Nāṣīf al-Yāziṣi: Kitāb faṣl al-khiṭāb fi uṣūl lughat al-
dārāb ("The conclusive discourse on the rules of the Arab's language")

Beirut: American Press (al-maṭba‘a al-ammirkiyya), 1836
168 pp., 19 x 12 cm.
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, A.or. 1574

This little pocket-sized book which appeared in 1836 in Beirut in an edition of 1000 copies was a true novelty: for the first time a book of secular content was printed in the Arab world. It was printed by the Protestant missionaries of the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" (ABCFM) who had opened a printing shop in Beirut two years earlier in 1834. The author of the concise treatise on Arabic grammar was Nāṣīf al-Yāziṣi (1800-1871) a local Greek Catholic scholar from a little village south of Beirut who later became one of the most celebrated Christian Arab authors of the 19th century. With his numerous philological works, but moreover with his poetry and rhyming prose he influenced a whole generation of Arab intellectuals and thus became a pioneer and outstanding protagonist of the so called Nahḍa, the renaissance of Arabic language and literature.

The grammar book Faṣl al-khiṭāb fi uṣūl lughat al-dārāb was Yāziṣi’s first printed publication and laid the foundation for his future reputation. It is a treatise on morphology and syntax in two parts: part one (Kitāb al-ta‘rīf, pp. 6-93) deals with morphology, part two (Kitāb al-nahw, pp. 94-168) with syntax. The book starts with a title page followed by a short introduction (pp. 4-5). There are some folded tables showing lists of grammatical forms.

The publishers tried to make the book interesting for all circles of readers by avoiding Christian symbols and formulas. This becomes evident from the first page of the introduction (p. 4) which is reproduced here. It starts with a Muslim ba‘ṣmullah in the form of a nūṣhū‘i, the calligraphic form of giving the Sultan's name on official documents and coins. In this introduction al-Yāziṣi briefly explains his aims without referring to religious matters. The few words seen in the reproduction nevertheless show some peculiarities of the print as a whole. The printing quality is poor, some words are difficult to read. The text is partly vocalised, some illustrative sentences even have full vocalisation. The beginnings and ends of the chapters are decorated with simple geometrical elements in the form of rectangles. A header indicates the respective part and chapter of the book.

A footer on the last page mentions briefly that the book was printed in 1836 in Beirut without speaking of the printing house or those in charge of it. This was also surely meant to guarantee wide acceptance from all readers of Arabic irrespective of their religious affiliation. The practical pocket-sized format facilitated the book’s use for teaching. The book is bound in a cheap cover of blue boards with a leather spine.

C.W.
Our example comes from a popular and widely disseminated collection of sermons and homiletic passages which were assembled and written by the 14th century Sephardic rabbi Yitzhak Abohav [The First]. Little is known about his personal background. The book has been published in more than 70 editions: beginning in the third edition, certain abridgements appear, probably the result of restrictions imposed by Jewish or Christian authorities. The book was intended to be read by those whom the author addressed in his introduction: “for the small and the youngsters and the elders, for the integer as well as for the vain, for men and women”. It was translated into various languages such as Ladino (Livorno, 1656), Yiddish (Amsterdam, 1723), German (Krotoschin, 1848) and Dutch (Amsterdam 1756). It also appeared in abridged versions bearing the title: Sheva ha-Petliot (Engl.: “The seven Wicks”).

The epigrammatic title of the book might be translated as “lamp of light” and is accordingly divided into seven chapters. These correlate with the seven candles of the lamp in the tabernacle as well with the seven planets, as is explicitly mentioned in the rhymed introduction: “and these are the seven candles of the lamp /the six on the flanks are for the splendour /to flame in front of the lamp /towards the middle which is the stones of the Torah /that is as the glowing sun in its light /and in the middle for the seven shining planets.”

The introduction begins with a forty-line verse in which the acrostic reads “treatise of Yitzhak Abohav.” The second column reads “to rabbi Avraham’s memory for the life in the next world.” The printer, Astruk de Tulun, who denominates himself modestly as the “youngest among the engravers/lawgivers/printers” (all of these alternate translations fit the Hebrew noun mehekej), was an assistant to the first generation printers in Constantinople.

The book is set in two columns using indentation but no leading and wide side margins which improve the overall legibility of the page and mollify the otherwise severe look of the type area. Our example shows the opening page of the book with its rhymed introduction. Only the title and the name of the author (the first and second lines to the right) are set in square Sephardic letter. The entire text, except for highlighted words at the beginning of certain paragraphs, is set in a semi-bold Rashi-letter, using a special ligature for the word “God” and other special characters for abbreviations or partial vocalization. In order to justify the line, the typesetter sometimes fills out a single letter at the far left end of the line. This letter begins the word on the next line. This custom of line justification is known from traditional writing of Hebrew religious texts, where hypenation of words is prohibited. Instead of a full stop, there is a point set in the middle of the line or a small vertical sign to mark an end of a sentence.

The second revised edition appeared thirty years later. Published in 1544, it was overlooked by Daniel Edelkind, one of the most experienced printers of Jewish books in Venice. The pages of this second edition are characterized by a much brighter and more highly legible layout.

L.J.T.
Yitzhak ben Moshe 'Arama: *Aqidat Yitzhak*

Saloniki: Yehuda Gedalia, 1532

31.2 x 21.2 cm.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 2 A. hebr. 18

The following example comes from the first printed edition of a collection of 105 sermons interwoven with philosophical homilies and allegorical exegesis about the Pentateuch, seasoned with plain fables of various sources. Written by rabbi Yitzhak ben Moshe 'Arama (ca. 1420–1494), it is entitled *Aqidat Yitzhak* (Engl.: "Binding of Isaac"). Rabbi 'Arama was already active during his younger years as a preacher in Jewish Iberian congregations at Zamora (where he was head of the local Talmudical college), Tarragona and Fraga. He was later also active in Calatayud, where he wrote most of his works, of which our example is undoubtedly the best known. His sermons deal with principles of Jewish faith as opposed to that of Christian faith. A local decree compelled Jews to attend Christian sermons on Sundays. Rabbi 'Arama also participated in some public debates with Christian scholars. After the Expulsion he and his family found temporary refuge in Naples, where he died. His son, rabbi Meir 'Arama, buried him there. Rabbi Meir 'Arama was deported a year later and fled to Saloniki, where this book was printed.

The collated sermons are preceded with an autobiographical and a general introduction. Each of the book's sermons or entries is divided into two parts: *derishah* (Engl.: investigation) and *perishah* (Engl.: explanation). In the investigation section, *'Arama* sets out the philosophical or ethical issue he intends to delve into, combined with quotations from the sayings of the Sages. In the second part, he explains the entire weekly portion from the Pentateuch. This combination of philosophical discussion integrated with copious Biblical commentary is one of the most distinctive characteristics of this book. A later commentary of his to the Five Megillot (Engl. scrolls, i.e. Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) appeared in 1551. His son, rabbi Meir, also wrote a commentary to *Esther*, which we find added to the second edition of *Aqidat Yitzhak*. This commentary was published in Venice in 1532. In subsequent editions, printers published *Aqidat Yitzhak* together with his son's commentary, whereas the commentary rabbi Yitzhak 'Arama himself wrote to *Esther* (printed in 1518 in Constantinople) was not included. The book soon became the best-known Jewish sermon book and is still actively and inspiringy used today. It was translated into Latin and published in a bilingual edition by Anton Julius von der Hardt (Helmstadt, 1729). A modern English translation was prepared by Eliyahu Munk in 1986.

The book was handsomely and accurately produced in five volumes, separating blank sheet between. At the end of the book, the reader finds a useful and detailed index with references to Biblical passages. Refraining from any typographical ornamentation, the printer (Yehuda Gedalia, one of the pioneering Jewish printers in Saloniki), used only two Hebrew typefaces: the semi-bold Rashi-letter for the text and the square letter for the titles and first words of passages, both in Sephardic style.

The second edition was published by Daniel Bomberg in Venice in 1547.

I.J.T.
The following example is taken from the first edition of the Hebrew philosophical-theological treatise *Rosh Amana* (Engl.: "Head of Faith"). According to its colophon, *Rosh Amana* was written by Don Yitzhak ben Yehuda Abravanel (1437-1508) and concluded in Naples in 1454. A many-faces individual, Abravanel superlatively combined his initial role as a humanist and Renaissance Jewish scholar with traits one would more likely associate with a neoplatonic philosopher imbedded with an aspiring faith in the speedy return of the Messiah. This faith is particularly evident in his Bible commentary (an undertaking overlooked in his time by fellow Jews, but cited and opposed by Christian theologians). Abravanel, a prominent leader of the Jewish community, was also a statesman of considerable significance in the kings’ courts of Portugal and Spain and after the Expulsion from the Iberian peninsula in Naples and Venice. This book marks the first publishing of Abravanel’s writings and was first issued by Jewish printers of the so-called “first period” in Constantinople. Although the contents were largely ignored later on, the volume nevertheless was printed in nine subsequent editions in various places such as Venice, Sabinetta, Cremona, Altona, Tarnopol, Warsaw and Königsberg. All of these later editions were most probably based on the original Constantinople edition. Two known additional manuscripts of the text are likewise based upon the first printed edition. *Rosh Amana* was translated also into Latin, French, German and English. The first edition was the third part of an omnibus volume of Abravanel’s three works, of which *Rosh Amana* was the final portion. It contains a philosophical reasoning in support of Maimonides’ *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, which was originally written in Arabic. The work begins with six lines of coloquial verse, each of which is divided into two columns with a casusura in the middle and with the repetition of the word amana (Engl.: “faith”) at the end of each line (epitheta). Written by Abravanel’s son, Don Yehuda ben Yitzhak Abravanel, these verses praise his father’s work in short, pithy phrases rife with biblical and rabbinical allusions. This text is followed by an introduction, a brief synopsis of Maimonidan principles and 24 concise, rather eclectic chapters, an example of which is shown here.¹

The opening eulogy is circumvallated by an elaborately illuminated border which could be traced to the printing shop of Avraham Alcantari of Hijar, Spain, and later to the shop of Eliezer ben Yaakov Toledo of Lisbon, the first printer in that town. Except for this border the Cordoban silversmith Alfonso Fernandez also prepared the punchcutting for the Hebrew types. Rather than using initials, as was the Christian custom, Hebrew manuscripts and early printing traditionally highlight the first words of each new subdivision. The main text is set in a semi-bold Rashi typeface; it shows somewhat less refinement in its character details and is set without leading. The text is set in one full block, with each paragraph indented through a small interstice in the line, as is also customarily used in writing the Hebrew Bible. A printed page in the first edition consists of 50 lines of 16 words per line. In the second edition (Venice 1545), the Rashi-letter is much brighter and finer in its details; each page contains only 36 lines of 13 words, a welcome relief for any reader’s eye.

¹ In the exhibition will be shown the opening page which could not be reproduced.
Bahya [Ben Asher Ben Hlava]: *Kad ha-Kemah*

Constantinople: [unknown printer.] 1515
27.8 x 21.4 cm.
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 2 A. hebr. 38a

This book contains sixty clarifications written by rabbi Bahya ben Asher ben Hlava (d. 1340), a religious judge, exegete, cabalist and preacher. The passages in the book are a refined collation of his teachings in Saragossa or in Barcelona, where his distinguished teacher, rabbi Shlomo ben Avraham Adret, was staying. The title *Kad ha-Kemah* (Engl. “Pitcher of Flow”) alludes to the Biblical narration in 1 Kings 17:14, where the prophet Elijah reassures the widow of Zarephath in Sidonia, whom he requests to provide him during the big drought: “the jar of meal shall not be spent […] before the day when Yahweh sends rain on the face of the earth.” This prophecy was apprehended as an example of utter faith in God even during perilous times, such those suffered by Sephardic Jews during the days of the Expulsion of Spain and Portugal.

Rabbi Bahya’s sermons are alphabetically arranged under sixty themes. The partly rhymed, systematic and clear presentation of the themes helped to ensure that this book remained useful and popular for many generations. In two instances, we find an entire entry devoted to the scrolls of *Josiah* and *Esther*. In addition to this printed work, three handwritten manuscripts have survived.

Our illustration shows the first double-spread of the book. On the right side, the title heading is set in woodcut letters in Sephardic square letter. These conspicuous initials are known from the printing shop of Avraham Alansansi of Hijar, Spain, and later Eliezer ben Yaakov Toledoano from Lisbon. The printer’s device on the first and last page – a standing lion turning with his stretched upper paws to the left – is known from incunabula from these two printers. (Since both print shops used the same typographical material some researchers suspect that both may have been operated by the same individual.) Beneath this, the rhymed introduction begins with a highlighted word set in Sephardic square letter. The remainder of the text is set in two columns in a semi-bold Rashi-letter. The overall design is very modest, severe and without any emblems. The running titles are set, and there is pagination (in Hebrew characters) on the upper left side of each double-spread. The margins are well proportioned, but the gutter between the columns is rather narrow. The printer obviously had some difficulty with the task of adjusting the various contents of the type area, such as type columns and letters of different sizes, because the columns are neither parallel to one other nor do they correctly fit within the printed page.

A second edition, published by Giustiniani through his supervisor Israel Cornelius Adelkind in Venice in 1546, shows a much elaborated layout, set with a thinner Rashi letter and with references set around the margins of the text.

L.J.T.
Zenob Glak is supposed to have been a Syrian historian of the fourth century, who, together with Grigor Lowasaworte (Illuminator), Apostle of the Armenians, came to Cesarea in Cappadocia, and, following Grigor's wish, wrote a history of Taron in the Syrian language, working in the monastery Innaknean (Nine Sources) or Sorrhir Karapet (Holy "Pioneer"), supposedly founded by Grigor; later the monastery was named Glak after him, the first abbot. Yovhanes Mamikonean translated this work into Armenian and incorporated it into his historical work.

The 17th/18th century printer Grigor, born in Marzvan, a town in the province of Sebastiani/Sivas is the founder of Armenian engraver's art. Following a number of undertakings in the late 16th and 17th centuries, some of which were carried out clandestinely, he was the founder of an Armenian publishing house in Constantinople. His exact dates are unknown. He was trained in the famous monastery school Amradow in Balstat (Bitlis). Until 1734 he was active for nearly a quarter of a century in his native town and in Constantinople as a printer, issuing about 14 books under his name, amongst which was the Praises of Chrysostomos.

R.P.R.
The work, whose usual title is Պավստոս Բիվզանդցի (Faustus Byzantius): Bowzanday meci patmagri, ("The narrations of the Byzantine [?], Hapax legomenon, according to others: 'epic']", written down by the great Historian of Byzantium).

Constantinople: Martiros Sargsyan, 1730 [First edition].
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, A.01. 1715

The work, whose usual title is Պավստոս Բիվզանդցի (Faustus Byzantius): Bowzanday meci patmagri, is a continuation of the chronicle of Agathangelos — which exists in a Greek and, in extracts, in Georgian, Syrian, Copt and Arab versions, too — and is consequently counted as book three to six. Therein the occurrences from the end of the first century A.D. until the end of the second half of the fourth century A.D. are chronicled. Opinions are divided on the question of whether the original was composed in Greek or Armenian. The author could have been a Byzantine of Armenian extraction or an immigrant Greek, who perhaps is identical with a titular bishop under the Katholikos Nerses.

R.P.R.
Ignatios Vardapet: Մեղրն տղա տարում

Awetaranin or Հեգուս /*@tq;w@awo<

Commentary on the Holy Scripture according to Luke.

Constantinople: Astvacatow Kostandnowpoltec’t, 1735.
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 4°A.or.1733

The vardapet Ignatios, about whom almost nothing is known, belongs, together with Sargis Mebali and the famous Nerses Shohtali, to the school of the monastery Karimy vank’ (Red monastery) in Cilicia. The work, which was assigned to him by his friend, the Katholikos Grigor Pawlawwni, was finished around the middle of the 12th century. Ignatios owes much in particular to Chrysostomos, but tries to be more concise. His style is famed as being correct, well-chosen, and pleasant.

Astvacatow, from Constantinople, who was at first a co-worker of Grigor of Marzvan, was even more productive than Grigor, having his own publishing house. After his death in the year 1745 it was carried on by his son until the seventies of the 18th century.

R.P.R.
Grigor Narekac’i: Գիրք ալոթիկ (Book of Prayers)

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 4*Λ.ο. 1725

Grigor Narekac’i — poet, philosopher and musician — lived from 951 until 1003 (according to other sources 945-1010). Born in one of the villages on the southern side of Lake Van, he received his cognomen due to his place of activity of many years, the monastery Narek, founded 935 and situated 4 km south of Lake Van. Girk’ alot’ic’, in German literature also called ’Buch der Lamentationen’, is his most famous book, being a collection of 95 lyrical prayers in prose, which are each subdivided in several chapters, resulting altogether in 366 “poems”.

A first edition had been attempted as early as 1673 in Marseille by the Vardapet Oskan alias Oskan Erevan’ci (born in 1614), but remained uncompleted due to the editor’s death February (14), 1674. In the year 1700 the work appeared in Constantinople with the title Գիրք հալոթ, և հասել նարեկայի Գիրք ալոթ իկ, srbym Grigori Narekac’wey arareal (Book of Prayers composed by the Holy One from Narek).

The editor, better known by his epithet Kretayi (he came from Candia on Crete), was the Katholikos of the Armenians from 1734 until his death on the 18th of April 1737. For 25 years he was the head of the diocese T’ck’rdhal (Rodostoi/Tekirdag) in Thrace, for which reason he was called A. T’ck’rdhal’c’, or A. T’rakac’, too.

R.P.R.
Eznik Kolbac'i: ՀՅՈՒPJ ՔՆԿՐԱՅԱՔՆԵՐ. ԳՐՈՒ'
anddimowt'eanc'. (Book against the Sects)

Smyrne'znir: Mahlesi Markos (ed. by Yakob Nalean), 1762.
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, A.or. 2052

The first edition of 1762 and that of 1826 (Venice) represented authentic sources during the second half of the 19th century, because the only preserved manuscript (of the year 1280) disappeared after the publication of the Venetian edition. It was believed to have been fallen victim to the 1845 fire in Smyrne'znir. In 1901, however, the manuscript was rediscovered in the library of Efje'necin.

The author was formerly identified with a pupil of the initiators of the Armenian literature, the Katholikos Sahak and the "inventor" of the Armenian script Mesrop Maşroc'. The author was sent by his teachers, together with one of his schoolfellows, first to Edessa and then, with two other companions, to Byzantium, in order to study ecclesiastical literature and to translate it into Armenian. He is further believed to be identical with a bishop of Bagrewand named Eznik, mentioned by one of the authors of the second half of the 5th century as participant at the synod of Aritac in the year 449. The author attacks in his work the "hersity" of Greek philosophers, of the Persian Madaïaism, and the Christian sect of Marcian.

Yakob Nalean Zmrac'i, Armenian patriarch of Konstantinopolis in the years 1741-49 and 1752-64, was born in Zimara in 1702 and died in Konstantinopolis in 1764. He worked as writer, educator and commentator. Between 1749 and 1752 he was the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem. Struggling against the influence of the church his aim was to keep together the Armenian nation through church. Beside the edition of Ezniks work special esteem enjoys his analysis of Grigor Narekac' in "Book of Prayers" and the "Eulogies" from a philological and theological point of view.

Armenian merchants in Smyrna are attested as early as 1251. After Shah Abbas' displacings by force one thousand Armenian families from Erivan, Naxijavan and Larabah settled down in Smyrna in 1605. Smyrna has been a centre of Armenian culture. The printing house of Mahlesi Markos was founded in 1759.

R.P.R.