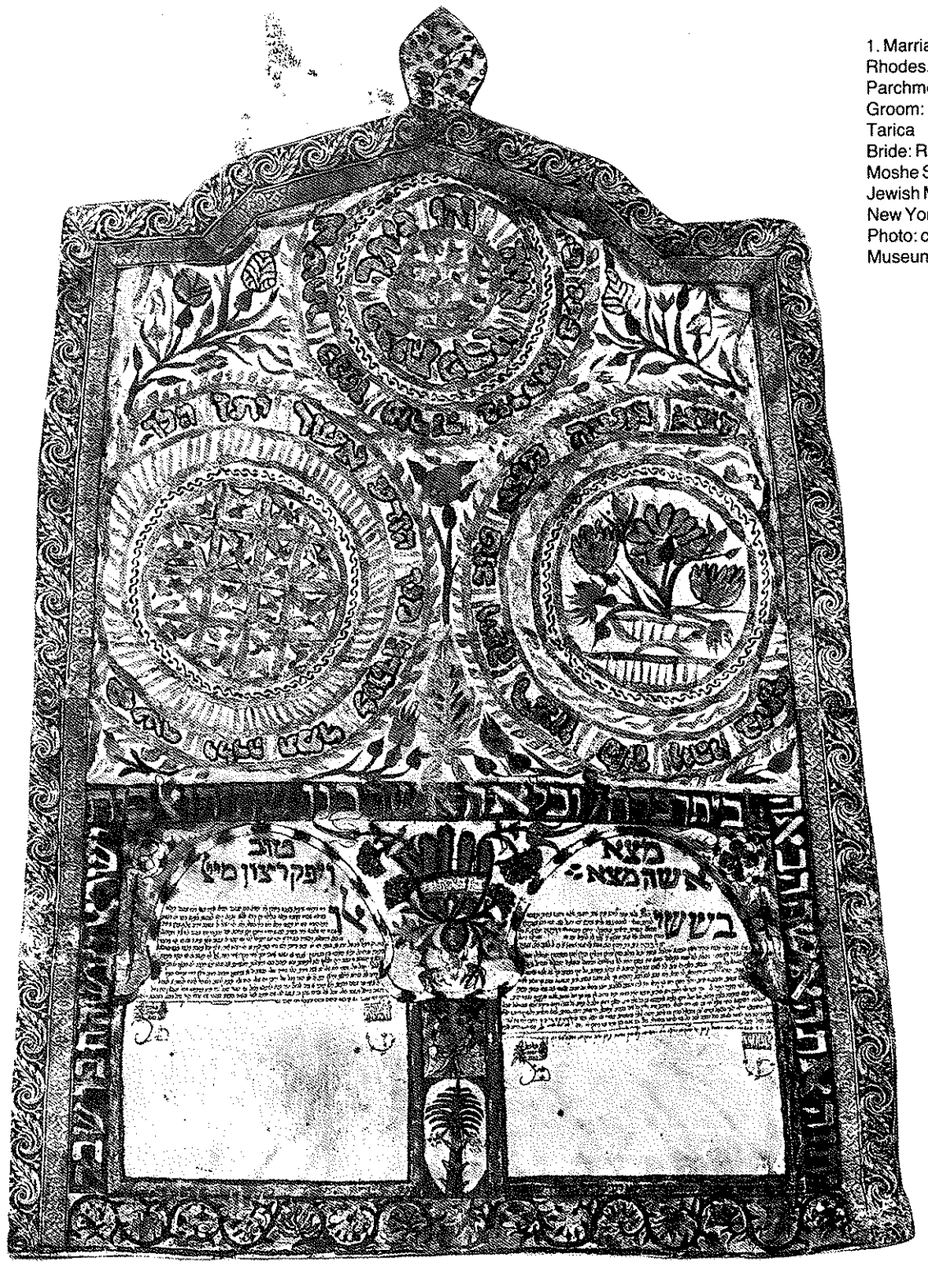


1. Marriage contract
Rhodes, 1830
Parchment, ink, gouache(?)
Groom: Yosef, son of Moshe Tarica
Bride: Rivka, daughter of Moshe Soriano(?)
Jewish Museum Collection, New York, 3142
Photo: courtesy of the Jewish Museum, New York

Decorated *Ketubbot*

Shalom Sabar

One of the most popular customs of the Sephardi Jews, which was maintained even after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, was the decoration of marriage contracts (*ketubbot*). Little is known about the spread and practice of this custom in the period prior to the expulsion. Only a few Jewish objects from Christian Spain, among them *ketubbot*, have survived. Furthermore, while some of these *ketubbot* are decorated,[1] their designs are rather simple and they reflect the traditions of but a few different cities of origin. Nevertheless, these examples clearly indicate that the decorated *ketubbah* was well-known in at least a few communities as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, if not earlier. Additional evidence can be found in the testimony of R. Simeon ben Ẓemah Duran (1361-1444) of Majorca, who states that not only was it customary in his time to cover the *ketubbah* with "pictures and verses," but that this practice was in keeping with religious law.[2]

Evidence linking the decoration of *ketubbot* to Sephardi Jewry steadily increases after the expulsion, particularly in the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Numerous examples of *ketubbot*, with decorations ranging from simple, schematic patterns to multicolored figurative compositions, have survived from almost every community in the "Sephardi dispersion." The most important centers for the decoration of *ketubbot* arose in cities with large and established Sephardi communities, such as Venice and Amsterdam. Yet, richly decorated examples, with names clearly attributable to Sephardi Jews, were also produced in such cities as Hamburg and Vienna, in which small Sephardi communities lived side-by-side with the large and established Ashkenazi majorities.[3] Even in Italy, which is considered by many to be the true home of the decorated *ketubbah* and where the practice ultimately reached its artistic peak, *ketubbah* decoration began only after the arrival of the Sephardim.[4] We may thus conclude that the decoration of *ketubbot* was a custom that characterized Sephardi communities all over, from the booming commercial centers of Europe to any of the places in which the exiles found refuge.

The importance of the decorated *ketubbah* in the Ottoman Empire, where thousands of exiles from Spain and Portugal found a safe and permanent home, is therefore evident. Within the first few generations of their arrival, many members of the Sephardi community achieved economic stability and gradually assumed distinguished positions in the upper echelons of Ottoman society. In the important Jewish communities of Istanbul, Salonika and Adrianople, and in later years Izmir, the Sephardim gradually became the dominant force. We may assume, therefore, that within one or two generations the exiles returned to the traditional ways of their fathers, and wealthy members of the community began to commission elaborate *ketubbot* for the extravagant wedding ceremonies of their sons and daughters.[5] These *ketubbot* must have reflected the tradition of *ketubbah* decoration common in Spain prior to the exile. Unfortunately, none of these early examples have survived. It should be borne in mind that we are not referring to a single tradition. Rather, as the exiled Sephardi communities of the sixteenth century were still organized according to their places of origin on the Iberian Peninsula, there were probably significant stylistic differences in the *ketubbot* they produced. As we shall see, it was only in later years, when these divisions became less pronounced, that each of the major cities began to develop its own independent style.

While we have found no examples of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century decorated *ketubbot* from Turkey and Greece,[6] other sources have provided us with information about the motifs used to decorate them. The most important of these sources is a responsum of R. Avraham ben Moshe di Boton (1545?-1588), a second generation exile, born and raised in Salonika. "I have been asked," writes di Boton, "about a *ketubbah* in which the scribe (*sofer*) drew the images of the bridegroom and bride, and the sun and the moon, if it is advisable to do so..."[7] From this source we learn that in the second half of the sixteenth century, *ketubbot* were illustrated with celestial and human images. While di Boton advised against using these images in *ketubbot*, he did not disqualify *ketubbot* that had already been decorated with them. Judging from the very careful wording of his response, and based upon what we know from other rabbinic responsa to questions regarding the legitimacy of decorations on ritual objects, including *ketubbot*, we may safely conclude that the aforementioned *ketubbah* reflected an acceptable and popular form of *ketubbah* decoration.[8]

Another indirect source is a group of Sephardi *ketubbot*

created in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[9] Among them are some of the oldest known decorated *ketubbot* to be produced by a Sephardi community after the expulsion. Indeed, these contracts are decorated with motifs found on Jewish ritual objects and Hebrew manuscripts from medieval Spain. Their most dominant feature is a double horseshoe arch, which forms a border around the text of the *ketubbah*, on the right, and that of the *tena'im* (pre-nuptial agreement) on the left.[10] This motif originated in the Moorish art of Spain, and was brought to Venice by the Sephardi exiles. Thus, it is highly probable that the Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire also used this motif, at least during the first few generations of exile.

A relatively late *ketubbah* made in Salonika in 1790 (pl. 54)[11] offers support for this thesis and provides us with a concrete example of the kind of *ketubbah* mentioned in the responsum of di Boton. The *ketubbah* was the work of a folk artist, an apparently skilled craftsman who drew his inspiration from both early and contemporary *ketubbot*. In it, as in Venetian *ketubbot* from the early seventeenth century, a double horseshoe arch, though simple and schematic, surrounds the two parts of the *ketubbah* text. The artist was probably familiar with this motif from *ketubbot* of previous generations that belonged to members of his community; he could not have taken it from the decorative tradition of the Sephardi Jews of Venice, if only because it had already disappeared from use in Venice by the mid-seventeenth century. On the other hand, the twelve medallions with signs of the zodiac that surround the double horseshoe arch are apparently based on eighteenth-century Italian *ketubbot*.[12]

In addition, the use of the horseshoe arch thus seems to indicate that among the Sephardim of Salonika there were those who preserved this architectural element, perhaps out of nostalgia for their tradition and their former land, despite the fact that it was not used in the local environment.

A most surprising element in this *ketubbah* is found in the upper part of the page: in two small structures located on both sides of a central structure, are two human images, depicted in a rather naive fashion. Within the structures are inscriptions linking the central structure to the marriage canopy of King Solomon (Song of Songs 3:9), and the human images to the bridegroom and bride. The verse "He who finds a wife has found happiness and has won the favor of the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22) appears next to the images. This use of human images, which is not found in Turkish and Greek *ketubbot* of the period, brings us back to the responsum of di Boton. It appears, then, that the tradition of decorating *ketubbot* with images of the bridegroom and bride had been quite common in Salonika of the sixteenth century but it gradually declined.

In subsequent generations, the attempts to revive the age-old motifs apparently ceased. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire, from the late eighteenth century until the Empire's ultimate collapse at the beginning of this century, the social and economic status of the Jews also waned. It may be reasonably assumed that this had a bearing on the production of elaborate ritual objects for home and synagogue use, although we have but little evidence of this.

One example may be found in the area of decorated *ketubbot*. While *ketubbot* were generally written on parchment until the end of the eighteenth century[13] and in a few places also in the early nineteenth,[14] during the period of decline most examples were produced on sheets of paper. The use of the cheaper, less durable material undoubtedly indicates a change in attitude towards the *ketubbah*. The decline is also reflected in the decoration. A limited number of designs were repeated over and over in the *ketubbot* of each city, in accordance with the socioeconomic status of the patron. This stylistic poverty was also the result of the strong influence of Ottoman folk art on the *ketubbah* decorators of the big cities, as stylistic and iconographic homogeneity also characterizes non-Jewish Ottoman folk art of the nineteenth century.[15] Gradually, the differences between the various Sephardi *kehalim* disappeared, and the objects produced by them lost their individuality. The folk art of the Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire began to take on similar characteristics and became much more uniform.

Most of the *ketubbot* known to us date from this period. On the whole, they are written in dense, rabbinic-cursive script on large rectangular sheets of paper. In cities where it was customary to include the *tena'im* with the *ketubbah*, there are two columns of text; where this was not the practice, there is one column with longer lines.[16] A decorative border, with a rich variety of freely drawn motifs without contour lines, surrounds the text, filling the page with color. The common motifs are, for the most part, unrelated to the *ketubbah* text and the marriage ceremony and do not have any particular Jewish significance. As mentioned, even the images of the bridegroom and bride were no longer rendered by this period. While several *ketubbot*, as we shall see below, seem to attempt to lend Jewish significance to motifs that had already become a fixed part of the decoration, it is possible that the absence of particularly Jewish motifs did not really constitute a problem. As certain elements, together with Hebrew inscriptions, were repeated time after time on so many of the *ketubbot*, it was probably taken for granted that that was how the marriage contracts were "supposed" to appear.

The following is a survey of nineteenth-century Sephardi *ketubbah* designs from the five major communities of the western Ottoman Empire: Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika, Rhodes and Adrianople.[17] The discussion will also touch upon the last phase of this illustrious tradition, namely, the transition from the handwritten to the printed *ketubbah*. Finally, we shall briefly describe characteristic features in the formularization of the *ketubbah* text in each of the five cities.

Istanbul

Some of the most striking nineteenth-century *ketubbot* from the Ottoman Empire originate in the Sephardi communities of Istanbul and its environs. Despite the gradual deterioration of Jewish life during this period, Istanbul, the capital city, remained a center for Jewish cultural activity. It was undoubtedly the home of a great many Jewish craftsmen, who prepared ritual and other objects. From the sums quoted in the section of the *ketubbah* that deals with the bridal dowry, we learn that both the wealthy and the middle-class commissioned decorated *ketubbot*. The difference between the *ketubbot* commissioned by the upper-class and those by the middle-class can generally be seen in the design: while the former are colorful, rich in motifs and technique, the latter are smaller, less exuberant in color and characterized by a standard decorative design, copied from one *ketubbah* to another.

One type of *ketubbah* commissioned by members of the middle-class was particularly popular for several decades (pl. 50).[18] These *ketubbot* are replete with crowded floral patterns, drawn in impressionistic strokes, without outlines, in bright shades of yellow (gold), red and green. The page is divided horizontally into two. Floral patterns fill the upper part, while the bottom contains the text. Written in wide lines, the text is bordered by a round or pointed arch, which is surrounded by a frame of long stems and green leaves. The two parts of the page are separated by a framed rectangle. In it the verse, "He who finds a wife has found happiness and has won the favor of the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22) appears in large, square, gold script.[19]

The use of stylized flowers and floral patterns to fill the entire field is characteristic of the decorative art of the Ottoman Empire in general.[20] The illuminators' considerations were, above all, decorative; the organization of elements on the page was governed by principles of harmony, rhythm and symmetry. On the whole, the *ketubbah* illuminators remained faithful to these norms. Their works recall items produced for members of the middle-class – particularly the merchants – in Turkey during that period. Most of the *ketubbah* illuminators were apparently Jewish. Although they had not been apprenticed specifically in this area, the more talented ones among them gradually mastered the technique. In many cases they would prepare a page decorated according to the standard *ketubbah* design in advance. The text of the *ketubbah*, taking up only a small portion of the page, would be written by the local scribe at a later stage.[21]

2

2. Marriage contract (detail)
Istanbul, 1863
Paper, gouache and gold powder
Groom: Moshe Bekhor Ḥayyim Ben Moshe
Bride: Kalo(?), daughter of Menaḥem Even Yakar (Abeniacar)
Private collection

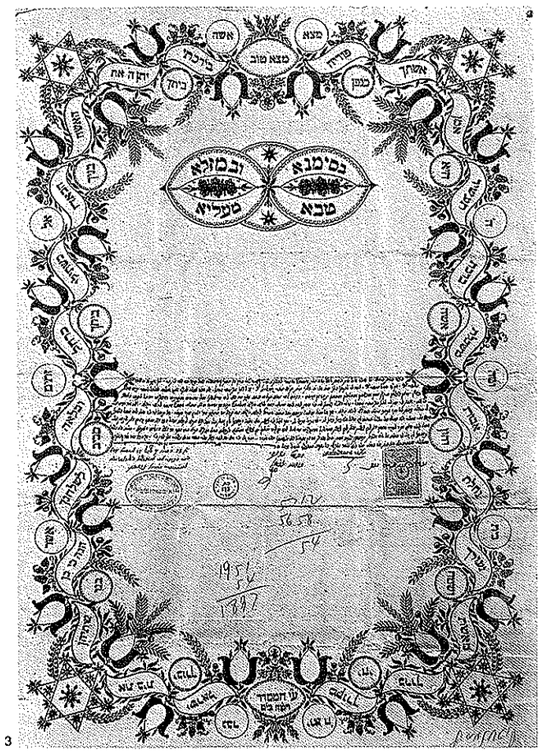
There is a more elegant variation of the standard design outlined above, apparently created for the more established middle-class. Two *ketubbot* from the years 1854 and 1863 (fig. 2, pl. 49), probably the work of one artist, represent an interesting combination of the ordinary composition and new elements. Actually, the standard design is enriched by a more rhythmic and symmetrical organization of the flowers, arranged within horizontal and vertical rectangles that lend uniformity and harmony to the page. In addition, the variety of colors and flowers is greatly increased. The most significant change, however, can be found within the central rectangle, just above the standard verse from the Book of Proverbs. There we observe a framed miniature, depicting a characteristic scene from the banks of the Bosphorus: three buildings with rounded decorated domes, separated by a garden of shrubs and two large trees. In the foreground, black boats of various sizes float on the river; above, a number of birds sweep through the sky.[22] The three buildings recall the typical Ottoman *kösk*, a small structure used by the Turkish nobility for special occasions and for receiving guests. Such *kösks*, both simple and elaborate, were often found on the banks of the Bosphorus.[23] What is difficult to understand, however, is why this scene was assigned so prominent a position in the composition of the *ketubbah*. While this may be no more than an expression of local Jewish patriotism for the host city,[24] the explanation may go beyond this. Perhaps the inclusion of this scene reflects the desire of middle-class families to approach, if only by way of imitation, the status of the nobility.

Support for this interpretation can be found in the source of the miniature used in the *ketubbah*. While this scene was indeed typical of the region, it was not inspired by the natural surroundings themselves, but was based rather upon a common artistic convention of the time. This convention is employed, for example, in the long, rectangular friezes depicting the characteristic horizon of Istanbul, with its *kösks*, trees, birds and boats, that form part of the frescoes in palaces and private homes of the Turkish nobility (fig. 2). According to Renda,[25] frescoes with architectural elements integrated with the local scenery first appeared in Turkish art in the mid-eighteenth century, under the influence of Western art trends. Turkish artists learned the principles of baroque and rococo art from their European counterparts who visited the capital city, as well as from artifacts that were imported from Europe to Turkey. Members of the Turkish nobility who sought to imitate the lifestyle of the West commissioned local craftsmen to decorate their homes according to the new techniques. In the Jewish neighborhoods such frescoes appear mainly in the synagogue (cf. "Synagogues"). But a simpler and more immediate way for Jewish patrons to emulate the Turkish nobility was found by incorporating depictions of these houses in their *ketubbot*. It should be noted, however, that in the frescoes in palaces and homes, the artists made a conscious effort to employ Western techniques, particularly the use of linear perspective, which was still foreign to Turkish art. In the *ketubbot*, however, the motifs, which may also have symbolized the house in which the couple would live, were depicted in the traditional manner, with no attempt at foreshortening, and with no overlapping of figures.

The tremendous popularity of this design is demonstrated by the fact that not only more sophisticated variations were created[26] but simpler ones as well, such as the 1864 *ketubbah* from the Ortaköy quarter of Istanbul (pl. 50b), housed in the Jewish and National University Library, Jerusalem.[27] This *ketubbah* reflects an extreme simplification of the standard design, incorporating the most basic of elements in a modest, more limited fashion. Even the flowers are simpler, and there is no attempt to crowd the page as in other *ketubbot*. Additional evidence of the popularity of this design can be found in *ketubbot* of Istanbul's large Karaite community, which also employ the elements and composition of standard design.[28] These contracts also attest to the stylistic and iconographic homogenity of the *ketubbot* types that developed in the different cities of the Empire. During this period, the material culture of the Jews was influenced more by the folk art of the surrounding community and the socioeconomic status of the patron who commissioned the object, than by the internal traditions of the different Jewish communities.

Another type of elaborate *ketubbah* commissioned by wealthy members of Istanbul's Jewish community is characterized by its eye-catching, multicolored decorations. An interesting example of this kind, today part of a private collection in the United States, dates to 1881 (pl. 51a). It was produced on an exceptionally large (144 x 72 cm.) rectangular sheet of paper. The top margin is cut in the shape of a dome above a tiered roof. As in other *ketubbot*, the page is divided into two. Its upper portion contains a large paper-cut in the shape of a golden sun[29] and a flower in each of the four corners; the bottom portion holds the text of the *ketubbah*. Both parts are surrounded by a rectangular frame, which is covered with paper-cuts of airy, multicolored buildings and tall cypress trees. The buildings are placed one next to the other in a long row, their windows creating a pleasing, colorful rhythm. Larger buildings, done in a similar technique, also appear on the tiered roof and the dome (these have only been partially preserved). Thin golden bands, cut from paper, add additional light and color to the overall composition, framing the different decorative elements and forming the square border that surrounds the text.[30]

This technique is employed in yet another *ketubbah* from 1881, which is housed in the Erez Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (pl. 51b). It, too, is exceptionally large (149 x 73.7 cm.) and its central field consists of multilayered paper-cuts representing



3

4

colorful buildings. In this case, however, a central building, flanked on either side by smaller structures, appears just above the text. An additional airy building surrounded by cypress trees, is found at the top of the page, also cut in an architectural design. This *ketubbah* contains, in addition, three pairs of colorful birds.

The cut-outs in both of these *ketubbot* recall the skyline of Istanbul, although no specific buildings are depicted. Their general layout, comprised of a rectangular central section surrounded on all four sides by rows of buildings, is reminiscent of the conventional pictures of the holy sites in Islamic miniature paintings.[31] Thus, it is possible though as yet unproven that the central structure in the last *ketubbah* represents the *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple). The inclusion of the cypress motif in each of the *ketubbot* may have to do with the fact that in Islamic culture, this tree is a symbol of the upright young lover, and was thus used to ornament the marriage

3. Marriage contract
Istanbul, 1898
Paper, print (gold)
L.57 W. 40.5
Groom: Mordekhai Menashe Ben Shemuel Menashe
Bride: Sarita, daughter of Moshe Capiluto
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 278, Jerusalem

4. Marriage contract
Istanbul 1906
Paper, print
Press: "Impresseria Gabbai"
L. 43 W. 27.5
Groom: Menahem Ojalvo Ben Avraham
Bride: Julia, daughter of Moshe Capiluto
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 741

document.[32] The pairs of birds in the latter *ketubbah* were also commonly used during this period to represent lovers. The placement of one of the pairs of birds next to the inscription "With good fortune, and in time of blessing and success" lends support to this assumption.

Beginning in the 1890s, the Jews of Istanbul gradually stopped producing elaborate marriage contracts, and the popularity of the printed *ketubbah* increased. Eventually it was used for all Jewish marriages in the city.

The first printed *ketubbot* reflect an attempt to preserve the spirit of the handmade types. In a 1898 *ketubbah* now at the Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem (fig. 3), for example, the entire text was written by hand, while the border – done in gold – was printed. The pictorial motifs are so rich, however, that they almost appear to have been done by hand. Yet within a few years, the attempt to approximate handmade *ketubbot* ceased, so that the printed *ketubbot* from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards are much simpler (fig. 4). In these *ketubbot*, the entire page, including the text, is printed (except for the date, names, and dowry, which were filled in by hand). Even the border is simpler: a thin intertwined decorative band with the Ten Commandments in the top center part of the page. It is interesting to note that these *ketubbot* were made in the Jewish printing houses of Istanbul, and occasionally the printer's name appears at the bottom of the page.

Finally, a few words on the *ketubbah* text used by the Sephardim of Istanbul in the nineteenth century. Unlike the other Sephardi communities both inside and outside the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardim of Istanbul did not include the text of the *tena'im* in their *ketubbah*. This text was prepared as a separate document, while the *ketubbah* itself contained only the final amounts of the dowry and the increment (*tosefet*).[33] Istanbul *ketubbot* quote, however, one of the most important terms that falls on the bridegroom: "he shall not take another wife in addition to her and he shall not divorce her without the permission of the *Beit Din* (Rabbinical court)." This term usually appears in the list of special *tena'im* used by the Sephardi communities, but owing to its importance, and to the fact that the *ketubbot* from Istanbul did not include the standard text of the *tena'im*, the rabbis of the city apparently decided to include it in the *ketubbah* itself.

Istanbul is referred to in the *ketubbot* as **קושטנדינא** (Kushtandina), according to the old Arabic name of the city. The location of the city is described as "sitting on the banks of the great sea."[34] If the wedding took place in one of the Jewish neighborhoods, the following was written: "here in the place of [name of quarter], which is near Kushtandina." In the dowry clause of the *ketubbah* various coins are mentioned, but especially the Turkish coin called by the Jews **גרוש אריות** (**זוlion piastres**"). In Istanbul, unlike some other communities, it was customary for the bridegroom to sign the *ketubbah*.

Izmir

A different and independent tradition of *ketubbah* decoration developed in Turkey's second most important community during the nineteenth century. The many examples from Izmir in our possession indicate that the custom of *ketubbah* decoration had been quite popular among the Sephardim of that city. The large number of *ketubbot* preserved enables us to trace four stages in the development of nineteenth-century *ketubbah* decoration:

1. Early period, 1800 until the 1830s
2. Intermediate period, 1840s-1850s
3. Late period, 1860s-1880s
4. Transition to the printed *ketubbah*, starting in the 1890s

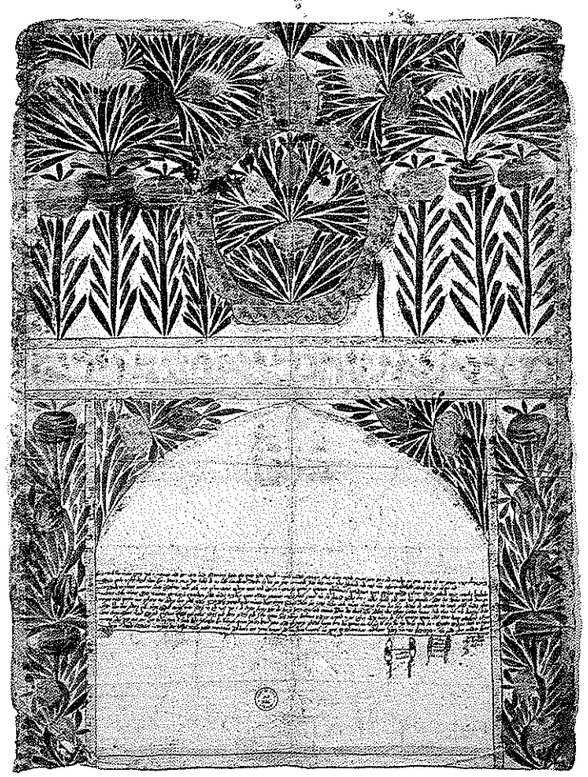
Only two *ketubbot* from the early period are known to have survived, one dating to 1828 and the other to 1830 (fig. 5, pl. 52). While these *ketubbot* were created towards the end of the period, they clearly preserve elements of the Sephardi *ketubbot* produced before the centers of the Ottoman Empire began to develop their own standardized designs. This is especially evident when these *ketubbot* are compared with Salonikan examples from the same period. The 1830 *ketubbah*, for instance, has many elements in common with a Salonikan *ketubbah* from 1837 (pl. 55d): the knob-like protrusion of the top of the page; the text, set within an arch, above which the verse from Proverbs appears; the upper portion of the page, decorated with a round medallion in which there are flowers, pairs of birds, etc. The differences between the two types, however, (i.e., the location of the birds, which in the *ketubbah* from Izmir are inside the medallion but in the Salonikan example above it) indicate that there is neither a direct link between the two nor is one a copy of the other. Rather, the *ketubbot* probably stem from a common source, which later developed independently in each of the communities.

Besides their similarity to the Salonikan *ketubbot*, the two contracts from Izmir contain other elements that shed light on the long tradition that preceded them. First, both were produced on parchment, a practice which, as we have mentioned, gradually disappeared during this period. Second, the shape of the arch differs from that used in local *ketubbot* as they developed in subsequent years. It is quite possible that this arch represents a later, stylized variation – a final stage in the fading collective memory – of the Moorish arch brought by the Sephardi Jews from their homeland. If so, it may have come to Izmir by way of Salonika, although other routes are also possible.

Not enough homogenous material from the intermediate period has survived to enable us to determine with certainty the general nature of the decorations in its *ketubbot*. Unlike those from the early, late and transition periods, the few

Plate 49

Pl. 49
Marriage contract
Istanbul, 1853
Paper, gouache and gold powder
L. 108 W. 73
Groom: Shabbetai Ḥayyim, son of Yosef Ḥayyim
Bride: Kaden, daughter of Nissim Avraham Alkolumbri
Israel Museum Collection, 179/317; 56.82
Purchased by courtesy of Fund in honor of Ari Ackerman, 1987



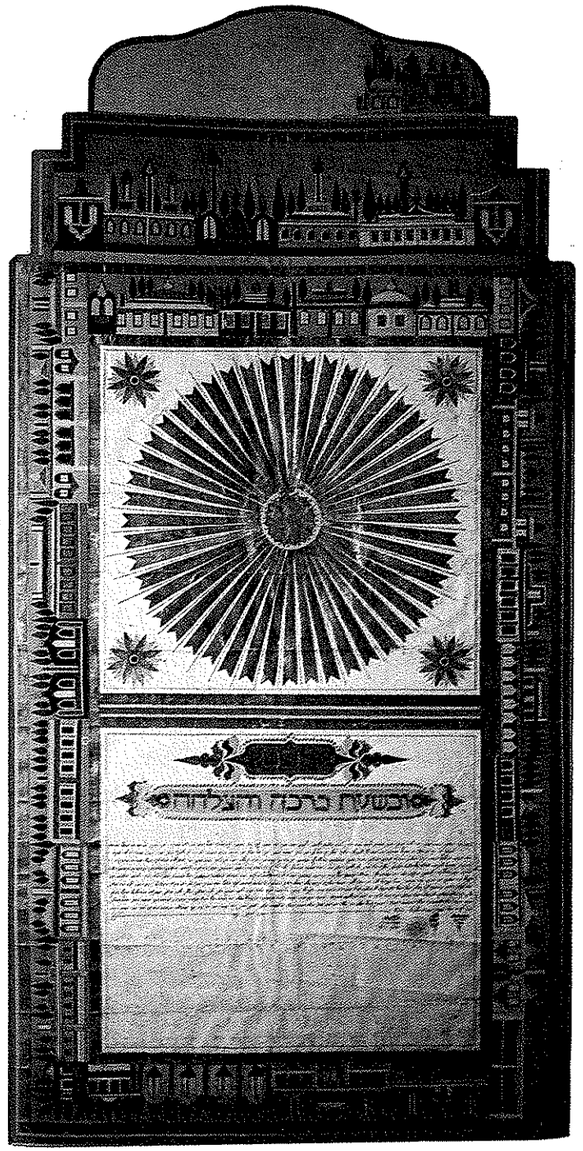
a

b

Pl. 50
Marriage contract
a. Istanbul, 1863
Paper, gouache
L. 77 W. 62
Groom: Nissim Eliezer, son of Moshe Raphael Vitas
Bride: Luna, daughter of Yeuda (sic) Bulenbo
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 166
b. Istanbul (Ortaköy), 1864
Paper, watercolors and gold powder
L. 62 W. 47
Groom: Yiẓhak Romano, son of Nissim Moshe Romano
Bride: Kalo, daughter of Yeuda (sic) Rispin
The Jewish National and University Library Collection, 22 c, Jerusalem
Photo: courtesy of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem

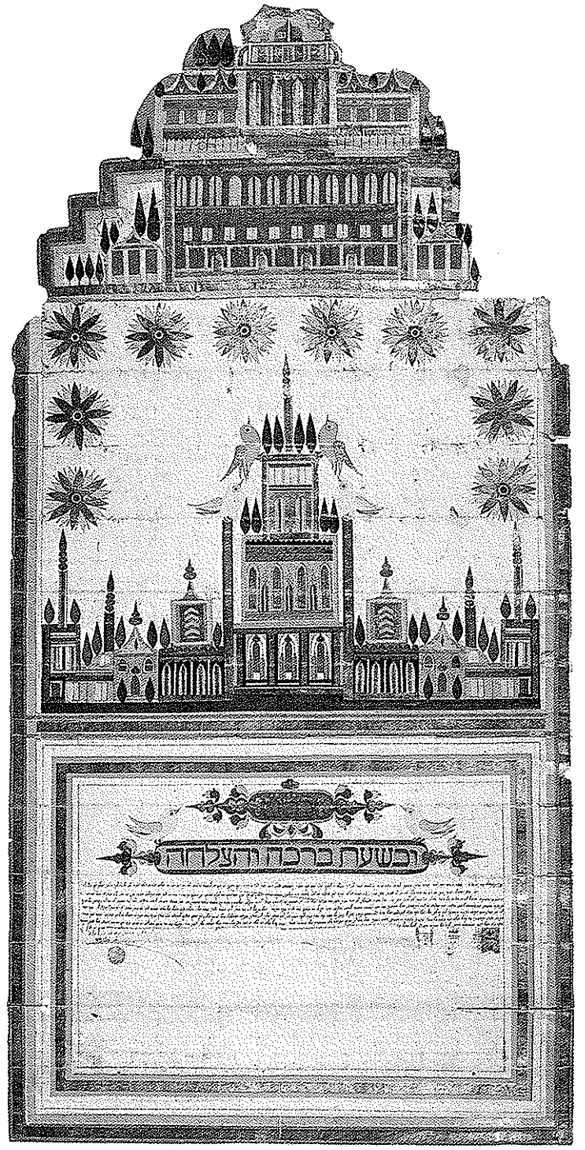
Pl. 51
Marriage contract
a. Istanbul 1881
Paper, collage
L. 144 W. 72
Groom: Avraham Shem Tov Efendi, son of Yeḥezkiel(?) Shem Tov
Bride: Esther, daughter of Gabbai Efendi
Leslie Meral Schick Collection, Boston
b. Istanbul, 1881
Paper, collage
L. 149 W. 73.7
Groom: Eliezer Taros
Bride: Ḥanula
The Ethnography and Folklore Pavilion Collection, MHE 59.84, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv
Gift of Moshe Benbenishty, Margorith Kalawra and Rosa Levi, Tel Aviv
Photo: courtesy of the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv

Plate 50



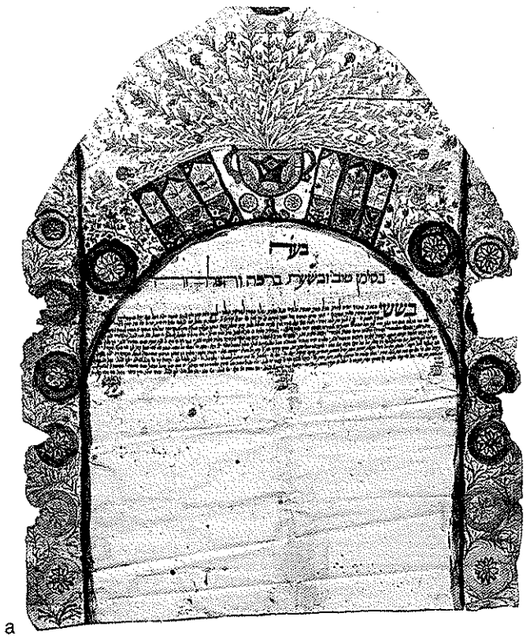
a

Plate 51



b

Plate 52



a

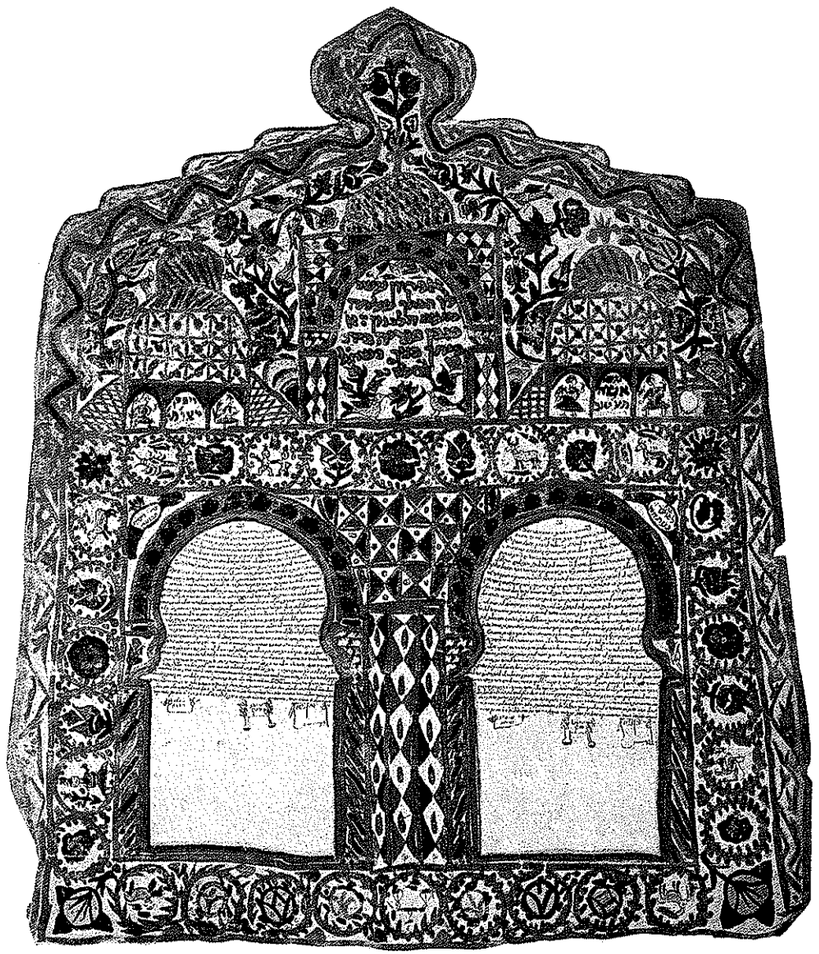
c

b

Plate 53

Pl. 52
Marriage contract
Izmir, 1830
Parchment, watercolors, gold powder and ink
L. 79 W. 64
Groom: Ya'akov Franco, son of (the gravedigger) Moshe Franco
Bride: Fari Goria(?), daughter of Ḥayyim Franco
Israel Museum Collection, 179/139; 667-11-40
Gift of Rahel Even-Zohar, Jerusalem

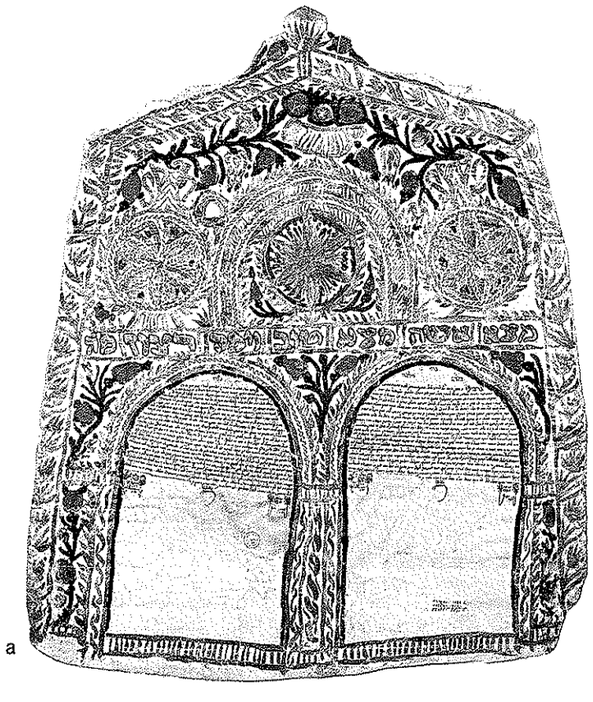
Pl. 53
a. Izmir, 1852
Paper, watercolors, gouache and gold powder
L. 74 W. 56
Groom: Yiẓḥak...Seriro(?), son of Yosef Seriro(?)
Bride: Miriam..., daughter of Moshe, son of Deisos(?)
Avraham Yaari Collection, Jerusalem
b. Izmir, 1878
Paper, watercolors
L. 53 W. 38
Groom: Ya'akov ha-Cohen
Bride: Dona
Israel Museum Collection, 179/335
c. Izmir, 1880
Paper, watercolors
L. 70 W. 57
Groom: David Tellias, son of Yosef Tellias
Bride: Miriam, daughter of Yiẓḥak Mizraḥi
Avraham Yaari Collection, Jerusalem



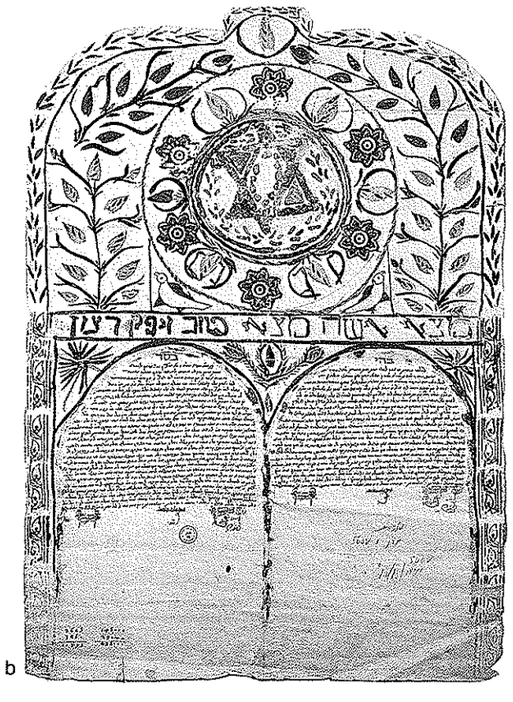
Pl. 54
Salonika, 1790
Parchment
Victor Klagsbald, Jerusalem
(From: Synagoga, C304)

Pl. 55
Marriage contract
a. Salonika 1827
Parchment, watercolors and gold powder
L. 77 W. 66
Groom: Shemuel, son of Yiẓhak Yeini known as Mercado
Bride: Julia, daughter of Yeuda (sic), son of Rabbi David ha-Levi Carasso
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 19, Jerusalem
b. Salonika, 1842
Paper, watercolors, gold powder
L. 73 W. 53
Groom: Asher, son of Yeuda (sic), son of Rabbi Yiẓhak ha-Levi Carasso
Bride: Sarah, daughter of Yeuda (sic), son of David ha-Levi Carasso
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 17, Jerusalem
c. Salonika, 1866
Paper, watercolors
L. 45 W. 35
Groom: Shelomo Ben Aharon known as Bekhor Moshe
Bride: Raḥel, daughter of Pinḥas Meshulam
The Jewish National and University Library Collection, TK 25, Jerusalem
Photo: courtesy of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
d. Salonika, 1837
Paper, watercolors
L. 79 W. 55
Groom: Yeuda (sic), son of Ya'akov, son of Eliyahu Arditi
Bride: Mazzal Tov, daughter of Shemuel ha-Cohen
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 16, Jerusalem

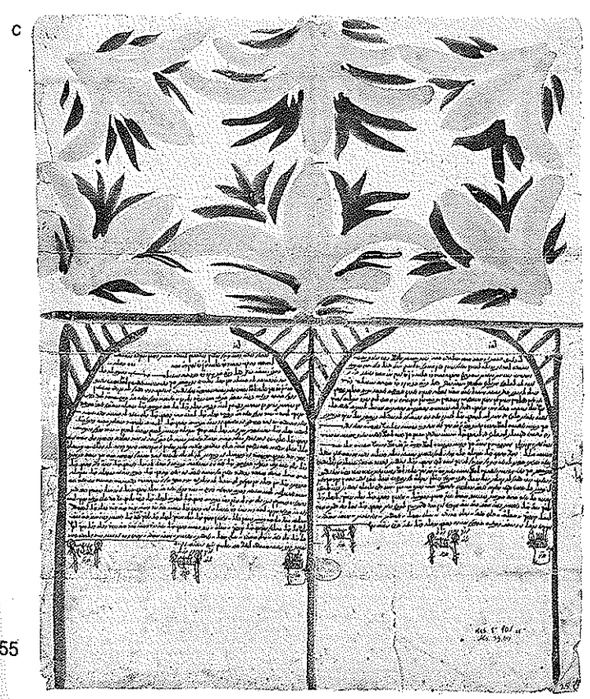
Pl. 56
Marriage contract
Rhodes, 1843
Groom: Hayyim Yosef Tarica
Bride: Joya, daughter of Rabbi Mikhael Ya'akov Israel
Victor Tari Collection, New York
Photo: courtesy of Victor Tari, New York



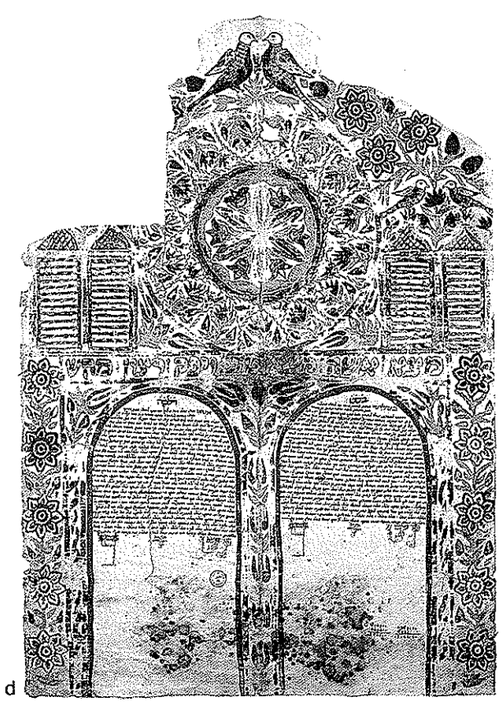
a



b



c



d

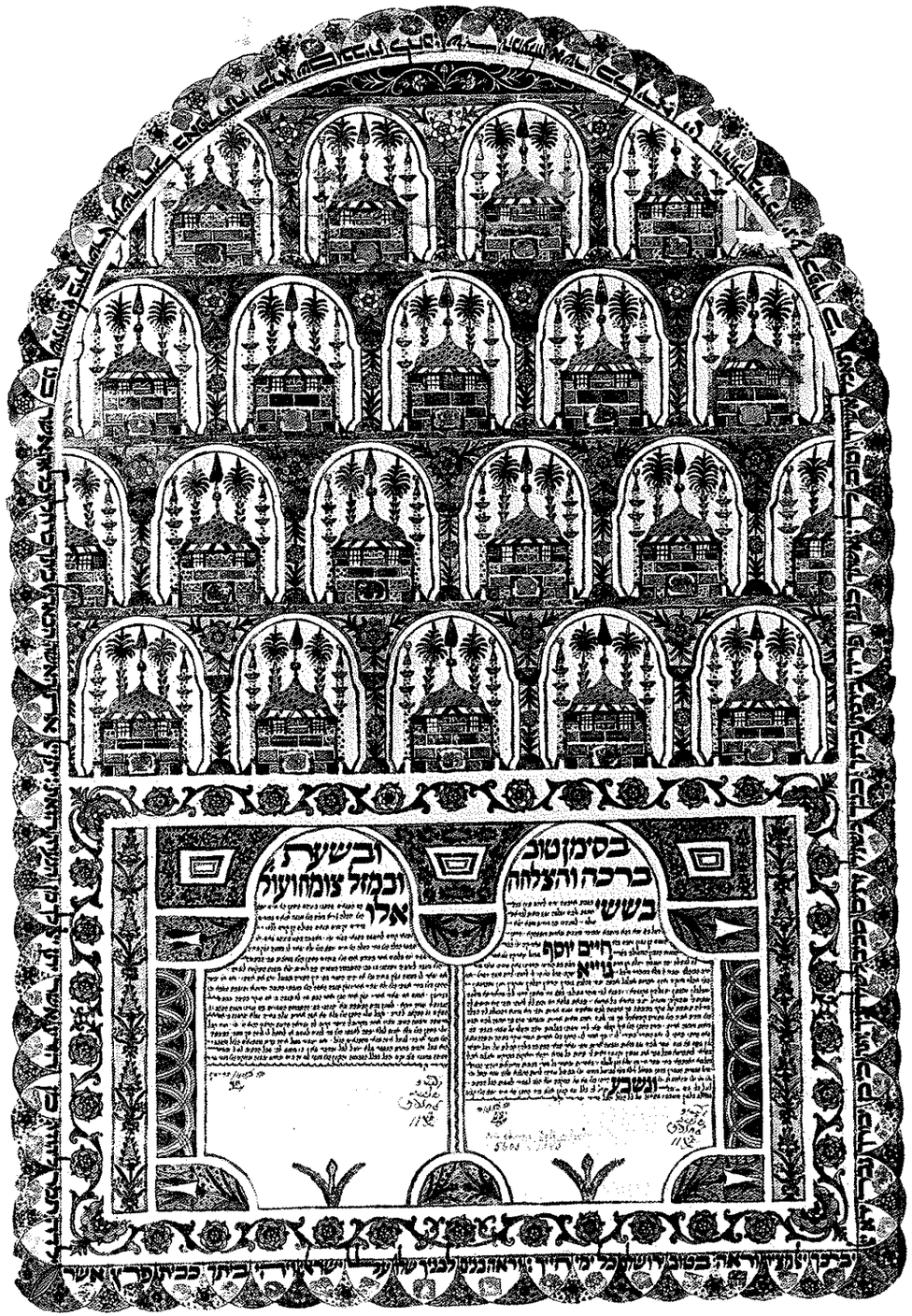

בסימן טוב
ברכה והצלחה
בששי
ובשעת
ובמזל צומחויעוה
אלו
חיים יוסף
ויאיא
ונשבע

Plate 58


בעזה
בסט ובשעת ברכה והצלחה
בשני
שבעת אלפים ששים מאות
וקנינא
וקבל
וקנינא

5

6

7

examples known to us do not present a unified picture. Generally speaking, however, the outstanding features of the earlier *ketubbot* were replaced with new motifs, some of which were to become quite common in the next generation. While the intermediate *ketubbot* still preserve the arch and floral motifs, these are of a slightly different kind. In an example from 1852 (pl. 53a) we find an outlined, rounded arch with long, narrow "pillars" at its sides. This architectural scheme seems to echo the way in which the page was cut. The other parts of the page, with the exception of the large portion set aside for the text, are densely decorated with a large vase and several smaller vases, overflowing with plants and flowers. The motif of a rose in a round frame is particularly prominent. It is repeated no less than twelve times in the decorative border and is popular in other *ketubbot* from the period.

During the third (the late) stage, the architectural scheme of the *ketubbah* in pl. 53a became quite popular; it is not clear, however, why the artists or their patrons preferred this design to those used in the earlier period. The design, which is repeated virtually with no variation in surviving *ketubbot*, is characterized by a high concave arch with long narrow columns at the sides, as in the *ketubbah* in pl. 53b. The framed rose and vases, on the other hand, disappeared entirely from the composition. A slight change is found in the upper outside border of the page: the "shoulders" of the arch are cut in a

6. Marriage contract
Izmir, 1894
Paper, print (gold)
L. 80 W. 59
Groom: Hayyim Ya'akov de Sigura, son of Meir de Sigura
Bride: Vida, daughter of Raphael Shelomo Alazraki
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 39, Jerusalem

5. Marriage contract
Izmir, 1828
Parchment, watercolors and gold powder
L. 55 W. 50
Groom: Avraham, son of Senyor known as Mercado, son of Ya'akov, son of Senyor
Bride: Esterula, daughter of Yiẓhak Morges
Israel Museum Collection, 179.26; 6297-9-39

7. Marriage contract
Izmir, 1905
Paper, print (gold)
Tatikian Press
L. 68 W 49
Groom: Yeuda (sic) known as Leon Sid, son of Ya'akov Sid
Bride: Senyora Sirma, daughter of Nissim Benyamin Pontrimoli
Israel Museum Collection, 179/331; 802/88

wavy fashion, although the oval protrusion typical of earlier *ketubbot* is preserved.

Some of the *ketubbot* in this category share common floral motifs as well. There is no doubt that the sample in our posession represents the work of but a small number of craftsmen, each of whom was quite familiar with the other's style. Some of these *ketubbot* (such as pl. 53b) were created during the 1860s and 1870s, apparently by a single craftsman. They are characterized by the arch and pillars described by a thin, painted line, and the long, blue branches and leaves that fill in the border. These flowering blue bushes are lightly painted and spotted with dots of red, green and yellow that represent the buds, creating a feathery, colorful rhythm. In the 1870s and 1880s, this particular detail can be found in the works of other artists, but without the same airiness and charm.

A slight variation of this composition with flowers of a different type can be found in a *ketubbah* from 1880 (pl. 53c). There the arch is outlined in blue, but the design and the division of the surface are different; the flowers are fuller, and the rising stems depicted in greenish shades.

From the 1890s onwards, the handmade *ketubbah* disappeared almost entirely from use in Izmir. It was replaced by a *ketubbah* in which the border was printed and the text written in by hand. Two similar borders were commonly used (figs. 6, 7). They were printed on a long rectangular page, without the typical cut-out design at the top, in black on white, although occasionally other colors were used. The borders resemble a massive gate resting on columns: Corinthian in fig. 7 and Dorian in fig. 6. Grape vines are entwined around the columns. Above each gate is a lunette composed of verses written in large letters and of symbolic motifs. At the center of the lunette we find a Star of David, in which there is a clasped pair of lovers' hands. Above the star, the verse "The sound of mirth and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride" (Jeremiah 7:34) is inscribed. In the *ketubbah* in fig. 7, the circle surrounding the Star of David serves as a center from which crowded rays of sun extend, a motif found in *ketubbot* from Istanbul, as well. In the *ketubbah* in fig. 6, the space in the lunette is filled with grapevines. Undoubtedly, these grapevines are associated with verse inscribed above the text, "May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, abundance of new grain and wine" (Genesis 27:28). The crown at the top of the *ketubbah* in fig. 7 is identified with the marriage crown of King Solomon "that his mother gave him on his wedding day" (Song of Songs 3:11). In both, a rhyme is quoted within the lunette: **לשמחת חתני: רצוף אהבה אשורר בנועם זאת הכתובה.** This rhyme is taken from a song that was customarily sung by Sephardim just before the public reading of the *ketubbah* at the marriage ceremony.[35]

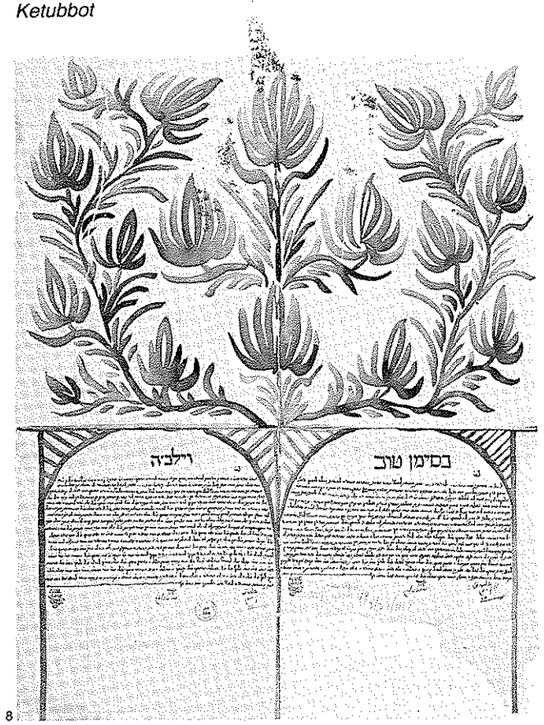
In Izmir, as in Istanbul, the *tena'im* were not included in the *ketubbah* but written on a separate page. The formula citing the location of the wedding is as follows: "Here in the city of Izmir, may the Lord establish it, amen, which sits on the banks of the sea, and gets its water from springs and wells." In Izmir, as well, it was customary for the bridegroom to sign his name between the signatures of the two witnesses. The amount of the dowry, as well as the names of the bride and groom, were sometimes written in large square letters that stand out in contrast with the undulant cursive script of the rest of the text. The sums are quoted in "lion piastres," but towards the end of the century, the Turkish coin "silver mecidies" is used. In all stages, including that of the printed *ketubbah*, it was customary in Izmir to write in the following blessing at the top of the page: "With the Lord's help. With good fortune, and in time of blessing, welfare and success. Amen, may it be His will." In some cases, this is the only verse that decorates the page.

Salonika

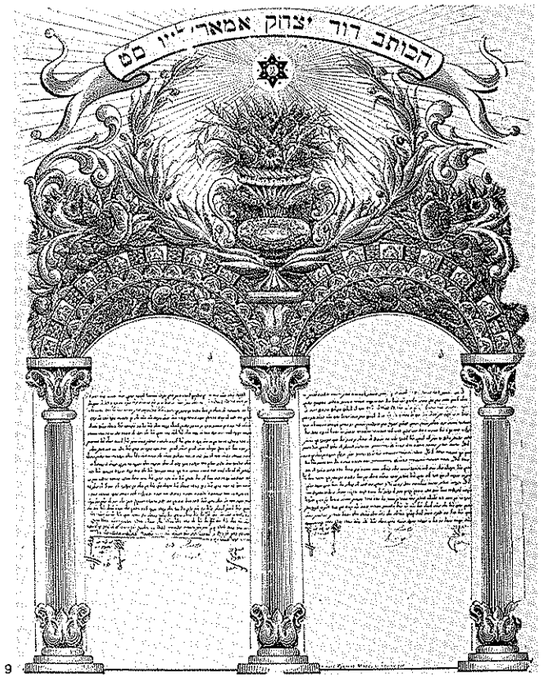
As demonstrated above, the Salonikan *ketubbot* are a particularly important source for learning about the motifs popular among the Sephardi Jews of the Ottoman Empire during a period about which we have very little information. This is especially true with regard to the Salonikan *ketubbah* of 1790 (pl. 54).[36] But *ketubbot* from the nineteenth century also contain elements, such as pairs of lovebirds, that gradually disappeared over the course of the century.

When comparing the Salonikan *ketubbot* to those from Istanbul and Izmir, what immediately strikes us is their design, which is based upon a double arch that roofs two columns of text – the *ketubbah* to the right and the *tena'im* to the left (pls. 54, 55, figs. 8-10). This feature lends a certain uniformity to the Salonikan *ketubbot*. As stated, the double arch is not unique to Salonikan contracts, but can be found on the *ketubbot* of many Sephardi communities throughout Europe, both inside the Ottoman Empire (Rhodes, Adrianople – see below, and Sofia, Vidin, Shumen, Belgrade and Sarajevo, in the Balkans) and outside it (Venice, Livorno, Ragusa and Vienna). In this respect, the Salonikan *ketubbot* represent yet another link in the chain of this Sephardi decorative tradition.

In our attempt to explain the centrality of the double arch, we must recall that originally it had had no particular relevance to the concept of marriage. Rather, we find that in certain ancient Christian illuminated manuscripts, it was customary to frame columns of short text (such as Canon Tables) with an architectural structure featuring arches. This tradition continued throughout the Middle Ages, and undoubtedly influenced the Jewish scribes and illuminators of Christian Spain.[37] When over the course of time the arch in its various permutations became an indivisible part of the *ketubbah*



8



9

design (it also became popular on the title pages of books and in carpet designs), attempts were made to invest it with Jewish meaning. Thus, we sometimes find the verse, "This is the gateway to the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it" (Psalms 118:20), inscribed in a central part of the architectural design.[38] In Italy, where it was customary to include several verses on the *ketubbah* page, the illustrators tried to draw a relationship between the single- or double-arched gate and marriage. This was usually accomplished by the associative use of verses concerning building, or in which the word "gate" is mentioned in connection with marriage, the ideal woman, and so forth. We thus find examples of *ketubbot* with such verses as "The wisest of women *builds* her house," (Proverbs 14:1) or "A house is *built* by wisdom" (Proverbs 24:3) inscribed on the gates. Yet the most popular verse by far is taken from the story of the marriage of Ruth to Boaz before the elders sitting at the *gate* of the city (Ruth 4:11-12).[39] This association certainly invested the gate motif with particular significance; its use in the *ketubbot* of most of the communities continued, even after the advent of the printed *ketubbah*.

In the Salonikan *ketubbot*, the double arch takes up the bottom half of the page alone. The arches in *ketubbot* from the nineteenth century are generally rounded and schematically drawn, practically without any additional architectural features.[40] The verse characteristically found on *ketubbot* from Istanbul, "He who finds a wife has found happiness and has won the favor of the Lord," also appears here in a similar manner: inscribed in large letters in a rectangular frame that separates the two halves of the page. In the upper portion and around the double arch, the surface is laden with floral and geometric motifs, drawn or stamped, filling any available space with vivid color. Until approximately the 1840s, pairs of birds were at times also integrated into the design in the upper part of the page (pl. 55d). Until the 1850s, this part was decorated with an outline similar to the type found in *ketubbot* from Izmir, and a large medallion, containing a floral wreath, appeared in the center of the top section. In a *ketubbah* from 1842 (pl. 55b) the medallion is filled with a Star of David.

The 1860s onwards witnessed a decline in Salonikan *ketubbah* decoration. While the basic composition of the page remained more or less the same, certain changes in the decoration took place: the arches became simpler and more

schematic; the floral patterns at the top and sides became less rich and colorful; the rectangular frame with the verse from Proverbs disappeared entirely; and the use of cut-out designs at the top of the page ceased. In an 1867 *ketubbah* housed in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (pl. 55c), the decorative elements have been reduced to almost abstract strokes, and the spaces have not been filled in with color.[41]

In the 1880s, printed *ketubbot* entered Salonika, as well. A small number of forms, some of them simple, some elaborate, served the needs of the city's large Jewish community. An interesting type, seen in a 1885 *ketubbah* (fig. 9), bears at its top the inscription: "Written by David Isaac Amarillo S.T."[42] David Amarillo, who evidently made his living by drawing up contracts and other official documents for his coreligionists (a fairly common profession for both Jews and Muslims in the major cities of the Empire), probably commissioned a design from a local artist with which to print out forms for his customers as needed.[43] Once again we find the double arch, but the execution is far more sophisticated, with a marked attempt at creating a sense of depth. The arch rests upon three columns with stylized bases and capitals. Just above the arch we find a large amphora, surrounded by a wreath and bouquets of flowers. The background consists of rays of sun bursting forth from a Star of David center. The artist who designed this block was certainly familiar with the tradition of *ketubbah* decoration in his and other cities (the sun motif, for example, was also common in Izmir and Istanbul). Yet he also attempted to incorporate elements derived from classical art, such as the columns, the amphora, and the wreath of triumph, which were quite popular during his time.

Another interesting form (fig. 10) was noticeably influenced by the new artistic style of Jugendstil or Art Nouveau, which combined two-tone lithography with stylized floral decorations. We do not know the name of the artist responsible for the design. Unlike the *ketubbah* mentioned above, here both design and text were printed – only the names, dates and amounts were filled in by hand. No space was allotted to the *tena'im* – another sign of weakening ties to tradition, and the abandonment of elements that had been regarded as essential just a generation earlier.

Salonika, like Izmir, is referred to in *ketubbot* as "the city of Salonika, may the Lord establish it, amen, which sits on the banks of the sea, and gets its water from springs and wells."[44] The terms of the marriage are slightly different than those found in the *ketubbot* of other Sephardi communities: in the case of divorce, the woman is entitled to the full amount of her dowry plus the bridegroom's increment; it is forbidden for the husband to take another wife, even as a mistress; it is forbidden for him to divorce his wife without her consent and that of one of her relatives; if she dies without having given

10

8. Marriage contract
Salonika, 1867
Paper, watercolors
L. 68 W. 48
Groom: Yizhak, son of Avraham Matalon
Bride: Rahel, daughter of David ha-Levi Carasso
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 244, Jerusalem

9. Marriage contract
Salonika, 1885
Paper, print (blue)
L. 73 W. 51
Groom: Shemuel, son of David Amarillio
Bride: Mazzal Tov, daughter of Ya'akov Bekhor Russo
Israel Museum Collection, 179/262; O.S. 37.84

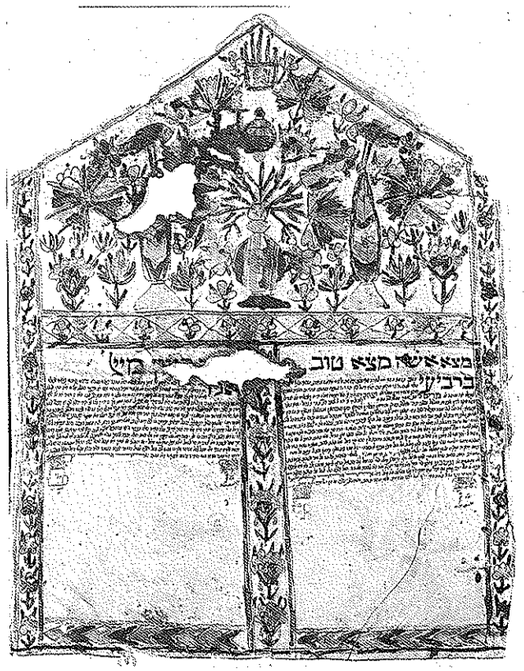
10. Marriage contract
Salonika, 1928
Paper, print
L. 56 W. 44
Groom: Leon, son of Shemuel Yosef Hasid
Bride: Mathilde, daughter of Yehoshua Kuenka
Israel Museum Collection, 179/343
Gift of the Kovo Family, Tel Aviv

birth to a child who lived thirty days, he must give her heirs at least half the value of the dowry; he must in no way attempt to influence her to break the terms of the *ketubbah*, or to forfeit, for his sake, the rights legally granted to her by power of the *ketubbah* and the *tena'im*.[45] At the top of the *tena'im* column, we often find an acronym that stands for the verse, "And may they be teeming multitudes upon the earth" (Genesis 48:16) – a blessing for fertility.

Finally, the custom of writing the first letter of each column in "large, wide letters," found in Salonikan *ketubbot* and those of other cities in the Empire, is justified in a legal question directed to Rabbi Hayyim Moshe Amarillo of Salonika (1695-1748) by the words, "It lends beauty to the writing and loveliness to the page."[46]

Rhodes

While the number of Sephardi Jews living on the island of Rhodes in the nineteenth century did not exceed 2,000-4,000, the *ketubbot* and other ceremonial objects produced there are as rich as those created in the three large centers mentioned above. Wealthy members of the local community expended vast sums on elaborate weddings, which sometimes even provoked rabbinic censure.[47] The dowry was prepared with extreme care, and proudly presented before residents of the Jewish quarter and the wedding guests. Afterwards, its final amount was copied scrupulously into the *ketubbah*.[48] For a festive, once-in-a-lifetime occasion such as this, which was carefully planned many months in advance, nothing but a richly decorated *ketubbah* would do.



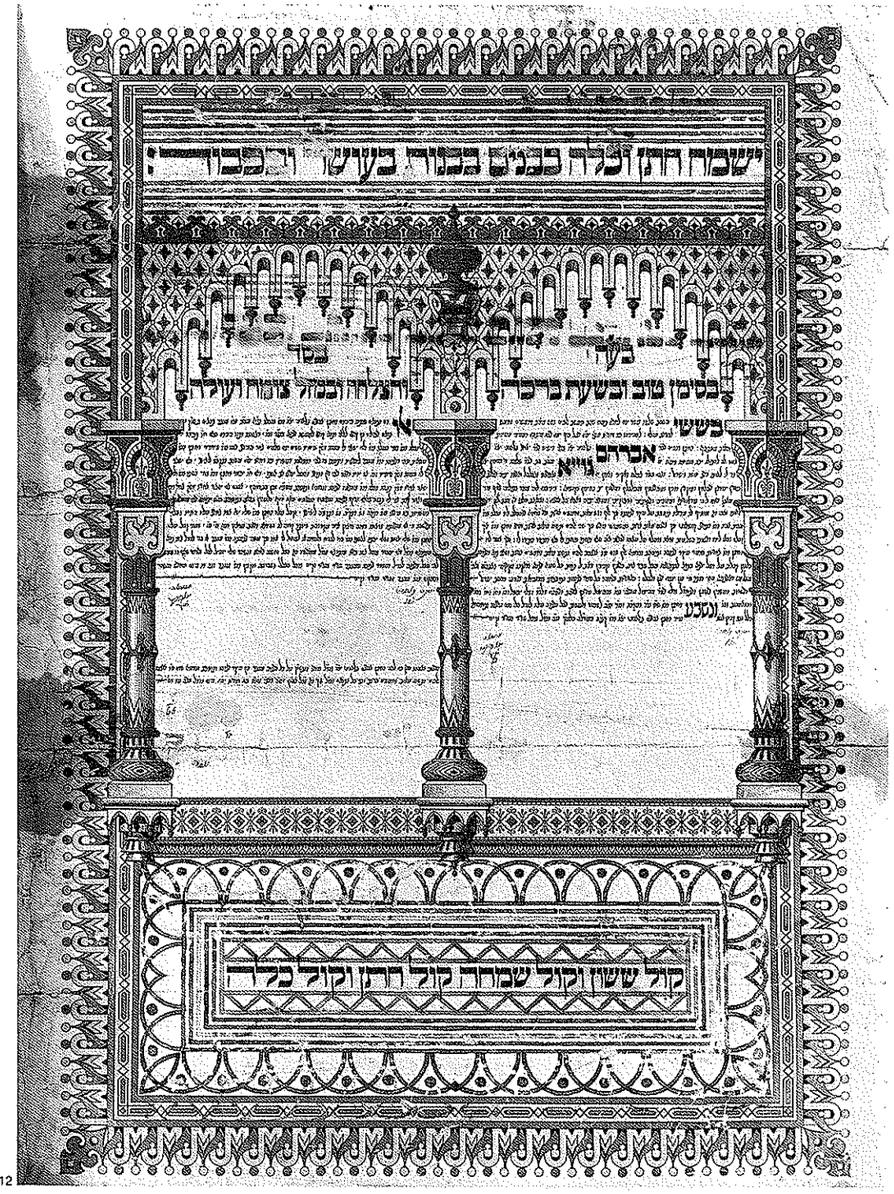
11

Ketubbot from Rhodes, like those from Salonika, were written in two columns, with the text of the *tena'im* to the left. It should be noted that the island's scribes excelled in their particularly attractive writing tradition: while written in cursive script, the letters often appeared to have been printed. With regard to the decoration, in addition to those motifs common to the various communities of the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardi community of Rhodes incorporated several of its own unique motifs.

The earliest example known to us is a *ketubbah* from 1806 (fig. 11). As expected, it was produced on parchment as opposed to paper. While the page is divided into two, the double arch is absent. Instead, we find a rectangular frame with simple watercolor floral designs. The upper part of the page is cut in the form of an equilateral triangle and also decorated with very simple floral patterns. Above the vase in the center is an element rarely found in the *ketubbot* of the above-mentioned cities: the *ḥamsah*,[49] indicating an Islamic influence. As marriage was regarded as one of the most crucial stages in a person's life, various customs were developed in order to safeguard the health and happiness of the young couple. The Jews of Rhodes adopted certain popular magic symbols for protection against the evil eye, of which the *ḥamsah* is the outstanding example.

The *ḥamsah* motif also plays an important role in a later *ketubbah*, from 1830, which is housed in the Jewish Museum, New York (fig. 1). In this *ketubbah*, the *ḥamsah* is positioned between two arches that contain the text. Around the arches we find a verse connecting marriage with building the House of Israel: "May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel" (Ruth 4:11). Three large medallions in the upper part of the page have verses inscribed in their outer rings, while floral decorations fill their centers. Similar decorations also surround the medallions. As may be recalled, a similar arrangement of the upper part of the page (but with a single medallion in the center) characterizes the *ketubbot* of Izmir and Salonika of those years, as does the protrusion at the top. An element unique to this and other *ketubbot* from the island is an external border consisting of regularly repeated geometric or floral motifs.

One of the most magnificent nineteenth-century Ottomon



12

11. Marriage contract
Rhodes, 1806
Parchment, watercolors and gouache
L. 63 W. 50
Groom: Yiẓḥak Capiluto, son of Hayyim Capiluto
Bride: Miriam, daughter of Nissim Capiluto
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 242, Jerusalem

12. Marriage contract
Rhodes, 1895
Paper, print, watercolors
Groom: Avraham Galante, son of Yeuda (sic) Galante
Bride: Joya, daughter of Shelomo de Buton
Jewish Theological Seminary of America Library, 91
Photo: courtesy of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York

Empire *ketubbot* to have survived commemorates the union of Hayyim Yoseph Tarica and Gioia Yisrael, who were married in Rhodes in 1843 (pl. 56). The bride and groom were the descendents of two of the island's most prestigious families. The bride's grandfather, R. Hayyim Yehudah Yisrael (1768?-1829), had been the Chief Rabbi of Rhodes; her father, R. Michael Ya'akov Yisrael (1790-1856) and the father of the groom, Shemuel Tarica, were among the community's leaders.[50] Accordingly, an elaborate *ketubbah*, which includes motifs that have not been found in any of the other examples from Rhodes, was prepared in honor of the young couple's marriage. The singularity of the *ketubbah* is particularly manifest in the repetition of a basic decorative unit, a small building, no less than eighteen times in its entirety and twice in a partial form in four wide bands in the upper part of the page. The building, with slender spires at its sides, each crowned with a crescent moon, recalls the form of an ornate mosque. Yet, in the spirit of the verse from the Book of Ruth which is inscribed in the outside border, it is quite likely that here, as well, the implication is building the House of Israel. It is also possible that the lucky number five is related to the five buildings in the second and fourth rows, and to the number of the projecting elements on each of the buildings. The other elements of the design, such as the double arch, the floral decoration around it, the decorative strip around the outside border, the top of the page which was cut in the shape of an arch – all of these are familiar to us from other *ketubbot* from Rhodes. This *ketubbah*, however, was produced by an artist with a great sense of symmetry, harmony and color. In fact, the overall shape of the page actually echoes the individual border surrounding each of the buildings.

Even at the end of the nineteenth century, when, in other cities, the decorative tradition had begun to decline, the Jews of Rhodes continued to produce elaborate *ketubbot*. An example from 1891, preserved in a damaged state, is found in the Ben-Zvi Institute (pl. 57c). Above the double arch appears a large octagon, decorated with crowded, colorful flowers, geometric designs and an inscription written in large, square, handsome letters, arranged within half-circle frames. The inscription is taken from a song sung at the public reading of the *ketubbah*, the beginning of which also appears on printed *ketubbot* from Izmir:

For my bridegroom's joy, full of love,
I graciously read the *ketubbah*.
Listen to me my bridegroom, lend me your ear,
While I read the *ketubbah* to you
And you will be rewarded with hearing
The reading of your sons' *ketubbot*.[51]

The letters of the inscription were created by a technique commonly employed by the scribes of Rhodes; white spaces were left in the blue painted background, forming the large block letters. This technique was also used on other objects from nineteenth-century Rhodes, including a mock Purim *ketubbah* written in Ladino (pl. 57b).[52] In light of this, the ornate *Shivviti* plaque in the Israel Museum collection (pl. 57a) should be attributed to Rhodes.[53]

Towards the end of the century, *ketubbot* with printed borders became increasingly popular in Rhodes. The most important example was printed in several colors by the technique of lithography, while the text was filled in by hand. In the copy before us (fig. 12), housed in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York,[54] the text is from 1895. It is interesting to note that although according to the inscription that appears at the bottom of the page, the form was printed in Vienna, it was most commonly used in Rhodes until the early 1930s.[55] The central element is a double stalactite arch, surrounded by geometric decorations and other ornamental patterns. The wide rectangular surface underneath the columns was not printed but drawn and painted in a variety of styles by local artists.

As Rhodes is situated by the sea, the location of the wedding is inscribed in the *ketubbah* as follows: "Here in the city of Rhodes, may the Lord establish it, amen, which sits on the banks of the great sea, and gets its water from springs and wells."[56] The first names of the bride and groom were inserted in large block letters into the cursive text. In the dowry section, the final sums are divided according to *kontante*, namely cash and household goods, particularly bedclothes, and other personal items. In the nineteenth century, the sums were quoted in terms of the Turkish coin "lion piastres," but after the island came under Italian rule in 1912, Italian liras were used. While the *tena'im* inscribed in the left-hand column are essentially the same as those used in the other Sephardi communities, they also include the 1817 *haskamah* (decision) of the Rhodes community regarding matters of inheritance, as well as decisions concerning the collection of the inheritance taken in 1722, 1752 and 1802.[57] The saying most commonly appearing above the texts of the *ketubbah* and the *tena'im*, even in the printed *ketubbot*, is: "With good fortune and in time of blessing and success; [may their] fortune sprout and come up." In the mock Purim *ketubbah*, this inscription was changed to **בסימנא רעה ובמזלא מאפלייה. בסימן קיור בשעת קללה ואפילה במזל סייגורה אי איסקורה...**

Edirne

As large and important as the Sephardi community of Edirne (Adrianople) was, we have in our possession only one decorated nineteenth-century *ketubbah* from this city (fig. 13). To be sure, it is difficult to make generalizations about *ketubbot* from this area based upon a single specimen, but we may assume that this example is at least somewhat repre-

13. Marriage contract
Edirne, 1863
Paper, watercolors and gold powder
L. 62 W. 45
Groom: Hayyim known as Bekhor, son of Avraham Navon
Bride: Mazzal, daughter of Mordekhai ha-Levi know as Bekhor
Israel Museum Collection, 179/319; 366.82
Gift of Suzanne Zimmer and Marthe Soussana, Paris, by courtesy of Mazal Linenberg

sentative of the *ketubbot* produced in or around 1863, when it was created. First of all, we learn that in Edirne, unlike the other major centers of Turkey, it was customary to include the *tena'im* in the text of the *ketubbah*. The basic structure is thus similar to that of *ketubbot* from Salonika and Rhodes: the page is divided into two parallel columns of text, above which the major decorative motifs are concentrated. In this *ketubbah*, the upper edges are cut in the form of a pointed arch with wavy shoulders, the center of which is illustrated with a miniature scenic view set inside a crescent moon. The miniature depicts several trees, painted with a few brush strokes, lacking contours, creating a tranquil, impressionistic effect. The significance of this representation is unclear, although it may be related to the pastoral miniatures of the *ketubbot* from Istanbul. Around the picture and the two sections of text are stylized floral decorations done in soft, light tones. At the top of each column, in decorated cartouches, appear acronyms for the phrases "with good fortune" and "in time of blessing and success," also popular in *ketubbot* from other cities (cf. the blessing in *ketubbot* from Istanbul).

In citing the name of the city, no source of water is mentioned, unlike the other Sephardi *ketubbot*. The currency used is called "lion piastres." The usual shortened version of the *tena'im* appears in the left-hand column, and it emphasizes the prohibition against polygamy.

In summary, the nineteenth century witnessed a decline in the tradition of *ketubbah* decoration among the Sephardi communities of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the *ketubbot* produced during this period are relatively conservative in terms of their decorative design, which was repeated over and over again with very little variation. Yet the widespread use of such *ketubbot* throughout the Ottoman Empire points to the continued popularity of this custom, even during a period marked by overall decline in traditional art forms among the Jews of Europe. Moreover, the *ketubbot* of wealthy Sephardi Jews in this period reflect a version of the standard composition enriched with extraordinary motifs and an array of attractive colors. The elaborately decorated *ketubbah* with the details of the bridal dowry continued to play an important role in wedding celebrations. Nevertheless, with the ongoing process of secularization and the erosion of the old ways of life, this tradition gradually disappeared, and the decorated *ketubbah* was eventually replaced by the printed contract.

Translated by Nancy Benovitz

Notes

* I would like to thank Esther Juhasz for all her assistance throughout the preparation of this article.

1. For these *ketubbot*, see Sabar, *Beginnings*, pp. 102ff., and figs. 5, 6, p. 103.

2. R. Duran authorized this popular custom, writing: "I approve of the custom of decorating the marriage contract with pictures and verses; as they used to make a large sheet for decorative purposes, and fill it with these verses and pictures, so that the witnesses would not sign on the first line underneath the *ketubbah* text, leaving a blank space" (Duran, *Sefer ha-Tashbez*, part 1, p. 7b, par. 6). See also Iris Fishof's remarks in *Ketubbot italiane*, p. 232; and Sabar, *Beginnings*, p. 102, n. 46. For the reactions of other rabbis, see below.

3. For reasons we cannot delve into at the present, it was *not* customary for Ashkenazi Jews to decorate their *ketubbot* during this period. For an example of a Sephardi *ketubbah* from Hamburg, 1690, see Rubens, *Costume*, p. 120, pl. 163 (private collection). For an example of a Viennese *ketubbah*, see below, n. 6.

4. See Sabar, *Beginnings*, pp. 104ff.

5. For marriages within the Jewish community during this period, including the value of the dowry, see Goodblatt, pp. 94-99.

6. A decorated *ketubbah* from Istanbul, 1601, which had previously been in the private collection of Hadji Ephraim Benguiat, is mentioned in Adler and Casanowicz, p. 733, no. 141. My attempts to locate this *ketubbah*, however, proved fruitless. It should also be mentioned here that the *ketubbah* photographed in the Hebrew periodical *Mahanayim*, 83, **1963**, p. 23, und the caption: "Decorated *ketubbah* from Turkey, 14th c.," actually originated in the Sephardi community of Vienna and is dated to 1854. This *ketubbah* formerly belonged to the Berlin collector Salli Kirschstein (see Helbing, p. 17, item no. 265; Helbing mistakenly predates this *ketubbah* to 1844). A color photograph of this contract can be found in UJE, vol. 6, facing p. 367.

7. Avraham di Boton, *Leḥem Rav*, p. 6, par. 15.

8. Cf., for example, the case of the noted Italian rabbi, Lampronti (1679-1756), who quotes R. di Boton's words prohibiting the decoration of *ketubbot* with human figures and heavenly bodies (Lampronti, *Paḥad Yizhak*, vol. 10, p. 16a; and cf. Sabar, *Use*, p. 47). Yet we know of many *ketubbot* from Ferrara – Lampronti's birthplace and center of influence – decorated quite elaborately with these motifs (examples in *Ketubbot italiane*, pls. 18, 21). Moreover, some of these *ketubbot* even bear Lampronti's signature.

9. For more information regarding these *ketubbot*, see Sabar, *Beginnings*, pp. 100ff. and figs. 3, 7, 10, 11.

10. Examples: Venice, 1602 (ibid., fig. 3); Venice, 1612 (ibid., fig. 7); Venice, 1614 (ibid., fig. 10).

11. In the private collection of Victor Klagsbald, Paris. Color reproduction and brief description in *Synagoga*, item C305.

12. Cf., for example, *Ketubbot italiane*, pls. 11, 13, 16, 21.

13. The parchment industry in Istanbul during the seventeenth century was primarily, if not entirely, in Jewish hands, as we learn from the testimony of Evliya Efendi (1611/12-1679): "The parchment-makers (*küderijián*) are three hundred men, with eighty shops. They are all Jews, and their manufactory is at Khoja-páshá" (Evliya Efendi, p. 207, article 381).

14. The *ketubbah* from Salonika (pl. 54), for example, is on parchment. Another *ketubbah*, from Manissa (northeast of Izmir), 1785, was preserved becuase its parchment was used as the cover of a book (Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, *ketubbah* no. 34; see Yoel, p. 310, no. 47). A few examples from the early nineteenth century are cited below.

15. See "On the History of the Jews" in this volume and Barnai, *Jews*, pp. 240-242.

16. While the text of the *ketubbah* includes all the fixed obligations of the husband towards his wife according to Jewish law, the *tena'im* were of a more individual nature, and contained clauses that varied from community to community. Over the generations, each community developed a more-or-less uniform formula of *tena'im*, which formed the basis for negotiations between the two families. Among Sephardi families, the *tena im* dealt primarily with matters of inheritance in the event of the death of one of the spouses, and with the prohibition of taking a second wife without the proper divorce of the first. Unlike the Ashkenazi Jews, the Sephardim customarily inscribed a full or shortened version of the *tena'im* on the *ketubbah* itself. Full versions were usually written in the left-hand column, next to the *ketubbah* text (e.g., Salonika and Rhodes), while shortened versions appear either underneath the *ketubbah* text (Amsterdam) or integrated within it (Istanbul). Regarding the *tena'im*, see also Cohen, *Ketubbah*.

17. For examples of decorated *ketubbot* from other regions of the Ottoman Empire, see Benjamin (detailed discussion of nineteenth-century *ketubbot* from Erez Israel and Syria); Sabar, *Illustrated* (the chapter "Sephardi Europe" includes examples from Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Rumania and Turkey). Reproductions of *ketubbot* from Vidin, Bulgaria, can be found in Hacohen, pp. 106, 129; EJC, vol. 6, pp. 426, 429. Examples from Semlin and Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, appear in *Belgrade Catalogue*, pp. 131-32, pls. 9-10.

18. Examples of this type can be found at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York (Istanbul, 1830, Ketubbah no. 155); Hebrew Union College, Skirball Museum, Los Angeles (Istanbul, 1848, no. 34.40, and see color reproduction in Sabar, *Illustrated*, Ket. 177); Cecil Roth Collection, Beth Zedec Museum, Toronto (Istanbul, 1863, and see reproduction in *Ontario Catalogue*, p. 51, no. 28).

19. The last three words in the Hebrew are usually written in the acrostic ויר"מ.

20. For examples of objects, produced in a variety of techniques, see Petsopoulos.

21. It should be noted that this was an exceptional instance of an especially large community. In smaller communities, *ketubbot* were made to order, and it was the scribe who apparently decorated the *ketubbah*. Evidence of this can be found in the words of Rabbi di Boton, quoted above: "A *ketubbah* which has been decorated by a scribe...." Evidence from the nineteenth century of this custom is also cited below, in the description of *ketubbot* from Rhodes.

22. A simpler version of this arrangement, with a single structure, a boat, a tree and a bird, appears within a small cartouche on a *ketubbah* from Istanbul, 1863 (above, n. 18). The theory advanced in *Ontario Catalogue*, that this scene depicts a synagogue on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, is, in our opinion, unfounded.

23. For the architecture and role of the sultanic *kosk*, see Aslanapa, *Architecture*, pp. 246-51.

24. For example, the Ottoman Torah ark curtain with an elaborate Turkish structure embroidered in its central field (see pl. 20b and discussion on p. 130 in this volume). An outstanding example of a Jewish object which in many communities adopted local architectural elements for a similar reason is the Hanukkah lamp (cf. *Architecture*).

25. Renda, *Batililaşma* (English abstract, pp. 262-65); and Renda, *Wall*.

26. One of the variations originated quite far away in the Empire – in Cairo. A Cairene *ketubbah*, dated 1821, housed in the Cambridge University Library (ULC Or 1080, Box 9, f. 21), features a miniature with houses and human figures! The other decorations on the page, including twelve medallions with the signs of the zodiac as a frame around the text, were apparently influenced by Italian *ketubbot*. For this *ketubbah*, see Weiss.

27. For a description of the text of this *ketubbah*, see Yoel, p. 310, no. 46.

28. A few examples are preserved in the offices of the Karaite community in Ramleh, Israel.

29. The sun-ray motif is especially prominent on printed *ketubbot* from Izmir and Salonika (see below, figs. 7, 9). It may have been borrowed from ornamented sultanic documents from the nineteenth century, in which it appears in a similar fashion – at the head of the decorated page, above the framed text. See Kerametli, ill. 31. The significance of this motif is unclear, but it should be mentioned that it is also commonly found on Jewish ceremonial objects and silver items throughout the Ottoman Empire.

30. Gold paper, or cut-outs glued onto *ketubbot*, could be found in villages near Izmir (see, for example, "Paper-cuts," n. 20, in this volume), and were also common in other communities throughout the Empire. In the eighteenth century, ornamentation in Damascus *ketubbot* consisted primarily of decorated paper-cuts. A *ketubbah* from the Sephardi community of Vienna, 1831, housed in HUC Skirball Museum (no. 34.90) features cutouts of golden vases (see Sabar, *Illustrated*, Ket. 152).

31. See, for example, *Türkische Kunst*, 1/17b; 1/19a.

32. In Turkish folk art, the cypress was also, and in fact, primarily, a symbol of death (see Arseven, p. 60; Akar and Keskiner, p. 61 and pl. 68), though this symbolism obviously did not apply to cypress motifs appearing on *ketubbot*.

33. Regarding the great importance of the dowry in planning the life of the young couple in Istanbul, until the modern period, see Glazer, and "Marriage" in this volume.

34. Cf. Hagiz, *Sefer Halakhot Ketannot*, p. 71a.

35. A fuller version of the song appears on a *ketubbah* from Rhodes, 1891 (see below, n. 51).

36. Another Salonikan *ketubbah* from the eighteenth century (dated 1760), in a fragmentary state, is housed in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York (no. 217).

37. A double horseshoe arch similar to those appearing on Sephardi *ketubbot* from Venice is also found on several Hebrew manuscripts from Spain, such as the First Kennicott Bible (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Kenn. 1), see Narkiss, *Spanish*, part 2, figs. 447-50.

38. See, for example, the title page of *Sefer ha-Musar* by Yehudah Khalaz, printed by Eliezer Soncino in Istanbul, 1537 (Kaplan, p. 18, no. 16 – mistakenly dated "1536"); for examples of carpets see "Textiles," figs. 41, 42, pl. 18; regarding a Venetian *ketubbah* from 1649 with the above-mentioned verse, see Sabar, *Beginnings*, p. 108, fig. 13. See also Sabar, *Use*, pp. 49ff.

39. For examples of Italian *ketubbot* featuring these verses, see *Ketubbot italiane*, e.g., pls. 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21, 24. Examples from the Ottoman Empire are brought below.

40. Issachar Yoel's theory that the source of inspiration for this frame is "the two Tablets of the Law" (Yoel, p. 310, nos. 41-44) is, therefore, not feasible. The very fact that *ketubbot* with one column of text are framed by a single arch shows that there is no connection with the shape of the Decalogue.

41. For details of the text of the *ketubbah* in pl. 55c, see Yoel, p. 310, no. 41.

42. Another form of this page, with the *ketubbah* text dated 1890, is housed in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, *ketubbah* no. 23 (Yoel, p. 310, no. 43).

43. Regarding the livelihood of scribes from Salonika from the writing of *ketubbot* and similar documents, see Barnai, *Jews*, pp. 275-76.

44. Cf. the testimony of R. Ya'akov Hagiz, *Sefer Halakhot Ketannot*, p. 71a. R. Hagiz comments: "Salonika [spelled in Hebrew שלוניקי] without the letter *aleph* between the *shin* and the *lamed*, as was customary among our predecessors." But, as a rule, the *ketubbot* in our possession do feature the *aleph* (connected to the *lamed*, as was the practice).

45. For a full description of the *tena'im* commonly found on Salonikan *ketubbot*, see Gulak, pp. 47-49. A Salonikan *ketubbah* with a slightly different version of the *tena'im*, accompanied by rabbinic commentary, is cited in *Zikhron Saloniki*, pp. 372-75.

46. Amarillo, *Devar Moshe*, part 3, p. 37a, par. 9.

47. See, for example, the responsum of R. Raḥamim Ḥayyim Yehudah Yisrael (1815-92), cited in Angel, p. 120.

48. Cf. Angel, ibid., and "Marriage" in this volume.

49. The *ḥamsah* appears, for example, on a Sephardi *ketubbah* from Tiberias, 1842, in the Cecil Roth Collection (see *Ontario Catalogue*, p. 31). An exceptional example of the *ḥamsah* motif appears on a *ketubbah* from Istanbul, 1866, in Mann, *Two Cities*, p. 76, no. 37. In other cities, such as Safed, Jerusalem and Damascus, it was customary to quote in the *ketubbah* sums in which the number five was repeated several times. These sums were indicated by large, square letters that stood out against the cursive text. For the importance and wide distribution of the *ḥamsah* motif in textiles, see "Textiles" in this volume.

50. For the lives of R. Ḥayyim and R. Michael Yisrael, see Markus, pp. 58-75. The father of the groom is apparently Ḥezekiah Shemuel Tarica, a well-known rabbi and poet from early nineteenth-century Rhodes; on him see Angel, pp. 75, 117, 118, 136.

51. We do not know who the author of this marriage song was. The song first appears in the rare book *Shirim, u-Zemirot, ve-Tishbaḥot*, printed by Eliezer Soncino in Istanbul, 1545 (see Markon, pp. 236, 278). In any case, these lines are not taken from the poem *Yarad Dodi le-Ganno* which precedes the Shavuot *ketubbah* composed by R. Yisrael Najara (1555?-1625?), as proposed by Davidson (Davidson, vol. 3, p. 67).

52. For more about this *ketubbah* and other versions of Sephardi *Ketubbot Pegaim* (mock *ketubbot*) in honor of the marriage of Haman and Zeresh, see Lewinsky, *Purim*, pp. 34-37.

53. This theory is supported not only by the letters and the decoration of the outer border, both characteristic of Rhodes, but also by the name of the "artist and scribe" appearing in the upper left-hand corner of the blue-white band – Raphael Mordekhai Moshe Tarica – a common name among the Jews of Rhodes.

54. *Ketubbah* no. 91 in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

55. Although examples of this form have come to us from other cities of the Ottoman Empire, it was in Rhodes that it attained particular popularity, and was hand-decorated with additonal designs that are generally not found on forms from other cities. It is interesting to note that this form even reached the USA, as exemplified by a *ketubbah* from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1918, housed in the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati (Ms.792a; reproduced in Sabar, *Illustrated*, Ket. 254). The left-hand column of this *ketubbah*, which was meant for the text of the *tena'im*, contains an English translation of the *ketubbah* text.

56. This spelling of the name of the island [רודיס] was the norm in Hebrew documents and sources from Rhodes. It should be mentioned, however, that in earlier generations, the Rabbis deliberated whether or not to adopt the customary Greek spelling – רודוס. See Markus, p. 5, n. 1.

57. See Angel, p. 95.

Bibliography

Adler and Casanowicz — Adler, C.A. and Casanowicz, I.M., "The Collection of Jewish Ceremonial Objects in the United States National Museum," *Proceedings of the United States National Museum* 34 (1908), pp. 701-46.

Akar and Keskiner — Akar, A. and Keskiner, C., *Ornament and Design in Turkish Decorative Arts*, Istanbul 1978.

Amarillo, *Devar Moshe* — Amarillo, Ḥayyim Moshe, *Devar Moshe*, part 3, Salonika 1750.

Angel — Angel, Mark D., *The Jews of Rhodes: The History of a Sephardic Community*, New York 1978.

Architecture — *Architecture in the Hanukkah Lamp* (Exhibition Catalogue no. 186), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem 1978 (Hebrew and English).

Arseven — Arseven, Cela Esad, *Les arts décoratifs turcs*, Istanbul [n.d.].

Aslanapa, *Architecture* — Aslanapa, O., *Turkish Art and Architecture*, New York 1971.

Barnai *Jews* — Barnai, Jacob, "The Jews in the Ottoman Empire," in *History of the Jews in the Islamic Countries*, ed. S. Ettinger, Jerusalem 1986, vol. 2, pp. 181-297 (in Hebrew).

Belgrade Catalogue — *Izlozba: Jezik, Pismo I Knjiga Jevreja Yogoslavia* (Exhibition Catalogue), Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade, Belgrade 1979.

Benjamin — Benjamin, Jonathan, "Ketubah Ornamentation in Nineteenth-Century Eretz Israel," *Israel Museum News* 12 (1977), pp. 129-37.

Avraham di Boton, *Lehem Rav* — Avraham di Boton, *Lehem Rav*, Jerusalem 1968 (first ed. Izmir 1660).

Cohen, *Ketubbah* — Cohen, She'ar Yashuv, "The tena'im in the Ketubbah," *Mazkeret, in memory of Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog*, Jerusalem 1962, pp. 545-53.

Davidson — Davidson, Israel, *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, vol. 3, New York 1931 (in Hebrew).

Duran, *Sefer ha-Tashbez* — Duran, Shimon Ben Zemah, *Sefer ha-Tashbez*, Lemberg 1891 (first ed. Amsterdam 1738-41).

EJC — *Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana*, vol. 6, Mexico City 1949.

Evliya Efendi — Evliya Efendi, *The Travels of Evliya Efendi*, vol 1, pt. 2: *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. from Turkish by Joseph von Hammer, London 1846.

Glazer — Glazer, Mark, "The Dowry as Capital Accumulation among the Sephardic Jews of Istanbul, Turkey," in *Jewish Societies in the Middle East: Community, Culture and Authority*, ed. S. Deshen and W. P. Zenner, Washington 1972, pp. 299-309.

Goodblatt — Goodblatt, M.S., *Jewish Life in Turkey in the XVIth Century*, New York 1952.

Gulak — Gulak, Asher, *A Thesaurus of Jewish Legal Documents*, Jerusalem 1926 (in Hebrew).

Hacohen — Hacohen, Menachem, *Jewish Life Cycle: Marriage*, Jerusalem 1986 (in Hebrew).

Hagiz, *Sefer Halakhot Ketannot* — Hagiz, Ya'akov ben Shemuel, *Sefer Halakhot Ketannot*, Venice 1704.

Helbing — Helbing, H., *Die Judaica-Sammlung S. Kirschstein, Berlin: Kultgeräte für Haus und Synagoge*, Munich 1932.

Kaplan — Kaplan, Mitchell M., ed., *Panorama of Ancient Letters: Four and a Half Centuries of Hebraica and Judaica*, New York 1942.

Kerametli — Kerametli, Can, *Galata Mevlevihanesi. Divan Edebiyati Müzesi*, Turkey 1977.

Ketubbot italiane — *Ketubbot italiane. Antichi contratti nuziali ebraici miniati*, Milan 1984.

Lampronti — Lampronti, Iẓḥak, *Paḥad Iẓḥak*, vol. 10, Lyck 1871.

Lewinsky, *Purim* — Lewinsky, Yom-Tov, *Haman-Smiting in the Diaspora; Compilation of Purim Folklore*, Tel Aviv 1947 (in Hebrew).

Mann, *Two Cities* — Mann, Vivian B., *A Tale of Two Cities; Jewish Life in Frankfurt and Istanbul, 1750-1870* (Exhibition Catalogue) The Jewish Museum, New York 1982.

Markon — Markon, Isaac D., "Sefer Shirim u-Zemirot ve-Tishbaḥot," in *Dvir*, vol. 1, Berlin 1923, pp. 228-84.

Markus — Markus, Simon, *De claris qui ex Rhodia Israel familia erant rabbinis*, Jerusalem 1935 (in Hebrew).

Narkiss, *Spanish* — Narkiss, Bezalel, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, pt. 1: *The Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts*, Jerusalem 1982, 2 vols.

Ontario Catalogue — *Ketubbah: the Jewish Marriage Contract* (Exhibition Catalogue), Art Gallery of Ontario 1980-81.

Petsopoulos — Petsopoulos, Yanni, ed., *Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans: Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire*, London 1982.

Renda, *Batililasma* — Renda, Günsel, *Batililasma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanati 1700-1850*, Ankara 1977.

Renda, *Wall* — Renda, Günsel, "Wall Paintings in Turkish Houses," *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. G. Feher, Budapest 1978, pp. 711-35.

Rubens, *Costume* — Rubens, Alfred, *A History of Jewish Costume*, New York 1973.

Sabar, *Beginnings* — Sabar, Shalom, "The Beginnings of *Ketubbah* Decoration in Italy: Venice in the late Sixteenth to the Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Jewish Art* 12/13 (1986/87), pp. 96-110.

Sabar, *Illustrated* — Sabar, Shalom, *The Illustrated Ketubbah: Jewish Marriage Contracts of the Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum and Klau Library*, Philadelphia (forthcoming).

Sabar, *Use* — Sabar, Shalom, "The Use and Meaning of Christian Motifs in Illustrations of Jewish Marriage Contracts in Italy," *Journal of Jewish Art* 10 (1984), pp. 47-63.

Synagoga — *Synagoga: Kultgeräte und Kunstwerke* (Exhibition Catalogue), Recklinghausen 1960.

Türkische kunst — *Türkische Kunst und Kultur aus Osmanischer Zeit* (Exhibition Catalogue), Recklinghausen 1985, 2 vols.

UJE — *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, New York 1939.

Weiss — Weiss, G., "An Illuminated Marriage Contract from the Cairo Geniza from April 16, 1821," *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies* 7 (1978), pp. 90-98.

Yoel — Yoel, Issachar, "From the Collection of Marriage-Contracts in the Library," *Kiryath Sepher* 21 (1945), pp. 302-12 (in Hebrew).

Zikhron Saloniki — *Zikhron Saloniki: The Grandeur and Destruction of the Jerusalem of the Balkans*, ed. D. Recanati, vol. 2, Tel Aviv 1986 (in Hebrew).

1. *Sukkah* decoration, paper-cut
Artist: Yosef Abulafia
Izmir, late 19th century
H. 20
Hayyim Abulafia Collection, Ramat Aviv

Paper-cuts

Esther Juhasz

Introduction

The art of the paper-cut has a long tradition in the Ottoman Empire.[1] Serving diverse purposes, it was both an independent branch of art and an auxiliary element in other art forms. Among the various types of paper-cuts we find book covers, folios in illuminated manuscripts featuring illustrations and calligraphic designs, calligraphic plaques hung in mosques, cut-out patterns for embroidery and characters for the shadow theater.[2]

Leather book bindings with cut-out decorations developed at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Persian bookbinders settled in various Turkish cities.[3] Many of the paper-cuts reveal a similarity to Chinese paper-cuts in subject matter and style. It may well be, therefore, that Chinese paper-cuts reached Turkey via the "Silk Route," together with porcelain and other goods, and influenced local artisans. Among the guilds described by Evliya Efendi in the seventeenth century we find a paper-cutters' guild (*oimajián*), with twenty members working in nine shops: "The paper-cutters are dervishes, who are possessed of a thousand arts; they cut out of paper, with scissors, many wonderful borders and edgings, which are kept in books for remembrance sake."[4]

Calligraphic plaques with cut-out letters were common in Turkey during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were produced in two ways: either the letters were cut out and pasted onto a sheet of a contrasting color, creating a positive design, or the sheet from which the letters had been cut was placed on a sheet of another color, forming a negative design (in Turkey these cuts were known as "feminine" and "masculine"). Some of the cut calligraphic plaques were made to be hung in homes and mosques, while others were used to illuminate manuscripts. The most prominent Turkish artist in this field was Fahri of Bursa who worked in the seventeenth century.

Paper-cuts for illuminated manuscripts were sometimes used to enhance drawn illustrations, but also appeared independently (fig. 2).[5] Eighteenth-century artists produced multilayered and multicolored paper-cuts, mostly depicting landscapes and used to decorate writing cabinets.[6] Paper or cardboard cut-outs were also used as patterns for gold embroidery (fig. 10) and as stencils for copying designs onto calligraphic plaques and for preparing shadow paper.[7]

The technique of leather-cutting was also utilized to create figures for the Turkish shadow theater (*Karagöz*). Tradition has it that the shadow theater was brought to Turkey from Egypt by Sultan Selim I in the sixteenth century. Whatever the case may be, once this art form had put down roots in its new home it continued to evolve independently and is still popular there (fig. 3).[8]

The achievements of Turkish paper-cutting made a considerable impression on European visitors to the country, and some scholars hold that it was due to Turkish influence that paper-cutting developed in Europe during the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries.[9]

Some characteristics of Turkish paper-cutting

Of the various technical and stylistic characteristics of Turkish paper-cuts, the following ones are of particular importance for Jewish examples of the art:

1. The making of the paper-cuts from small independent cuts mounted side by side or partly overlapping, either to create a composition, or as frame decorations for drawn pictures. In some cases identical parts were cut out together from several sheets of paper that had been pasted together; the multilayered cut-out was then soaked in water to dissolve the paste and separate the parts.
2. Design or motifs based on a narrow contour line, filled with a vegetal latticework.[10]
3. Several layers of paper pasted together to form a multilayer paper-cut with partially overlapping designs, the result being a kind of relief, alluding to a three-dimensional presentation.[11]
4. Asymmetric compositions, or only apparently symmetric, with slight, probably intentional discrepancies. This structure is particularly common in paper-cuts composed of several parts.[12]
5. Use of a great variety of types, textures and colors of paper.

Types of Jewish paper-cuts

The art of paper-cutting was popular among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire no doubt owing to the influence of their surroundings. Evidence to that effect is provided by Jewish

paper-cuts preserved in museum collections, private collections and synagogues. Most of the surviving Jewish paper-cuts date from the second half of the nineteenth century, and exhibit a variety of techniques and styles. The high degree of skill exhibited by some may suggest that the surviving examples of the art are the last links in a long chain of tradition.

Although the origins of paper-cutting among Sephardi Jews are not known, interesting evidence of its antiquity survives in Spanish-Jewish literature from the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. R. Shem Tov Ardutiel of Soria (Castile), in a verse entitled "The Debate between the Pen and Scissors," relates how he was once forced to cut out letters with a pair of scissors when the ink in his inkwell froze solid.[13]

All Jewish paper-cuts known to us are connected with religion or folk beliefs. They include *ketubbot* (marriage contracts) and *Shivviti* plaques used as decorations in the synagogue or the *sukkah*; some were made to celebrate life-cycle events, such as weddings, while others served as amulets.[14]

The largest group of paper-cuts is that of the *Shivviti* plaques, which feature chapters and verses from the Bible, the Tetragrammaton (the four-letter name of God), various versions and abbreviations of the names of God, benedictions, prayers, and names of angels and various incantations commonly used in amulets. These plaques are sometimes called *menorah* plaques, as many of them feature the seven-branched candelabrum, with the words of Psalm 67 (to which mystical significance was attributed) inscribed between or on the branches; another common text is the kabbalistic prayer *Anna be-khoah* (known as "the prayer of R. Nehunya ben ha-Kanah," and also endowed with mystical properties, as the initials of its words form the 42-letter Holy Name of God).[15] In the center of these plaques appears the verse "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalms 16:8; the first word of this verse in Hebrew is *Shivviti* – hence the term *Shivviti* plaque), and the Tetragrammaton stands out in large letters in the center. Some of these plaques – those meant to be hung in *sukkot* – also contain the *ushpizin* text (inviting the seven "guests" [*ushpizin*] who traditionally visit every Jew's *sukkah* during the feast of Tabernacles: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David).

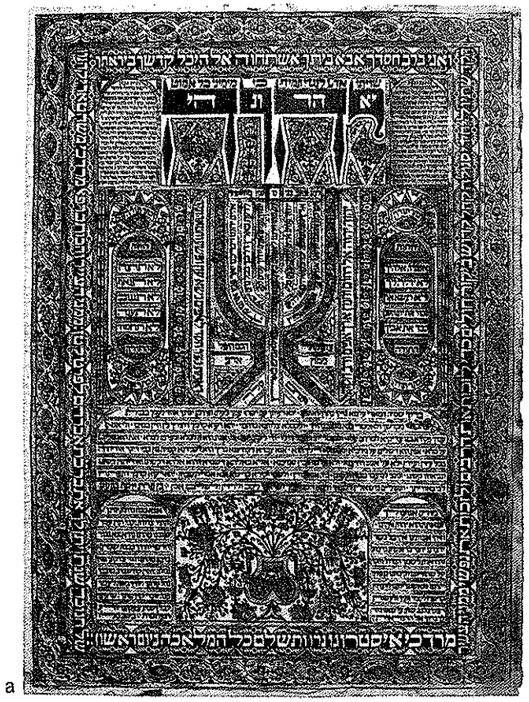
Almost all the paper-cuts bear the artist's signature, sometimes together with a date and the name of the person to whom the work was dedicated, or of the person who commissioned it and donated it to the synagogue. According to the signatures, all the artists were men, and their names point to their Sephardi origin. Their command of biblical and prayer texts, as well as amuletic formulas, indicates that they may have been connected in some way with the Hebrew printing trade or the craft of the Torah scribe.[16] They presumably learned the art of cutting with scissors or knife from their Turkish neighbors. In fact, paper-cutting was still being studied in Turkish schools as part of arts and crafts lessons as late as the twentieth century. However, we do not know when the Jewish paper-cutters attained the high degree of skill demonstrated here.

The Jewish paper-cuts from Turkey can be classified into different stylistic groups, each having its own specific technical characteristics, apparently drawn from several different traditions of cutting work.

Small paper-cuts as frames around drawings

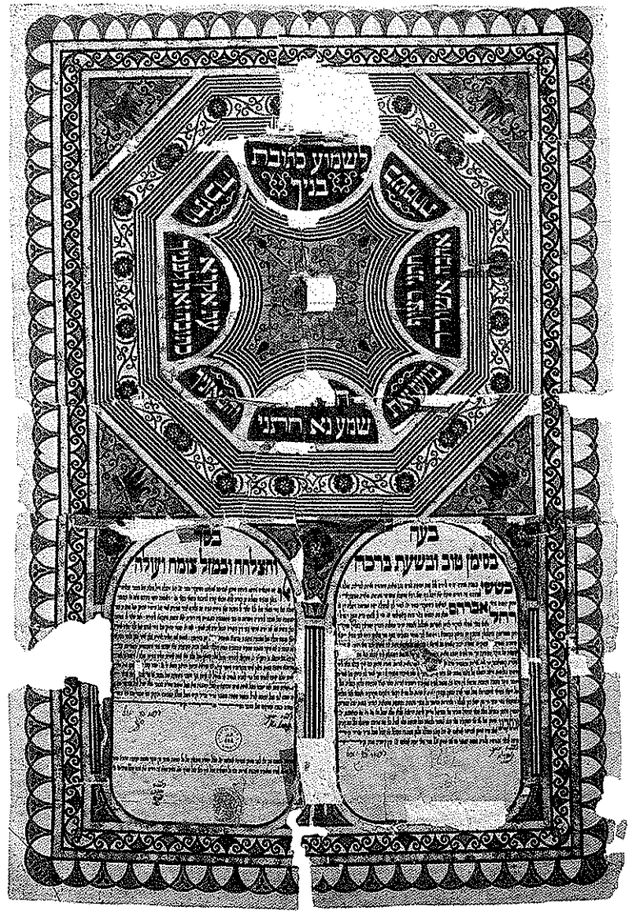
This group includes the earliest dated plaque known to us – a combination of *Shivviti* and a map of the holy places (pl. 58).[17] According to the dedication, the plaque was produced in Istanbul in 1838/9 by Moshe Ganbashe. The central field is taken up by the holy places and the sea – complete with a steamship – painted in color. The cut elements in the plaque are the strips separating the different parts of the painting and the letters around the central part, as well as the vases with

2



a

b



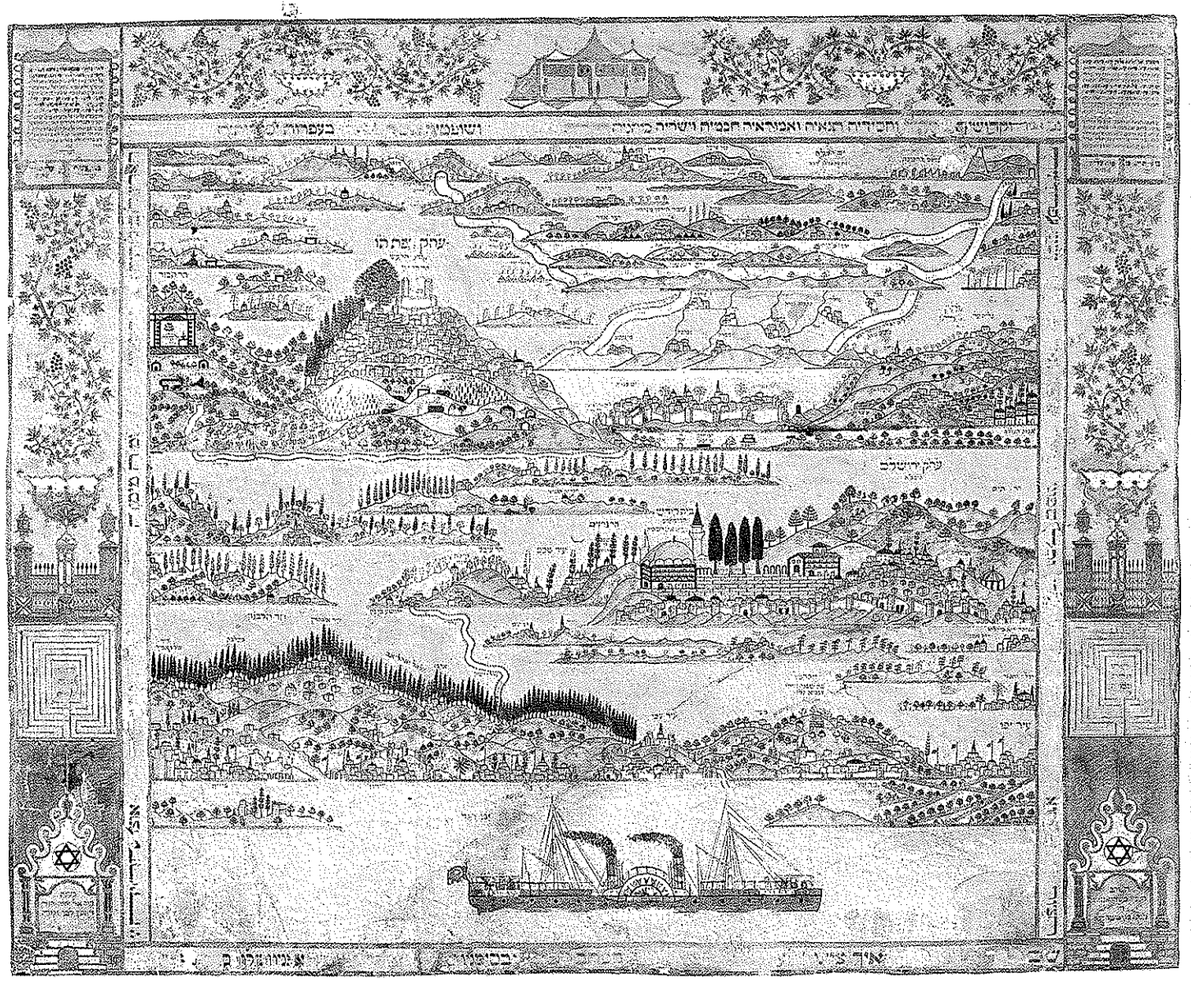
c

2. "Jew in Constantinople"
1618
Paper-cut, colored
British Museum, manuscript
1974-6-17-013 fol 58 b
Photo: courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London

Pl. 57
a. *Shivviti* plaque
Artist and scribe: Raphael Mordekhai Moshe Tarica
1862?
Paper, gouache (tempera?) and gold powder
L. 78 W. 57
Israel Museum Collection, 168/57; 615.85

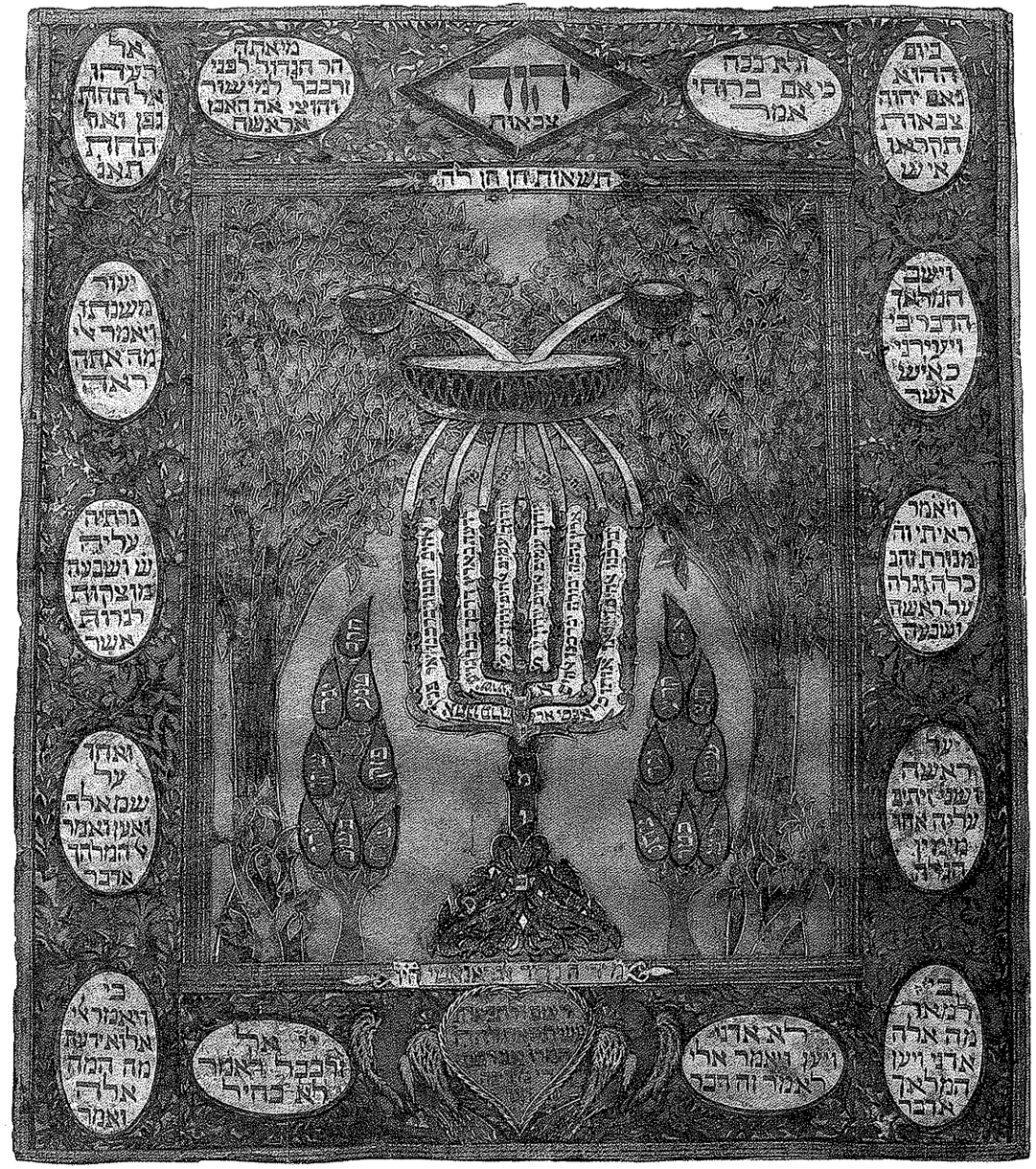
b. Mock *ketubbah*
Rhodes
Paper, gouache
L. 46 W. 32
Israel Museum Collection
179/113; 20.84
Gift of Nelly Devidas

c. Marriage contract
Rhodes, 1891
Paper, watercolors, pencil and colored pencils
L. 66 W. 44
Groom: Avraham Amato known as Bekhor
Bride: Rahel, daughter of Moshe Capiluto
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection, 243, Jerusalem



Pl. 58
Shivviti plaque
Map of the Holy Places
Istanbul, 1838/9
Paper, paint, ink, paper-cut sections
L. 87 W. 107.2
The Jewish Museum Collection

F5855, New York
Gift of Dr. Harry G. Friedman
Photo: courtesy of the Jewish Museum, New York



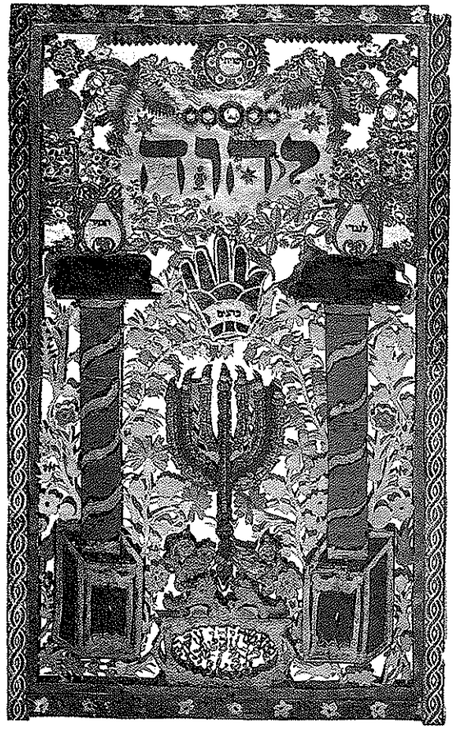
Pl. 59
Shivviti plaque
Artist: David Algranati
19th-20th centuries
Multilayared paper-cut
L. 41 W. 45
Israel Museum Collection, 168/58; 616.85

Plate 60

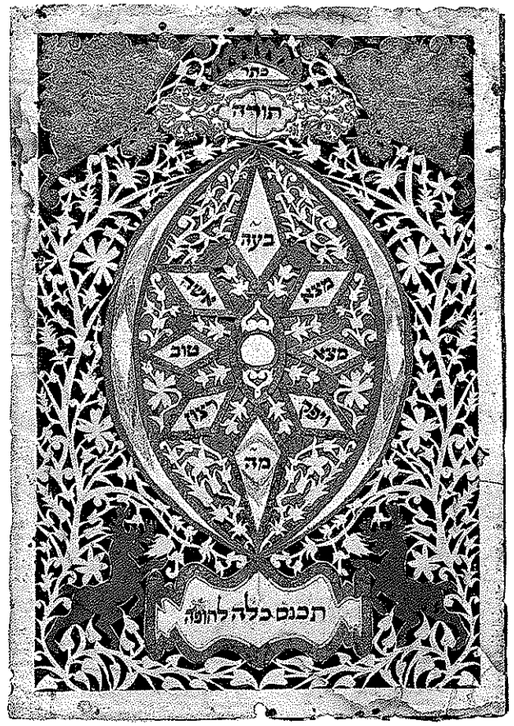
Plate 61

Pl. 60
Shivviti plaque
Artist: David Algranati
19th-20th centuries
Multilayered paper-cut
L 92 W. 66.5
Israel Museum Collection,
168/59; 617.85

Pl 61.
Shivviti plaque for the *sukkah*
Multilayered paper-cut
Artist: Hayyim Ye'uda (sic)
Algranati
19th-20th centuries
Multilayered paper-cut,
embossed gold paper
L. 67 W. 41
Israel Museum Collection,
168/43; 603.85



a



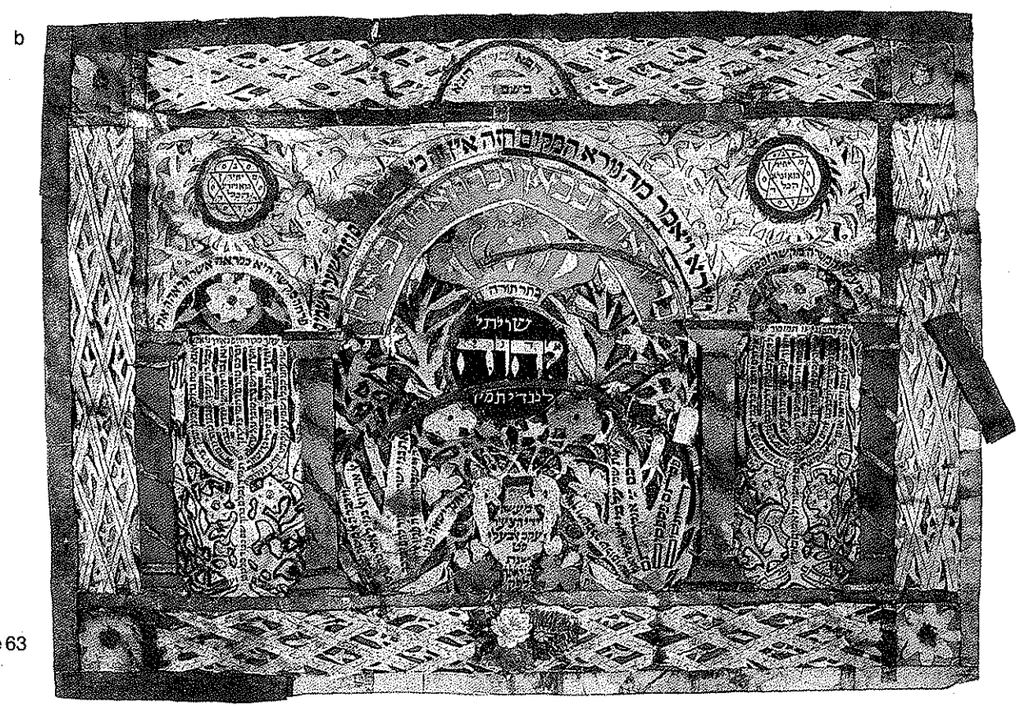
b

c

Pl. 62
a. *Shivviti* plaque
Artist: Ya'akov Albagli
1875
Paper-cut, mirror, paper, colored pencils
L. 44 W. 27
Israel Museum Collection, 168/55; 613.85
b. Blessing for a wedding
19th-20th centuries
Paper-cut, paper and embossed gold paper, ink, colored pencils
L. 43 W. 30
Israel Museum Collection, 177.149
c. Amulet
Multilayered paper-cut
Artist: David Algranati
19th-20th centuries
L. 14 W. 12
Israel Museum Collection, 177/148; 814.84
Courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Pl 63
a. *Shivviti* plaque for the *sukkah*
Artist: Yosef Abulafia
Izmir, 1889/90
Paper-cut, paper, ink on embossed metal paper
L. 38 W. 54
Israel Museum Collection, 168/48; 606.85
b. *Shivviti* plaque
Artist: Ya'akov Albagli
1873/4
Paper-cut, colored paper, watercolor and ink
L. 27 W. 44
Israel Museum Collection, 168/53; 611.85

a

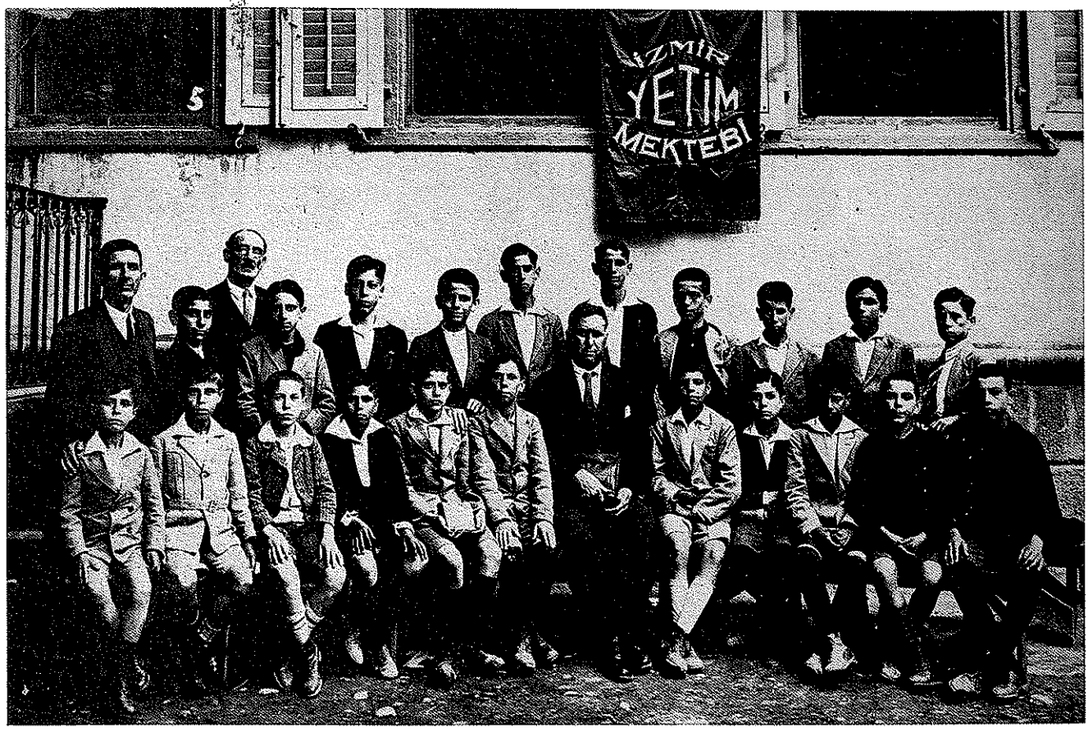


b

Pl. 64
Shivviti plaque
1858/9
Paper-cut, multicolored paper, printed and gold embossed paper, ink
L. 71 W. 43
Israel Museum Collection, 168/54; 612.85

3

3. Two types of Jews in the Karagöz shadow theater
Leather, painted and cut
L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art, Jerusalem
Private Collection, Jerusalem



4

vine trellises and grape clusters framing the whole. The elements in the frame were cut in pairs and then mounted opposite one another. This combination of painting with a paper-cut frame is known from illuminated Turkish manuscripts and albums;[18] it can also be seen in Italian *ketubbot* and Scrolls of Esther.[19]

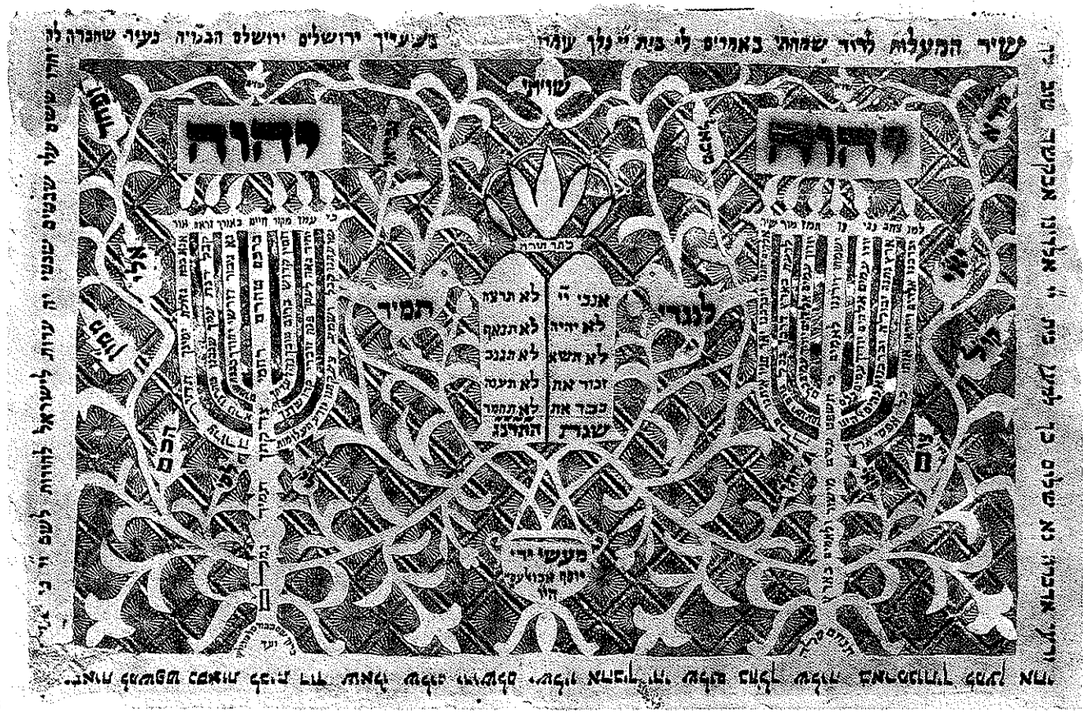
Ketubbot decorated with multilayer multicolor collages

We know of two *ketubbot* from Istanbul, dated 1881 (pl. 51) (see preceding chapter, "Ketubbot,"), and some from smaller cities.[20] Those from Istanbul are decorated with designs cut from paper of striking colors, as well as gilt paper, in simple geometrical patterns, mounted side-by-side and on top of one another (e.g., windows and doors on houses).

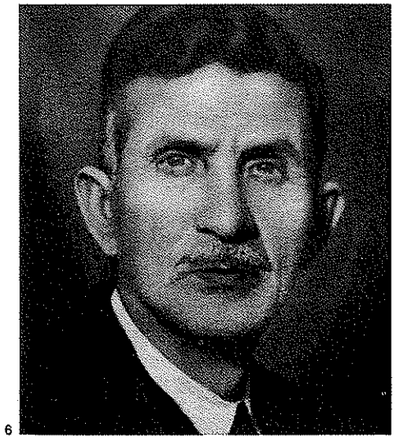
The subject matter is mainly architectural – the skyline of a Muslim city, perhaps Istanbul, with buildings topped by cupolas, minarets of mosques and cypress trees, in keeping with the conventions of Turkish art. The *ketubbot* use two contrasting elements to convey a sense of space and depth: the smooth pieces of paper form a multicolored, decorative continuum; while the colored units, partially overlapping, give a sensation of depth due to the alternately depressed and raised sections of the design – although there is no real sense of perspective. The impression of depth is also heightened by the magnification and diminution of various details, such as the cypresses.

Single-layer carpet pages

This group comprises paper-cuts created by Yoseph Abulafia and Yoseph Halevi b. Yiẓḥak, known as Bekhor (figs. 1, 5, 7-9, pl. 63a), both of whom worked in the 1890s. A few details of Yoseph Abulafia's life are known.[21] He was born around 1880 in Bunar-Başi, near Izmir, and died in Izmir in 1942 (figs. 4, 6). He apparently came from a rabbinical family – his elder brother was head of an Izmir burial society – and taught at the Talmud Torah school in Izmir; however, we know nothing of his formal education. A skilled calligrapher, he was a jack of many trades, including paper-cutting, wood-carving and pre-



5



6

4. Yosef Abulafia with his pupils
Talmud Torah school
Izmir
Photo. Arch. 5953
Courtesy of Ḥayyim Abulafia, Tel Aviv

5. *Shivviti* plaque
1893
Artist: Yosef Abulafia
Paper-cut, paper and ink on embossed metal paper(?)
L. 20 W. 25
The Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

6. Paper-cut Artist:
Yosef Abulafia
Izmir, 1880-1942

paring inscriptions for tombstones. Among his surviving creations is a *Shivviti* plaque for a *sukkah* (pl. 63a) and a copy of it, probably cut together with the original (visible in the second plaque is the beginning of an unfinished micrographic inscription containing texts from the Song of Songs), a smaller *Shivviti* plaque (fig. 5), and a number of multilayer cut-outs that open out into three-dimensional decorations for the *sukkah* (figs. 1, 7). The latter were made of four double sheets of different colors, folded together like a booklet, cut and then sewed along the fold. The result is a structure of eight identical leaves around a central axis. The prevalent motifs in these works are floral vases, fish, an architectural structure in perspective containing a Magen David and cut-out inscriptions. One paper-cut is a unique portrayal of a Turk wearing a fez and brandishing a sword (fig. 1).

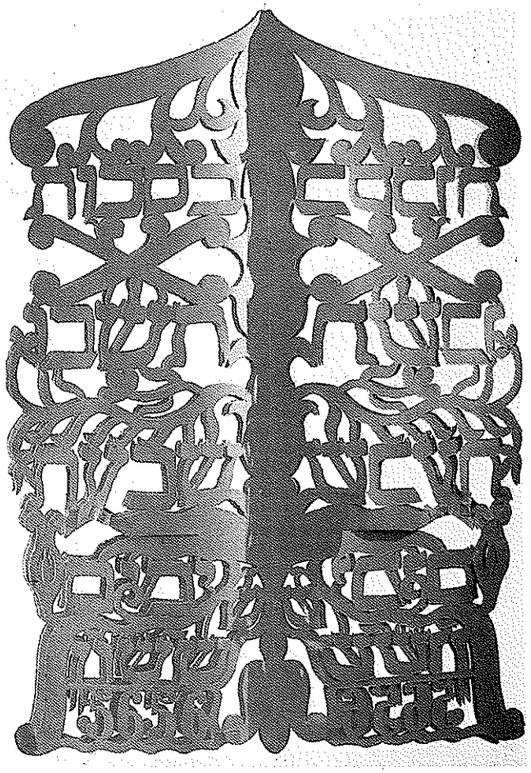
On Yosef Halevi we have no details whatever. We know six samples of his work, all *Shivviti* plaques, one of them for a *sukkah* (fig. 8). Four of the plaques are dated to the 1890s (1891/2 and 1893/4).[22]

The paper-cuts of Abulafia and Halevi have several common features. They are horizontal rectangles made of a single sheet of paper folded once to obtain bilateral symmetry. The design consists of a central rectangle surrounded by one or more frames, generally depicting one or two seven-branched candelabra (in the center of each half) and such motifs as the Tablets of the Law, a Torah crown or a Magen David. The field of the design is filled with dense foliage growing out of vases, linking the various motifs to the frame and to each other. The *Shivviti* plaques for *sukkot* also feature an additional lower strip, in which the *ushpizin* blessings are inscribed on a row of seven vases framed by seven rounded arches. The cut-outs are made of white paper (oxidation has set in and the paper is darkened). They were cut with a knife and mounted on a background of embossed gilt and blue paper. The verses and prayers are written in black ink in the uncut areas.

The obvious similarity between the work of these two artists hints at a possible connection between them – they may have been acquainted with each other's work; perhaps both studied with the same master or worked within the same genre conventions.

Abulafia's design of the vegetal latticework is far more delicate and his repertoire of patterns richer than those of Halevi. The ornamental motifs and flowers are smaller and more detailed, and one readily identifies among them tulips and roses, borrowed from Ottoman art and following its conventions. Halevi's lines, on the other hand, though schematic, are well-rounded and firm, creating a sense of flow.

In Abulafia's *Shivviti* for a *sukkah* (pl. 63a) the inner frame contains a strip in which inscriptions were cut in negative, exposing an additional background beneath. According to the



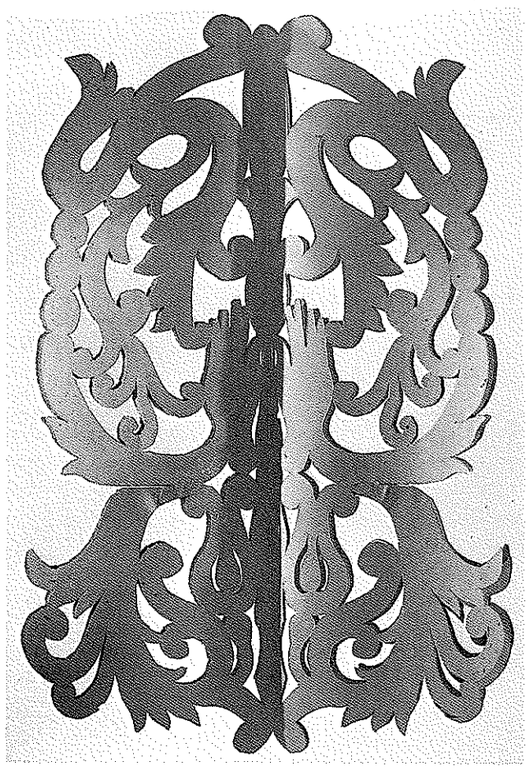
7

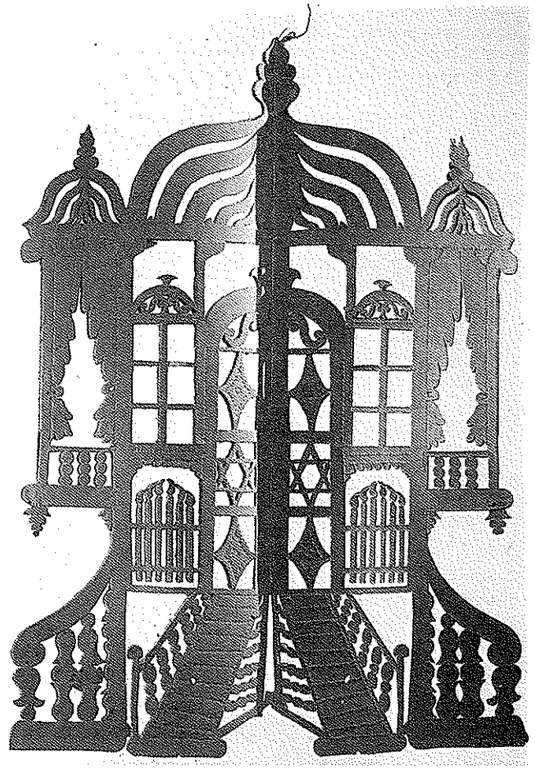
dates in the *sukkot* cut-outs, Abulafia's *Shivviti* precedes that of Halevi (1889/90 as against 1893/4).[23] As this type of carpet page is uncommon in Turkish paper-cutting, its sources should probably be sought in Jewish paper-cuts from other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the design of the details as mentioned above, such as the pair of cypresses in Abulafia's creation – a narrow outline entirely filled with foliage – indicates familiarity with the Ottoman style.

Multilayer collage paper-cuts on a vegetal latticework

This group of paper-cuts includes works by two artists, Hayyim Yauda Algranati and David Algranati, who were most probably related. The former produced a *Shivviti* plaque for a *sukkah* (pl. 61) and the latter two *Shivviti* plaques and a personal amulet (pls. 59, 60, 62c). The works are not dated, though those of David Algranati include personal dedications.

Highly skilled artisans, both artists were clearly of the same

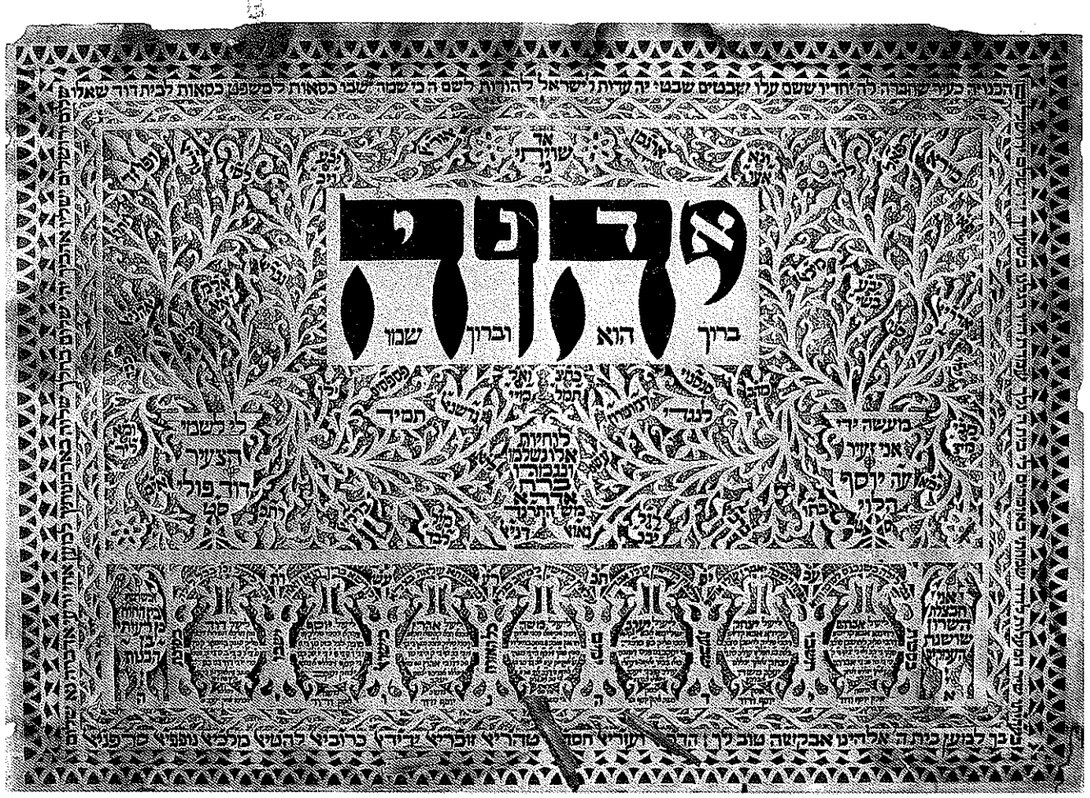




school and drew on similar traditions. Their paper-cuts reveal common features:

1. The paper-cuts are multicolored. Both design and background are fashioned from paper of varying types, textures and colors.
2. Each *Shivviti* plaque is made up of a large number of smaller cut-outs, created using different techniques and mounted side-by-side or in layers, partially or completely overlapping. The number of layers may be as high as seven, creating a kind of rich mosaic.
3. The symmetrical structure is maintained, despite a few discrepancies. It seems that some parts of the paper-cuts were cut together and mounted on the plaque opposite one another, on either side of the axis of symmetry.
4. The field between the main patterns is filled with a delicate vegetal lattice design, mounted on a background of a contrasting color.

7. *Sukkah* decorations
Artist: Yosef Abulafia
Izmir, late 19th century
Paper-cut
L. 20
Hayyim Abulafia Collection, Ramat Aviv



8

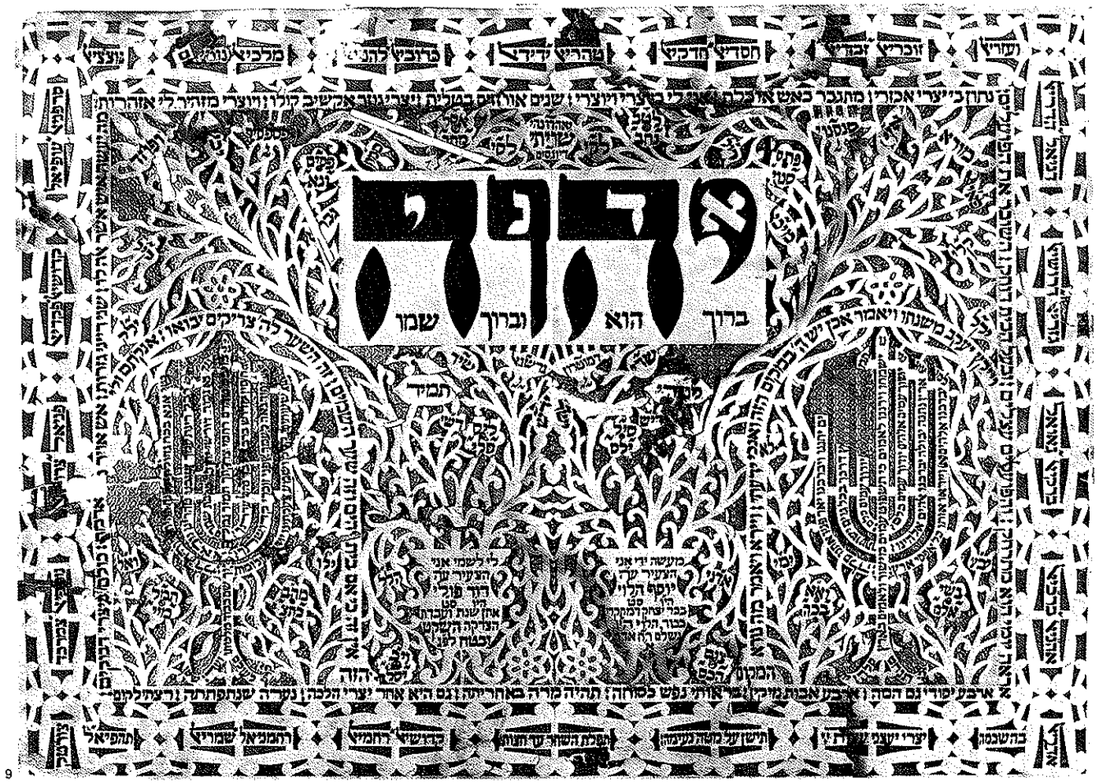
5. The layers are produced by different techniques: independent two-layer paper-cuts, consisting of an upper layer – the cut-out itself – and a background of contrasting color (see, for example, the muskets and cannon barrels in pl. 61); multilayer paper-cuts made by an underlaying technique: first the upper layer is cut out and mounted on a different-colored background, and then the latter is cut parallel to and very near (c. 0.5 mm) the previous lines (this technique is unique to David Algranati). One also finds paper-cuts pasted together by an overlaying technique, such as a collage paper-cut on a vegetal latticework filling out the background, and various combinations of these two techniques.

6. Both artists incorporate inscriptions, either positive or negative cuts, and some written in black ink. David Algranati makes much use of negative cuts, backing up the inscriptions with paper of changing colors. Ḥayyim Yauda Algranati uses both techniques equally frequently.

7. Incorporation of ready-made components of colored paper, in different sizes, bearing various embossed or printed decorative designs. The paper-cut of Ḥayyim Yauda Algranati, for example, has a gilt-embossed page mounted in its center, containing "windows" within which the cut *ushpizin* text appears (pl. 61). The sword handles in this paper-cut are also ready-made elements, embossed in gold. The high level of skill displayed by both of these artists indicates that their use of such elements was not due to technical inability, but to the intrinsic value they attached to these items.

Collage paper-cuts of ready-made components

This last group includes two *Shivviti* plaques, made by Ya'akov Alba'ali in the 1870s, one of them mounted on a mirror (pls. 62a, 63b). These paper-cuts, unlike those de-



9

10

8. *Shivviti* plaque for the *sukkah*
Artist: Yosef ha-Levi
Izmir, '1894
Paper-cut, paper and ink on embossed metal paper
L. 56 W. 41
Israel Museum Collection, 168/56; 607.85

9. *Shivviti* plaque
Artist: Yosef ha-Levi Bekhor Yizhak known as Bekhor ha-Levi
Izmir, late 19th century
Paper-cut, paper and ink on embossed metal paper
L. 56 W. 40
Israel Museum Collection, 168/47; 605.85

10. Embroidery cut-out (detail)
From: Ayten Sürür, *Türk Işleme Sanatı*, Istanbul 1976
Paper-cut

scribed previously, are made partly of white paper painted with water colors, gouache or colored pencils. Alba'ali, who was less skilful than the artists described above, made copious use of gilt-embossed or color-printed paper as an integral part of his creations. The *menorah* in the center (pl. 62a) is a printed illustration, cut out of a ready-made plaque, painted and pasted onto the plaque. Some of the medallions, vases and leaves figuring in his plaques are taken from similar sources.

The basic motif of these plaques is an arch or group of three arches, supported by columns, sometimes topped with vases. In pl. 63b the columns stand on bases which seem to be drawn in perspective, but in fact testify to the artist's general misunderstanding of the rules of perspective.

Also included in this group are a few unsigned plaques, composed of a combination of paper-cuts and collage with ready-made components, selected and placed in the plaque with due regard for the needs of the composition. The ratio of cut-out to ready-made components varies from plaque to plaque. A *Shivviti* plaque from 1858/9 (pl. 64) shows an abundance of ready-made elements and a very small proportion of original cut-outs, whereas a plaque celebrating a wedding (pl. 62b) contains many more cut-outs. Elements with printed designs are utilized in two ways: some artists use the decorative motifs without modification, while others juxtapose scraps cut from paper of differing textures and colors, sometimes partly overlapped, in order to create the desired design (see, for example, the columns in pl. 64).

Some of the plaques utilizing this technique are extremely intricate and overcrowded, the entire field being filled with a combination of ready-made patterns and cut-outs; others, including *Shivviti* plaques, benedictions for the Scroll of Esther and various inscriptions, consist solely of ready-made items, without original cut-outs. Among these ready-made parts one finds strips of gilt paper which serve for framing or separating the different sections of the plaque; sometimes the ready-made elements are combined together to form a decorative design (for example, fig. 11; see also fig. 2 in "Marriage" and pl. 41).

One might think that this preference for ready-made components in contrast to original cut-outs indicates a decline in the artistic level of the art of paper-cuts. However, examination of the dates of these creations reveals that both techniques were in use at the same time and indeed were sometimes combined with one another.

Style and motifs

The variety of the surviving paper-cuts indicates that this art was well-known and highly developed among the Sephardi Jews in Turkish communities. The relatively small number of existing items is perhaps due to the impermanence of the material. In the next few paragraphs we shall try to point out some of the factors that may have influenced the technique and style of Jewish paper-cuts, as well as their design and motifs.

Stylistic sources

The stylistic influence of Ottoman art is evident in many respects: the repertoire of flowers and plants; the overall design of the vegetal latticework used to fill out the field between the main elements, both as a foundation and as a connective element – all these are undoubtedly borrowed from Ottoman decorative art in general and from Turkish paper-cuts in particular (compare figs. 8, 9 with fig. 10).

The rich multicolored composition achieved by using differently colored papers as backgrounds for the various sections of the paper-cut (such as cartouches, arches and trees) – mostly characteristic of the work of David and Ḥayyim Yauda Algranati – is familiar from Turkish paper-cuts, and is very common in the painted carpet pages of illuminated manuscripts.[24] The technique of partial overlapping to create a single design may also be traced back to the same source (see above).

Three-dimensional or depth-creating effects are not common in the paper-cut medium, though they may be found in some kinds of Turkish paper-cut in which designs are mounted side by side or on top of one another. Appeal is sometimes made to western rules of linear perspective, such as convergence of lines toward the interior and gradual diminution of figures, though the perspective conception of space is not consistent and not always uniform even within the same plaque.[25] Such features may also be found in some of the Jewish paper-cuts. For example, each of the separate units in David Algranati's paper-cut (pl. 60) creates its own space: the hands and the Tablets of the Law are mounted on a base which is drawn in perspective; the base of the *menorah* in the central rectangle overshoots the frame and seems to be standing in the foreground, whereas the branches lie in the same field as the cypresses flanking the *menorah*. The two birds supporting the dedicatory plaque present a wholly illusory three-dimensional impression. David Algranati's second *Shivviti* plaque (pl. 59) also features the *menorah*, cypresses and olive trees in a single plane, whereas the tops of the olive trees seem to be behind the framework; on the other hand, the bowls and the pipes distributing oil to the branches of the *menorah* create an additional foreground and as it were force the branches further forward, beyond the plane of the olive trees. The twigs pasted onto the trunks of the olive trees contribute to the three-dimensional effect.

11. *Shivviti* plaque
19th-20th centuries
Paper-cut, paper, ink, gold embossed paper
L. 58 W. 40
Israel Museum Collection, 168/51; 609.85

Motifs

As we have already mentioned, Ottoman influence is also evident in the repertoire of motifs in Jewish paper-cuts. A good example is the central motif of Hayyim Yauda Algranati's *Shivviti* plaque for the sukkah. Here, alongside the customary elements of this type of plaque, such as the hands symbolic of the priestly blessing, the artist has portrayed a trophy of swords, axes, muskets and banners; at the bottom are two cannon barrels, and in each of the four corners a pair of pistols. This European design, which became common in Turkey in the nineteenth century (probably in connection with reforms instituted in the military establishment), may be found as a symbol in countless official government documents, coins and decorations; it was also widely used as an ornamental motif, e.g., on tobacco cases, cups and amulets (figs. 12, 13). That the artist saw fit to employ this motif in a paper-cut seems to indicate a sense of identification with the environment; indeed, it would be difficult to invest it with any Jewish iconographical significance.[26]

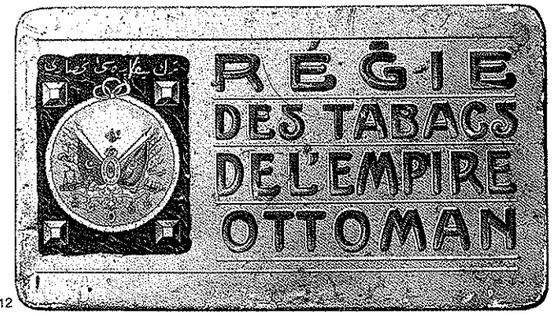
Alongside the signs of Turkish influence, the Jewish paper-cuts reveal strong links with Jewish tradition. The repertoire of motifs, compositions and numerous inscriptions continue the long-standing tradition of cut-out, painted and printed *Shivviti* plaques and *menorot*, as common in the Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa as it was in Eastern and Central Europe.

The main motif of the paper-cuts is the central *menorah*, or pair of *menorot*, with Psalm 67 or the *Anna be-khoaḥ* prayer inscribed on the branches. This is the principal element in any oriental *menorah* plaque and in many of the *Shivviti* plaques, and it also appears in some of the East-European paper-cuts. The hand motif found in Turkish Jewish paper-cuts is very common in other items from Turkey, such as amulets, Ark curtains, silver ceremonial objects and marriage contracts (cf. the relevant chapters in this book). It is also prevalent in paper-cuts from North Africa.[27] A variation of this motif is a pair of hands, with fingers splayed as required in the priestly blessing and an appropriate inscription.

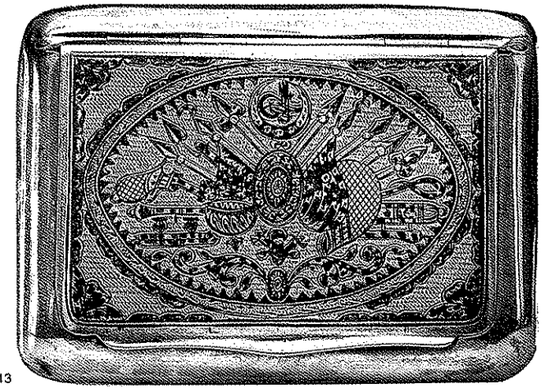
The Torah crown motif figures in some paper-cuts near the central section, in which the Tetragrammaton is inscribed, or between two banners with the inscription *keter Torah*. Plate 64 shows a Torah crown drawn after the fashion of European royal crowns. This motif is common in paper-cuts, *parokhot* and other objects from Eastern and Central Europe,[28] but rather more rare in other ceremonial objects from the Ottoman Empire.

The motif of a pair of deer standing rampant in a heraldic attitude (pl. 62b) is exceptional in Turkish art; it testifies to a direct link with European Jewish paper-cuts[29] and other ceremonial objects.

One of our *Shivviti* plaques (pl. 64) features an interesting



12

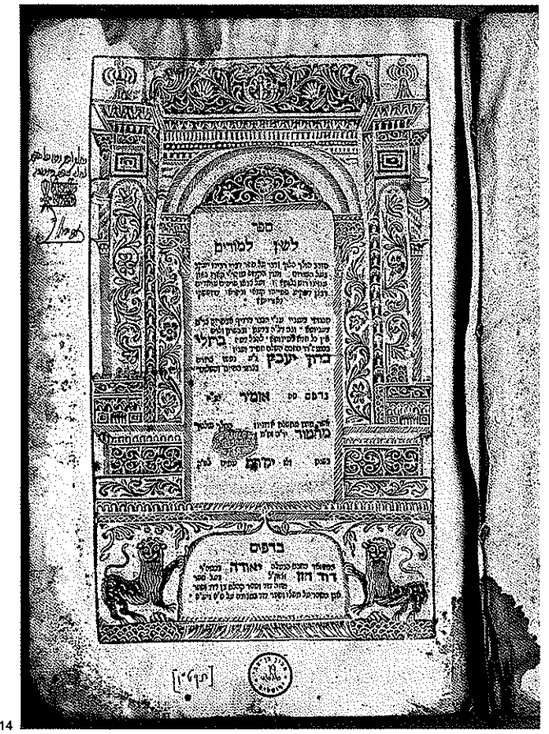


13

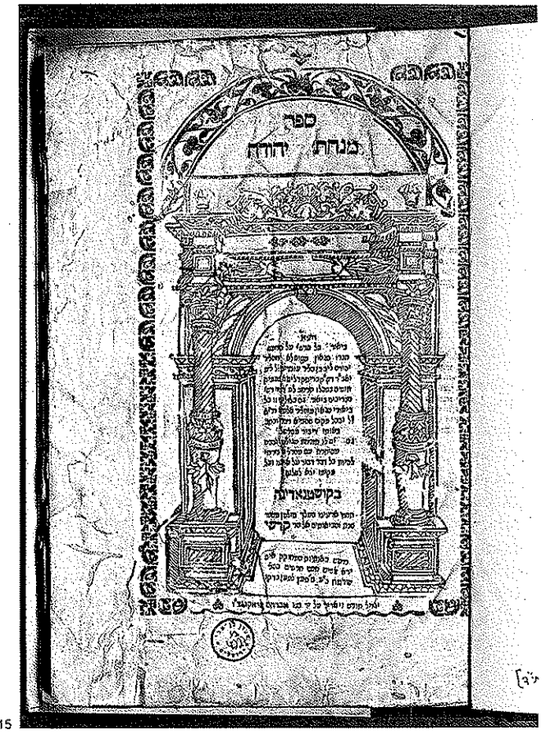
detail: between the base of each column and the hand above it, one can see part of the figure of a lion – only the tail and one of the hind legs are visible, the other limbs being covered with cut-outs, perhaps added at a later stage. Beside the figure is a cut-out inscription, "Judah is a lion's whelp."[30] We do not know why or by whom the lions were covered over.

Apart from the similarities of motifs already mentioned, Ya'akov Alba'ali's *Shivviti* plaque (pl. 62b) makes use of a ready-made *menorah*, cut from another printed plaque. This feature shows that the Turkish Jewish artisans were familiar with paper-cut or painted *mizraḥ* plaques from Eastern and Central Europe, as well as Erez Israel.

One of our paper-cuts, a *Shivviti* plaque also serving as an amulet (pl. 59), features an unusual text. In the center stands a *menorah*, with Psalm 67 inscribed between its seven branches; inscribed on the flanking cypresses are the initial letters of the prayer *Anna be-khoaḥ*. However, the design within the central frame is actually an illustration of the cut-out



14



15

text in the medallions of the outer frame, which is taken from the book of Zechariah (4:1-7): "I see and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it and seven lamps on it... and there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." Also illustrated is a later verse in the same chapter (v. 12, not included in the inscription): "The two golden pipes from which the oil is poured out." Visible above the *menorah* is a bowl into which oil is flowing from two smaller bowls at its sides. The illustration of this chapter is quite exceptional for a *Shivviti* plaque.[31]

The central composition of a pair of columns, sometimes also supporting an arch (for example, pls. 62a, 63b, 64), though very common in Jewish paper-cuts from Eastern and Central Europe, is less common in this genre in Turkey. There, however, it is widely used in title pages of Hebrew books, whether printed in Turkey or printed elsewhere and used in Turkey, and in marriage contracts printed in the late nineteenth century in various cities, in particular Izmir (see,

12. Cigarette box
Tin
Israel Museum Collection,
B87.68
Estate of Shimshom Harmat

13. Tobacco box
19th-20th centuries
Silver, niello
Private collection

14. *Sefer Leshon Limudim*,
Izmir, 1755
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection,
Jerusalem

15. *Sefer Minhat Yehuda*,
Constantinople, 1654
Ben-Zvi Institute Collection,
Jerusalem

e.g., figs. 6, 7 in "Ketubbot"). The design of the arch and the columns, their ornamentation, and also the faulty perspective, as seen in the paper-cuts, follow the conventions appearing in title pages (see, e.g., figs. 14, 15). Some of the Jewish creators of paper-cuts may well have been connected with the printing trade. This would also explain their mastery of Hebrew typefaces, their familiarity with the texts of Hebrew benedictions, etc., not to speak of their ready access to different kinds of paper.[32]

Another group of motifs may testify to other sources of influence. The small dedicatory plaque supported by a pair of birds in a heraldic attitude, appearing at the lower edge of David Algranati's work, betrays the artist's familiarity with neoclassical European art, either directly or through Ottoman art.

Although we have divided the paper-cuts described above into stylistic groups, there are also evident connections between the different groups, possibly indicating some relationship between the different artists and their creations. The differently colored cut-out letters in the inscription around the Istanbul *Shivviti* (pl. 58) are similar to those of Hayyim Yauda Algranati's plaque (pl. 61). Abulafia, Halevi and Hayyim Yauda Algranati employ similar patterns in their *Shivviti* plaques for the *sukkah*: a row of arches with vases, on which the blessings to the *ushpizin* are inscribed (fig. 8, pls. 61, 63a). One also discerns a similar exploitation by different artists of ready-made elements mounted on paper-cuts.

The paper-cuts described in this survey are being exhibited here for the first time. We have tried to point out the stylistic characteristics and possible sources of influence on this folk-artistic tradition. It is hoped that we have thereby made a first contribution to a more thoroughgoing examination of the Jewish paper-cuts of Turkey and their sources.

Translated by David Louvish

Notes

1. I would like to thank Yael Hoz for her assistance and deep involvement in the preparation of this article. The technical analysis of the paper-cuts was done under her guidance, and the terminology is largely based on her suggestions.

2. For a bibliography of Turkish paper-cuts, see: Arseven, p. 321; Çağman; Ünver £ Mesara; Renda, *Cabinets*; Renda, *Batililaşma*, pp. 179-84; Rogers, *Islamic*, pp. 18-20; the important paper by Kurz, *Libri*, and the bibliography he gives.

3. Aslanapa, *Binding*, p. 60.

4. Evliya Efendi, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 219-20.

5. See, for example, British Library Ms. 1974-6-17-013, known as the "Mundi Album" (fig. 2); Rogers, *Islamic*, fig. 9; *Türkische Kunst*, figs. 1/100a-b, 1/102a-b, 1/105, 1/106a-d.

6. See Renda, *Cabinets*, pp. 6-7; idem, *Batililaşma*, pp. 179-84.

7. For paper-cut-outs as bases for embroidery, see above, "Textiles." For shadow paper, see *Türkische Kunst*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43, and figs. 1/103a-c, 1/104, 1/108.

8. For shadow theater in the Near East see, for example, Landau; for the *Karagöz* puppets, see, for example, Tietze.

9. See, for example, Kurz, *Libri*, pp. 244-45; Rogers, *Islamic*, p. 19.

10. See, for example, Ünver £ Mesara, color illustrations (without page numbers).

11. See Rogers, *Islamic*, fig. 1; Renda, *Cabinets*; cf. also Riefstahl, figs. 60-62; Arseven, figs. 651, 652.

12. See Rogers, *Islamic*, fig. 8; Çağman, pp. 23, 25. For examples of seemingly symmetric paper-cuts, see Ünver £ Mesara, color illustrations (without page numbers); Riefstahl, fig. 62.

13. Kurz, *Libri*, pp. 240-42; Schirmann, vol. 2, pp. 529-40; Gibert-French.

14. It is quite possible that the Jews also used paper-cuts for other purposes, as well as bases for embroidery (which were in universal use; see "Textiles"). The only reference to Jewish paper-cuts in the literature is in Hamdy Bey's book (1873), p. 29: in a description of the costume of Jewesses in Istanbul he mentions that much importance was attributed to floral lace decoration which was attached at the edge of the *yemeni* scarf and adorned the forehead. However, in view of the prohibitive cost of real lace, special flowers, cut from white paper, were manufactured in the Kuzguncuk quarter, and these were used as a substitute.

15. Shahar, pp. 227-28.

16. Of one artist, Yosef Abulafia, we know for a fact that he worked as a teacher (see below). Jewish paper-cutters in Eastern and Central Europe were also exclusively men – *yeshivah* students, teachers and pupils in the *heder* and the *Talmud Torah*; see Frankel, *Paper-cut*, pp. 14-15.

17. Mann, *Two Cities*, no. 175, p. 147; Mann £ Kleeblatt, p. 128.

18. For example, the "Mundi Album"; see Titley, no. 7.

19. See Frankel, *Paper-cut*, pp. 92-93 (*ketubbah*), 94-95 (Scrolls of Esther).

20. For example, a *ketubbah* from Turgutlu, from the collection of Abraham Ya'ari, and another from Tire, in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. For other paper-cut decorated *ketubbot* see "Ketubbot," n. 30.
21. For the information about Abulafia, I am indebted to his two daughters and, in particular, his son, Hayyim Abulafia of Tel Aviv.

22. The dates on the other two (fig. 9 and nos. 168/46, 604.85 in the Israel Museum Collection) are apparently written in a faulty way.

23. Judging from Abulafia's date of birth as communicated by his children, the paper-cut was made when he was only ten years old.
24. For the use of backgrounds of different colors in illuminated Turkish religious plaques (*murakka hilye*) see, for example, *Turkish Contribution*, nos. 7, 11, 12.

25. See, for example, Rogers, *Islamic*, fig. 1.

26. A similar pattern is carved on the case of a Jewish amulet from Serbia; see Benjamin, *Stieglitz*, no. 273.

27. See Frankel, *Paper-cut*, pp. 105, 107, 109.

28. For paper-cuts see, for example, ibid., pp. 19, 21, 25, 41, 49, 67, 73, etc.

29. Ibid., pp. 21, 23, 33, 35, 47, 49, 75, etc. For a *Hanukkah* lamp, see Benjamin, *Stieglitz*, no. 153.

30. I am indebted to Yael Hoz, who noticed this detail. The inscription may hint at the artist's name.

31. Another illustration to this chapter – the only one known to me spread over a full page – may be found in the Cervera Bible, in the National Library, Lisbon (f. 316v); see Narkiss, *Manuscripts*, pl. 6. However, despite the similarity of design, composition and colors between the paper-cut and the page from the Cervera Bible, there seems to be no connection between the two. Up to the present we have no additional evidence of such a tradition among the Sephardi Jews of Turkey.
32. For example, a person named Hayyim Yauda Algranati is mentioned in a list of Jewish books printed in Izmir, as having assisted in 1864 at the printing of the book *Me-'Am Lo'ez* at the press of Benzion Benjamin Roditi; see Ya'ari, *Izmir*, no. 129.

Bibliography

Arseven — Arseven, Celal Esad, *Les arts décoratifs turcs*, Istanbul [n.d.].
Aslanapa, *Binding* — Aslanapa, O., "The Art of Book Binding," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, ed. B. Gray, Paris 1979, pp. 59-91.
Çagman — Çagman, Filiz, "XV Yüzyil Kağit Oymacilika (Kaat'ı) Eserleri" (The Art of Paper Filigree), *Sanat Dünyamiz* 8 (1976), pp. 22-27.
Evliya Efendi — Evliya Efendi, *The Travels of Evliya Efendi*, vol. 1, pt. 2: *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. from Turkish by Joseph von Hammer, London 1846.
Frankel, *Paper-cut* — Frankel, Giza, *The Art of the Jewish Paper-cut*, Tel Aviv 1983 (in Hebrew).
Gibert — Gibert, Soledad, "Variadades sobre Otto Kurz: 'Libri cum characteribus ex nulla materia compositis'," *Al Andaluz* 38 (1973), pp. 243-47.
Hamdy Bey — Hamdy Bey, Osman, *Les costumes populaires en la Turquie en 1873,* Istanbul 1873.
Kurz, *Libri* — Kurz, Otto, "Libri cum characteribus ex nulla materia compositis," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 240-47.
Landau — Landau, J. M., "Shadow Plays in the Near East," *Edoth* 3 (1947-48), pp. XXIII-LXIV.
Mann, *Two Cities* — Mann, Vivian B., *A Tale of Two Cities: Jewish Life in Frankfurt and Istanbul 1750-1870* (Exhibition Catalogue), The Jewish Museum, New York 1982.
Mann and Kleeblatt — Mann, Vivian B. and Kleeblatt, Norman L., *Treasures of The Jewish Museum* (Exhibition Catalogue), The Jewish Museum, New York 1986.
Narkiss, *Manuscripts* — Narkiss, Bezalel, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Jerusalem, New York 1969.
Renda, *Batililasma* — Renda, Günsel, *Batililasma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanati 1700-1850,* Ankara 1977.
Renda, *Cabinets* — Renda, Günsel "Writing Cabinets with Landscape Decoration in the Topkapi Palace Museum," *Sanat Dunyamiz* 3 (1977), pp. 2-7.
Riefstahl — Riefstahl, Rudolf M., *Turkish Architecture in Southwestern Anatolia*, Cambridge, Ma. 1931.
Rogers, *Islamic* — Rogers, Michael, *Islamic Art and Design 1500-1700,* London 1983.
Shachar — Shachar, Isaiah, *Jewish Tradition in Art, The Feuchtwanger Collection of Judaica* (Exhibition Catalogue), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem 1971-81.
Schirmann — Schirmann, Haim, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv 1956.
Tietze — Tietze, Andreus, *The Turkish Shadow Theatre and the Puppet Collection of the L.A. Mayer Memorial Foundation*, Berlin 1977.
Titley — Titley, Norah, *Turkish Illuminated Manuscripts in The British Museum*, London 1981.
Türkische Kunst — *Türkische Kunst und Kultur aus osmanischer Zeit* (Exhibition Catalogue), Recklinghausen 1985, 2 vols.
Turkish Contribution — *Islam Sanatinda Türkler, The Turkish Contribution to Islamic Arts*, Istanbul 1976.
Unver and Mesara — Unver Sühaeyl A., and Mesara Gülbün, *Türk ince oyma sanati: kaati*, Istanbul and Ankara 1980.
Ya'ari, *Izmir* — Ya'ari, Abraham, "Hebrew printing in Izmir," *Areshet* 1 (1959), pp. 97-222 (in Hebrew).

1. The Kovo family
Salonika, 20th century
Photo. Arch. 5925
Courtesy of Esther and
Yehoshua Kovo, Tel Aviv

Childbirth

Miriam Russo-Katz

"Mujer paridera al Satan lo vense" – A woman who has delivered a child has conquered the devil.

The customs and ceremonies which accompanied the birth of a child commenced with the woman's pregnancy and continued until mother and child had safely joined the everyday life of the family.

Childbirth has many sociological aspects, but we shall focus here upon those related to material culture, particularly to objects associated with the birth and its surrounding events, in an attempt to understand their significance and relationship to the various ceremonies and customs. These ceremonies and customs derived from several different spheres. One, common to all Jewish communities, was religious law, as expressed in the *brit milah* (circumcision ceremony), *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn son), and the laws of ritual purity observed by the woman after the birth of the child. Another was custom – the local interpretation given to the halakhah and its observance. In the circumcision ceremony, for example, the prayers, order of events, choice of *sandak* (godfather), and use of Elijah's chair were all determined by local custom. Certain practices were not based upon the halakhah at all, but over the years, had become an integral part of Jewish life. In many cases, these too exhibit a local flavor. For example, while in many Jewish communities it is customary to name baby girls in the synagogue on the first Sabbath after the birth, girls in most of the Sephardi communities of Turkey are named in a special ceremony, held in the home.

Another significant category of customs are those of popular origin related to various magical beliefs. The use of magic, as a means of ensuring safety and protection, stemmed from concern for the lives of the mother and newborn, as childbirth in those days involved many risks. Though some of these popular customs are related to Jewish tradition, most reflect the influence of the Muslim population and Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire. Many of them are, in fact, universal, and can be found in societies throughout the world.

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century – the period under discussion here – many changes took place within the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire. The process of westernization that affected the Empire as a whole left its imprint on the Jews as well. Exposure to European culture led to the gradual secularization of Jewish society, and resulted in changes in the Jewish way of life which were also reflected in the material culture. Secularization caused the weakening, and even disappearance, of many customs which had once formed an integral part of Jewish tradition, while others, though they continued to exist, lost their religious-traditional significance, or were instilled with new meanings altogether.

Our information concerning customs related to pregnancy, childbirth and the subsequent ceremonies, has been gathered primarily from women who gave birth in the 1920s and 1930s, and who could also testify as to the customs of their mothers and grandmothers. The description is based to a large extent on this material, as well as on the objects that have been preserved.

Pregnancy

A first pregnancy symbolized the beginning of a new stage in a woman's life. Of particular significance was the woman's first pregnancy, which dispelled all fears that she might be barren, a devastating defect in traditional societies. In Sephardi communities, a woman was regarded as a bride (*nóvya*) from the day of her marriage until she concieved. Pregnancy thus granted her a new social status.[1]

When the pregnancy became known, the family began preparing for the upcoming birth. The woman received special treatment: she ate well and was prevented from engaging in strenuous labor.[2] The period of pregnancy was accompanied by many beliefs and practices, which were meant to protect both the woman and fetus. According to one belief, it was important to indulge all the woman's cravings. For example, if she smelled the aroma of a particular dish, it would immediately be brought to her to taste (*gostar por guezmo* – to taste because of the smell).[3] It is possible that this custom stems from the halakhah,[4] though it is also practiced by the Muslim population of Anatolia.[5] Beliefs concerning the diet of a pregnant woman can be found around the globe.[6] Sephardi women also believed that pregnant women must not be exposed to sudden fear or shock, or to anything that might signify a bad omen, such as death, lest it harm the woman or fetus.[7] Certain customs, of a magical nature, were meant to

ensure an easy delivery. For example, throughout the pregnancy, the doors, closets and drawers were left open in the home,[8] just as the doors of the Torah ark were often left open during the birth.[9]

During this period, especially in first pregnancies, a major preoccupation was the preparation of clothing and bed linen for the expected child.

Preparation of the infant's clothing

According to our sources, Sephardi women began preparing the infant's clothing and diapers (*fašadúra fáto*) a few months prior to the upcoming birth.[10] It was customary to mark the commencement of the work with a ceremony called *kortár fašadura*, (the cutting of the diapers). This ceremony was held when the woman was in her fifth month, and was attended by female relatives, neighbors and friends. A relative, whose parents were still alive and who was herself a mother of children, was given the honor of cutting the fabric and performing the formal act of *ečár tižera* (opening the scissors). At this time, candied almonds (*konfites*) were tossed onto the fabric.

The fabrics used for the *fáto* – a collective term referring to the infant's diapers, clothing, and bed linen – were in most cases brought with the woman's trousseau. In the 1920s, the most common fabrics were *xasé* (a cotton used for the infant's bedding and underclothes), *nimé* and *fanéla* (cottons used for the various diapers), and batiste (used for outer garments). These fabrics reflect European influence; prior to the twentieth century, traditional Ottoman fabrics, such as *pembezar* and *menemen bezi* (a rough cotton) were the norm. The cut fabrics were handed over to relatives for sewing, a process that took many weeks, as the outer garments and bedding were decorated with embroidery or crocheted and knitted. Well-to-do families often engaged a seamstress or embroideress to prepare these items for them.

There were various types of diapers, such as *panyáles, pišaléros*, and *kuléros*, some of which were lined with cotton batting or towelling fabric. The outer diaper, *pána*, was a kind of square swaddling cloth, in which the infant was wrapped with legs and arms inside so that he looked like a small bundle.[11] This form of swaddling continued until the infant's second or third month, after which his limbs were gradually exposed, first the arms and then the legs. The set of diapers also included two belts (*fašas*): a narrow one which first served to bind the infant's navel and later to tie the inner diaper, and a wider one, sometimes decorated or crocheted, which was wrapped around the infant several times to secure the outer wrap. Other garments included: a sleeveless shirt (*kamizíka*), underpants (*bragíta, pantaloniko*), and a shirt with sleeves and openings at the front and back (*kazakíta*). Bedding was also prepared: mattress covers, sheets and pillows, and blankets, padded, crocheted or embroidered.

According to women from Salonika and the region of Thrace, one of the most important items prepared was a long gown, similar to a dress, called *kamíza lárga*, which was regarded as having protective qualities: "kamíza lárga para vida larga," – a long gown for a long life. The gown was worn by boys at the circumcision ceremony, by girls when they were named, and by all infants on their first outings.

The women tried to complete the *fáto* by the end of the seventh month of pregnancy, in case of premature birth. Upon the completion of the work, an entire day was spent washing and ironing the clothes. Later, they were laid out for display before female relatives, neighbors and friends.

In Izmir, it was apparently the custom to sew a Torah binder as well, which the mother would dedicate to the synagogue. This binder (*fáša*), made of an expensive fabric but uninscribed, was, according to one source, given to the synagogue before the birth for "good luck." According to another source, it was donated only afterwards, as a sign of gratitude towards God who had safeguarded the lives of the mother and newborn. Today, one can find in the synagogues of Izmir wrappers filled with many such binders, which are not in use. It is interesting that among the hundreds of binders examined,[12] only a few were made of fine fabrics or embroidered; most were made of simple cloth and prepared with little attention or care. It is possible that with the decline of tradition within the community, this custom lost its importance, even though it was practiced until the 1950s.

Our informants from Salonika were not aware of the custom of dedicating a Torah binder to the synagogue after the birth. Yet we find evidence of this practice in the book *Orḥot Yosher*, written in Salonika in the eighteenth century: "After the woman who has given birth has purified herself and goes to the synagogue, something should be contributed to the synagogue, in place of the sacrifice offered by the woman after childbirth. I have seen some instances of women who dedicated a *mitpaḥat* (binder?) for the Torah, which is not the best way to observe the commandment, since every synagogue already has several of these *mitpaḥot*, stored away in a box. It would be better to donate a *tallit* to the synagogue, or a book to the *beit midrash*, or to have a book repaired, or to contribute something so that an orphaned young woman can be married, to donate a pair of *tefillin* to the poor, or to the synagogue."[13]

The Israel Museum Collection has a Torah binder from Salonika which was originally an infant's swaddling diaper. This unique item features an embroidered inscription, but as it makes no reference to child or birth, it is impossible to know whether or not it was donated in observance of the aforementioned custom (fig. 2).

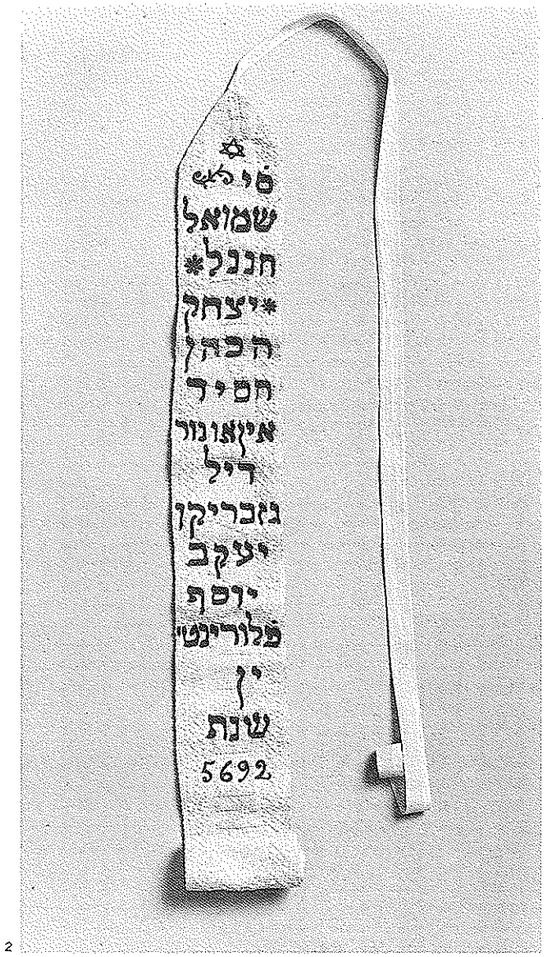
Birth

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women still gave birth at home, with the help of a midwife; doctors were only called in the event of complications. Though the mortality rate among women and infants had significantly decreased, childbirth (*paridúra*) and the period directly following it were still considered dangerous times for both the mother and newborn. Thus, the various magical and religious customs intended to protect the lives of mother and child were still in practice.

Among the Sephardi Jews, as in most traditional societies, the birth of a son was greeted with tremendous joy, which was expressed in festivities and prayers.[14] The arrival of a daughter, however, was often accompanied by feelings of disappointment and frustration. The son was regarded as one who could eventually assist the family, and someday even support it, while bringing up a daughter was but a cause for concern and worry: a suitable husband had to be found, the dowry had to be prepared, and, of course, there was the anxiety that she might be unable to bear children.

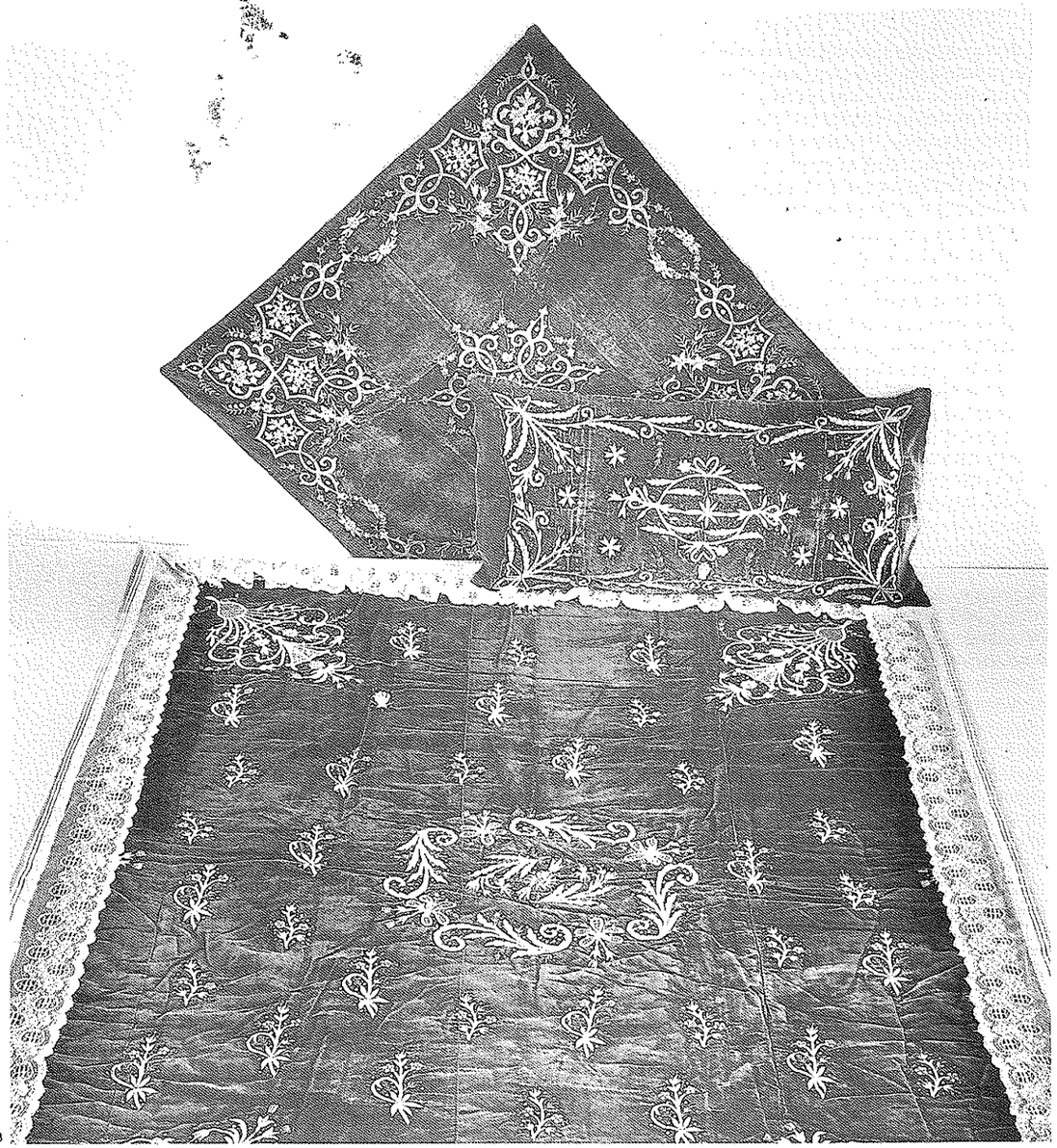
This sentiment was expressed in various popular sayings, such as "Ken ijo kria oro fila, ken ija kria ansia en fila" (He who raises a son gains gold, he who raises a daughter gains worry)[15] and "Estas kayados, komo ke vos naserya ija" (You are as silent as if you just gave birth to a daughter). Its prevalence can also be deduced from mid-nineteenth-century writings and sermons, which preach against such notions.[16] This attitude eventually changed with the advent of modernization, though a certain preference for boys still prevailed.

During the eight days following the birth, the new mother remained under the constant supervision of, in most cases, either her mother or another female relative. She was lavishly cared for, and never allowed out of bed.[17] According to Jewish law, she was regarded ritually unclean after the birth. Apparently, most women waited forty days before purifying themselves through immersion; especially pious women waited forty days after the birth of a boy and sixty after the birth of a girl, though this figure does not correspond to the periods indicated in the halakhah.[18] During this period, the woman did not venture out of the house, nor was she permitted to return to the full burden of household chores. She was always accompanied by another woman. This was probably due to the belief that it was dangerous for her to encounter certain individuals, such as another woman who had recently given birth, a woman in her first month of marriage, or women who could bring bad luck. These beliefs were also prevalent among the local, non-Jewish population.[19] Muslim and Christian women were also guarded for forty days after the birth, and not allowed out of the house; at the end of this period they too underwent a purification ceremony.[20]



2

2. Torah binder
Salonika, 1932



3

4

The period following the birth was marked by numerous customs and ceremonies, which were accompanied by a large variety of objects meant to both adorn the mother and child and serve as amulets, to protect them from the dangers that threatened them at this crucial time.

Childbirth bed

The arrangement and decoration of the bed for a woman in childbirth (*káma de parída*) was among the most important customs associated with childbirth.[21] It should be borne in mind that during this period, a large part of the population still slept upon mattresses on the floor. Therefore, a special bed was brought into the home for the mother-to-be.

The beds that were in use during the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries were high, made of metal, and equipped with a headboard, a footboard, and four corner posts joined together at the top in a frame. The entire bed was decked with a full set of elaborately embroidered bedding, which the woman had brought with her in her trousseau (fig. 3). The set consisted of a blanket (*kolča de parída*), two square or

3. Bedding for childbirth bed
Bedspread and sheet (*kólča de parída*)
Bedspread: velvet, couched metal-thread embroidery
Sheet: silk
L. 180 W. 144
Israel Museum Collection, 3850, 3851
Purchased by courtesy of Marlyne Taub, New Jersey
Cushion cover (*kavesál*)
Izmir, late 19th century
Velvet, couched metal-thread embroidery
L. 85 W. 42
Israel Museum Collection, 539.76
Gift of Mathilda Arditti, Barcelona
Wrapper (*bógo*)
Istanbul, late 19th century
Velvet, couched metal-thread embroidery
L. 90 W. 88
Israel Museum Collection, 760.81
Gift of Elda Eliachar, Jerusalem, in memory of her parents Anna and Salomon Barukh

4. Childbirth bed (*káma de parída*)
Istanbul, c. 1920
The bed is decorated with European style white embroideries
Photo: Photo Archives, Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv
Courtesy of the Barokas family, Tel Aviv

rectangular pillows (*kavesáles*), and a square cloth (*bógo* or *bohča*), which decorated the wall next to the bed and also figured in the circumcision ceremony. These items were usually made of burgandy, blue, or purple velvet, though sometime light-colored silks or cottons were used, with gold Ottoman embroidery. The sheets were made of silk or linen (*bürümcük* and *pembezar*), embellished with hand- or factory-made lace. A cloth (*yíró de káma*, *pyé de káma*) of the same fabric as the sheets was spread out at the foot of the bed; it was sometimes decorated with multicolored and metal-thread embroidery.

Around the upper frame of the bed was a pleated canopy (*kortináže*), and a mosquito net made of decorated tulle (*namusía*), which was attached to the frame, underneath the canopy, surrounded the bed like a tent. When the net was not in use, it was tied behind the headboard with a wide decorated sash. While the woman was lying in bed, the net served to shield her from the eyes of visitors. Sometimes, a curtain of opaque fabrics, such as velvet and brocade (*kortína*), was used. It was also customary to hang a carpet at the entrance to the room, to augment the protective atmosphere.

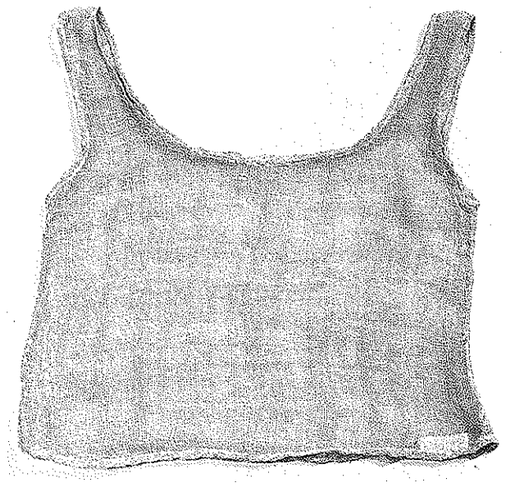
Only middle- and upper-class families had the means to afford such elaborate sets of bedding. As most of the population was rather poor, the necessary items were often borrowed, piece by piece, from neighbors and relatives.

With modernization, the traditional way of arranging the childbirth bed gradually changed. Bedclothes made of European fabrics with white embroidery became popular. They were first used in conjunction with the traditional gold-embroidered fabrics, and later replaced them entirely. This new style of bedding, made of linen or cotton and embroidered in the European fashion, adorned the childbirth bed as well, though sometimes one or two surviving traditional items were used as a reminder of the past (fig. 4). The bed was customarily arranged by a female relative, who had a family of her own and was known to have a happy marriage.

The decoration of the childbirth bed is apparently a custom which the Jews adopted from their non-Jewish neighbors. It was practiced by Muslim women,[22] but it is also known to have existed among the upper classes of Italy and France in the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries.[23]

Amulets

An important group of objects used by the mother and newborn were amulets. Certain amulets were meant to protect the mother from harmful spirits, and others from the "evil eye." It seems that gold thread, the color blue, and particularly the color red, which were more common in the sets of bedding for childbirth than in other contexts, were attributed with amuletic significance. If the color red did not appear in the set of bedding, the attendant women made sure



5

6

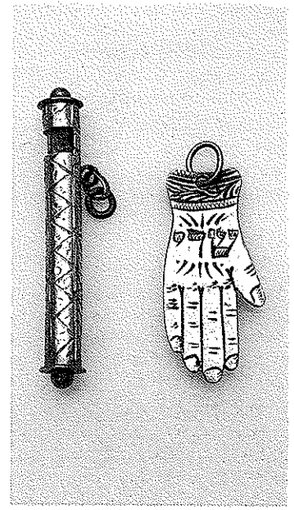
5. Amuletic undershirt for infant
Salonika, early 20th century
Linen
L. 31
Israel Museum Collection, 103.77
Gift of Lydia Albo, Haifa
Made for the newborn of a mother whose previous children had died, it was sewn from part of his grandmother's shrouds as an omen for a long life.

6. Amuletic bonnet
Izmir, early 20th century
Silk, metal-thread embroidery and pearls
Israel Museum Collection, 419.77
Gift of Victoria Russo

7. Amuletic pendants (*Shaddai*)
Izmir, 19th-20th centuries
Gold
D. c.2.5
Courtesy of Regina Politi, Mathilda Gordon and Miriam Russo-Katz

8. Amulets for newborn infants
Izmir, 19th-20th centuries
Hamsika: silver, repoussé and engraved
L. 3
Courtesy of Regina Politi, Jerusalem
Mezuzika: gold, parchment
L. 4
Israel Museum Collection
Gift of Renée Gomel, Montreal

7



8

to at least hang a red cloth in the childbirth room.[24]

One of the special and most popular items was an embroidered amuletic kerchief to be worn by the new mother (*tokadór de parida*). This cloth, in the shape of a right-angled triangle, was made of thin cotton or silk in either pink, purple, blue or burgundy. The right angle bore a Hebrew inscription, in metal-thread embroidery, and sometimes tiny baroque pearls. It was combined with one or two hand-shaped motifs and a floral decoration, which together formed an additional triangle.[25] The inscription included one of the names for God, as well as the names *sanoi, sansanoi, samangelaf*.[26] The latter are, according to a *midrash*, angels who protect the new mother from Lilith, who threatens the lives of the mother and all newborn infants.[27] Occasionally, the inscriptions included the names of Adam and Eve, *shamriel*, and the expression "beyond Lilith."[28] The kerchief was tied in such a way that the embroidered section rested on the forehead (pl. 45).

The Israel Museum Collection includes a pink silk bonnet in a turn-of-the-century European style, inscribed with the above-mentioned amuletic phrase. This singular item demonstrates the continuity of tradition within the process of modernization (fig. 6).

Besides the kerchiefs, there were also bands, which were fastened over the forehead of the new mother (pl. 45), and rectangular embroidered plaques for hanging on the wall above her bed, all embroidered with the same amuletic phrase.

A different kind of amulet in the Museum's collection, which originated in Salonika, is an undershirt to be worn by an infant born to a woman whose previous children had died (fig. 5). The garment was sewn from the fabric which was designated as his grandmother's shrouds. The undershirt was placed on the infant immediately following his birth, and was supposed to ensure a long life. The use of shrouds for the infant's clothing reflects the cycle of life and death, and the link between generations within the family.

Amuletic jewelry: The mother customarily wore eye-catching gold and diamond jewelry, which were believed to protect her from harm. According to women from Rhodes, a special gold ornament was worn, called the *templadéra*, which seems to have been similar to the *lilál* (see "Jewelry"). This multi-chained accessory was attached to the head-covering, and concealed the upper half of the woman's face. It was meant to draw attention away from the woman's face, and thus to protect her from the evil eye.

The mother and child customarily received gold coins, also viewed as amulets, which were attached to the woman's pillow, the infant's crib, or to their clothes. This practice was also prevalent among the Muslim women of Anatolia.[29] Similarly, it was common to give the woman a necklace of gold coins, as related in one of the Romances:

Ya viene'l parido
Con los combidados
Ya trae'n su mano

Resta de pexcado
Para la parida
Resta de ducados...

Here comes the father of the child
And with him the guests
And in his hand he carries
A string of fresh fish
and for the mother
a string of gold coins...[30]

The infant was also given small gold ornaments, such as *Shaddai* plaques, *mezzuzot*, and hands – all of magical significance.

Shaddai plaques: small plaques, usually flat but sometimes hollow like a flattened box, in a variety of shapes – round, rectangular, and in the form of hearts, shields, four-petaled flowers, or Stars of David. In the center of these plaques was inscribed the name *Shaddai*, and additional motifs like the Star of David, the *menorah*, Moses carrying the Tablets of the Law, and floral designs (fig. 7). Plaques given to girls were sometimes inlaid with small rubies, which were also believed to contain amuletic qualities.[31]

Hand (*xamsíka*): a small hand made of silver or gold, engraved and occasionally inlaid with a blue stone (fig. 8).

Mezzuzah-like pendant: a cylinder made of tin, smooth or decorated with engraving or filigree, containing a paper slip inscribed with the same verses used in wall *mezzuzot*. Sometimes, the cylinder had a small opening through which the letter *shin* was visible. Occasionally, the opening was covered. These amulets were mainly given to boys (fig. 8).

Precious stones and other objects: Magical properties were also attributed to precious stones, glass beads (especially blue), and other items, such as coral, blue glass "eyes" and a form resembling a wolf's tooth which was made of bone.[32]

Most of the amulets mentioned above were very small, and often a few were used together, since, among other things, each one was attributed with a particular function; for example: a *mezzuzah*, a coin, and a blue "eye" were often pinned together to an infant's clothing or crib.

Herbs and spices: Therapeutic powers and protection from the evil eye were attributed to various plants and herbs. A plant commonly found at ceremonies and events associated with childbirth was the rue plant (*rúda*), which was believed capable of protection from evil spirits. Rue was popular in the east among Jews and Muslims alike, and was delegated a prominent place in the childbirth room.[33] It was affixed to the woman's bed and clothing, and to the clothing and crib of the infant. Thin gold foil (*varak*) was attached to the plant's leaves. When the plant was shaken, the paper would rip into tiny pieces, which clung to the leaves. Heads of garlic were also hung from the childbirth bed and the walls.

Various spices were also used as amulets: A small bag sewn from a triangular piece of fabric and filled with cloves, fennel, cumin and garlic was inconspicuously attached to the infant's undergarments.

Another group of amulets that hung in the room were plaques made of wood, cloth or paper, bearing magic formulas. These were handwritten by a rabbi or a *sofer*. Copies of the Psalms or the *Zohar*, placed underneath the pillow of the mother or child, also served as amulets.

Brit milah (circumcision ceremony)

The *brit milah* was the most important event associated with the birth. Circumcision is the first commandment given to Abraham (Genesis 17:11-12) and is one of the basic laws of Judaism. The responsibility of circumcision rests with the father, but if he is unable to perform the task himself, as is usually the case, he may appoint a *mohel*, someone trained in the laws and methods of circumcision, to fulfil the commandment for him.[34] The transfer of the right to circumcise is integrated into the ceremony itself: "And it is the custom of Salonika that the father of the child hands the circumcision knife to the *mohel*, thus making him an agent..."[35]

Leil ha-shemira (vigil night)

The night before the *brit*, called *leil ha-shemira*, is in most Jewish communities dedicated to prayer and the study of the Torah, viewed as a means of protecting the mother and newborn during these difficult and traditionally risky hours. In Izmir and Rhodes this night was called *noče de šemira*, while in Istanbul, Thrace and Salonika it was called *la vyóla*. Rabbis and scholars were invited to the house of the mother and child, where they prayed and studied Torah the whole night through.[36] Over the generations, the night meant to be dedicated to solemn prayer and learning lost some of its serious nature and took on a more festive air, now characterized by song and drink. Romances and especially those dealing with birth, were sung. Occasionally, musicians were hired to entertain all those present.[37] A special meal (*rizo*) was served and the event lasted until dawn. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, R. Ḥayyim Palaggi pointed to the changing nature of this practice, and spoke out against it.[38]

Throughout the night, it was forbidden to leave the child alone in his cradle; it was customary for either the maternal grandmother or another close relative to hold the infant in her arms until the time of the ceremony.

The ceremony

The circumcision ceremony was held at home or in the synagogue (fig. 10), though most of the information we have gathered relates to ceremonies held in the home.

In the case of the circumcision of a firstborn son, it was customary for the paternal grandparents to act as *sandakim* (godparents), whereas the maternal grandparents were the *sandakim* at the second son's *brit*. In the cities of Thrace, some other relative or a recently married couple was some-

9

10

9. "Elija's chair" with Torah Ark curtain
Metal-thread embroidery

10. Circumcision
Izmir, 1988
Mohel: Avraham Mizrahi
Photo. Arch. 6019

11

times given this honor.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the godmother (*la kubára*, *la kitadéra*) carried the infant to the entrance of the room on a decorated pillow. He was covered with a cloth embroidered with metal threads and on his face lay a thin, transparent fabric. The godmother handed the infant to her husband, the godfather (*el kubár*), who, in turn, handed him to the *mohel*.[39] The *mohel* first laid the infant for a few moments on the "Chair of Elijah," which was covered with a gold-embroidery (fig. 9),[40] and then on the lap of the godfather, who had in the meantime seated himself on a special chair next to the "Chair of Elijah." This high, decorated chair, called *sía pára cirkúnsir* (a chair for circumcision), was usually stored in the community house and brought in especially for the ceremony. The "Chair of Elijah," on the other hand, was generally just an ordinary chair taken from the synagogoue, apparently owing to the holiness attributed to synagogue items. In Izmir, it was customary to set a candle on the "Chair of Elijah" which was lit by the *ba'al habrit*, the infant's father.

The cloth that covered the infant was the gold-embroidered *bógo*, which decorated the wall next to the bed of the woman after childbirth. In Salonika it was called *koltúk*, meaning "armchair" in Turkish, probably because a similar cloth was also used to cover the "Chair of Elijah."

If the ceremony was held at home, it was customary to take embroidered Torah Ark curtains (*parokhot*) from the synagogue to cover the "Chair of Elijah" and the table which held the circumcision instruments. We do not know whether this was because there were fewer and fewer traditional embroideries in the homes, or because of the sanctity of synagogue items (see "Textiles").

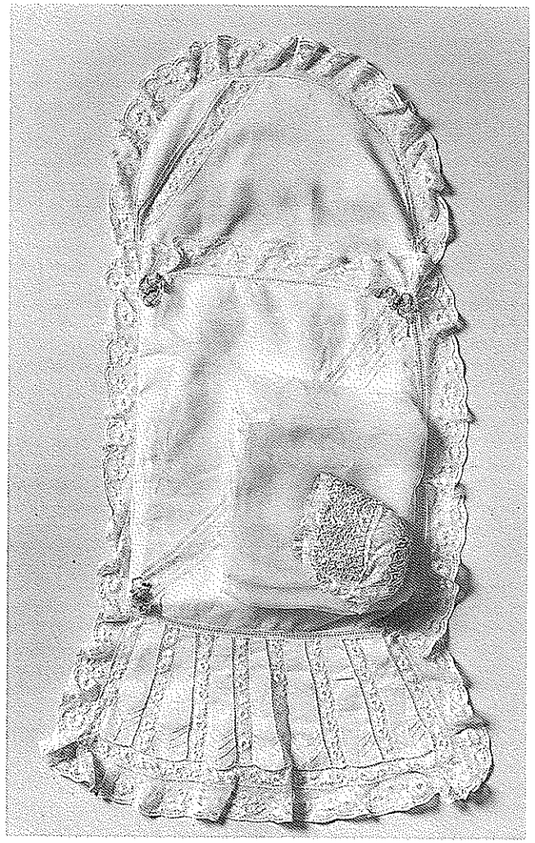
The infant was clothed in garments especially prepared for the occasion. We are familiar with such sets of clothes from various periods, made of different fabrics (figs. 11,12). The later sets generally consist of an undershirt, a dress, a cap, and a *tallit katan* (four-cornered garment). The Israel Museum Collection has a rare set from the late nineteenth century (pl. 46b) which originated in Istanbul. It includes pants (open at the inner seams), a belt, a *tallit katan*, and a cap, made of undyed cotton and silk, embroidered with silver threads in the Ottoman style. An embroidered Hebrew inscription, perhaps in secondary use, was attached to the cap, which is made of cotton ribbons and lace. The letters of the inscription are not clear, except for the abbreviation **בט"ט** (*besiman tov* – under a propitious sign i.e., for good luck), traditionally said at the conclusion of the *brit* ceremony.

Another typical garment for the ceremony was a vest sewn from an expensive fabric, such as Ottoman brocade, which was commonly used for the women's garb. The material for the vest may have, in fact, originally been part of a dress belonging to a woman of the family and no longer in use (pl. 47).

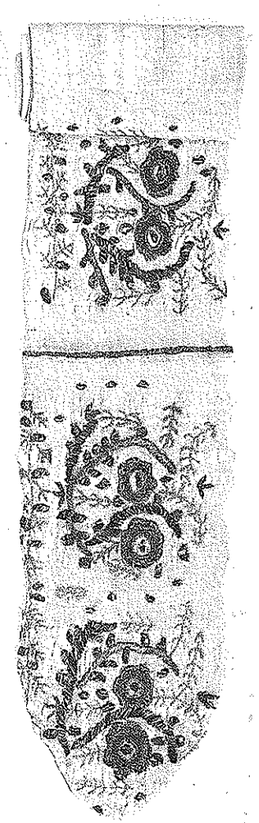
An exceptional item, today in a private collection, is a cap, similar to a *kippah*, with a tassle. It is made of velvet, and embroidered with an inscription, like those on the amulets for women in childbirth, as well as a hand and floral patterns (pl. 44a). An identical cap without the inscription was used for the Muslim circumcision ceremony (*sünnet*) in Anatolia.[41]

The circumcision outfit gradually changed throughout the period of modernization. The new garment was usually a European-style dress, occasionally worn together with a short jacket and undershirt. It was made of silk, embroidered in white and decorated with lace. The most elaborate specimens are made entirely of lace. Some are reminiscent of Christian baptismal outfits.

During this period, not all families had a *tallit katan* made, so the *mohalim* usually provided one. Special sashes were also prepared for the ceremony, which were used to swaddle the



12

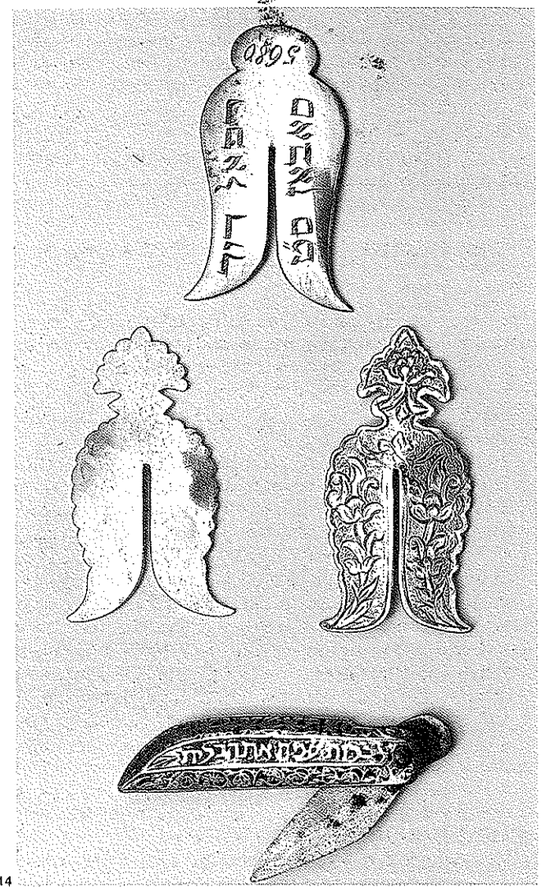


13

11. Infant's circumcision outfit
Izmir, 20th century
Dress, shirt, undershirt and hat
Silk, tulle, lace ribbon
Dress: L. 49; shirt: L. 22
Undershirt: L. 38; hat: D. 11
Israel Museum Collection, 988.85 a-d
Gift of the Abir family, Netanya, in memory of Shlomo Cabilio

12. Set for bearing the infant at the circumcision ceremony
Salonika, 20th century
Pillowcase
Linen, lace ribbon
L. 106 W. 39
Kerchief to cover the infant's face
L. 103 W. 100
Hat
Tulle, lace ribbon, silk cord, corals
Israel Museum Collection, 1037.9.85
Gift of Esther and Yehoshua Kovo, Tel Aviv

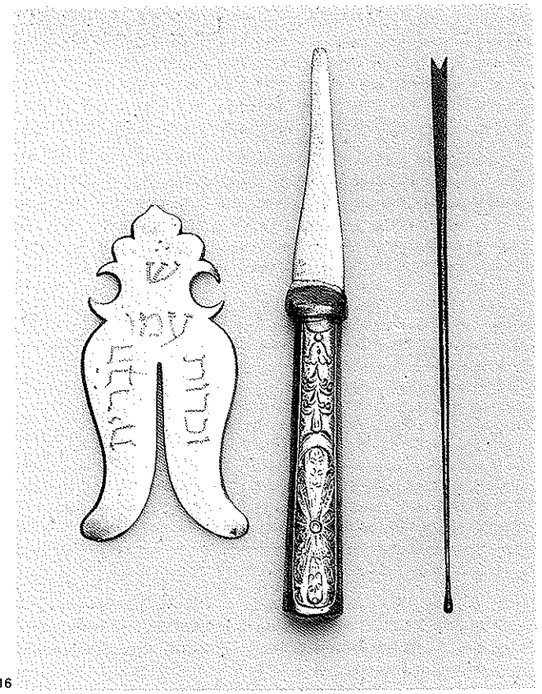
13. Belts to tie the outer swaddling diapers at the circumcision
19th-20th centuries
Linen, silk- and metal-thread embroidery
L. 115 W. 13
L. 115 W. 10
Israel Museum Collection, 112/118, 748.81
Gift of Pauline Hazan Tel Aviv Feuchtwanger Collection, purchased and donated by Baruch and Ruth Rappaport, Geneva



14

15

14. Circumcision clamps and knife
Early 20th century
Silver, repoussé and engraved; steel
Istanbul and Salonika
Israel Museum Collection, 117/72, 115.68; 112/34a,b, 67.81; 112/134d, 67.81
Gift of the Salonika Jewry Research Center, Tel Aviv



16

15. Circumcision knife
Salonika, 19th century
Silver, partially gilt, pierced and engraved; steel
L. 121 W. 30
Israel Museum Collection, 112/102
Feuchtwanger Collection, purchased and donated by Baruch and Ruth Rappaport, Geneva

16. Circumcision tools
Belonged to the *mohel* Rabbi Elazar Halevy
Izmir, early 20th century
Cast silver, repoussé and engraved
Courtesy of the Halevi family, Yehud

infant; belts (*kuşak*), embroidered at the ends, also served as sashes (fig. 13).

Circumcision tools
Our knowledge of the tools used for circumcision is sparse, and based largely upon the few items that have survived (figs. 14, 15, 16). A few early twentieth-century sets of tools from Salonika, Istanbul, and Izmir, include a knife, sharpened on both sides, and a shield (*almodrása, almodrána*).[42] In the set from Salonika, there is also a small bottle for holding powder. The handles of the knives and shields are, for the most part, made of silver, and engraved with designs and Hebrew inscriptions. One of the sets also includes a glass pipette for suction. It was introduced in Turkey and Greece in the 1920s, in accordance with regulations of the countries' ministries of health.

Seudat mizvah
In all Jewish communities, it was customary to serve a festive meal on the day of the circumcision.[43] Traditionally, not only the family, but ten poor people from the community were invited to this meal. Apparently, however, by the mid-twentieth century, few Sephardi families still observed this practice. Most families served only a selection of sweets – candied almonds (*konfites*), marzipan cakes (*mogadós, marončinos*) and tiny silver-colored candies (*matalúva*), filled with anise seeds, to which curative, good luck powers were attributed.[44] In addition to the sweets, the guests were also given leaves of the rue plant.

The naming of the daughter (*zeved habat)*

A ceremony in which the daughter was named (*fádas, fadanyénto, siéte kandélas*) was common in most Sephardi communities of Turkey and the Balkans,[45] though in each region it was given a different name. While this ceremony had no fixed date, it was usually held sometime between seven (as in Izmir) and thirty (as in Rhodes) days after the birth.

The ceremony was conducted by a rabbi, in the presence of at least ten men (*minyan*), usually at home but sometimes in the synagogue. The infant was clothed in an elaborate dress, a head covering and a transparent gold-embroidered scarf which covered her head. In Izmir and its environs, it was customary to adorn the dress with jewelry borrowed from a woman of the family. The purpose of this symbolic custom was to ensure the happiness and wealth of the child. The infant was handed over to the rabbi, who held her throughout the ceremony. In Izmir and Rhodes, a tray of rice and candies was prepared, into which seven candles were inserted, and which relatives were given the honor of lighting. The rabbi then said a prayer and gave the child her official name. The clothes worn by the infant for its ceremony in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were in European style: silk dresses decorated with lace and tulle. The Israel Museum Collection has an example of such a dress from Salonika (pl. 46a). Its length suggests that it may be the *kamíza lárga* prepared for the birth (see above), to which amuletic powers were attributed.

Pidyon haben (redemption of the firstborn son)

According to Jewish law, if the firstborn child of a woman is a son, the father is obligated to redeem him from the *cohen* (priest) for five *shekalim*. The ceremony, (*rexmído, rexmír*) is held thirty days after the birth. Exempted from this law are *cohens* and levites and mothers who are daughters of *cohens* and levites.

We do not have much information about customs and special objects associated with this ceremony among the Sephardi communities. In the cities of Turkey it was customary to redeem the child with silver or gold coins equivalent to five *shekalim*, or with silver objects.[46] In Izmir and Salonika, the ceremony often incorporated a staged humorous argument between the father and the *cohen*: The *cohen* would pretend to demand more money for the child, refusing to return him if the father did not comply. The argument presented by informants for this practice was that it made the ceremony somewhat more meaningful, and helped draw a larger crowd.[47] In traditional circles and in other cities of the Empire, the ceremony was held without this variation. To the *cohen*'s question, the father replies that he chooses to redeem his son, and hands him the coins or silver objects. After the ceremony, however, the *cohen* returns the "payment" to the father, and receives a gift in return.

According to the testimony of informants from Ankara, Istanbul, and Thrace, the mother wore her wedding dress and veil to the ceremony of the redemption of her firstborn. But by the mid-twentieth century, only the veil continued to be worn.

The customs and ceremonies related to birth and the objects accompanying them have been presented here in relation to the social and cultural changes that took place within the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire. The transition from traditional to modern society naturally left its impact. With medical advances and the ever-growing influence of the West on the population, many of the traditional beliefs associated with birth and customs having magical sigfnificance, disappeared. Changes are also clearly expressed in the material culture, as European-style objects gradually replaced traditional ones. It was thus difficult to

glean first-hand information about the period prior to modernization.

Nonetheless, one can surmise that the customs associated with childbirth in the Sephardi communities of Turkey and the Balkans were a combination of customs originating first and foremost in Jewish tradition, with the addition of local folk customs deriving from the surrounding Muslim society and Christian minority. These together found their expression within the particular social and cultural heritage of the Sephardi communities themselves.

Translated by Nancy Benovitz

Notes

1. This attitude towards the married woman also existed in Muslim society; see Nicolas, p. 53.

2. Benvenisti, p. 60; Yehoshua, vol. 3, p. 79. For the attitude to Turkish women, see Bayri, *Istanbul*, I, p. 53; Oztelli, pp. 436-37.

3. Yehoshua, p. 79.

4. According to Stahl, *Sons*, p. 80, "Jewish law holds that if a pregnant woman smells food on Yom Kippur and craves it, she should be given it to eat: Mishna Yoma 8:5; Talmud Yoma 82a-b. This belief could also be found among Ashkenazi Jews in the Middle Ages."

5. Nicolas, p. 59.

6. In France for example; see Gélis, pp. 122-123. Regarding other European nations and the Arabs of Asia and Africa, see Stahl, *Sons*, p. 80.

7. Similar beliefs were held by Turkish women; see Bayri, *Istanbul*, I, pp. 53-54. Regarding Christian women in France, see Gélis, p. 135.

8. Molkho, *Usos*, p. 51. Similar beliefs were common among the Muslim population of Anatolia; see Nicolas, p. 83; Bayri, *Balikesirde*, p. 101.

9. Patai, p. 283.

10. Yehoshua, vol. 3, p. 79. This was also customary among Muslim women throughout Turkey; see Bayri, *Istanbul*, II, pp. 79-80; Ülkütaşir, *Anadoluda*, p. 2883. Ashkenazi Jews did not usually prepare the infant's clothes before the birth, for fear of the evil eye. This precaution was also taken by Christian women of France; see Gélis, p. 135.

11. Molho, *Usos*, p. 60; Yehoshua, vol. 3, p. 80. This way of swaddling the infant is common throughout the Middle East. For Muslim women in Turkey, see Bayri, *Istanbul*, II, p. 82; Ülkütaşir, *Anadoluda*, p. 2884; Blunt, vol. 2, p. 2.

12. During a visit to the synagogues of Izmir in the framework of *Survey of Sephardi Communities*.

13. Molkho, *Orhot Yosher*, pp. 194-95.

14. Molho, *Usos*, p. 59; Attias, *Romancero*, p. 44.

15. Moskona, *Peninei*, p. 107.

16. R. Hayyim Palaggi, in *Tokhahat Hayyim*, p. 283, quotes Eliezer Papo (*Pele Yoez*, p. 38b): "I have observed the evil custom in many places of making jokes and laughing at a man to whom a daughter is born, such as 'the cold is great,' or 'the stench is great' and so forth to the point where this person can find no place to hide from all the persecution...." Later he writes, "and moreover, there is the foolish practice whereby if a man's wife bears him a son, he loves and honors her. If the child is a girl, he does not even go in to see her, and the sadness is great."

17. Molho, *Birth*, p. 259: "Until today, it is forbidden to leave a woman who has just given birth, alone; it is even forbidden to leave her in the dark, for if this is done, evil spirits will harm her. Usually her mother remains by her side day and night for fifteen days." This custom was also observed by Turkish women; see Blunt, vol. 2, p. 6.

18. Leviticus 12: 1-5: "When a woman conceives and bears a male child, she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the period of her impurity through menstruation... The woman shall wait for thirty-three days because her blood requires purification; she shall touch nothing that is holy, and shall not enter the sanctuary till her days of purification are completed. If she bears a female child, she shall be unclean for fourteen days as for her menstruation and she shall wait for sixty-six days because her blood requires purification..." According to the *Shulhan Arukh*, "Yoreh Deah," Laws of Niddah, 194:3: "A woman who has given birth to a boy waits then seven days after the birth and seven clean days and a woman who has given birth to a girl waits two weeks after the birth and then seven clean days."

19. Öztelli, III, p. 507; Nicolas, pp. 138-39; Ülkütaşir, *Sinopta*, pp. 60-61. According to these sources, it was believed that a meeting between a woman who has recently given birth and a pregnant woman, or a new bride, might harm the newborn or the bride.

20. Muslim women and their children purify themselves through bathing after forty days. See Nicolas, pp. 137-38; Bayri, *Istanbul*, III, pp. 99-101; Bainbridge, pp. 2-3. Among the Christians, the purification ritual was held in the church, on the fortieth day after the birth. See Blunt, vol. 2, p. 22; Argenti and Rose, p. 271. The custom of purification also existed in Christian Europe from the Middle Ages until the late nineteenth century. Gélis, pp. 292-96; Van Gennep, vol. 2, pp. 119-20.

21. For a description of this custom in Bulgaria, see Mezan, p. 142; and in Jerusalem, see Patai, p. 292.

22. Garnett, vol. 2, p. 472; Pardoe, vol. 2, pp. 97-98; Bayri, *Istanbul*, II, pp. 80-81; III, 97-98; Tezel, p. 1; Ülkütaşir, *Sinopta*, p. 59.

23. Gélis, p. 263.

24. Among Turkish women, the color red was thought to possess magical properties efficacious against the evil spirit El, who, like Lilith, was especially harmful towards women after childbirth, and newborns. Thus, directly after the birth, it was customary to tie a red scarf or ribbon to the woman's head, and a red ribbon to the newborn's cap or clothes. See Bayri, *Istanbul*, III, p. 99; Öztelli, V, p. 618; Blunt, vol. 2, pp. 2-3; Bainbridge, p. 2.

25. For the symbolism of the triangle for women in childbirth in Yemen, see Muchawsky-Schnapper, p. 65.

26. For a detailed explanation of these names, see Shrire, p. 118.

27. Ibid., pp. 114, 115, 118; Gagin, *Keter Shem-Tov*, pp. 577-78.

28. Shrire, pp. 113, 130; Grunwald, p. 225; Gagin, *Keter Shem-Tov*, p. 576.

29. Nicolas, pp. 122, 134; Bayri, *Balikesirde*, p. 104; Bayri, *Istanbul*, III, p. 98.

30. From Levy, *Antologia*, vol. 4, p. 375.

31. It was believed to be especially helpful with regards to childbirth, conception and the prevention of miscarriage. See Palaggi, *Refuah ve-Hayyim*, chap. 9, p. 28(3).

32. Blue beads, blue "eyes," coral and wolves teeth were the most common amulets among the Muslim women of Anatolia. See Nicolas, p. 112; Bayri, *Istanbul*, III, p. 99.

33. Gagin, *Keter Shem-Tov*, p. 576, points to the existence of this custom in Erez Israel, Syria, Turkey and Egypt. For Yemen, see Muchowsky-Schnapper, p. 72.

34. Ashkenazi, *Beit Oved*, p. 489(3, 4).

35. Shama Halevi, *Makhshirei Milah*, p. 115, based on *Shulhan Gavoah*. This custom is also found in other Jewish communities.

36. Palaggi, *Tokhahat Hayyim*, pp. 70-71.

37. Molho, *Usos*, p. 62.

38. Palaggi, *Tokhahat Hayyim*, "Lekh-Lekha," p. 71: "I am also very distressed about the small number of our people, who, when they hold a *leil shemira*, hire musicians and singers, and spend the night drinking wine, playing instruments ... and engaging in other such frivolities. I say that it is wrong to do such things during any night, most of all the watch night, because instead of helping the child it does him harm."

39. Moskona, p. 118; Molho, *Usos*, p. 65.

40. See Gagin, *Keter Shem-Tov*, p. 574; Reischer, p. 42.

41. Tansûg, fig. 3.

42. Lunz, pp. 12-13; Molho, *Usos*, p. 66.

43. Palaggi, *Tokhahat Hayyim*, "Lekh-Lekha," pp. 64-65.

44. Van Gennep, vol. 1, p. 141.

45. Molho, *Usos*, p. 79.

46. Ibid., pp. 81-83.

47. Ibid., p. 82.

Bibliography

Argenti and Rose — Argenti, Philip and Rose, H.J., *The Folklore of Chios*, Cambridge 1949, 2 vols.

Ashkenazi, *Beit Oved* — Ashkenazi, Yehuda Shemuel, *Beit Oved, Seder Tefilla Keminhag KK Sepharadim*, Livorno 1862.

Attias, *Romancero* — Attias, Moshe, *Romancero sefaradi: romanzas y cantes populares en judeo-espanol*, Jerusalem 1955 (in Hebrew and Ladino).

Bainbridge — Bainbridge, Margaret, "Life-cycle Rituals of the Turks of Turkey," *Muslims in Europe* 16 (1982) (Sally Oak College, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations) pp. 1-11.

Bayri, *Balikesirde* — Bayri, Mehmet Halit, "Balikesirde doğum ve cocuk hakkinda âdetler ve inanmalar," *Halk Bilqisi Haberleri* 77 (1938), pp. 97-105.

Bayri, *Istanbul* — Bayri, Mehmet Halit, "Istanbulda doğum ve cocukla ilişikli âdetler ve inanmalar, I, II, III," *Halk Bilqisi Haberleri* 111 (1940), pp. 49-54; 112 (1941), pp. 79-86; 113 (1941), pp. 97-104.

Benvenisti — Benvenisti, David, *Salonikan Jews in Recent Times*, Jerusalem 1973 (in Hebrew).

Blunt — Blunt, (Mrs.) John Elijah, *The People of Turkey; Twenty Years' Residence*, London 1878, 2 vols.

Gagin, *Keter Shem-Tov* — Gagin Shem-Tov, *Keter Shem-Tov*, Keidan 1934.

Garnett — Garnett, Lucy, *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-lore*, London 1890, 2 vols.

Gélis — Gélis, Jacques, *L'Arbre et le fruit; la naissance dans l'occident moderne (XVIe – XIXe siècle)*, Paris 1984.

Gellis — Gellis, Yehuda, *Customs of Erez Israel*, Jerusalem 1968 (in Hebrew).

Gennep — Gennep, Arnold van, *Manuel de folklore français contemporain*, Paris 1976, 2 vols.

Grunwald — Grunwald M., "The Child in Sephardic Folklore," in *Max Grunwald, Tales, Songs and Folkways of Sephardic Jews*, ed. D. Noy, Folklore Research Center Studies, vol. 6, Jerusalem 1982, pp. 225-28 (in Hebrew).

Levy, *Antologia* — Levy, Izhak, *Antologia de liturgia judeo-espanola*, Jerusalem 1965, vol. 4 (in Ladino, Hebrew and Spanish).

Lunz — Lunz, Abraham Moshe, "The Custom of our Brothers in the Holy Land in Religion and Life," *Luah Erez Israel*, 2 (1898-99), reprinted in a collection from *The Luah*, ed. Eli Schiller, Jerusalem 1980, pp. 9-60 (in Hebrew).

Mezan — Mezan Saul, *Les Juifs Espagnols de Bulgarie*, Sofia 1925.

Molkho, *Orhot Yosher* — Molkho, Izhak, *Orhot Yosher*, in Ya'akov Kovo, *Orhot Zaddikim*, Salonika 1769.

Molho, *Birth* — Molho, Michael, "Birth and Childhood among the Jews of Salonica," *Edoth* 2 (1947), pp. 255-68.

Molho, *Usos* — Molho, Michael, *Usos y Costumbres de los Sefaradies de Salonica*, Madrid, Barcelona 1950.

Moskona — Moskona, Isak, "Material and Spiritual Life of the Bulgarian Jews," *Annual of the Social, Cultural and Educational Association of the Jews in the People's Republic of Bulgaria* 5 (1970), pp. 103-47.

Moskona, *Peninei* — Moskona, Isak, *Peninei Sefarad (Two Thousand Proverbs from the Treasury of Sephardi Wisdom)*, Tel Aviv 1981.

Muchawsky-Schnapper — Muchawsky-Schnapper, Ester, "Symbolic Decorations for a Woman after Childbirth in San'a," *The Israel Museum Journal* 7 (1988), pp. 61-74.

Nicolas — Nicolas, Michéle, *Croyances et pratiques populaires Turques concernant les naissances* (Region de Bergama) Paris 1972.

Öztelli — Öztelli, Cahit, "Zile'de doğum ve âdetleri, I, III, V," *Türk Folklor Arastirmalari*: 28 (1951), pp. 436-37; 32 (1952), pp. 506-7; 39 (1952), pp. 618-19.

Palaggi, *Refuah ve-Hayyim*
Palaggi, *Tokhahat Hayyim*
Pardoe
Patai
Reischer
Schrire
Shama Halevi, *Makhshirei Milah*
Stahl, *Sons*
Survey of Sephardi Communities

Tansug

Tezel
Trachtenberg
Ülkütaşir, *Anadoluda*
Ülkütaşir, *Sinopta*
Yehoshua

Palaggi, Ḥayyim (Palache), *Refuah ve-Ḥayyim*, Jerusalem 1908 (Izmir 1874).
Palaggi, Ḥayyim (Palache), *Tokhaḥat Ḥayyim*, Salonika 1853.
Pardoe, Julia, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, London 1838, 3 vols.
Patai, Raphael, *On Jewish Folklore*, Detroit 1983.
Reischer, Mendel, *Sefer Sha'arei Yerushalaim*, Warsaw 1879.
Schrire, T., *Hebrew Amulets; their Decipherment and Interpretation*, London 1966.
Shama Halevi, Eliyahu, *Makhshirei Milah*, Livorno 1793.
Stahl, Abraham, *Sources for the Study of the Culture of the Jews of the Middle East: Sons*, Jerusalem 1987 (in Hebrew).
Survey of the Material Culture of Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire Carried Out by the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1976-87. Documents and Reports.
Tansug, Sabiha, *Turklerde Cicek Sevgisi ve "Sumbulname" (The Turkish love of flowers and "Sumbulname)*," Istanbul 1988.
Tezel, Naki, "Istanbulda logusalik âdetleri," *Halk Bilqisi Haberleri* 73 (1937), pp. 1-2.
Trachtenberg, Joshua, *Jewish Magic and Superstitions*, Cleveland 1961.
Ülkütaşir, Şakir, "Anadoluda doğum âdetleri," *Türk Folklor Araştirmalari* 160 (1962), pp. 2884-86.
Ülkütaşir, Şakir, "Sinopta Loğusa Yâtagi, Kirk Hamami ve kirk adeti," *Halk Bilqisi Haberleri* 111 (1940), pp. 59-61.
Yehoshua, Ya'akov, *Childhood in Old Jerusalem; the House and the Street in Old Jerusalem*, Jerusalem 1966, 4 vols. (in Hebrew).

Glossary

The glossary is of Ladino terms, alphabetized according to Ladino spelling. Words in other languages are given in italics. Definitions of Turkish words are taken mainly from the New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary, Istanbul, 1981.

č – ch (as in chain)
š – sh (as in shape)
ǰ – j (as in joke)
ž – j (as in the French jouer)
x – ch (as in the German ach)

ahl al-dhimma	The name given to the non-believers – non-Muslims – in Muslim lands. Though restricted in certain spheres, they were protected by the Muslim state.	22, 28, 30, 121
Alliance Israélite Universelle	Jewish welfare organisation founded in Paris in 1860	16, 34, 127, 160, 202
almáryo	cupboard, closet	205
alméndra	almond; name for a ring inlaid with diamonds in the shape of an almond (also called **(e)skaraváto**)	188
almoáda	pillow coverlet for pillow	202
almodrána, almodrása	circumcision clamp	267
antiríya	coat dress worn by women of Bosnia (a variation of the Turkish *entari*)	163, 166
árǰ **árǰ širít** **árǰ tantéla** **árǰ klavedón**	trimming of a garment (cf. Turkish *harç)* ribbon trimming lace trimming metal-thread trimming	155
arožáles or **orožáles** **arožáles de diamantes** **arožáles de lwíǰi**	earrings diamond earrings earrings made with **lwíǰi** coins	188 191
arye, arayot, grosh arayot (Hebrew)	meaning lion or lions. The name is given in Jewish sources to the Turkish *esedi* coin, the Levant Thaler, issued in Holland and called *arye* because of the image of a lion printed on it.	198, 224, 232, 234
astár	lining, material (cf. Turkish *astar*)	122
ašugár	dowry	200, 201, 206
atlás	satin, monochrom, compound weave (cf. Turkish *atlas*)	122
basmá	cheap printed cotton, called also **čit basma** (cf. Turkish *basma*)	
batísta	batiste, fine cotton or linen	160, 202
baúl	trunk, dowry chest (also called **sepét, káša forsél**)	202, 204
berat (Turkish)	royal or imperial diplomas, letters or privileges	30
béza máno	"the kissing of the hand" – name of the betrothal ceremony or of present given during that ceremony to the bride (after receiving the gift the bride kisses the hand of the giver)	197, 198
bindallı, bindal (Turkish)	purple velvet embroidered with silver thread	80, 211
biníš	long cloak worn by certain dignitaries, among them rabbis (cf. Turkish *binış)*	138, 139

blankería	bed-linen	201
bógo	square cloth used as wrapper, or cloth (cf. Turkish *bohça* and Greek bógos) also called **boxčá** and **koltuk**	204, 205, 260, 264
bógo de nóvyo	wrapped gifts given to the bridegroom by the bride	209
bógo de bányo	wrapper containing the bride's accessories for the public bath, given to her by the groom	205
bonéta bonéte	tall hat, a Jewish man's hat in the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century; later this was the name of the rabbis headgear (cf. Spanish *bonete* – fifteenth century hat used by doctors)	126, 127, 130
boxčá	see **bógo**	206, 260
brágas, bragítas	wide underpants for men; babies' pants (cf. Greek *vraka*)	
bríl(es)	thin metal strings used, for example, to decorate the brides temples	212, 213
burunjuk	kind of crêpe made of raw undyed silk, usually striped; used for underclothes and bed linen (cf. Turkish *bürüncuk, bürümcuk*)	143, 200, 260
bústo	brassiere	162, 202
camašír(es)	underclothing, underwear (cf. Turkish *çamaşir*)	201
çatma (Turkish)	velvet woven with silk, gold, silver and gilt silver threads	65, 90
čévre(s)	embroidered kerchief, general name for all embroidered items in Turkish style (cf. Turkish *çevre*)	86, 204
číkur	draw-string belt-sash for holding up trousers or drawers (cf. Turkish *uçkur*)	
čintián	woman's wide trousers (cf. Turkish *çintiyan*)	141, 155
cirkií	woman's jacket, worn over the **entarí** by women in Izmir (cf. Turkish *çerkes* – circassian coat with tight fitting body)	155, 160
čít	cheap cotton cloth printed mainly with flowers, known today as *basma*, used for the *şalvar entari* and also for covering matresses etc. (cf. Turkish *çit*)	155, 202
čitarí	kind of brocade made of silk mixed with cotton, a men's cloak made of this material (cf. Turkish *çitari*)	134, 155, 200, 213
čizaí	square scarf worn over the hat of Jewish women in Rhodes (cf. Turkish *çezair*)	162
cizye (Turkish)	poll-tax collected from non-Muslims also called *harac*	25
despozóryo	betrothal, the engagement deed (see also **espozóryo**)	197
devantál, delantál	apron, part of the costume of a Jewish woman in Salonika	152
dhimmi (Turkish)	non-Muslims, non-believers	
dival işi (Turkish)	gold and silver thread couched embroidery over cardboard cut-outs (see also **masurí**)	79
divan (Turkish)	long bench against or around wall of room (also council of state, especially Turkish privy council)	73
dizlik (Turkish)	breeches, drawers reaching to the knee	141, 153
dönme (Turkish)	"convert to Islam," members of a Jewish community who were converted to Islam following the Sabbetai Žvi movement in the 17th century	27, 32

dópya	gold coin	191
dukádo	ducat, gold coin, a general name for any gold coin used in jewelry	184, 191
dulbént	muslin turban; gauze (cf. Turkish *dülbend, tülbend*)	122
ečár tižera	literally "opening the scissors" – the beginning of cutting, for example in the ceremony of cutting the baby's diapers	256
elalí	a textile of silk wrap and cotton, flaxen on woolen woof used for underwear; shirt made of such material (cf. Turkish *helâli*)	143, 202
entarí	loose robe; long-sleeved coat dress, in a variety of cuts for men; long sleeved coat dress for women; costume of Jewish women from Salonika: inner sleeveless dress (cf. Turkish *entari* or *anteri*)	97, 127, 134, 143, 145, 153, 155, 160, 210, 214
enfiladéras	women who specialized in threading pearls	190
(e)skaraváto	beatle scarab, popular name for a ring shaped like a scarab (also called **alméndra**)	188
(e)skrivaniá	pen-case, pen	198, 200
esnáf	trade guilds in the Ottoman Empire; tradesman (cf. Turkish *esnaf* see also *rofit, hirfet, taife*)	26
espozóryo	engagement, betrothal, or engagement-contract (also called **despozóryo**)	197
fadamyénto, fádas	name-giving ceremony to a girl as called in Salonika (also called **syéte kandélas**)	267
fálda	underskirt	
fáša	baby's swaddling diaper; Torah binder	75, 256
fašadúra	baby's clothes diapers and bedclothes (also called **fáto**)	256
fáto	comprehensive name for baby's diapers, clothes and bedclothes (also called **fašadúra**)	256
ferejé	overcoat or cloak worn by women in public (cf. Turkish *ferace*)	122, 139
ferman (Turkish)	firman, Imperial edict	30
fermelé	short braided waiscoat worn over the **entarí** (see also *libade* **mečaré** and *yelek*) (cf. Turkish *fermele*)	134
fez (Turkish)	hat in the form of a truncated cone introduced in the Ottoman Empire as part of the modernisation of dress in 1829	127, 130, 131, 139, 213, 244
filár	chain (see also **kadéna, kolána, kordón**)	184
forsél	trunk, dowry chest (also called **sepét, káša, baúl**)	204
fránkos	Jews of European origin who settled in Ottoman cities and who enjoyed a social and political status superior to that of the local residents	33, 103
frentéra	decoration for the forehead, worn by Jewish women in Bosnia, made of a row of partly overlapping coins attached to the edge of the hat along the forehead	162, 163, 191
fústa	underskirt	160
fustán	dress (cf. Turkish *fustan*)	

fustán de sébax	a dress for the morning after the wedding (cf. Turkish *sebah* – morning)	213
gabéla	indirect tax on consumer products	25
galéčas	wooden clogs (also called **tákos**)	205
gerdan **gerdán de dukádos**	neck, throat, necklace (cf. Turkish *gerdan*) necklace made of **dukádo** coins and beads (see also **yadrán**, **máso**, **manážo**)	 191
gömlek (Turkish)	shirt, chemise, smock, made of *helâli*, *büründuk*, *cözme*, materials	143, 153
haham başí (Turkish)	chief Rabbi of a community or of the whole Empire (**xaxám baší**)	30, 139
haham hane (Turkish)	the constitution given by the Ottoman administration for the organisation of the Jewish communities of the Empire in 1864	30
halebi	see **xalebi**	
hamam or *hammam* (Turkish)	Turkish bath (**xamám**)	16, 74, 86, 205, 209
hamsa	see **xámsa**	
harac (Turkish)	capitation tax (see also *cizye*) (**xaraj**)	25, 155
hirfet (Turkish)	craft and trade guilds (see also *esnaf*, *taife*, **rofit**)	26
hirká	quilted or fur lined jacket (cf. Turkish *hırka*)	143
hotoz (Turkish) *hotoz iğnesi* (Turkish)	ball- or egg-shaped headgear for women decorated pin for the *hotoz*	141, 184, 186, 191 186
ibrişim (Turkish)	loosely spun silk thread	86, 190
istófa or **(e)stófa**	fabric; kind of silk brocade (cf. Turkish *ustufa*)	
janfés	fine silk taffeta (cf. Turkish *canfes*)	139, 155
jepken	jacket worn over the entarí by Jewish women of Izmir (cf. Turkish *cepken* – a stout jacket the sleeves of which are slit, leaving the arms free)	143, 155
josmé	kind of cotton in crêpe weave, cheap cloth for underclothes and bed linen (cf. Turkish *cözme)*	202
jubé	long robe, worn as overcoat by imams, judges, barristers and professors, with full sleeves and long skirts. Made of wool and sometimes lined with fur for the winter or linen for summer (cf. Turkish *cübbe*)	134, 139, 155, 160
jud(e)ría	Jewish quarter	37
kadéna	chain (also called **kolána**, **kordón**, **filár**)	184
káma de parída	decorated bed of a woman after childbirth	259
kamíza	shirt, chemise	145, 153, 202
kamíza de yénso	shirt, chemise for a woman in Salonika (also called **yénso**)	145
kamíza lárga	long shirt or chemise, like a dress for a baby, considered as amulet	256, 267
kamizíka	small shirt or chemise for a baby	256
kapitána	women's jacket with fur lining, costume of Jewish women from Salonika	152
Karagöz (Turkish)	Turkish shadow theater; the main figure in this theater	240

káša **káša de jéves**	chest, box chest, box made of walnut	204 205
katífe	velvet (cf. Turkish *kadife*)	
kavesál	cushion, pillow; head of the bed	202, 260
kaveséra	set of luxurious bed-cover and pillows for wedding and childbirth bed, decorated with metal thread embroidery	75, 202
kav(x)ané	set for serving coffee; coffee-house (cf. Turkish *kahvehane*)	198
kaxyá	Jews nominated to be the connection between the community and the authorities (cf. Turkish *kâhya*)	
kazáka	undershirt with wide sleeves	202
kazakíta	undershirt for a baby	256
kemha (Turkish)	compound weave, polichrome silk and silver and gilt silver threads, one of the products of the imperial Ottoman workshops	65, 90, 122
kezáda	marzipan cake	209, 213
kindimá	lacework ribbon inserted into material (cf. Turkish *kedime*)	162, 202
kirím	long, fur-lined overcoat for man or woman (also called **pálto**, **kyurdí**, **pólka**, **hirká**)	134, 152
kitadéra	godmother (also called **kubára**)	264
klavidón	metal thread used for embroidery; metal wire wound around silk core (cf. Turkish *kilaptan*)	79, 210, 213
kófya	the headcover of married Jewish women in Salonika, or their whole costume (cf. Greek *skoufia*)	145, 190, 213, 214
kolána	chain (also called **kadéna**, **filár**, **kordón**)	184
kólča **kólča de parída**	cover, bed-cover, coverlet coverlet for a woman after childbirth	202 260
kolčón	mattress	202
koltúk	in the Ladino of Salonika, a square cloth (see **bogo**) to cover Elijah's chair in the *brit milah* ceremony (cf. Turkish *koltuk* – armchair)	264
konfites	candies, sugared almonds	209, 256, 267
kontádo, **kontánte**	money (cash) that the bride's father gave the bridegroom as part of the marriage agreement	198, 200, 232
koráča	in the Ladino of Salonika, bag for phylacteries, and prayer-shawl (also called **taléga**)	74
kordón	chain (also called **kolána**, **filár**, **kordón**)	184
kortár fašadúra	ceremony marking the starting of the cutting of the baby's diapers and clothes, held in the early months of pregnancy (see also **ečár tižéra**)	256
kortína	curtain, curtain for closing off the bed	260
kortináž	gathered canopy surrounding the upper part of a bed	204, 266
kortížo	interior courtyard; patio; many houses were built around inner courtyards with a well in the center.	206

kösk (Turkish)	villa, summerhouse; small building typical of Ottoman architecture	86, 222
kubár(a)	godfather, godmother; and in Salonika – **kumbaro** (cf. Greek *koumbaros*, also called **kitadéra**)	264
kukulítra	undyed striped crêpe cotton used for chemises and undershirts or, in Izmir, the undershirt made from this material	145, 153
kuléro	type of diaper	256
kürk (Turkish)	fur, fur coat	134, 143
kušák	sash used as a belt (cf. Turkish *kuşak*)	86, 134, 141, 143, 155, 192, 198, 267
kuyumǰí	goldsmith, jeweler (cf. Turkish *kuyumcu*)	176
kyurdí	long overcoat with fur lining; see also **hirká, pálto, pólka, kirím** (cf. Greek *gourdi*)	134, 152
lelál, leláf	head decoration, (cf. Turkish *hilal* – crescent)	183, 184, 191, 261
lelál de óro	of gold	183
lelál de pláta	of silver	183
lelál de pérlas	of pearls	190
libadé	jacket, felt coat (cf. Turkish *libade*)	134
linó	linen	160, 202
manážo	the name of the **yadrán** necklace in Rhodes (see **yadrán**)	188, 190
manía	bracelet	
manía de čatón	bracelet worn by Jewish women, made of several chains and clasp.	178, 179
manía de mentešé	the same, its name in Salonika	178
manía de óro	gold bracelet	202
manía de pláta	silver bracelet	200
marama, maraman	outer shawl or kerchief, worn by Jewish women for going out, covering the head and shoulders (cf. Turkish *makrama* – handkerchief, kerchief, napkin)	139
maročínos	almond cookies	200, 267
máso de pérlas	literally bundle of pearls. Name for pearl necklace made of numerous rows of small pearls (see also **yadrán**)	188, 190
masúri	embroidery with metal thread (also called *dival-işi*) (cf. Turkish *masura* – bobin, metal thread embroidery done with several bobins)	
matalúvas	little silver candies containing anis seeds, believed to have healing properties and bring good luck	267
mečaré	women's vest, without sleeves, made of embroidered felt; night gown (see also *libade, yelek*) (cf. Turkish *meçare*)	134, 155
mendíl	handkerchief, napkin, daily scarf for a woman (also called **yemení, mumi, yazma**) (cf. Turkish *mendil*)	
Menemen bezi (Turkish)	rough cotton from the city Menemen used for baby's diapers	256
mesta	light thin-soled boots, worn either alone (indoors) or inside shoes (outdoors) (cf. Turkish *mest*)	135
méza fránka	literally "free table"; maintenance of the young couple at the home of the groom's parents for a predetermined period after the wedding	198
mihrab, mihrap (Turkish)	niche of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca	103

millet (Turkish)	The organization system of Non-Muslim groups in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century	30
mogadós	marzipan cookies	267
mortážas	shrouds	202
mumí	printed cotton kerchief, headkerchief. Daily headcover for women (see also **yemení, mendíl, yázma**)	139, 190
namusía	canopy; mosquito net	260
nišán	sign, mark, order, decoration, insignia token – given on betrothal (cf. Turkish *nişan*)	139, 198
nóče de alxénya	the night of the Henna ceremony, also called **nóče de tafí**	205
nóče de šemíra	night of vigilance, before the circumcision, as called in Izmir and Rhodes (see also **la vyóla**)	262
nóvya, nóvyo	bride, bridegroom	255
ogadéro	necklace made of several chains and a clasp, probably typical Jewish necklace in the Ottoman empire.	179, 180, 183, 192
ogadéro ǰoyarí or **ǰoyádo**	necklace inlaid with precious stones	183
oyá	needle lace, trimming (cf. Turkish *oya*)	139, 143, 202
pabuč, papuč	shoe, slipper (cf. Turkish *pabuç, papuç*)	135
pálto	long overcoat for men and women (also called **kirim, kyurdi**) (cf. French *paletot*)	152
pána	square sheet for swaddling baby	256
pandéro	drum	209
pantalónes, pantalonikas	trousers (cf. French *pantalon*)	162, 202
panyáles	baby's diapers	256
parída	woman after giving birth	
paridúra	birth	257
pečadúra	dicky, brassiere, part of the dress of the married Jewish woman in Salonika	145
pelúdo	bath robe	205
pembezá(r)	undyed cotton or linen, used for underclothes and bed linen (cf. Turkish *pembezar, penbezar*)	143, 145, 202, 256, 260
peştamal (Turkish)	large bath towel; piece of cloth intended for covering the body before immersion in the bath	205
pirónes de pláta	silver forks	202
pišaléro	a kind of baby's diaper	256
pódya	headcover of the Jewish woman in Salonika, or a pearl embroidered square attached to the snood of this headgear (cf. Greek *podia* – apron)	145
pólka	furlined women's jacket, apparently, in European style (also called **hirká, pálto, kyurdí, kirím**)	143, 160
polkáki	undershirt (?)	160

presyádo	assesment; ceremony of the dowry's evaluation	201
presyadór	assessor	201
primér vestído	literally "first dress," first dress in the dowry, the wedding dress	202, 210
pul	spangle sequin, used in embroidery (cf. Turkish *pul*)	
purčúl	fringes of silk imitating hair; part of headgear of Jewish women in Bosnia	163
pyé de káma	sheet for covering the foot of the bed (also called **yíro de káma** (cf. French *pied*)	260
ránda	band of lace in European style attached to the hem of a garment or bed linen	162
résta de dukádos	coin necklace	191, 261
rexmído, rexmír	redemption of the first son (Hebrew – *pidyon haben*)	267
rízo	festive meal	262
rofit (Turkish)	trade guilds, tradesman, artisan; see also *esnaf, hirfet, taife*	26, 121
Romaniotes	Greek speaking Jews who lived in the territories of the Byzantine Empire conquered by the Ottomans. The name is derived from "Rome," as in "Eastern Roman Empire"	19, 20, 24, 42, 75, 121
róska	ring shaped cookie, ring-shaped yeast cake	206, 213
rozéta	hatpin worn by Jewish women of Izmir, or rose-shaped diamond ring	186, 188, 213
rúda	the rue plant, believed to be effective against the evil eye	262
šalí, šal	shawl, especially a cashmere shawl, homespun woolen cloth made of cashmere goat wool, camlet, alpaca (cf. Turkish *şal, şalî*)	155
šalvár	baggy trousers (cf. Turkish *şalvar*)	126, 127, 131, 141, 155
şam alaca (Turkish)	satin from Damascus, striped silk and cotton material used for men's robes	134
samára	fur, fur-coat (also called *kürk*)	134
samúr	sable fur, coat lined with this fur (cf. Turkish *samur*)	
sapátos	slippers	135
sarraf (Turkish)	money-changer	176
satí kordón	chain with watch (cf. Turkish *saat* – watch)	184
savaná	sheet	202
sáyo	in men's costume robe, also called **entari;** outer coat dress in costume of married women of Salonika (cf. Greek *saias*)	134, 145, 210, 214
sayóla	inner skirt	160, 162, 202
sébax	morning, the morning after the wedding night (cf. Turkish *sabah* – morning)	213
seǰadé	prayer rug, small carpet (cf. Turkish *seccade*)	97
selimiyé	a kind of brocade characterized by stripes and intertwined flowering branches; woven in Selimiye near Istanbul; used for women's *entaris* (cf. Turkish *selimiye*)	97, 155, 204

sepét	trunk; dowry trunk (also called **baúl, forsél, káša**) (cf. Turkish *sepet* – trunk usually wickerwork)	202, 204
seraser (Turkish)	compound weave, gold and silver cloth product of the imperial workshops in Istanbul	65, 90
šerít	tape, ribbon, trimming (cf. Turkish *şirit*)	97, 155, 204
sevaí	patterned silk material used for women's clothes (cf. Turkish *sevayi*)	264
sía pará sirkunsír	circumcision chair	79
sim (Turkish)	wire, tinsel, used in embroidery	160
sinǰáp	squirrel, squirrel fur (cf. Turkish *sincap, sincab*)	210
sirmá	lace or embroidery with silver and/or gilt silver thread (cf. Turkish *sırma*)	188
(e)skulaříčas, skulaříčis	earring (cf. Greek *skoulariki* also called **arožáles**)	
sürgün (Turkish)	forced deportaion of population by the Ottoman government in the time of Mehmed the conquerer	19, 24
suzení	chainstitch embroidery (cf. Turkish *suzeni*, also needle)	
syéte kandélas	literally seven candles, the name used by the Jews of Izmir for the ceremony of giving a name to a girl; also called **fádas fadamyénto**	267
taife (Turkish)	see *esnaf, hirfet*, **rofit**	26
tákos	wooden clogs (also called **galéčas**)	205
talamó	wedding dais canopy, a boothlike structure used in Sephardi weddings as the wedding canopy (*huppah*) and as a seat of honour before and after the wedding (cf. Greek *thalamos*)	74, 206, 207, 209
taléga	bag, usually for *tefillin* (phylacteries) and *tallit* (prayer shawl)	74
tantéla	lace (cf. French *dentelle*)	
tanyedór, tanyedéra	drummer	209
Tanzimat (Turkish)	the political reforms in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.	16, 30, 127
tapéte	carpet, rug	205
tapéte trukmén	turkemen rug	205
tapéte alaǰa	rug from Alaca	205
tarabulus	in Salonika, a wide sash for men's costume (derived from the name of the city Tripoli)	134
tása de bányo	metal bowl for washing one's body in the public bath	205
tavlá de dúlse	tray for serving sweets, set for serving sweets	205
tawšan	hare, hare-fur (cf. Turkish *tavşan*)	160
tel	tinsel for embroidery (cf. Turkish *tel*)	79, 86
templadéra	gold jewel for women after childbirth, similar to the **telál**	261
tepé-tepelúk	cap, in costume of Jewish women of Bosnia	162
tertír, tertíl	chenille	210
tokádo	hat, headcover of Jewish women mainly in Izmir, Rhodes and Bosnia	145, 153, 162, 163, 166, 186, 188, 191, 213

Glossary

tokadór	scarf	
tokadór de parída	a scarf with embroidered amuletic inscription for women after childbirth	261
tokadór de bányo	square scarf to cover the hair in the bath205	
tuváža	towel	105
uç-etek (Turkish)	literally – three skirts, *entari* (loose-robe) with slits along the sides	143
uçkur (Turkish)	see **čikúr**	86
ulema (Turkish)	doctors of Muslim theology, learned men	122, 127, 138
urtí	cover (cf. Turkish *ürtü)*	204
varák	thin metal foil used for decoration (cf Turkish *varak*, Greek *varaki*)	262
vedre	green	
vestído	garment, Torah-mantle	75, 201
(la) vyóla	night of vigilance, before the circumsicion, as called in Istanbul, Thrace and Salonika (also called **nóča de šemirá)**	262
xalebi	headcover in the shape of a ball, worn by Jewish women in Istanbul, Bursa and Jerusalem until the mid-19th century (see also Turkish *hotoz*)	141, 143, 186
xámsa	motif pattern of a hand with five fingers, in Muslim lands believed to drive away evil spirits (cf. Turkish *hamsa*)	113, 191, 230
xasé	cotton, usually white without any pattern (cf. Turkish *hasa, hase*)	160, 202, 256
yadrán	necklace, choker	173, 188, 198
yadrán de pérlas	necklace of pearls	202
yadrán fíno	necklace of real pearls	188
yadrán fálso	necklace of artificial pearls	188
yaşmak (Turkish)	veil composed of two kerchiefs worn by Turkish women	139
yázma	cotton kerchief printed mainly with flowers (also called **yemení, mumí,** and **mendíl**) (cf. Turkish *yazma*)	139
yelek (Turkish)	sleeveless waistcoat, long or short, worn by men or women over the *entari*	134
yemení	printed cotton scarf, daily headcover for women (also called **mumí, mendíl, yazmá)** (cf. Turkish *yemeni*)	139, 143
yeniçeri (Turkish)	Janissary force of the Ottoman army, dismantled in 1826	
yénso	chemise worn under the dress as it was called by Jewish women in Salonika (see also **kamíza de yénso)**	145
yidék	head decoration made of pearls; chain of precious metal with a pendant (cf. Turkish *yedek*)	190
yíro de káma	sheet covering the foot of the bed (also called **pyé de káma**) (cf. Greek *yiro*)	260
ziyara, ziyaret (Turkish)	pilgrimage to the Holy places	