Quality of the Translation

Judge Gabbay’s translation is not only extremely free, but quite erratic in the sense that accurate renditions alternate with paraphrases having at times little basis in the original text. He adds and eliminates things as he moves along. To illustrate his methodology, I have chosen three passages, with the underlined parts representing segments which can be accounted for in the translation.

1. Kizb, Mintira: This section is quite accurate, as it leaves out or adds almost nothing. But it is not typical of the rest of the book:


   LA MINTIRA es una manya muy fea, ke tanto ala
ey i tanto al mesvo kale fuvir de eya. Porke kon el avlar mintira, se izveron i se están ayendo muchas dezventuras en este mundo. I el ken yene esta manya syempre se vergu(a)enia kon ke le sale alguna mintira en la kara, i keda rejestado. La onor i el ihtibar ke yene kon la diente sele kome ke poy esto las kriaturas kale ke bushken a non enbezar sus linguas en mintira si non syempre avlar vedrad, i non tener guste de ir engayando a las dientes. Porke un una vez ke se aferra kon falsa mas no lo kren afilly en su vedrad. I kon esto, siguro ke topa muchno danyo.

2. Sadakat, Pagamyento de Prometas: This is a free paraphrase of the original five lines, with much that has been left out, and new things freely added:

   SADAKAT, kistı içinde ve sözünde doğru olmak insanca pek güzel ve hayırlı buyların biri oklubünden, ve bu huy sabitir her yerde berhurder ettiğinden, sadakat ve istikâmeti yani her yerde sözü ve özünd doğru etmekli, adet etmekleri calismalıdır.

   PAGAMYENTO DE PROMETAS. Esta manya es una de las alavadas tanto para el Dyo como para la diente. I es koza ke aprometes para azerlo, mirar una ora antes a pagar lo ke aprometes por ke ansi es el menester i el dover. I tambyen no olvidarse el ben adum de sus amigos y sus parientes i syempre azer kavret de azeries plazer asta ande les alkansa la mano.
3. Sirkat, Rovo: The underlined parts in either column clearly reflect Judge Gabbay's uneven approach in what he was translating:


ROVO, i esto tambien ala ley i al meyov es una manya muy negra. I el Dyo ke no travya a ke se altisbee el ken adam en esto. I su kayo es muy negro bar minnan. I ken aze koradio a esto, el kayo de su diuzgo es o ala perdjona a al remo o lo matal bar minnan. O lo deshan churudear en prezymung fuerter i no ay ken se apiado de una persona de este modo. I savras ke la kuip del ken roya si keres saver komo es un negra, ke si aflul no lo djuzagran kon ley i lo diuzgaran kon roya es mas fueuer su pena. Syendo ke el terbie ke lo azen es mas negro ke si lo djuzagran kon ley. Syendo onzi si aflul es una koza chika ke no vale una para, hasta ke no es tuya sin darle avizo al patron lo tomass i lo vendes a outros o lo enprenzeas, seras aborresido de la djente i de tus paryentes i de todo el mundo. I si azen aroves de todo lo ke dishimos ke kaminas kon kavod i neemanuj syento ke seras kerido i alavado de el Dyo i de la djente.

Judge Gabbay's capriciousness is reflected in the very titles of the various topics found in this book. Side by side with

ziyânkârlık which is left alone as ziyankertlik,
arsizlik ve masharâltik becomes dalbaukluk,

which it is not!

After
kanaat which is kontentes
he skips to
muavenet ve şefakat as piyadad and hifz-ı stihat-ı vucud as sanedad de puerpo,
before returning to
hüsn-ü karin as onestegad.

---

68 This dislocation may have been caused by a Turkish original different from the one published here. I have been unable to verify this possibility.
Here is a complete list of all the topics discussed by Rifat Pasha and Judge Gabbay:

ibâdet (engrasyar al Dyo)
üm (sensya)
ta'zîm vâlideyn ve üstâd (onor a padre i madre i a haham)
kizb minûra
nemmâmlik mishâlikur
îklî yûzlûlûk de dos karas
giybet lashon ha-ra
ziyânkârîlık ziyanizlerlik
enâîyyet gaava
hased selo
haylâzîlîk haraganud
ittestîlîk falseqad
ärîsîzîlîk ve masharalîk dalkaukluk
bedzebânîlîk avla fea
sirkât rovo
âğzî gevşekîlîk flo(f)shedad de boka
tahkîr ravya
istihzâ (zeifkdenarse)
garez ve kin ve nefsâniyyet mal kerensya
sadâkat pagamento de prometas
vefâkârîlîk (amar a sus paryentes)
rifâyetkârîlîk onrar a otros
kanâ'at kontentes

hûsn-i karîn onestadâ
acele premura
inâd (inad)
terk-i kabûl-i nasîhat (ravya)
gazab pasensya
hûm limpeiza
nezâfet vertud
sahâvet (eskaseqad)
buhl

mu'âvenet ve şefakât piâdad
hifz-i sîhat-i vûcûd saneqad del puerpo

ulfet ve ünsiyet enoshiyuyt
edeb ve hüürmet kâvod
hukûk-i uhuviyet buen korason
îffet ve harniyyet presyo de la honor
rifâyet-i hukûk-i ülfet amor antiga
Notes on Phonology

Understandably, Ladino's phonology is a function of geographic location, and varies almost from city to city. Also, in studying how Turkish words are transliterated into Hebrew characters, extreme care is necessary, as the Hebrew Rashi script itself is unvocalized and can be variously interpreted. As a fellow Istanbullu, my evaluation of some of Judge Gabbay's spelling habits is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>endek</td>
<td>אֶנדֶק</td>
<td>is for ʼ hendek, with ellipsis of h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eznaft</td>
<td>אֶזְנָפֵט</td>
<td>is for ʼ esnaf, with sonorization of s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ihtibar</td>
<td>אֵיתְבָאֵר</td>
<td>is for ʼ ihtibar, with infixed h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ihtiza</td>
<td>אֵיתְזָא</td>
<td>is for ʼ iktiza, with spirantization of k.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| karar | קָראָר  | can be 1) ʼ karar: decision, decree  
                                         2) ʼ kadad: quantity, amount, with regressive assimilation of d by r. |
| kayret | קָאֵיְרֶט | is for ʼ gayret |
| masraf | מָאֵסְרַפַּא | is for ʼ masraf, with an infixed t. |
| sea | סֵא | the variant שֶאֶה is unusual, and must be a typo. |
| urdi | אוֹרְדִי | is for ʼ urdu |
| yuch | יָעֵךְ | is for ʼ gūc, with initial g switching to y. |

The spelling of initial ʼy

The spelling of words with initial ʼy is often intriguing in Ladino, simply because parallel spellings of the Tetragrammaton, especially in Kabbalistic writings, had to be avoided. To the eternal chagrin of Hispanists, the ʼy in the Ladino word יָוארָר, yorar has by now no connection with its Spanish counterpart llorar! Needless to say that in וי imper, the ʼy has no etymological value either. And now, with the Turkish word יָאָקִיסְחֶיא, yakishea spelled with a ʼy (p. 8), that argument loses all cogency.
LADINO-ENGLISH GLOSSARY
of
SELECT LEXICAL ITEMS
in
EL BUEN DOTRINO

A

abashar : go down, descend
   abasharse : lower oneself
abasteser : be sufficient, be enough
abidiguar : bring back to life
   The Ferrara Bible renders הָבִיא as A' maian y abiniquan. The Asa version
   has A’ maian i abidiguan. (1 Sam 2:6)
abolar : turn, overturn
   aboltar a : change; switch
aborreser : hate, detest
abrochonarse : button up
   (for Onunu kavusturmak)
achakes de : because of
adelantarse : go forward, advance (for ḡapirlo)
adyyentro : inside
afear : put to shame; embarrass
   (causative of jeo, ugly, shameful)
aferrar : catch
afueras : outside; except
agro : sour, acid
   kara agr : sour face
   mirar kon ojo agr : look down upon, deprecate
   (for hakaret nazarile bakmak)
akonteser : happen
akorrido : (be made to run) driven
akorrotu : frequently
alargar : lengthen (for ḡapirlo)
   alargar en : elaborate
   alargar anyos de vida : grant a long life
alavago : praised
alavasyon : praise
alegria : joy; enjoyment
alesharse : keep away from (for ḡapirlo)
alavantaro : raise; remove
   alevantaarse : get up
alimanya : animal
alkansar : reach
   alkansa la mano : be able, capable
   (for ḡeru)
allado : beside
alteza : (it altezza) height
   suvir en alteza : climb up the social ladder; gain consideration, become prominent
amargado : embittered
ambre : hunger
amostrar : show
anbezar : same as enbezar
anke : (it anche) also
   si anke : even if
ansi : thus, so
apartar : distinguish, differentiate (for ḡartap)
apaziguar : pacify
apegar : glue; cleave, adhere to (for ḡapirlo)
apiadarse de : show mercy (for acirmak)
apretado : held tight. squeezed
   korason apretado : weary
apreto : trouble, difficulty
   sin apreto : comfortably
   travar apreto : undergo suffering
   (for sikinti çekmek)
aprometer : promise
aprovecharse : take advantage
   azer aprovecharse : let someone take advantage
arankar : pick
aravyarse : get angry; get upset, be enraged
arekojar : gather
arepintir(se) : change one’s mind (for ḡartap)
   (but rarely repent)
arvez : the opposite; on the contrary
arrejistado : same as rejistado
arto : full, satiated; replete
\textit{arrarse} : be satiated
askearse : be disgusted, feel aversion
asperar : wait; hope; aspire
auflarse : be inflated, swell, expand
avla : speech; word (for \\textit{دربور} / \\textit{دربور})
avlador : one who is speaking; speaker
\textit{es muy avlador} : he is very talkative
avagar : slowly
ayuda : help

\textbf{B}
basho : low; socially outcast (for \textit{الك})
\textit{los bashos} : low-class people; scum
bendizir : praise; bless
bivir : live
\textit{bivir negra vida} : live a bad life, live miserably
boka : mouth
\textit{kaer en bokas del mundo} : become subject to public ridicule
(for \textit{زا} ve \textit{رعي} - \textit{ا لل})
bolar : turn, return; turn around, bring back
bushkar : search, look for; try
(for \textit{ها} and \textit{م} / \textit{حك})

\textbf{Ch}
chikez : childhood
chiko : small
\textit{los chikos} : children

\textbf{D}
danyo : damage
\textit{topar danyo} : incur damage
(for \textit{مزرات} \textit{حرب})
danyoz : damaging, dangerous
dar : give; permit (for \textit{حرب})
\textit{darle el meyo} : seem appropriate; comprehend, grasp
deklarar : explain; comment; (for \textit{كرر})
\textit{deklaro} : commentary
demazia : excess
demazyago : excessive
demazyaga mente : excessively
deshar : let; allow, permit
deskalso : barefoot
\textit{fuyirse deskalso} : run for one’s life
despartirse : be distributed; be divided
despertar : awake
detener : hold
\textit{detener de} : keep from
dezazer : undo; shatter; waste; disintegrate
dezeo : wish
\textit{le paso el dezero} : his craving is gone
dezmodramento : bad behavior; impropriety
dezventura : misfortune (for \textit{ديج لا سي})
difisil : (for \textit{ديج لا سي}) difficult, hard
dito : (\textit{دي تو}) aforementioned
dotrino : ethics, morals (for \textit{ديج لا سي})
Dyo : God
(Always el Dyo, \textit{never} Dios! or D....)

\textbf{Dj}
djesto : (\textit{دي تو جي تو}) gesture
djoya : (\textit{دي تو جي تو}) jewel
\textit{pyedra de djoya} : gem stone
djuguar : (\textit{دي تو جي تو}) play
\textit{djuego} : game
\textit{djugar djugeglos} : play games

dchar : throw, throw away
\textit{echar tienpo} : waste time
\textit{echar ala kaye} : throw out, throw away
echo : deed, action (for \textit{دا})
enbarasar : offend
\textit{me enbaraso} : I was offended;
I felt sorry
\textit{no me enbarasa} : I don’t mind
enbezar : teach
\textit{enbezarse} : learn
endelantre : in front of
\textit{de agora endelantre} : from now on
endenyar : be respectful; deferential
\textit{no endenyar} : be contemptuous of, stay aloof
\textit{ni me endeny} : I wouldn’t dignify
\textit{ni me endeny} : he ignored me
enderechar : straighten up
enfasyar : bother, annoy
\textit{enfasyo} : boredom, annoyance
engrandeserse : grow up (for \textit{دا})
engrasyar : thank; bestow
enkashar : stick in; stuff
enpero : but; nevertheless
enprezentar : give as a gift; grant, bestow
(for \textit{لا سان جي تو})
enriva : above; on top
entender : understand
entremeterse : participate in, get involved
entrampeser: cause to stumble  
The Ferrara Bible renders 'יִהְיֶה' as y estrompecara ayudan. The Asa version has i entrompeara ayudan (Isaiah 3:8)

enventado: invented; brought about; authored
envento: excuse; slander; fabrication
enverano: summer

eskapor: finish; save
eskaparse: a) be finished, terminated  
    b) escape; save oneself

eskasedad: stinginess
eskayer: fall down, decline, wane
eskavlo: slave, servant; worshiper; person  
    (for kuv)

dever del eskavlo: worshiper’s duty  
    (for kulluk etmek)

eskuro: obscure, dark; terrible, horrible
manyak eskuora: terrible habit

espandir: expand, stretch out
espandir el puye: stretch out one’s foot

espantar: fear; feel awe  
    (for ḥayalun)

espeso: thick, dense

ser espeso: be insistent, obstinate

espigir: digest

F

fasil: (f) facile) easy
feo/feyo: ugly
flako: weak
flo(t)shedad: looseness, slackness
flo(t)shedad de boka: one who cannot hold his tongue, 
    tattle tale  (for ağzi şeykilık)

fraguia: building
fraguair: build
fregarse: rub; press
fuyir: flee

fuyirse: run away from

G

gaste: spending, expenditure
gostar: taste

grandes (los): grown ups; adults

grandeza: pride  
    (for ḥayalun)

grasya: grace; favor
entrar en grasya: find favor

guadrar: keep; protect

El Dyo ke guadre: May God keep,  
    God forbid!  (for Allah estrigesin)

guste: pleasure

I

inchir: fill
indimas/ínimas: besides; especially

inimistad: enmity

K

kale: it is necessary; must
kansado: tired
karonal: dear; cordial

amigo karonal: very close friend

catar: (Latin capitcapere) look at, consider

katar kavod: honor  
    (consider honorably)

kavo: end, extremity  
    (for ḥeyb)
de un kavo al oto: from end to end

kayerse: fall

kaza: house; Temple  
    (for ḥizb)

Kaza Santa: Holy Temple

kedar: stay, remain

kij: (Past tense of kiser) want, be willing
kitar: bring out, bring forth; generate

kitar al mundo: give birth; promote

komer: eat

komerse la onor: (his) honor gets  
    eaten up/consumed  (for ḥab)

kontentés: contentment, satisfaction

kovrar: gain; regain

koradjo: (u koraggio) courage  
    azer koradjo: dare

kortar: cut; interrupt

kortar el lakirdi: interrupt a  
    conversation  (for lakirdi kesmek)

kozer: cook

kozer de nuevo: be cooked again;  
    be reprocessed  (for tekrar pişmek)

kreatura: (creature) child
kreer: believe

Kriador: Creator

kriansa: act of being created; creature

en la kriansa: when they were created  
    (for ḥayalun - yaradılısda)

kuadrar: to square; grasp; comprehend

le kuadra el meoyo: he has a  
    grasping mind  (for akı len)

tener meoyo: be wise

kumplido: accomplished; well-educated  
    (for ḥayalun)
kumplimyento: accomplishment, 
    achievement, attainment
lazdrar : toil; labor; travail, struggle
lesensya : license, permission
ley : law; Tora; religion
   ala Ley : according to the Law, in keeping with religious Law (for dince)
loar : praise

maestro : master; teacher
   maestro de ofisyo : boss; supervisor
      (ir üstâd)
   maestro de sensya : science teacher
mal kerensya : ill will; antipathy
mankansa : (ir mancanza) lack, deficiency; fault; misbehavior (for ayip)
mansana : apple
mansevo : young
   manseviko : youth, young man; teenager
mantenerse : get sustenance; earn a livelihood
      (for ṭe’ēst)
manya : custom, habit; attribute
      (for ṭe’ēst)
   manyas buenas : ṭiḥmi ṭilalal
   manyas negras : ṭiḥmi ṭe’ēst
manzia : (blemish) victim of a blemish
   manziarse : feel sorrow and pity; sympathize

   (In Lagino this word does not mean become blemished)
más : more
   mas i mas : first and foremost
medyo : half; center; medium, milieu
   salir en medio : come out in the open; emerge
meldar : read; study
melizina : medicine, cure
menester : need
   es menester : it is necessary
   tener menester : to need
   menesterozo : needy
mentar : mention; call names; curse
   mentarle el padre i la madre: to insult one’s parents
meoyo : brain; mind
   al meoyo : rationally (for akika)
   tener meoyo : have brains, be wise
meter : put, place
   meter fuego : set fire, inflame
   meter en sakkana : endanger

mirar : look
   mirar de : see to it that, try
   no mira al boy : irrespective of size or stature
mishilikear : slander; inform, gossip
   (for nemmâ’mlik, kovculuk)
mofinarase : be saddened; feel sorry
      (for teessüf etmek)
muez : walnut
   muez vazia : (empty walnut) without content; nothing

Nego : evil (for ṭe’ēst)
azer negro : do evil; harm
(nombradja : name; fame
nunka : never

Oonesteđad : honesty
onra : honor (for ṭe’ēst)
ona : hour
   en ora de : at the time of
   en toda ora ke : whenever
ovligo : (ir obbligo) obligation, duty

Paladar : palate
   avlar savor de su paladar : speak as one pleases, speak one’s mind
pasada : passing; passage
   dar la pasada : turn a blind eye
pasarse : get along
paseo : excursion
patron : master; owner; one who has
   patron de meoyo : one with common sense
   patron de sedaka : charitable person
   patron de manyas : having good qualities
   patron de palavra : dependable
pekado : sin
   ke pekado! : what a shame!
penar : toil, work hard; try hard
   penar i lazdrar : work & toil, work very hard
pensar : to think
   pensar en su korason : consider
      (for ṭe’ēst)
perkurar: provide; try
korrer i perkurar: try urgently
(similar to בָּא לְקָרָה רָע [לְאָדָם] of Hab 2:2, salir: go out; grow up
which the Ferrara Bible renders as:
para que corra el leyen en ellas)
salir: Bueno: come out well
kitar de su kavesa: lead astray
(for bastan çıkmak)
salir de su kavesa: be out of control,
(for bastan çıkmak)
salirle el nam: gain a (bad) reputation
(for adı çıkmak - söz gelmek)
selo: jealousy
selarse: be jealous
sensya: science
sensyas chikas: elementary sciences
sensyas mas ondas: advanced sciences
sia: chair; seat; throne
Sia de Tu onra: Throne of your glory
(for beşte kabir)
sigun: according to
siguro: sure; surely
si non: rather, but (for değil)
sirvir: serve; worship
sol: sun
soles de enverano: summer sun
(for güneşlerde)
sonportar: bear, tolerate; stand
sudar: sweat; perspire
sudado: (in sweat) perspiring
suyo: his, it's
de suyo: by himself, by itself; automatically
suzyedag: dirt
syendo: being that; since, as
syerto: sure; surely, definitely

R
ravya: anger, rage
ravyo: prone to anger
rejistar: be ashamed (for hâ)
azer rejistar: put to shame (for hâ)
The Ferrara Bible renders 이강한 yâhîkîna, be ashamed, of Jer 31:19
as arrégestee y yambien fuy avergonçado,
'I am ashamed and humiliated'.
rejisto: shame (for hâ)
remo: oar, paddle
al remo: forced labor (for kürêge konur)
repozado: calm
reyevar: contain; fill to capacity
rijirse: govern oneself; behave
rijirse como perdon: act as if forgiven
ropa/ropas: clothing; goods
rovâr: steal

S

T
taraka: firecracker
riir kon tarakas: laugh boisterously
(for kahkaha)
temor: fear; awe
tener: hold; have
tener menester: need
tener meo yo: be wise
tenerse por: consider oneself
	
tikia: tuberculosis
entikia do: stricken by tuberculosis
azerse tikia: catch tuberculosis;
be aggravated
tomar: take
tomarse kon: get (unfairly) angry with
topar : find
  topar repozo : be at peace
  toparse : find oneself
  toparse en : (find oneself with) have

tosigo : poison
traer : bring; cause to be
  el Dyo ke no trayga : God forbid!
  (May God not bring us to the point of)
travar : pull; endure, suffer
  travar apreto : undergo suffering
  (for zahmet çekmek)

trezlando : translation (for translatus)
trezladasyon : translation (for translatio)
tuguerto : crooked
tyempo : time
  tyempo ke : when (for ῥωμή)

U

uzar : be accustomed
  uzo : custom
  uzo del pueblo : public custom, common practice

V

valutozo : (is valuta) valuable, precious
vazio : empty
  en vazio : in vain (for beyhûde)

vedrad : truth
  avlar vedrad : speak the truth
  (for doğru söylemek)
vedradero : true; real
veluntad : will
  sea veluntad : may it be Thy will
  (for ׳קאר ῃל)
verguensa : shame
  verguensarme : feel shame,
  be embarrassed (for aytb)
vinir : come
  vinir a : end up
  vinir aide la mano : be able
  vinir fursat ala mano : have the opportunity
  (for eleine fursat geçmek)

Y

yelarse : catch a cold; cease to care for:
  have strained relations
  (for soğukluk geçmek)
yelor : cold
  vinir en yelor : become chilly in
  one's relations
APPENDIX

Sarrafbaşı Yehezkel Gabbay
Judge Gabbay's Grandfather
(d. 1826)

In the nineteenth century, there were two prominent figures with the name Yehezkel Gabbay. In addition to Judge Yehezkel Gabbay (1825-1898), there was also Sarrafbaşı Yehezkel Gabbay (d. 1826), his grandfather, surnamed Bağdatlı. He was a very wealthy banker born in Baghdad who moved to Istanbul after he helped Talat Efendi, on orders from Istanbul, to get rid of Süleyman Pasha, the Governor of Baghdad, for rebelling against Sultan Mahmud II. Our main source for this information is M. Franco.¹ The few Turkish history books I have consulted make no reference to this minor revolt by Süleyman Pasha which became so central to Yehezkel Gabbay's move from Baghdad to Istanbul. There can be no doubt that Yehezkel Gabbay, for all his good qualities and acts of philanthropic largesse, was an extremely ambitious person who, in the end, paid with his life for the many abuses he must have fostered. We know that he did not hesitate to remove the president (Nasi) of the Jewish Community of Baghdad in order to have him replaced with his own brother, Ezra Gabbay, who from Baghdad, continued to coordinate his brother's personal policies!

A slightly more detailed account of grandfather Yehezkel Gabbay's life story can be found in S. A. Rozanes,³ who writes:

The second strong man in Istanbul was Yehezkel Gabbay, also called Yehezkel Baghdadi. Yehezkel was born in the city of Baghdad, he had a good heart with generosity toward all. His purse was open to the downcast and the afflicted, irrespective of religion or nationality. His business was in bonds and currencies. At times, there were more people who turned to him for help than for actual business. Everyone who came to him with tears in his eyes was received by him in a friendly manner, and would leave smiling. No one was turned down empty-handed. In short, Yehezkel Gabbay was a compassionate father of the poor and the down-trodden.

² Avraham Ben-Yaakov, Yehude Bavel, Yerushalayim 1965, pp. 101-103.
³ S. A. Rozanes, Korot ha-Yehudim be-Turkiyya uve-Arsoq ha-Kedem, volume 6, (pp. 70-76). The translation from the Hebrew is mine.
It is usually said: *the more wealth, the more worries.* One could add: the more wealth, the more jealousy. On account of his wealth, Yehezkel Gabbay was soon surrounded by a host of envious people whose increasing resentment succeeded in bringing him down. And yet, these ignoble people were careful in their despicable behavior toward him. Even his smartest opponents had to acknowledge that this noble Jew acted generously towards everybody. That is why they waited for the right moment. At that time, Yehezkel Gabbay was still on the ascendancy, assured that some high position was reserved for him as a supporter and a leader of his downtrodden people, and as a powerful manager of government finances, at the right hand of the rulers of the land.

In the year 5571, Süleyman Pasha, Governor of Baghdad, rebelled against Sultan Mahmud. At that time, every provincial governor had to send to Istanbul an annual sum of money from the taxes he collected, after deducting expenditures, as well as a contingent of young men for the army. But Süleyman Pasha refused to send the money and the young men, thus freeing himself from any accountability toward the Sovereign. Sultan Mahmud became very angry, and branded this governor a rebel, deserving the death penalty. And so he sent emissaries to Baghdad to have the Governor arrested. But Süleyman secretly hired spies who watched over the whereabouts of the Sultan's emissaries, and kept the Governor informed of their arrival. And when these emissaries reached the District of Baghdad, the followers of Süleyman captured them, and mercilessly put them to death. Süleyman successfully played this strategy three or four times, until Sultan Mahmud's patience was exhausted; he swore "to see with his own eye the head of Süleyman". At that time, the chief secretary in Baghdad was Talat efendi, a trusted individual who secretly advised the Sultan not to send any more emissaries or military forces against Süleyman, but to wait for the last showdown. The Sultan agreed with the advice of his confidant.

Talat efendi, without divulging his intentions, turned to Yehezkel Gabbay who knew well Süleyman, the Governor, his behavior and his ways, all his whereabouts and his movements, etc. In his innocence, Yehezkel reported every detail that was known only to him. Armed with this information, hirelings of Secretary Talat succeeded in drawing Süleyman Pasha to a specific locality where they ensnared him and killed him. Immediately, Talat efendi ordered the head of the Governor of the city cut and dispatched to Istanbul. When he received this wonderful gift, Sultan Mahmud is supposed to have plucked out the hair of Süleyman's head, then trampled on it and burned it. Talat efendi was summoned to Istanbul where he became a minister at the Court. Upon his recommendation, Yehezkel Gabbay also moved from Baghdad to Istanbul and became chief of the Treasury. There, he was introduced to Hallet

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4 Hillel's saying in *Pirké Avot* 2:8.
Pasha, known also as Halet efendi, as he was formerly called, and who was the Sultan’s friend and secretary. This senior official greatly liked Yehezkel Gabbay, because some important, decisive measures had been introduced by him. Yehezkel’s outside appearance, too, was quite impressive. His face projected the image of a serious but good-hearted person, having both wisdom and integrity. He knew Arabic and Turkish very well, and was familiar with oriental customs. He was also an expert in banking and monetary matters.

At that time Halet efendi was an adviser to the Sultan, and also the Turkish ambassador in Paris. Being for progress, he deeply hated the Janissaries. As the Sultan’s advisor, he introduced Yehezkel Gabbay to him, and mentioned the help of this Baghdadi Jew in the capture of the rebel Suleyman Pasha. The Sultan agreed to put Yehezkel Gabbay in charge of financial matters with the title of Sarrafbaşı (Chief of the Treasury). In this position, he made steady headway, bringing honor to the Jewish community in the capital city which took pride in him. He was an activist not only on the side of the Jews, but also on behalf of the Turks, and the other nationalities. Whoever turned to him with a request was sure of a positive result. With the passing of time, Yehezkel’s influence increased steadily to the point where it became possible for him to promote or demote ministers, to appoint various officials, to issue death sentences against criminals, to fix salaries, and to extend guarantees of help and support. In brief, it became possible to obtain anything thanks to him, because Halet efendi who loved the Sarrafbaşı could never turn him down on anything. Halet, his friend, would immediately try to fulfill any wish uttered by Yehezkel, being aware that this upright man worked only for everybody’s welfare.

But Yehezkel who had stature not only in his personality and in his deeds, but also in his demeanor, aroused feelings of respect and awe in the eyes of the people. It was his custom to leave his home riding on a horse, surrounded by a group of guards from the royal palace, while the people showed him the respect he deserved. With these feelings of respect, some trepidation was also stirred up in people’s minds. Whether due to his high office, or as a reaction to his overly serious and proud appearance, the Sarrafbaşı generated such fear and anxiety that many shook in his presence, as if he were a Janissary. That is why, the number of those who were jealous of him, and hated him steadily increased.

We have already seen that at the time of Sultan Mahmud, the Armenians had started to get ahead by progressively increasing their influence in government. Jews and Armenians never lived in peace and harmony. These two communities were considered Ra’aya (subjects); both had endured much from the hostility of the Janissaries. But instead of being united in their distress, they hated each other, and kept afar from each other. Furthermore, they denounced each other to the authorities. At times, they would fabricate things which had never existed, if only to reach their goals. Jews accused Armenians of always trying to harm them
by using schemes aimed at pushing them out of their positions. In those days, the Armenians devised schemes to place a large part of the Jews in a very dangerous situation. So, the Jews turned to Yehezkel Gabbay, the strong man. He inquired and thoroughly investigated the matter, and when he saw that quite often his brethren were in a precarious situation, he complained about it to his friend, Halet efendi. Their complaints proved substantiated, namely that the leaders of the Armenians were strongly supported by the Janissaries; moreover, that they were divulging top secret information to the head of the rebel Greek partisans. Immediately, Halet efendi reported this information to Sultan Mahmud in the name of the Sarrafbaşı. The Sultan ordered the immediate hanging of the head of the Armenian Allahverdioglu family. Two of his brothers, who were government officials, were also hanged. For three days, their bodies were left untouched for the people to see and fear. An Armenian by the name of Artin Kazzaz, who plotted evil against Yehezkel Gabbay, was exiled from Istanbul to Rhodes, even though he was the head of the Royal Mint. It is easy to understand the suffering and mourning of the Armenians. Their hatred of the Jews increased so much that it became impossible for any Jew to go through an Armenian neighborhood and vice versa.

After a while, and with the help of the influential Jewish strong man Tchilibi Behor Karona, the Armenians who were rich and prominent, succeeded in attracting the Sultan’s favor on behalf of the exiled Artin Kazzaz. He was allowed to return to Istanbul and to regain his post, as in the past. There was also another reason for this reversal. Coins minted after his exile were of an inferior quality, as there were no experts like him! When this man returned to Istanbul, he swore never to rest for a moment, until he took full vengeance against the Sarrafbaşı and the Jews. So, he waited for the opportune moment, while considering schemes to realize his goal. And as he succeeded in regaining Sultan Mahmud’s favor, he told him from time to time that the Sarrafbaşı had grown extremely wealthy, and that with money, he had gained the support of the Aghas of the Janissaries, and that one day, with his enormous wealth, he might cause riots in the country! This vicious accusation awakened suspicions in the Sultan’s mind, but he refrained from taking any action. Artin Kazzaz, whose sole purpose was to take revenge against Yehezkel Gabbay, knew full well that he would never be able to harm him so long as Halet efendi, the strong man and the Jews’ best friend, was in office. That is why he thought that he had to remove him from office first. And so, he started secret talks with the heads of the Janissaries, the enemies [of Halet].

The Janissaries who were still quite powerful, and who hated the guts of Halet efendi, tried to remove forcibly from office many ministers among whom was Halet efendi. According to the report of the British traveller Walsh, who then spent some time in Istanbul, the following event occurred on November 15, 1822 (12 Kislev 5582). Sultan Mahmud, who
in the hands of the Janissaries was like clay in the hands of a potter, was forced to fulfill their wish. He decreed that Halet efendi be sent into exile (sürgün) to the city of Bursa, and while on the way, another order, which a courier brought to the village of Bağlarbaşı, came out to chop off his head, and to bring it to Istanbul. His wife bought his corpse for the price of two thousand grush and buried him. But the Janissaries were cruel enough to exhume him from his grave, and to toss him into the sea.

This tragedy plunged Yehezkel Gabbay into sorrow, as he was well aware of Artin Kazzaz’s hateful schemes toward him. Indeed, Artin rejoiced enormously for having been able to remove Halet efendi, and to cause his death. Now, it would be easier for him to take his vengeance against Yehezkel Gabbay, for when the helper stumbles, the helped falls! Slowly, this Armenian dug holes under Yehezkel Gabbay’s feet, until he finally succeeded with his smooth talk to discredit him, and to make him despicable in the eyes of the Sultan, with the claim that he enjoyed the support of the Janissaries. After members of this group had been decimated in the year 5586, the Sultan sought to eradicate all their vestiges, so that anyone allied with the Janissaries would be unable to raise his head again. Artin described the Sarrafbaşı as one of their allies who could cause further turmoil. Thus the Sultan, in a fit of anger, decreed to send him into exile (sürgün) to the city of Antalya. Later on, Artin succeeded in impressing upon the Sultan to kill him in order to get rid of him.

There is a story circulating among Turkish Jews that the Armenians celebrated the day of his death as a holyday. According to the historian Franco, many believe this story, even though there is no recollection of such a celebration among the Armenians, but perhaps at the time of this event, there were some people of Artin’s entourage who rejoiced privately in their homes about this downfall, whence the story of the holyday, so that it is impossible to ascertain what is the truth and what is a fabrication. It is clear that Yehezkel Gabbay’s death, as that of Tchilibi Behor Karmona, was devastating to the Jews of Istanbul, as their crown jewel was removed from their head. For many months, life for these ill-fated Jews was precarious. Shame-faced, they hid in their homes, unable to appear in public, especially those who were in touch with the Sarrafbaşı, and felt haunted and harassed. From that time on, the moral standing of the Jews in the capital went steadily down. In business, they retreated and

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5 I hope that Avraham Ben-Yaakov (op. cit.) is not confusing the alleged decapitation of Süleyman Pasha with that of Yehezkel Gabbay. At any rate, on page 103, note 11, Ben-Yaakov adds two new details to this sad story which I would like to report here for whatever they are worth. First, Sultan Mahmud II apparently rescinded Yehezkel Gabbay’s death sentence, but by the time the Sultan’s pardon reached Antalya, Yehezkel had already been executed. This angered the Sultan who claimed that his order was to condemn Yehezkel to death, but not to carry out the death sentence immediately. Thus, the people responsible for the death of Yehezkel were themselves put to death. Second, Yehezkel’s head had been purchased by the Jews who buried it in the cemetery of Kuzguncuk which of course is Kuzguncuk, my own birthplace and hometown! Needless to say, no one can verify if there ever was such a burial in the vast Kuzguncuk cemetery.
fell behind. Many among them lost their wealth, and became subject to all kinds of adversities. But all the troubles endured by the Jews of Istanbul, Edirne and Izmir, which were full of Armenians, are nothing when compared to what happened to the Jews of Baghdad, the birthplace of this strong man.

As a native of Baghdad, Yehezkel Gabbay, the strong man, was known in the city of his birth as an efficient person. The mere mention of his name intimidated many people. A large part of his possessions was located in that area. Süleyman Pasha, who had been killed in Baghdad by order of the Sultan, had many friends and relatives who knew very well that their friend and protector had been captured thanks to Yehezkel. So long as this strong Jew was alive, they did not dare raise their heads. But after the news of his demise became known to them, their hatred of the Jews, based on their memories, increased. Henceforth, the Jews of Baghdad became the target for the anger and the hatred of the jealous and unruly Arabs; but since the Jews were also needed for their businesses, they did not always openly harass them. But secretly they were haunted and continually under pressure.

Yehezkel Gabbay was considered a Sage, he was versed in the Tora and in good manners. He worked on behalf of his people's education. He established *Yeshivot* and various houses of study which he supported from personal funds to educate the children of his people in the Tora of Israel. With his efforts, he succeeded somewhat in raising the ethical standard of the Jews of Baghdad. When Yehezkel moved to Istanbul, he did not forget the people of his hometown whom he supported with everything in his power. At the time, the community of Baghdad had many institutions and various welfare organizations whose financial position had improved. All business transactions between Baghdad and European Turkey on the one hand, and between India and Persia on the other, were in the hands of the Jews. Obviously, when the Arabs saw the Jews climb up the ladder of success, their hatred of them increased greatly. But they did not attempt to express this hatred openly. That is why, it became very strong, waiting for the opportune moment, before it could burst in all its fury.

And now, the opportune moment had come. Yehezkel Gabbay, the strong man, had fallen off his high position, his life had been terminated, and with it, the prosperity of the Jews in Turkey, especially those in Baghdad, had come to an end. The news of the death of their rescuer and savior came to the Jews of Baghdad as a thunderbolt foreboding their future, bitter destiny. The Arabs, friends and relatives of Süleyman Pasha, who were still alive, stood up as one man to take vengeance against the Jews. It was a mass uprising. Like predatory wolves, they fell upon those they hated, for eight dark days, or more accurately, during eight nights there was violence, devastating destruction in the Jewish community of Baghdad. Many were killed, maimed, burnt, beaten, their homes torn down and burnt, their goods and possessions
destroyed. Even after that time, no rest was given to the Jews. They were harassed at all
times, they turned into a playground at the hands of these unruly people.

In the [history] of Jewish literature, the name of Yehezkel Gabbay will be remembered
as one who took interest in congregational matters. He established a Yeshiva in his Ortaköy
home where he supported many Talmide Hahamim. Rabbi Avraham al-Azzaki who remembers
him, speaks incidentally about him and of an event that took place in K.K. Es Hayyim in the
village of Ortaköy.\(^6\)

He had been called as ma[tir on the Shabbat of Hol ha-Mo'ed Sukkot, but he did not mention in the
holiday blessings meqaddesh Yisrael veha-semannim. The Haham ha-Shalem and perfect Dayyan,
rabbi Hayyim ha-Kohen was there, and said that this was a great mistake......until news of this
mistake reached the home of the gevur Rabbi Yehezkel Gabbay with whom there were also (other)
great hahamim. The above mentioned gevur asked a ruling on this custom, whether it is necessary
to say meqaddesh Yisrael veha-semannim or not. They said, if he said it, it is not a mistake.

The British traveler Walsh, who was an eye-witness to these events in Istanbul, further
tells us about Yehezkel Gabbay that his house was in Kuruçeşme (in the vicinity of Ortaköy)
and that when the Yemenite Halet efendi was removed from office, they searched the home of
Yehezkel Gabbay, and they found a box full of precious objects and stones. A neighbor of his
assured him that they needed eight porters to carry these objects to Istanbul. Thus, they were
valued for eight million grush, but they were not satisfied, and asked for more money from
him.

This noble Jew gave another three million grush, sum total eleven million grush, that is
a million tellers reached the authorities.

According to stories told by elderly people, his wife fled to Larissa (Yenişehir), and
from there she moved to Selanik with all the possessions that were left to her. For many years,
her home was known as that of the Sarrafbaşı. His oldest grandson, Judge Yehezkel Gabbay,
namesake of his grandfather, the Sarrafbaşı, settled in Istanbul, where he became the founder
of the second newspaper\(^7\) to appear in the capital city.


\(^7\) This newspaper was the weekly Djournal Yisraelit (1860-1871) which for a while appeared up to three times a
week. In 1871, its name was changed to El Nasional, and in 1872 it was renamed El Telegrapho, which under
the direction of Yehezkel's son, Isaac Gabbay, continued to appear until 1930, the year of Isaac Gabbay's death.
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Sr. Avraham Asa, hakat

Aprenda por saber dinitim de ovligasyon,
Noche i día tener karvava,
Shabbat i Moed korno verna,
Atodo ocho meldar akonantar.

En Issur i (h)eter soor pronto alavasyon,
Sin sospecho,
Grande provecho,
Saver i non preguntar.

Buen libro este Ladino kon deklarasyon,
Dinim de doctrino,
Ke meldeesh de kontino,
Muncho mas ke tratar.

Vida, estorya i kuentas de perdisyon,
Poner en memoria
Divre Tora son gloria,
De eyas non apurar.

Rijes de Djudermolo emender buena kondisyon,
Alechar el djugar,
I la noche madrugar,
I por meldar despertar.

Resive non durmir sin meldar liisyon,
Gevir i merkalet,
I ken non tyere poder,
Por muchiguar meldado aprontar.

Halucha le-Moshe ml-Sinay ke el riko terna perdisyon,
Si livro non toka,
Ke non es koza poka,
Aha Ley deshar i soliar.

(h)eter para ke non save le scras rigmisyon.
A baale Tora dinero dar,
I ke poren aga meldar,
I demurim betelim non koniar.

Meldar tanbyen loke save sin detaudasyon,
Este livro ordeni,
Para kual ker benoni,
Ke meldar sin akuntar.

Mas dulses son ke myel i kolasyon,
Avlas kon pezo,
Ke agidesen el sezo,
I alma azen afolgantar.
Anbezan aken non save dinim de orasyon, 
I de Shabbat i Moed, 
Ke ayara aki yo so ed, 
Todo asu kontentar:

Ayuda le sera ael meldador i membrasyon, 
Entre sayos, 
Avriru sus sayos, 
Pronto sin enkantar.

Santos dinim dichos de rabbanim de estimasyon, 
Geonim de onor, 
Yo Avraham Asa, el menor 
De saver y de enlentar:

Syendo somos en galtu kon abasisyon, 
Se pujo el olvido, 
I el meldar ya se vido, 
Kada dia ay falpar:

Ordenar este livrvo mai intisyon, 
Por dar dorino ami, 
Sorhe sibbur lo yami, 
Ael pueblo de yerros aze resguardar:

Ael Dyo Santo ruego kon locor i bindisyon, 
akurte el galtu largo, 
Ke de ser muy amargo, 
Fuerte por somportar:

Hizrayon afime de geula i salvasyon, 
Frague el Santuvayo, 
Kohanim vistan santo sayo, 
Levim tomven a su kantar:

Korbanot ayegen Yisrael i alsasyon, 
Veremos gran alegría, 
Ke ya vino el dia, 
De el kanorton:

Ken ye(h)ji rason

Full text of the Ladino poem with a double acrostic found in the Preface of Sorhe Sibbur, where Rabbi Avraham Asa talks about himself as the author of this translation. (see p. 28)