

**"The Book of the Responses of Dunash ha-Levi ben Labraṭ on
Rabbi Saadia Gaon": A Hebrew Original or Translation from Arabic?
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The treatise known as "The Book of the Responses of Dunash ha-Levi ben Labraṭ on Rabbi Saadia Gaon" contains some two-hundred items of criticism against the Gaon. Apparently, most scholars agree that it was composed by the tenth-century grammarian and poet Dunash ben Labraṭ. This book is full of Arabisms, difficulties and obscurities. By contrast, in another work of his – "Responses on Menaḥem" – Dunash seems to strive after linguistic purity, and his Hebrew is clear and fluent. Therefore, some scholars argue that the polemic treatise under discussion is the work of another author than Dunash.

I would like to propose another explanation which suggests that Dunash composed his criticism against the Gaon in Arabic (except for some rhymed sections occurring at the end of a few responses). Later (in the tenth or eleventh century), it was translated into Hebrew by someone whose linguistic style was different than that of Dunash. Sometimes, the translator misunderstood the Arabic text, which resulted in difficulties and obscurities in the Hebrew version. I will try to prove this by reconstructing the Arabic text. The method offered here is applicable to other treatises as well.