihimeras	rihmeras
p. 31, line 17	katuveryo	kativeryo
p. 33, line 27	ambrura	ambrera
p. 38, line 13	enenblankeser	enblankeser
p. 38, line 19	melizinado	melizinada
p. 39, line 31	enpushamyento	enpushamyento
p. 40, line 5	shonda	fonda
p. 44, line 11	pensamyeto	pensamyento
p. 46, line 1	asegara	apegara
p. 47, line 16	kon todas muestra alma	kon toda muestra alma
p. 47, last line	malosya	malisya