

# ***Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson*** **A Judeo-Spanish epic poem in rhyme and meter,** **lamenting the brutality of invading Russians** **toward the Jews in Bulgaria**

*Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson*  
 Un poema épico en judeoespañol para lamentar la brutalidad  
 de los invasores rusos hacia los judíos en Bulgaria

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## **Resumen**

En el presente artículo se publica y estudia una kopla del felek en letras rashiés i latinas acerca de la guerra ruso-turca y la destrucción de la comunidad judía de Karnabat. Los textos proceden de los Archivos Nacionales de Sofía y de la Biblioteca Municipal de Plovdiv.

**Palabras clave:** Endecha, kopla del felek, Yosef Hayim Benrey, Albert Confino, Judezmo, Bulgaria, Karnabat, guerra ruso-turca, edición de textos.

## **Abstract**

The article publish and studies a kopla del felek illustrating the Russo-Turkish war concerning the destruction of the Jewish community of Karnobat. The texts come from the National Archives of Sofia and the Plovdiv Municipalo Library Ivan Vazov.

**Keywords:** Dirge, Kopla del Felek, Yosef Hayim Benrey, Albert Confino, Judezmo, Bulgaria, Karnobat, Russo-Turkish War, Edition of texts.

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## 1. The Sofia Municipal Archive

The Sofia Municipal Archive has not only a magnificent collection of Judeo-Spanish books, booklets und brochures of the 19th and 20th century housed as the Ladino Library in a special room of the archive<sup>1</sup>. but also has an extensive collection of Judeo-Spanish manuscripts in Rashi, Solitreo, Cyrillic and Latin scripts<sup>2</sup>. Among them are a large number of unknown stage dramas (*pyezas de teatro*), several collections of proverbs (*refraneros*), short stories (*kuentos*), novels (*novelas*), poetry (*kantikas vyejas de boda*) and historical songs (*kantikas nasyonales*, *kantikas istorikas*, *kantikas de felek*).

These manuscripts stem in part from donations by families which left Bulgaria after the Second World War, and partially from an extensive and ambitious research project of the Institute for Jewish Studies, founded in 1948. As head of this institute between 1948 and 1951, Dr. Asher Hananel, the last Bulgarian chief rabbi (1895-1964), arranged with the assistance of numerous Jewish Community members in all larger and smaller towns across Bulgaria to have more or less all the synagogue, Community and association libraries brought to Sofia. And with the help of a qualified, but nonspecialist volunteer team, had a rich amount of folkloric material (folktales, fables, historical songs, ballads, poetry, proverbs, memoirs, glossaries, etc.) collected throughout the country<sup>3</sup>. A substantial part of this unique collection also consists of copies of well-known collections of songs. Among the songs there are lengthy historical poems about the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 still awaiting philological and historical analysis and examination.

## 2. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878

In the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, in which many Jews fought and died<sup>4</sup>, the ferocious Circassian auxiliary troops, the Moslem Bashi-bazouks<sup>5</sup> and their Bulgarian accomplices, terrorized the countryside, torching villages, robbing and plundering the town of Karnabat<sup>6</sup>, inflicting all manner of outrages upon the Jews who were murdered or expelled in atrocious circumstances<sup>7</sup>. Many of them fled to Sofia, Shumla (Shu-

1. A catalogue of this collection was compiled and published by Collin – Studemund-Halévy, 2009.

2. Studemund-Halévy, 2013 and 2014.

3. Collin – Studemund-Halévy, 2005; 2007a.

4. On the Jews in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, see Criticus (penname of S. M. Dubnow) in *Voskhod*, 1891: Book I, pp. 32-38. Phillips Cohen, 2014: 34-41.

5. The *bashi-bazou(u)ks askeri* ('leaderless', 'unattached', irregular troops) were refugees from the Caucasus, adventurers, armed (sometimes being cavalry) and supported by the Turks but not paid directly by them, they were mercenaries, rewarded by what plunder they could obtain the spoils of war, see Tamir, 1979: 86-91.

6. A Jewish community was first established in Karnabat in the 16th century, there are no Jews living in the area today (also known as Karnobat). See also Rosanes, 1930-1945; Keshales, 1971: vol. 1, 116, 142, 177, 191, 202, 311, 418. 422, 434; Romero, 2008: 305-306; Neuburger, 1996.

7. Monmarché, 1933: 309: «Au début de l'année 1878, Karnobat eut particulièrement à souffrir des bachi-bouzouks». *The Jewish Chronicle* condemned the way the Bulgarians exploited their national liberation to persecute Jews, with whom they had been on good terms for generations (5.10.1877, 7: 9-10), apud Keren, 2007. On the cruelties committed

men), Burgas, Varna, Bucharest or Adrianopoli (Edirne), but most returned at the first opportunity. The *Bulletins de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle* reported that thousands of Bulgarian Jews found refuge at the Ottoman capital of Constantinople<sup>8</sup>. The cruelties of the Muslim mercenaries belong since that time to the repertoire of Bulgarian and Jewish memorial and historical literature<sup>9</sup>.

The newspaper *haMagid* of 1 August 1877 carries a report on the Western condemnation of the Russian troops, while defending similar acts, mostly perpetrated by the Bulgarians, in their righteous anger at centuries of suffering that was their lot at the time. The Hebrew newspaper *haLevanon*<sup>10</sup> quotes a telegram by Lord Derby, who complains about the Russian behavior towards the Muslims<sup>11</sup>. Similar reports can also be found in the Jewish and Judeo-Spanish press in the Balkans and Vienna<sup>12</sup>. Bulgarian Jews who experienced the horrors of the Russo-Turkish war 1877-1878 wrote poems and vivid reports describing their bitter experiences.

## 2.1. The memoirs of Albert Confino

Albert (Abraham) de Eliezer Confino (1866-1958) was a teacher, principal, and school inspector in the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Born in Karnabat, he was sent along with his brothers to attend the Alliance school in Edirne (Adrianople), in Ottoman Turkey. He became later Director of the Alliance schools in Isfahan, and general inspector of all the Alliance schools in Persia<sup>13</sup>.

In his highly readable memoirs, published in 2005 (?) by his grand-daughter Maryse Choukroun<sup>14</sup>, he gave a detailed and vivid picture of the Russo-Turkish War<sup>15</sup>:

On a Saturday in February 1878 [Tevet-Shvat] 5638], the order was issued to evacuate the city [Karnabat] immediately the following morning [12-13]. Already that night people heard the deafening roar of the cannons. Now the word was: save yourself if you can. The Turks had seized control of all means of transport, so that the unfortunate Jews were forced to leave the city on foot, along with some scant belongings [...] A Turkish friend of my uncle who lived in Constantinople

by the Circassians and bashi-bazouks, see the German poem published 1878 in the *Volkskalender des Kladderadatsch: Baschibozuks und Tscherkessen / Plündern freilich ungestört / Doch die Russen auch vergessen / Was zur Menschlichkeit gehört* (Berlin 1878, 67); see also Keshales, 1971: vol. 1, 93-94; Romero, 2008: 306.

8. *Bulletin de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, 2. Semestre 1877: 7-17; Dunstan, 1883: «Constantinople, February 1, 1878 [...] yesterday morning 200 Jewish refugees arrived quite unexpectedly from Karnabat, after a sea-voyage».

9. Dimitrov, 1899: 206; 208-210; Vitcu 2007.

10. *haLevanon* was published intermittently from 1863-1886, with a frequency that varied between monthly, fortnightly, and weekly.

11. *haMagid* 21/30, 1.8.1877: 277; *haLevanon* 14/1, 3. 8. 1877: 2; 14/5, 31.8.1877: 36. See Keren, 2007: 113-130; Rozen, 2005: 131-136, especially pp. 135-136.

12. Mordekhai, 1968: 9-29, especially pp. 16-21; Keren 2007: 128.

13. Land, 2010.

14. Choukroun, 2005: 58-69; see also Antebi, 1999.

15. The numbers in brackets refer to the 113 lines of the Kompla *Sintid esta endecha* reproduced further below.

had provided us with an ox cart, and my grandmother, an aunt, my cousin sick with typhoid fever and I squeezed onto the cart. We wanted to get to Burgas, to the Black Sea<sup>16</sup>. We had hardly left the city when we saw the Jewish quarter ablaze, going up in flames. [37-38]. The Turks had set fire to it, so as to prevent our silo full to the top with grain from falling into the hands of the Russians [...] We heard shots being fired from all directions. Marauding bands, almost always Circassian mercenaries [104-106], who lived exclusively by looting. They came riding in from everywhere on small horses, they shouted and tried to frighten us by their screams. They forced us to give them our possessions [...]. Whoever refused was whiplashed and forced to give up their belongings, or beaten with the butt of a bayonet rifle. [...] In the evening, we reached a small, abandoned town [95] where we spent the night. [...] We departed the next morning [100]... Since the Circassians had already robbed us of our gold, silver and jewelry, now they took our rugs, linen, clothes and kitchen utensils. On the fourth day, a Circassian came toward us. As soon as he saw my sable fur coat, he ordered me to take it off. This child will not survive the cold, my grandmother said to him, can't you see that the child is still so small? What do I care, answered the bandit. I have a son his age, the fur coat will fit him like a second glove. I had to obey him and spent the rest of the journey wrapped in an old blanket that the bandit did not want. On the eighth day, our ordeal came to an end. In Burgas, our parents were waiting for us [109-110]. We spent a week in the bitter cold in a tent at the harbor and waited for a sailing ship that was to take us to Constantinople<sup>17</sup>.

Similar episodes of the Russo-Turkish war, supplementing Confino's memoirs and the poem, can be found in Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish newspapers and historical novels, for example:

a) Mal grado que no duro mucho, siendo en el ano 5637 (1877) ya se empieso la gerra Turca-Rusa en el mes de Mayo ya se empieso a bombardearse Nicopolis, y callo que todas las familias Israelitas junto con el huieron de alli a Plevna [...] Todas las familias puederosas que gosaban de la fortuna, se huyeron, y quedaron todas las familias pobres en grande miseria [...] Viendo el que la gera se estaba enforteciendo, penso en si loque es de hacer por rescatar a esas familias? Si se van encerrar en Plevna van a murir de hambre [...] rogandole por las familias israelitas pobres a que les diera carros grates, por transportarlas a Sofia, y con mucha laseria prospero a tomar 120 carros, hizo cargar a todas esas familias y el tambien partio junto con ellos, (ver en el jornal Hamagid No. 46 [28 november

16. In the 19th century, with the increasing maritime trade in the Black Sea, Burgas became one of the most important port cities. However, it has lost some of its importance with the shift of the trade between Balkans-Istanbul-Trabzon to Southern port cities with the construction of Salonica-Istanbul railway.

17. Choukroun, 2005: 68 (translation mine); Tamir, 1979: 94-95; see also Kocacik, 1978.

1877, 413] del año 1877), hasta que vinieron a la Orchanie, ese viaje les duro de 1-a-5 días por camino, con todo que fueron acompañados de los soldados yagados torna las miserias que somportaron ellos por el camino de parte de los Cherkieses son inumirables»<sup>18</sup>.

In 1878, it was reported that hundreds of Jewish refugees from Bulgaria escaped to Istanbul by the skin of their teeth (b-c), but most returned at the first opportunity<sup>19</sup>. Upon their return, however, many suffered from anti-Jewish attacks instigated by the Christian population, the Russian troops, and from their association with the vanquished Turks (d-e)<sup>20</sup>:

b) Nosotros arivimos a Kosta en el kavo de el mez de Shevat, i el poderoso Dyo nos aparejo la santa Aliansa por protejadera<sup>21</sup>.

c) Una noche yego un navio kon fondo derecho, segun los navios ke azen el servisyo en el Danubio. Este navio era yeno de emigrados de Burgas i sus entorno (Izak Gabbay, 1909: 272)

d) Este fue al venten día ke salimos a Kostan ke partimos por Karnabat, onde vimos nuestras kazas robinadas [...] nuestra kehila de Karnabat ke era una de los mijores en la Rumelia, la derokaron fin el fundamyento, tomaron sus tablas, levantaron sus pyedras de marmol i se yevaron fin los fyeros de las ventanas (Benrey, s.d, p. 6).

e) Mais à la suite de tous ces événements politiques, les affaires de mon pere avaient périclité et force nous fut de rentrer tous a Karnabat. Adieu veau, vache, cochon, couvée! Plus d'école, plus d'études! On devine mon état d'esprit en reprenant le chemin de notre petite ville. Et comble de maljheur, en arrivant, de constater que tout le quartier juif avait été rasé, de fond en comble. Seule la synagogue avait été épargné, les Russes en ayant fait le dépôt de munitions, La synagogue, mais aussi la plus belle maison, celle du Senyor Presente (Confino [2005]: 68).

18. «Beografia de L. M. Crispin, Redactor de el Luzero de la Paciencia», *Luzero de la Paciencia* III, 15, 1888: 210.

19. See Benbassa-Rodrigue, 2000: 104: «The war of independence of 1878 saw the harassment of Jews by Russian and Bulgarian soldiers, the burning of several Jewish quarters in the towns, and the flight en masse of various communities to Istanbul. When they returned in 1879, they had to make a completely fresh start»; Haskell, 1994: 101.

20. See Haskell, 1994: 101.

21. Benrey, s.d.: 4. The complete version of this kompla will appear in Studemund-Halevy – Collin (2015, forthcoming). See also Romero, 2008: 313-315.

## 2.2. Kantika de la guerra, 1878, oyida de Oroutcha la kriadera de Yohanán<sup>22</sup>

An unpublished collection of songs of the Arie family from Samokov<sup>23</sup> contains over 100 unpublished historical poems (*kantikas de felek*) and folksongs (*kantikas de boda*). The collection includes the two copies of the *Kantika de la guerra 1878 oyida de Oroutcha la kriadera de Yohanán* (number 262, p. 46 [MS] and p. 60 [typescript]) from the Russo-Turkish War written in Judeo-Spanish and Latin script and published here for the first time<sup>24</sup>:

Russia Russia que es tou fantazia  
 Tchika es la Turquía asta la Bulgaria.  
 Día de djoueves la ora esta quatro  
 Ya se van foyendo desznoudos i descalsos.  
 Tambien las priniadas les toman los partos  
 I los van pariendo en medio los campos.  
 Mas no kedo ke dizir, mas al Dio bendizir  
 Vini mis ermanos mos daremos manos  
 Por las kriyatouras ke las van matando.  
 El pan ya poujo i a sech i medio  
 De yorar ya era las qué vinieron  
 Oyid estas komplas i de la pelea  
 De Tzaar ya mourieron viejos i mansevos.  
 Ya se alevantavan los siété Reynados  
 Foursa para el tourko ya non le decharon<sup>25</sup>

22. There are further *Kantikas de Oroutcha*.

23. The wealthy Arie family was one of the most popular Jewish families in Bulgaria. Especially the family branch which lived in Samokov had a remarkable history. They were Sefardic Jews coming from Vienna and they settled in Samokov in 1793; see also Tadjer, 1932: 60-62; Benbassa, 1998; Hofmeister, 2009.

24. The version 35C [Romero 2008: 304-305, *Kantikas viejas*, number 262, p. 51 resp. 52], published by Elena Romero employing the rules for transliteration of the periodical *Sefarad*, stems from the Music Department, Jewish National Library (Collection Jacob Michael Books, number 2366). It differs in numerous respects from the two versions available to me from the Sofia Municipal Archive. The version published here, based on a typewritten manuscript, follows the two versions housed in the manuscript collection of the Sofia Municipal Archive / Ladino Collection..

25. Sofia Municipal Archive / Ladino Collection, number 262, p. 60. Poem on the 1878 war, as dictated by Oruča, Yohanán's governess: 'Russia, Russia, what is your fantasy? / Turkey is small and Bulgaria even smaller. / It is 4 o'clock on a Thursday / They are fleeing, naked and barefoot, / Even women in labor / Giving birth in the open fields / We have nothing to say, only to bless the Lord: / Come my brothers, let us hold hands, / For the children that are being murdered. / The price of bread has soared to six and a half / The survivors wring their hands in despair / Listen to the ballads of battle and slaughter / Both old and young die of sorrow and pain / Seven kingdoms have risen up against her / Turkey has no strength left' (translated by Yaffah Murciano). See also Keren, 2007: 129, and Romero, 2008: 303-305.

### 3. Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson

The most important of these poems is an early Judeo-Spanish «epic poem in rhyme and meter, lamenting the brutality of invading Russians toward the Jews»<sup>26</sup>, written by the Bulgaria Jew Yosef Haïm b. Rey [רײ בן], from Karnabat (or Karnobat) in southeastern Bulgaria, about whose life nothing is known<sup>27</sup>. This poem, which is part poem and part prose divided into three parts, describes the suffering of the local Jews, in particular their flight from the Russian troops, fearing the consequences of its entry into the city<sup>28</sup>. The title of the only book of his known to us is the

איסטורייה קומפויסמה די יוסף היים בן ריי די קארנאבט

*Istorya kompuesma* [!]<sup>29</sup> de Yosef Hayim de Karnabat

[‘Historical poem composed by Yosef Haim b. Rey de Karnabat’]

Of this poem three slightly distinct printed versions (in Rashi letters) and two typescripts (in Latin letters) are known. Poem and author were still known in Karnobat, Yambol and Burgas down into the 1940s<sup>30</sup>.

The first and second edition of the 8-page brochure «*Istorya kompuesma*» was, according to research by Elena Romero and Avner Perez, published after the Russo-Turkish War 1877-1878 in Rashi script by the well-known printer Yosef Baruch Pardo (1873-1950) in Plovdiv (Filibe). Yosef Baruh Pardo would then have been very young when he printed these editions<sup>31</sup>. In its valuable collection of Judeo-Spanish books, the *National Library Ivan Vazov* in Plovdiv has the only copy known to me of the second edition (*edisyon segunda*). According to the records in this library, the second edition was published in Plovdiv in 1890. According to the *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book* (BHB 0309327), the second edition was printed in 1900 in Plovdiv. According to the *Bulgarian National Bibliography*, a second (!) edition («*Histori conpoesta de Josef Haym Benrej*») was published 1934 by the Printing House Balkan in Plovdiv<sup>32</sup>.

The historical poem «*Istorya kompuesma*» (Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson) is a dirge-like *kompla* (hebr. *kina*) or *kompla del felek* (tk. *destiny*, dealing with

26. Tamir 1979, 74.

27. Menahemov, 1933; Phillips Cohen, 2014; Studemund-Halévy, 2014.

28. Keren, 2007.

29. The misprint can be explained by the similarity between the Latin letter -m- and the Cyrillic letter t- in handwriting (*m*).

30. This *kompla* was still known in Karnobat down into the 1940s, as the journalist and author Gracia Albuhaire (Albuhaire), raised in this city, reported to me in an extended conversation, 2 September 2013 in Sofia.

31. Arditi, 1973, vol. 4: 164-168. On Pardo's publications, see Collin – Studemund-Halévy, 2007.

32. Bulgarian Books, 1878-1944 (bulg.), vol. VI, Sofia 1963, p. 346 [nr. 54000]. The catalogue states that 200 copies were published. The printing house moved later to Sofia, see Eshkenazi, and Krispin, 2002; see also Collin, and Studemund-Halévy, 2007: 45, nos. 70a, 70b; idem, 2006.



historical events, current affairs and welfare)<sup>33</sup>, that commemorates the plundering of the town of Karnobat, the exodus of its Jewish inhabitants to Istanbul and the return to Karnobat, is a particularly impressive ego-document in which the writer and witness are continuously present in the writing and as describing subjects.

In the following, I seek to establish the dating of this early publication in Judeo-Spanish from Bulgaria to the year 1878, utilizing previously unknown documentation.

### 3.1. Editions

In 1999, Avner Perez published his short article «*Koplas del Felek sovre la suerte de los djudios de Karnabat*» in the journal *Aki Yerushalayim* in Jerusalem, containing six verses [verses 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7] of the *Istorya kompuesma*, consisting of three parts<sup>34</sup>: In a short historical introduction, Perez states, without enumerating reasons, that Yosef Haïm Benrey published the second edition he was in possession of had appeared in Plovdiv already in 1881:

Tenemos en nuestro poder la fotocopia de la segunda edision de este livro imprimido en la impremiria Yosef Baruch Pardo de Filipopoli al deredor del anyo 1881<sup>35</sup>.

In support of this date, he mistakenly refers to the sparse data of the last page of the small pamphlet: *Imprimeria de Yosef Baruch Pardo Filipopoli – Segunda edisyon* (Printing press of Yosef Baruch Pardo, Plovdiv. 2nd ed.), which does not give the year of publication either of the first or second printing. The printer Yosef Baruch Pardo, who published numerous books in Judeo-Spanish and newspapers such as *El Dia* (the mouthpiece of the Zionist movement even before the first Zionist congress) and *haShofar*, would have been five years old when Jews fled from Karnobat! It cannot be ruled out that the first edition was not published by Pardo, even though according to the data in the BHB, the first of the 50 books and newspapers published in Judeo-Spanish in Plovdiv did not appear until 1895 (*Statutos de la Sosyeta Shevet Ahim*, BHB 0309293)<sup>36</sup>. The first book published by Pardo's press according to the BHB appeared in 1897 (*Appelo ala djuderia i a sus ijos fieles*, BHB 0319962)<sup>37</sup>. Between 1897 and

33. The structure of the poem is modeled on the well-known *kinnot* 'Churban of Zion', in which the theme of the horrific events of the *churban* (destruction) dominates the *tefilot* and *kinnot* associated with Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning linked with remembrance of other tragedies that befell the Jewish people throughout history. See Hassán – Romero, 1978; Perez Bazo, 1981; Romero, 1992 [núm. 32a (ed. 1797); 70b (ed. 1848); 83a (1858); 179a (ed. c. 1900)].

34. *Aki Yerushalayim* XX, 60, 1999: 47.

35. Perez, 1999: 46.

36. Collin – Studemund-Halévy, 2007: 125, nr. 220.

37. Collin – Studemund-Halévy, 2007: 9, nr. 10.



1927, Pardo printed 19 books and newspapers in Judeo-Spanish (such as *El Dia* [1897] and *haShofar* [1927])<sup>38</sup>.

In 2007, the Israeli historian Zvi Keren placed the year of publication of this poem to 1893, without verifiable proof<sup>39</sup>. Unfortunately he does not indicate what editions cited in the research literature were available to him (presumably the manuscript housed in the Sofia Municipal Archive).

In 2008, Elena Romero likewise published this *copla* in her excellent, large anthology *Entre dos (o más) fuegos. Fuentes poéticas para la historia de los sefardíes de los balcanes*<sup>40</sup>. In contrast with Perez, she included all 25 verses of Part I and dated the second edition of the brochure to sometime after 1878:

Version aljamiada publicada en un librito Historia comfuesma [sic!] de Yosef Hayim'n Rey de Karnobat [...] segunda edición (s.d., d. 1878)

Elena Romero corrects the text published by Avner Perez and like him, does not deal with the author.

Between 2004 and 2011, together with Gaëlle Collin I visited dozens of libraries and archives. Among the valuable books and documents on the history of Bulgarian Jewry, today housed in the Sofia Municipal Library, which were able to film, scan and photocopy almost in their entirety was also two typewritten manuscripts of the *Istorya kompuesta* by Yosef Haim b. Rey (Collin & Studemund-Halévy 2007; 2009). The typewritten manuscript consists of eight pages, numbered 2 to 9. The second page begins in its upper half with a five-verse CANTIQUA by Aron Issac Daniel from Nikopol. The *Istorya komfuesma* begins in the lower half of the same page. It comprises three parts and its structure is largely the same as the original.

[Parte primera], 2-5 (26 verses: 2 couplets, 12 quatrains, 12 quintains); [Parte segunda], 6-7 (prose text, 5 parts); Parte tresera, 7-9 (12 quatrains). The final page (9) ends with a four-line CANTIQUA<sup>41</sup>.

Numerous typographical errors make it somewhat difficult to read the text: *destru-imineto* recte *destruimiento* (2); *estrmession* recte *estremission* (6); *never* recte *bever* (14); *principio* recte *pricipio* (14); *sentencia* recte *setensia* (37); *seto* recte *esto* (11), etc. The transcription has many irregularities and apparently was not corrected by the writer, who was not proficient in the Rashi script: *cae/calle*; *elos/eyos*; *hue/fue*; *indetcha/en-detcha*; *no/non*, etc; along with a large number of inconsistent transcriptions: *atema-cion*, *esparticion*, *membracion* vs. *abrigation*, *consolation*, *espartition*, *revolution*. The

38. Sitton, 1985: 236.

39. Keren, 2007: 113-130 [here: p. 128]. My thanks to my colleague Vladimir Paunovski, who drew my attention to this important article.

40. Romero, 2008: 306-318.

41. *A mi saray vos combidi / No lo begehatech / Tengo sala i camareta / Ventanas para la goerta / Tirilayla Hop*

text contains a number of non-Judeo-Spanish elements, including eleven Turkish words, fourteen Hebrew words and one word from Bulgarian:

(tk) *aman, bogo, çapa, konak, orman, saltanat, saman, soymak, tel, tepe, yağma*

(hb.) *beemot, hasidim, humot, kahal, kaparat-avonot, mishim (?), shvat, shishim (?), tevet, yom, zadiqim, zeher, zizit*

With the exception of the first few line of the manuscript in Latin script – which begins with *Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson* and not *Oid esta endetcha que quema el corasson*, as tradition demands<sup>42</sup>, along with two other textual changes, all the variants are due to smaller errors in transcription and a number of typographical errors! The complete edition of the 25 verses by Elena Romero, including many historical and linguistic annotations, differs only in a few places from the manuscript version of the *Istorya komfuesma*, part I, published here for the first time, aside from the numerous typographical errors in the manuscript. Here several examples:

- *sintid* (MS) / *oid* (Romero)
- *en el saman* (MS) / *dentro saman* (Romero)
- *lugar mauyavan* (MS) / *lugar fuyiban y maullaban* (Romero)
- *se derite el corasson* (MS) / *se deslie el corasson* (Romero)<sup>43</sup>

Below are several excerpts from the 25 verses partially transcribed by Avner Perez (in brackets and italics, the version of Perez; in brackets and bold, the 25 verses transliterated and adopted to the norms of the journal *Sefarad* by Elena Romero). Comparison of the Latin script version with the transliterations by Perez and Romero shows to what extent the latter deviate from the pronunciation of Judeo-Spanish common in Bulgaria.

1 Sintid [*Oid*; **Oid**] esta endetcha [*endetcha*] que quema [*kema*] el corasson [*kora-son*; **corazón**]

2 Del destruimineto [*destruimiento*; **destruimiento**] de Carnobat [*Karnabat*; **Karnaḅat**] i la venedura [*vinidura*; **venidura**] a Costan<sup>44</sup>;

3 Ayom [(**B**)**Hayom**; *beyom revii*] yom [-] 5 Chevat [*Shevat*; **šebat**] los teles ivan [**iban**] arrivando [*arivando*; **aribando**]

4 Todos ivan [**iban**] yorando [**llorando**] i mauyendo [**maullando**]

5 Si alos judios [*djudios*; **judios**] caros [*karos*] estan dando

6 Todos estan con estr[e]mession [*estremesion*; **estremición**]

42. «El texto va precedido de un estribillo de dos versos, parodiados de la conocicoda endecha *El horbán de Sión*», Romero, 2008: 307.

43. See MS, line 94: «De sentir esta mansia de desliyi el corasson»

44. *Kosta, Kostan, Konstantinopla* ‘Istanbul’

7 Djueves [**G'Jueves**]<sup>45</sup> ninguno loque [*loke*; **lo que**] aser [*azer*; **haćer**] no [**non**] savia [**sabía**]

8 De este mundo nada no queria [*kirian*; **querían**]

9 Loque [*loke*; lo que] ganimos fin [*fina*; **fin**] agora lo vamos a deshar [**dejar**] en un dia

10 Todo hoe [*fue*; **fue**] con depedriession [*depredission*]

11 Dia de Viernes<sup>46</sup> en lugar de desayunar [**desayunar**]

12 Ir al telegraph [**telegraf**] que notenssia [**notensia**] nos va dar

13 Una alma en la sivdad [**civdad**] no [**non**] tiene que quedar

14 De principio [**principio**] fin [**fin**] alcavo [**al cabo**] se tiene que quemar

15 Todod [!] [**Todo**] fue etcho [**hecho**] en destruission [**destrucción**]

16 Elos [*eyos*; **H)Ellos**] que sintieron esta mala desdetcha [*desdetcha*; **deśdicha**]

17 Todos tomaron yoro [**lloro**] i [y] indetcha [*endecha*; **endecha**]

18 Como [*komo*] se va aser [*azer*; **haćer**], ermanos [**hermanos**], esta grande etcha [*echa*; **hecha**]

19 De los cielos [*sielos*] nos callo [*kayo*; *cayo*] esta filecha [*felecha*; **filecha**]

20 I esto nos vino por afriission [**afriición**]

21 Viendo esto todo los djudios [**judios**] empessaron [*empesaron*] a yorar [**llorar**]

22 Estas criaturas [*kriaturas*] como [*komo*] mo las [*kon ke molas*; **con que mo las**] vamos a yevar [**yevar**]

23 A la bura [*ala bora*; **a la bora**] i [y] a la tempesta non [*no*; **no**] es cosa [*koza*; **cośa**] de somportar

24 Esto es porque [*porke*] isimos [*izimos*; **hićimos**] al Dio araviar [**arabiar**]

25 Estos [*esto*; **esto**] es una grande amargassion [*amargassion*; **amargación**]

26 Zahor [*Zeher*; **Zéjer**] para esto ya tiene que quedar

27 De las butiquas [**boticas**] las ropas ya empessaron [**empezaron**] a transportar

29 Por aqui los ladrones ya empessaron [**empezaron**] a soydear [**soidear**]

30 Ninguno de la sivdad [**civdad**] non [*no*; **no**] se tiene que menear

31 Esto fue el aunamiento de atemassion [**atemación**]

32 Hassidim [**hasidim**] i [y] zadiquim [**śadiquim**] todos ivan [**iban**] yorando [**llorando**] i [y] mauyendo [**maullando**]

33 Por las calles or/I [**y por**] las plaças [**plazas**] ivan [**eran**] andando

34 Mirad [**Mirá**], ermanos, esto por membracion guoadraldo [**guadraldo**]

35 Por caparat d'avonoth [**por kaparat 'avonot**] somportaldo

36 I esto nos vino por affriission [**afriición**]

37 Tevet [**Tebet**] sin entrar la sentencia [**setencia**] fue dada

38 Entera la sivdad fue quemada

39 I ala yahma [**yagma**] fue dada

45. Thursday, 10.1. 1878 = 6 Shvat 5638

46. Friday, 11. 1. 1878 = 7 Shvat 5638

40 Una sivdad [**civdad**] como Carnobat [**Karnaḅat**] fue desmembrada [**deśmembrada**]

41 Todo fue con destruission [**destruición**]

42 Yo vos dire que al nueve [**9 de**] Chevat [**šebat**] fuimos salidos

43 De la bura [**bora**] i del [**y el**] frion [!] fuimos oprimidos

44 I [**y**] de los tcherquieſes [**cherquieſes**] fuimos destruidos

45 Tchicos [**chicos**] i [**y**] grandes fueron [**estuvieron**] etchando djimidos [**ġemidos**]

46 Todo que [**quere**] guadrado por membracion

47 Ya salieron de la sivdad [**civdad**] minim i chichim [**šišim**]

48 Fin que arivimos [**aribimos**] todos a la michim [**mešesí**]

49 Ya mos escarvaron [**escarbaron a todos fina**] asta el zizith [**šišit**]

50I [**y**] seto [**esto nos**] fue una affriission [**afriición**]

51 Mas vo [**vos**] contar [**contare**] cosas mouy duras [**coſas mouy duras**]

52 Mujer con siete i otcho [**7-8**] criaturas

53 Suviendo [**subiendo**] i [**y**] abachando [**aḅajando**] por tepes [**de tepe**] i [**y**] alturas

54 La nieve era pico de onduras [**honduras**]

55 Para esto no pueda aver [**haber**] afalagassion [**afalagación**]

56 Ya salieron todos con al guayas [**alguaya**]<sup>47</sup> i [**y**] yoros [**lloros**]

57 Todos con las criaturas en los hombros

58 Coalos [**cualos**] atados muntchos [**munchos**] con bogos

59 No [**non**] valio la plata [**las platas**] i [**y**] los oros

60 Para esto non [**no**] abasta [**aḅasta**] ni consolation [**consolación**]

61 A Duvandji [**Duanġi**] vinimos, un conak isimos [**hićimos**]

62 I [**y**] por descanssar [**descansar**] nos assentimos [**asentimos**]

63 Ni agua [**agua**] para never [!] [**beber**] non topimos

64 De sentir [**sentir**] esta mansia [**manćia**] se derite [**deślie**] el corasson [**corazón**]

65 Cada uno en la tempesta andavan [**andaban**]

66 Por cuvrir [**cubrir**] enriva [**enriba**] una coltcha [**colcha**] se tomavan [**tomaban**]

67 Las criaturas frion [!] [**frio**] i [**y**] tempesta no reyeavan [**reellevaban**]

68 Por un pedasso [**pedazo**] de pan la alma davan [**daban**]

69 Guoay [**Guay**] de tala afriission [**afriición**]

70 Una mujer vieja se murio en el campo en el orman

71 Empessaros [**empezaron**] a gritar aman [**hamán**]

72 All cavo [**cabo**] la enteraron en el [**dientro del**] saman

73 Por non [**no**] aver [**haber**] ni tchapa [**chapa**] ni echhoela [**ešhuela**] ni [!]

74 Ni ningun atrificion [**atrefición**]

75 Esto que vos conti non [**no**] es nada de nada

76 Uvo [**hubo**] quen decho [**dejo**] en el campo criaturas regaladas

77 En el campo las decharon [**dejaron**] solas [**solas y**] assoladas [**asoladas**]

47. Recte alguayas Benrey, s.d., p. 2.

- 78 I [y] las madres fuyeron de la revolution [revolución]  
79 Ya salieron de Carnobat [Karnaḇat] todas las humoth [umot]  
80 De una mujer vieja le yevaron [llevaron] del caro las beemoth [beemot]  
81 La decharon [deḵaron] los hijos dispues [después] de tanta amor  
82 La decharon [deḵaron] solica sin abrigation [abrigacion]  
83 Criaturas con muntcho [muncho] saltanat caminavan [caminaban]  
84 En el campo solos esclamavan [esclamaban]  
85 Las madres por otro lugar mauyavan [fuyiban y maullaban]  
86 De sentir [sentir] esta mansia [manḵia] yora [llora] el corasson [corazón]  
87 Aquellos sefer-toroth [sefer torot] que en el Kaal [cahal] los aparavan [aparaban]  
88 En medio del campo los ladrones los espedassavan [espedazaban]  
89 Non [no] sea que ayga [hay] plata guadrada miravan [miraban] i [y] buchcavan [bušcaban]  
90 De sentir [sentir] todo esto como no se atriste [atrista] el corasson [corazón]  
91 Ninguna mansia [manḵia] como esta non avria [habria]  
92 La caye [cae] entera arastando de livriria [libreria]  
93 Los goyim de ellos muntchas [munchas] papeleras asian [harían]  
94 De sintr [!] [sentir] esta mansia [manḵia] de desliyi [dešlie] el corasson [(el) corazón]  
95 Muntcho [muncho] mal travimos [trabimos], fin Aytos asta que arivimos [aribimos]  
96 Padres, hijos i hijas nos pedrimos  
97 Esta noche en [-] Aytos dormimos  
98 Del frio i [y] de manquansa [mancanza] de cuvierta [cubierta]  
99 Se entezava [entesaron; entešaron] el [de] corasson [corazón]  
100 Ya salieron de Aytos demaniana [de mañana] matrana  
101 Todos demandando si no [lo] vitech [viteš] a mi ermano [hermano] or [o mi] ermana [hermana]  
102 I [que] caminavan [caminaban] en el frio i [y] la yelada  
103 Todos disian [deḵian] no savemos [sabemos] de esta espartition [espartición]  
104 De Aytos passaron [pasarón] a los tcherquiesses [cherquešes] encontraron  
105 A uno a uno por estrena los passaron [passaron]  
106 Fin el [un] aspro que tenian les tomaron  
107 Esto fue el soydeamiento [soideamiento] de atemacion  
108 Todos esparsidos [esparcidos] en los campos [el campo] como la [!] [las] urmigas [hormigas]  
109 Todo fue fin que vinimos a Burgas [Burgaš]  
110 Esperando sus criaturas que vinieran [venían] al lugar  
111 I [y] esto fue grande esparticion  
112 Todos caminimos en los campos [en el campo] como las aves

### 113 Vente dias por la mar [por mar] muertos de ambre [hambre]

It is thus easy to answer the question as to whether the manuscript goes back to a written or an oral source. Most probably the typewritten manuscript is a transcription of the Plovdiv edition, with numerous errors. Consequently, the datings suggested by Perez, Keren and Romero (of the first and second edition) cannot be supported. But when and where was the first edition of the *Istorya kompuesta* published, of which to date there is no known extant copy?

#### 4. The 1878 edition

We are grateful to Max Menahemov<sup>48</sup> for an early reference to what was probably the first printing. In an short essay in the commemorative volume for the outstanding Bulgarian historian and Hebraist Salomon Abraham Rosanes (1862-1938)<sup>49</sup>, he places the publication of the book in the year 1878. Writing in Bulgarian in his sketch of Judeo-Spanish literature, he mentions the young Jewish writer Yosef Benrey and the epic poem he had published in 1878 in Tsarigrad (Istanbul)<sup>50</sup> under a longer and quite different title (in Rashi script!):

איסטורייה קומפויסטה די הבהור והשוב יוסף ריי די קארנובאט  
הין בוז די היכה

*Istorya kompuesta de haBahur veHashuv Yosef b. Rey de Karnobat  
en boz de eha*

[‘History composed in the manner of the Book of Lamentations  
by the young and distinguished Yosef b. Rey from Karnobat’]

On Benrey and his *Istorya kompuesta*, Max Menahemov comments:

In 1878, after the end of the Russo-Ottoman War, a certain Yosef Benrey, a Jewish representative of the new era, published the poem «Istorya kompuesta de haBahur veHashuv Yosef b. Rey de Karnobat en boz de eha». There he describes the conquest of the city of Karnobat by the bashi-bazouks and the Russians, and the sufferings of the victims. The book of eight pages is an epic poem, a rhymed Jerimiade in three parts. Its literary value is mediocre, it mixes the important with

48. Max Menahemov contributed also to the The journal *El Mundo Sefardi* (The Sefardic World), which began to appear in Vienna in 1923.

49. Salvator Israel, Solomon Avraam Rozanes – Originator of the Historiography of the Bulgarian Jews (1862-1938), *Annual/Godishnik* (Sofia) XIX, 1984: 343-371; Ayala, 2012.

50. Tsarigrad (‘town of the Emperor’) is a historic Slavic name for the city of Istanbul.

the unimportant side by side. The main thing is that the lines rhyme. But for us the poem has important historical value, because it points to a growing new sensitivity for folk poetry. Benrey's book was published in Tzarigrad [Istanbul], since at this time there were no Jewish printing houses in Bulgaria<sup>51</sup>. No other works by this author are known<sup>52</sup>.

Upon the whole and granting that Max Menahemov had seen the booklet, it may with certainty be concluded that the first edition of the *Istoriya compuesta* was printed at Istanbul and not in Plovdiv, and the second edition between 1890 and 1900 in Plovdiv.

## 5. Glossary

afalagassion 'consolation'.

afriission 'hard deprivation, intense suffering'.

(al)guayas 'lamentations, protests'.

aman (exclamation) < tc. aman, hb. Haman; bg. аман.

aspro < tk.-ngr. 'small coin in the Ottoman Empire'.

ayom < hb. היום 'today, this day, now'.

beemoth < hb. בהמות 'domestic animals'.

bogos < tk. -ngr. 'bundle of old clothes'.

bura, bora < ngr. βορράς 'cold and violent northern wind' bg. бора.

caparat avonoth < hb. עוונות כפרת 'atonement of physical sins'.

caye 'street'.

chevat < hb. שבט 'the fifth month in the Jewish calendar'.

chichim < hb. ששים 'seventy'.

conak < tk. konak 'government house'; here: 'halting place' (tk. konak etmek 'to make a stop on a journey') bg. конак.

depredission 'ruin, total loss'.

Duvandji 'Tundja river'.

echar guayas 'to lament.

echhoela 'short-handled ax'.

51. This publication is lacking in BHB, Yaari, 1934 and 1967; on the early Judeo-Spanish printing houses in Bulgaria before 1878, see Collin and Studemund-Halévy, 2007a. After the Liberation, Khristo Gruev Danov (1828-1911) and another patriot founded what is now the foremost publishing and printing house in Bulgaria, the first Bulgarian book publisher and book-seller.

52. It is possible that Yosef Benrey was among the emigrees from Karnobat who fled in 1878 via Burgas to Istanbul. He may then have published his small epic poem there.



entezar-se ‘to be stiff by the cold’.

espedassar ‘to tear into pieces’.

estremision ‘terror, panic’.

filetcha, fletcha ‘arrow’, here: ‘comet’.

guayas see (al)guayas.

hassidim < hb. חסידים ‘righteous men’.

humoth < hb. אומות ‘Gentiles, non-Jewish people’.

kaal < hb. קהל ‘community; synagogue’.

mansia ‘sorrow, grief’.

mantar [< gr.] meşesi ‘oak forest; bg. меше.

mauyar ‘meow, bark, howl’.

meşesi < (?) tc. meşe ‘oak; meşelik ‘oak forest.

michim (?).

minim ‘heretics’ < hb. מינים ‘goyim’.

notenssia = notisya ‘news’.

or < Rumanian ori ‘or’.

orman < tk. orman ‘forest’.

papeleras ‘brown paper bag’.

saltanat < tk. saltanat ‘ostentation, spectacular’.

saman < tk. saman ‘straw’; bg. saman.

sefer-toroth < hb. תורות ספר ‘torah scrolls’.

somportar, soportar ‘to stand’.

soydamiento < tk. soymak + sp. –miento.

soydear < tk. soymak, soydurmak ‘ransack, rob, strip bare, sack’; bg. сойдурдицбам.

tchapa < tk. çapa ‘hoe, mattock’.

teles < tk. tel ‘telegram’.

tepes < tk. tepe ‘summit’; bg. теpe

Tevet < hb. טבת ‘the fourth month of the Jewish calendar’.

yahma < tk. yağma ‘loot’; bg. яма.

zadiquim < hb. צדיקים ‘pious men’.

zizith < hb. ציצית ‘one of the four tassels of the undergarment worn by Orthodox Jews’.

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