



The Sephardic Scholar

Series 4
1979-1982

Edited by
RACHEL DALVEN

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Ἑβραϊκός γάμος. Κωνσταντινούπολη, c. 1860. H. van Lennep. Συλλογή Ἑβραϊκό Μουσείου Ἑλλάδος.
Jewish Wedding, Constantinople, c. 1860. H. van Lennep. Coll. Jewish Museum of Greece.

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Editorial Board

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A publication dedicated to the advancement of the Sephardic heritage, and the recognition of its literature, customs and culture as it has been experienced in all lands of the Diaspora.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Sephardic Scholar* is twofold: to make known to the reader aspects of Sephardic culture, *e.g.*, historical, literary, religious and social which are perhaps little known; and to show how their secular and religious traditions are interrelated despite their separation in time and space.

We were fortunate to have the contributions of well-known scholars whose expertise in various disciplines bring this issue a variety of interesting topics. We hope that this will encourage future endeavors in Sephardic scholarship and perhaps evoke further response which will make our Sephardic culture better known.

The Editorial Board of *The Sephardic Scholar* expresses its sincere appreciation to the Maybaum Brothers Memorial Fund of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University, for their generous contribution which has made possible the publication of this issue.

The Editorial Board

Rachel Dalven, Editor-in-Chief
David F. Altabé
Reginetta Haboucha
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M. Mitchell Serels

THE CALL FOR THE SEPHARDIM TO RETURN TO SPAIN

by The Haham, Dr. Solomon Gaon

This paper is dedicated to the saintly memory of my teacher, Dr. Levy, who was murdered by the army of Hitler in Sarajevo.

The question has often been asked why Spain has a special and a peculiar place in the life and heart of Sephardi Jews. The Russian Jew has not the same feeling for Russia, although he has known in that country, as the Jew did in Spain, prosperity as well as persecution. The German Jews see in Germany a country of scientific and intellectual achievement to which they themselves made an outstanding contribution and continue to maintain a cultural affinity with it. However, most do not have those close ties with the German people which spring from sentiment and even friendship, as is the case in the relationship between the Sephardim and Spain.

In Spain, as in some other countries, the Jewish people reached the highest level of economic and cultural integration, but also the deepest degradation which found expression in the expulsion in 1492. They left the land of Spain but, without apology they perpetuated Spanish life in Salonika, Constantinople, as well as Tiberias, Safed and Jerusalem. They maintained Spanish customs; they saw to it that their sons acquired a Spanish outlook by teaching them the songs and language of ancient Spain. They became the faithful ambassadors of the country that expelled them. Gonzalo de Illescas, who fifty years after the expulsion from Spain met in Venice Jews from Salonika and Constantinople, and from other places in Turkey, stated, "They took to their new country our language, and that is the only language they use, even in commerce. In Venice I met Salonica Jews, even young men who speak better Spanish than I do."¹

Many reasons have been given for this special attachment of the

Sephardim to Spain but these do not fall within the scope of this paper. This attachment, however, helped to create certain reactions, especially among the intelligentsia of Spain, which resulted in attempts to persuade the Sephardim to return to the country which so cruelly disowned them. The cultural tie between the Sephardim and Spain was only one of the reasons that prompted this effort but there were also the objective conditions that gave it a special impetus.

First of all there was, and there is even today, a strong, visible, and historic evidence of the Jewish existence on Spanish soil. Much of this evidence was brought to light by the late Professor Cantera Burgos, who can be justly called one of the *Haside umot Haolam* ('A Righteous Gentile'). In addition to the visible evidence such as synagogues, documents, writings, there were also other reminders of the Jewish influence in Spain: the families who preserved a tradition of their connection with Judaism, the church that continued to maintain an uncompromising hostility to the Jews, even after the official abolition of the Inquisition and, last but not least, the more enlightened scholars, especially historians, who were ready to adopt a more critical and unbiased view of the Jewish contribution to the development of Spain and of the expulsion of 1492. As Amador de los Ríos declared:

It is difficult to turn to the history of the Iberian Peninsula — without coming across an event or name in every page relating to the Hebrew nation.²

There were a number of attempts to persuade the Spanish authorities to issue a call to the Sephardi communities to return to Spain or, at least, by cancelling or overlooking the edict of expulsion, allow them to reside in the Iberian Peninsula. As far back as 1797, after Spain had suffered great defeats at the hands of the French and the British, and when its economic position became disastrous, don Pedro Valera, one of the ministers of King Carlos III, suggested to him "to accept the Jewish nation in Spain" and added:

According to the general view, the richest treasures of Europe are in the hands of this nation.

In spite of the desperate situation, Carlos III and his Council not only rejected this proposal, but he signed a declaration asking the Governors of different provinces to inform the Inquisition if any Jews might be found residing in any of Spain's territories.³ It may be of

interest to mention in this connection that although the Inquisition was abolished in 1813, it was reinstated in 1814 through the initiative of the city of Seville. It was, however, finally abolished in 1834.

It seems that the action of don Pedro Varela was, as mentioned above, prompted by material considerations. The same motivation appears in the argument of other Spaniards who followed Varela's example, such as Juan Antonio de Rascón, Spanish Ambassador in Turkey, Izidoro López Lapuya, the editor of the *El Progreso*, and others.

Although some of these Spanish intellectuals were not in themselves motivated by financial considerations, they probably felt that the most convincing argument, as far as the government was concerned, was the one based on material gains. For that reason, even Dr. Angel Pulido Fernández, who, in the first place, emphasized the Hispanic cultural heritage preserved by the Sephardim, also stressed the economic benefits that would follow the admission of the Jews to Spain.

Dr. Angel Pulido Fernández was a prominent doctor and professor of Salamanca, and member of the Spanish Senate. In the summer of 1903, he traveled with his wife and young daughter to Vienna to visit his son, Angel Pulido Martín, who was studying medicine there. In the course of his studies, Pulido Martín came into contact with the Sephardim of the Austrian capital, and especially with the Sephardi students who were organized in the Society *La Esperanza*. For the Jewish intelligentsia of the Balkans, especially for the Sephardim, Vienna, with its universities and famous Rabbinic seminary, was the place where every family yearned to send their sons.

In 1903, Pulido Martín published a letter in *El Siglo Médico* ('The Medical Epoch') describing the Sephardim of the Balkans, among whom the Spanish culture was still alive.

While in Vienna, Dr. Angel Pulido Fernández, his son relates, decided to visit Belgrade, Bucharest, and Constantinople. While on a boat on the Danube between Belgrade and Budapest, they met Mr. Enrique Bejarano, a teacher of the Jewish School in Bucharest. Mr. and Mrs. Bejarano, with their Judeo-Spanish language and their enthusiasm for Spain and Spanish people, made a great impression on Dr. Pulido. This encounter led him to begin his endeavors to persuade the Sephardim of the world to return to their "*patria*" their homeland — and, on the other hand, to influence the Spanish authorities to effect a reconciliation between Spain and the Sephardim. At the end of 1903, he addressed the Senate, and asked that steps should be taken "*para proteger el idioma castellano*" ('to protect the Spanish language') in the East. He published a few articles on this subject in the Spanish Press, as

well as a booklet *Los judíos españoles y el idioma castellano*. ('The Spanish Jews and the Castilian Language'). The purpose of these publications was to create a closer contact with the Sephardi communities, to learn about their attitude towards Spain, their possible return to it and about the degree of their attachment to ancient Spanish culture. Thus began the correspondence between Dr. Pulido and the representatives and leaders of the Sephardi Communities throughout the world. This correspondence resulted in the publication in 1905 of the famous work *Españoles sin Patria* ('Spaniards Without a Country'). In it Dr. Pulido describes the answers he received from different communities as regards his plan to recall the exiles of 1492 back to Spain so that they become *Españoles Con Patria*. ('Spaniards With a Country'). According to his son Pulido Martín, this effort of Pulido Fernández achieved an important result. General Primo de Rivera issued an edict in 1924, inviting the Sephardim to apply to the Spanish Consulates if they wished to have their Spanish nationality restored to them. This edict was to be in force for six years.⁴ Pulido Martín also insists that it was due to the work of his father that Franco intervened to save many Sephardi Jews from annihilation in Hitler's concentration camps. Whatever effect his endeavors might have had on the Spanish authorities, the response of the Sephardi communities was not as enthusiastic as Dr. Pulido expected, and there is no doubt that he was somewhat disappointed. Only a few Sephardim took advantage of the opportunity to gain the Spanish nationality, although quite a number of them proclaimed their enthusiasm for a closer contact with Spain.

An answer which represented the views of the intellectual and the educated class of the Sephardim was given by Dr. Maurice Levy who, at the time, was the president of *Esperanza*, the student Sephardic Organization in Vienna. Dr. Maurice Levy was to become the Chief Rabbi of Bosnia and he was one of the founders and the Principal of the Rabbinic Seminary in Sarajevo, where I was a student for four years.

Maurice Levy begins his letter by excusing himself for having waited so long before answering Dr. Pulido's letter to the Sephardi student society, *Esperanza*. The reason for the delay was that he wanted to consult the members of *Esperanza* and wanted also to read *Los judíos españoles y el idioma castellano*, as well as some other articles by Dr. Pulido.

The letter of Maurice Levy covers five pages of close print in the *Españoles sin Patria*. Dr. Pulido must have felt that the president of the *Esperanza* was giving expression to the thoughts and feelings of the Sephardi intellectuals, and decided to print it in full, although it was not

very favorable to his appeal to the Sephardim of the world to return to Spain. As Dr. Pulido says himself, the members of this society are not insignificant, but represent the intellectual young generation of the Balkans.⁵

Maurice Levy acknowledges the receipt of Pulido's book, *Los judíos españoles y el idioma castellano* and also some of his articles printed in the liberal Spanish press, and expresses his *profundos agradecimientos* ('profound gratitude') for them. He says that it is difficult for him to express the impression that, as a Jew, his heart feels reading Pulido's book full of love and friendship for "our Jewish nation". But also before his eyes arises the history of "our ancestors in Spain." Glory, science, progress, all these were the contributions of our fathers to Spain and yet the result was the Inquisition which Levy states:

already in my tender childhood, was described to me in a most horrible manner. And I ask now, as I did as a child, what have our ancestors done that they were persecuted in such an inhuman manner? Is it possible that no human heart was found to intervene on their behalf? But now, as in my early days, there is nobody to give me an answer."

No, Maurice Levy is not ready to forget the lessons of history, but he is ready to listen to the call of Pulido: "You Sephardim who bear the illustrious Spanish names, who speak the Castilian language and keep in your souls the sad and nostalgic memories of your lost mother country (*patria*); you are still persecuted, murdered and threatened. Here in Spain you have a refuge." These sentiments Levy meets with the exclamation, "O, words of peace, how great would have been your blessing, had you appeared five centuries ago. How many murders and persecutions humanity might have been spared." The implication is quite obvious; why did the Spanish intellectuals wait so long, even after the movement of emancipation granted equal rights to Jews in many parts of Europe, before offering a refuge to the persecuted Jews and among them the Sephardim? Maurice Levy was probably referring to the abortive attempt of don Pedro Varela in 1797 to accept the Jewish people in Spain. Nevertheless, he is grateful to Pulido for the consolation his word of love and nobility brought to the heart of *un pueblo abatido* ('a depressed people'). "Even if your efforts may not be entirely crowned with success," says Levy to Pulido, "yet your words of love and consolation addressed to our people will never be erased from our memory." But, implies Maurice Levy, there is no possibility that large Sephardi masses will ever be repatriated to Spain, not so much because they are satisfied with their present position but because of a movement

that has changed the attitude of the Jewish people as a whole, and among them of the Sephardim. Mr. Levy writes to Pulido: "Mi honorado Señor, before giving you the full report of Mr. Isidor Sumbul on your book to the members of *Esperanza*, I do not think that it will be superfluous to inform you even briefly of a great movement which for the last twelve years has stirred the Jewish nation of the whole world although I am sure you must have had some information about the movement called *Sionismo* ('Zionism'). Then follows the description of the persecution of Jews in Russia and the other parts of the world which led "our great and lamented leader, Theodor Herzl to probe deeply into the question of the Jewish nation." These meditations have resulted in the publication of his work *Judenstaat* ('the Jewish State'). His (Herzl's) conclusion was that the Jewish question can only find solution in the re-establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Not only the social existence of the Jew but, above all, his morale and his culture depend on this solution. Assimilation has caused the Jewish nation indescribable damage. Jews of talent and ability, not imbued with love for their nation, use their skills to benefit strangers and thereby they constitute a great loss to the Jewish nation. The call of Zionism is: Jew, return to your nation. You, who speak English, French, German, and consider yourself a member of the nation in which you live, though of Mosaic persuasion. You are in fact not an Englishman or Frenchman, but a member of the Jewish nation. As such, you must work for your nation, trying to obtain for your persecuted brethren, an autonomous state and for your culture its proper character. Maurice Levy emphasizes that this movement has penetrated into the Jewish communities throughout the world, and has given new strength and hope to all Jewry. In all universities Zionist societies are being established and so, also, in the University of Vienna where there are over 800 Jewish students. The Sephardi Society *Esperanza* has also joined the movement of national regeneration and has identified itself with its "sublime ideals". It intends to reawaken Jewish national sentiment among its members, and especially among the Spanish Jews of the Orient. Levy concludes that the adherence of the Sephardim to the Zionist idea should in no way deny the necessity for the regeneration of the Spanish language, which reminds the Sephardim of their glorious and ancestral past in Spain. Maurice Levy then proceeds to report on the review given by Isidor Sumbul to *Esperanza* about the ideas expressed by Dr. Pulido in his book *Los judíos españoles y el idioma castellano*. This review and the resolutions that Mr. Sumbul submitted to the members of *Esperanza* need special treatment and cannot, therefore, be included in this paper. It must be mentioned,

however, that both Mr. Sumbul's review and the resolutions he submitted clearly follow Mr. Levy's ideas. There is no question of the Sephardi returning to Spain, not at least in considerable numbers.

There are, on the other hand, positive interests which necessitate that the Spanish Jews should preserve and purify their language. This decision was unanimously accepted by the students of *Esperanza*.

Both Maurice Levy and Isidor Sumbul were natives of Sarajevo and, at the conclusion of their studies, they returned to their native city, and became the most prominent members of the community there. These two young men undoubtedly influenced the response made to Dr. Pulido by the members of *Esperanza*. They must have been aware of the great responsibility that they took upon themselves when they decided to advise the rejection of Pulido's appeal to the Sephardim to return to Spain. They must have been aware of the great stirrings that were taking place among different nations which at the time were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Having known both of them, I know that they were aware that a conflict was unavoidable, which would break up the mighty empire of the Hapsburgs and in many ways disrupt and perhaps even endanger the very existence of the Sephardi communities in the Balkans. If such an emergency arose, as it did especially in the second World War, it would be useful, to say the least, to have a place of refuge, as the one that Spain was offering, to which the Sephardim and indeed other Jews, could return for safety. Levy also knew that the decision of *Esperanza* would affect not only its members, but the Sephardi communities of the Balkans and the East who were always ready to accept the lead and the advice of their intelligentsia. And yet Levy, Sumbul and other students of *Esperanza* did not hesitate to make a historic decision which resounded throughout the Sephardi world: *we are not retracing our steps back to Spain, we are going forward to build a state in the land that the Almighty has given us.*

This is an additional example, if indeed one was needed, of Sephardic loyalty to Zion and to the concept of Return. While there were many Jews in England and other parts of the world, and even Herzl himself, who were ready to consider even Uganda as a place of Jewish refuge, as Maurice Levy has shown, the Sephardim remained constant in their love for Eretz Israel.

It must also be emphasized that Maurice Levy, Sumbul and others were the product of a long Sephardic tradition rooted in the Kabala which made the settlement of every Jew in his homeland a religious obligation. This tradition found full expression in the life of the Sephardi Sarajevo community which produced Yehuda Alkalai, the har-

binger of modern Zionism to whom some claim Herzl owes his *Judenstaat*.

NOTES

1. Molho, Michael. *Literatura Sefardita de Oriente*. Madrid, Consejo Superior, 1960, p. 39.
2. Amador de Los Rios, J. *La Historia de los Judíos en España*. Buenos Aires, Biblioteca historia 1943, p. 9.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 552-554.
4. *Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios Sefardies*, ed. I.M. Hassan, M.T. Rubiato and E. Romero (Madrid, 1970).
5. Pulido Fernandez, Angel *Españoles sin Patria*. Madrid, 1903, p. 119.

AN ANTI-SEMITIC ANECDOTE IN LOPE DE VEGA
AND JUAN DE LUNA*

(for Reginetta Haboucha)

by Joseph H. Silverman

In a note entitled "A Possible Source of Lope's Pear-Tree Story," E. Herman Hesplet examined the following anecdote from Lope's *Mirad a quièn alabâis* (*Look at Whom You're Praising*):

Un judío mohatrero,
de éstos de que hay copia tanta,
tenía un peral, cuya planta
alababa al mundo entero.
Tanta la alabanza fué,
que un señor inquisidor
envió un paje y por favor
pidió que un plato le dé
de las peras que llevaba.
Alborotóse el judío,
que, aunque fuese en tiempo frío,
cualquier temor le quemaba.
Un hacha al tronco aplicó,
y como le vió caer,
por no tener qué temer
todo el peral le envió.

(A Jewish swindler and a cheat,
one of those that abound in the world,
had a pear tree whose fruit
he praised to one and all.
Its renown spread so far and wide
that an official of the Inquisition,
sent a page of his to request
a bowl of the pears that he had grown.

*A more detailed and annotated version of this paper will appear in a volume of studies on *Jews and New Christians in Old Christian Spain*.

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The Jew became greatly alarmed
for, though it was cold weather at the time,
the slightest fear seemed to set him ablaze. [recalling,
of course, the flames of the Inquisition]
So, he put an ax to its trunk,
and when at last he saw it fall,
in order not have no further cause for fear,
he sent the tree itself to the Inquisitor.)

Hespelt conjectured that Lope might have read Juan de Luna's *Segunda parte de la vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (Paris, 1620), despite the fact that the work had been placed on the *Index* by the Inquisition. Hespelt's tenuous hypothesis is based on the presence of the following anecdote which Luna used to illustrate the inordinate fear that the Inquisition inspired among Spaniards of all classes and castes:

A este propósito, aunque sea fuera del que trato ahora, contaré una cosa que sucedió a un labrador de mi tierra y fué, que enviándole a llamar un inquisidor para pedirle le enviase de unas peras que le habían dicho tenía estremadas, no sabiendo el pobre villano lo que su señoría le quería, le dió tal pena que cayó enfermo, hasta que por medio de un amigo suyo supo lo que le quería. Levantóse de la cama, fuése a su jardín, arrancó el árbol de raíz, y lo envió con la fruta, diciéndo no quería tener en su casa ocasión de enviásen a llamar otra vez. Tanto es lo que los temen, no sólo los labradores y gente baja, mas los señores y grandes. Todos tiemblan cuando oyen estos nombres, inquisidor e inquisición, más que las hojas del árbol con el blando céfiro.

(About this point — even though it lies outside of what I am dealing with now — I will tell of something that occurred to a farmer from my region. It happened that an Inquisitor sent for him, to ask for some of his pears, which he had been told were absolutely delicious. The poor country fellow didn't know what his lordship wanted of him, and it weighed so heavily on him that he fell ill until a friend of his told him what was wanted. He jumped out of bed, ran to his garden, pulled up the tree by the roots, and sent it along with the fruit, saying that he didn't want anything at this house that would make his lordship send for him again. People are so afraid of them — and not only laborers and the lower classes, but lords and grandees — that they all tremble more than leaves on trees when a soft, gentle breeze is blowing, when they hear these names: Inquisitor, Inquisition.)

Hespelt was unaware of the fact that Lope had, in all likelihood, used a variant version of this same story in a play of doubtful authenticity entitled *En los indicios la culpa* (*Evidence Confirms Guilt*):

Tenía un hidalgo allí,
con fragantísimo olor,
un naranjo, y a él un día
antojósele enviar
por un poco de azahar,
y el que el recado traía,
en su casa no le halló,
y por no se detener,
que era hora de comer,
dicho a su mujer dejó,
cansado ya de esperar,
que de parte del señor
don Fulano, inquisidor,
le buscaba un familiar.
Pero apenas del recado
el hidalgo se informó
cuando en pie se corrompió,
sin poder comer bocado.
Cuanto hizo y cuanto dijo
en su vida y nacimiento,
revolvió en su pensamiento
con un discurso prolijo,
y llegando [a] averiguar
después a lo que venía,
y que por más volvería
volviéndosele [a] antojar
el hidalgo respondió:
"¡Juro a Dios, no h[*a*] de tener
otra vez a qué volver!"
Y el naranjo le envió.

(There was once an *hidalgo*
who had a most fragrant
orange tree. One day it
occurred to someone to send
a messenger to him for
a sprig of orange blossom.
The one who was to deliver the message
did not find the *hidalgo* at home.
So, in order not to remain there,
since the dinner hour was at hand
and he was already tired of waiting,
he left word with the *hidalgo's* wife
on behalf of Mr. So and So,
the Inquisitor, that an employee of

the Holy Office had come to see him.
 Scarcely had the *hidalgo* been
 informed of the message
 when he became so violently ill
 that he could not even swallow a morsel of food.
 He mulled over and over again in his mind
 with prolix detail all that
 he had ever said and done from his birth
 to the present moment.
 And learning finally what the messenger
 had come for and that he would probably
 return for more if the whim were
 to strike the Inquisitor again,
 The *hidalgo* exclaimed:
 "By God, I swear that he'll have
 no further reason to return to this house!"
 And he sent the orange tree to him.)

According to Morley and Bruerton, Hespelt had demonstrated that Lope's pear-tree story was "identical" to the version in Luna's *Lazarillo*. And this detail, therefore, could serve as proof that the play *Mirad a quién alabáis*, printed in Lope's Parte XVI (Madrid, 1621), with an *aprobación* of September 24, 1620, was probably written in 1620, the year in which Luna's work was published. On the other hand, Morley and Bruerton do realize that Lope's own description of the tragicomic tale, "El cuento es viejo, en efeto" 'The story is indeed an old one' (*Acad. N.*, XIII, 43a), could indicate an earlier common source for both versions.

Now, *En los indicios la culpa* was first printed in Lope's Parte XXII (Zaragoza, 1630), but — according to La Barrera — there existed a manuscript of the play dated 1620, whose whereabouts are unknown. William L. Fichter suggested, however, on the basis of a verse analysis that its date of composition might be much earlier and that 1620 was simply a scribal error for 1602. Morley and Bruerton accept Fichter's suggestion and date the play 1596?-1603.

What conclusions are to be drawn from these meager bits of information? If *En los indicios la culpa* was written by Lope de Vega — and "there is no reason for thinking that it [was] not" — as early as 1596?-1603, then it seems unlikely that Luna's *Segunda parte de la vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* would have served as a source for the anecdote in *Mirad a quién alabáis*.

Although Morley and Bruerton claim that the version in this play

and that in Luna's novel are identical — and they were evidently ignorant of the story's earlier appearance in *En los indicios la culpa* — there are interesting, indeed crucial differences, one in particular, that should not be overlooked.

Let us examine the major difference in the elaboration of the three texts in order to grasp its implications for a more meaningful appreciation of each version. Whereas Morley and Bruerton considered the two versions known to them as "identical," it is important to note that the central figure in Lope's *Mirad a quién alabáis* is a Jew. In the earlier play, *En los indicios la culpa*, the brunt of the joke is an *hidalgo*. In Luna's sequel to *Lazarillo de Tormes*, however, the victim of the Inquisitor's unintentional, unconscious threat to his very existence is a *labrador*, a *pobre villano*, 'a farmer, a pitiful peasant'.

We have, then, three different levels of Spanish society represented in the texts at hand: (1) a Jew, (2) a member of the lesser nobility, undoubtedly an *hidalgo cansado*, a convert of recent vintage, and (3) a farmer, a representative of that mythical group of quintessential Old Christians, the last vestige of pure blood on Hispanic soil. In these three figures we have the basic components, the fratricidal antagonists, the Civil War that raged on in Spain throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the time that Lope was writing for the theater the Jew was only a phantasmagorical presence in his land, an imaginary threat to the Catholic unity of the Spanish faith. The *hidalgo*, however, was a daily irritant to the average Spaniard, a stimulant for envy and resentment, an ideal scapegoat for pent-up frustrations and unfulfilled ambitions; he was the inevitable victim, the perfect object of scorn and derision, whose tainted blood was an ineradicable stigma.

Now, why would Juan de Luna change the main character of the anecdote from a Jew or an *hidalgo* to a peasant? It is not difficult to suggest a reasonable justification for the change. That a Jew or convert should fear the proximity of an Inquisitor or the interest of some Inquisitorial authority in his possessions, however innocuous that interest might seem, is hardly novel or unexpected. The aesthetic delight provided by the incident derives precisely from the reinforcement of a shared truth. On the other hand, that a peasant, a farmer, should fear the mere presence of an Inquisitor is an overwhelming indictment of an institution whose supposed function was to assure the religious purity and orthodoxy of an entire nation. Thus, the psychic pleasure afforded by Juan de Luna's text is of a very different order. He was a violent enemy of the Inquisition, perhaps a *converso* himself, and he wrote from bitterly resented exile in France. He must have found it enormously

satisfying to present a peasant — not a Jew or even someone of mixed blood — as a quaking coward, for it enabled him to demonstrate with insidious subtlety that no one in Spain was beyond the reach of the capricious, perverse, unpredictable, arbitrary and relentless cruelty and injustice of the Holy Office.

In the conclusion to his interlude *El retablo de las maravillas* (*The Wonder Show*), Cervantes showed the lunacy of a peasant community that assumed an army quartermaster had to be a coward simply because, as they all mistakenly believed, he was of Jewish ancestry, “*ex illis*,” ‘one of them’. With vengeful genius Juan de Luna chose to make a peasant, the very symbol of Old Christianity, a coward. In the process, he revealed how all people in Spain — even lords and grandees — tremble when they hear the words Inquisitor and Inquisition. Lope de Vega, faithful to the stereotypical presentation of the cowardly Jew and tainted *hidalgo*, made now one, now the other the victim of a joke meant to amuse the Old Christian majority in his audience. And yet, his great gift for artistic empathy enabled him to present, even within the skeletal frame of an anecdote, the sense of anguish experienced by the *hidalgo* as he rehearsed in his mind a life’s words and deeds; words and deeds, even a blemished birth, that might be considered suspect and could soon be the raw materials of a prolonged and painful inquisitional trial.

From three versions of a simple anecdote I have teased a series of details which help us to experience yet again how the Inquisition, that bastion of Christianity, destroyed the pluralist paradise that Spain might have been.

GREEK ELEMENTS IN JUDEO-SPANISH TRADITIONAL POETRY*

by Samuel G. Armistead

Almost from the moment of its discovery by modern Western scholarship, the Judeo-Spanish ballad tradition — the *Romancero* — has been enthusiastically hailed for its notable archaism. The Sephardic ballads were seen primarily as a precious repository of late medieval narrative themes — themes which may otherwise have been familiar only in their sixteenth-century modalities, in gothic-type *pliegos sueltos* (‘broadsides’) and *cancioneros*, (‘ballad-books’) but which had long since become extinct in all other modern geographic subtraditions of the Pan-Hispanic *Romancero*. In his path-finding “Catálogo del romancero judío-español” (1906-1907), Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal praised the Jewish-Spanish ballads first and foremost for their archaic character and the great fidelity of their tradition. For Don Ramón, the Judeo-Spanish ballad tradition was “more ancient and venerable than that of any other region where our language is spoken.” According to Menéndez Pidal, “... the Jewish versions have greater poetic vigor... than do the early Spanish ones and thus they represent perhaps an even more archaic tradition... than that which was printed in the sixteenth century.”¹ Again, in a lecture delivered at All Souls College, Oxford, in 1922, Menéndez Pidal fervently evoked the Sephardic tradition, as

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offering a unique opportunity to perceive otherwise long dead echoes of Spain's medieval past:

When we listen to the *romances* sung by Jews from the cities of Morocco, so similar to the versions in the oldest broadsides and ballad books, it is as if we were hearing the living voices of Spaniards from the time of the Catholic Monarchs; as if Tangier, Tetuán, Larache, Alcázar or Xauen were medieval Castilian cities, plunged by enchantment into the depths of the sea, allowing us to hear the songs of their ancient inhabitants, enchanted there by the nymphs of tradition more than four centuries ago.²

Don Ramón's moving evocation of Sephardic tradition is, of course, also amply supported by documented fact. It is an indisputably correct appraisal — but, as we shall see, it cannot be given blanket acceptance. It is, of course, not to be taken as applicable to anything and everything that may be sung by the Sephardic Jews. And it is also quite certain that Menéndez Pidal himself never intended it to be accepted as unequivocally as it subsequently was. The fact is, however, that Menéndez Pidal's splendidly phrased appraisal came to be a sort of slogan for subsequent attempts to present Judeo-Spanish balladry in its historical context. It has indeed been all too easy to assume, without further questioning, the pre-exilic, pre-1492 chronology of all Judeo-Spanish traditional poetry.

Already in 1907, Menéndez Pidal himself pointed to the absolute certainty of an important post-diaspora increment in the Sephardic *Romancero*, by identifying such ballads as *La muerte del príncipe don Juan*, ('the death of Prince John') based on an historical event of 1497, as well as various other even later and clearly sixteenth-century compositions current in both branches of the Sephardic tradition.³ In 1970, in a fundamentally important review of recent Hispanic ballad scholarship, Diego Catalán studied the problem of creativity in the oral tradition and called attention — alongside its famed archaism — rather to the great originality of the Sephardic ballad tradition, in reshaping and remolding poetic matter passed down from earlier generations.⁴

To date, the majority of scholars concerned with Hispano-Judaic traditional poetry have, like myself, been Hispanists. And this fact has quite clearly affected their overall view of the Sephardic *Romancero*. They have seen the Judeo-Spanish *romansas* as a splendid key to philological problems pertaining to the reconstruction of earlier stages of Pan-Hispanic balladry. And thanks to this primarily historical

approach, the late medieval source texts of the Judeo-Spanish ballads and their relationship to modern versions have, in fact, in the great majority of cases, been identified and elucidated. This is, of course, crucially important. Yet other equally important and equally interesting features of Sephardic balladry have remained largely unnoticed.

What I would like to discuss here is the importance of looking at the Sephardic *Romancero*, not from the perspective of our fully justified enthusiasm for its marvellous conservatism, but rather to approach it from a new and equally important, but almost totally unknown angle: The Eastern Mediterranean Sephardim have lived for almost 500 years among Balkan peoples — Greeks, Turks, Slavs, Rumanians. And I would ask: Is there nothing in Sephardic traditional poetry which may perhaps be attributable to these long centuries of Balkan symbiosis? Might not the daily contact with Balkan peoples, which after all gave to colloquial Judeo-Spanish many hundreds of important Turkish loan words, might not such everyday contact also very possibly have wrought some effect upon the balladic traditions of the Sephardim? Throughout the Eastern Ottoman lands, where they settled after their expulsion from Spain, the Hispanic Jews founded communities side by side with the Greeks, whose tradition of epico-lyric narrative poetry is no less vigorous and perhaps even more venerable than that of the Hispanic peoples. Sephardic ballad singers, recently arrived from Spain, might well have admired the splendid narrative poetry being sung by their new Greek neighbors in sixteenth-century Salonika and elsewhere. As I hope to show, such hypothetical Sephardic contact with the Hellenic traditional ballad did indeed take place and it was to result in a significant thematic enrichment of the Judeo-Spanish *Romancero*.

Let us look first of all at the introductory verse of an amusing little Sephardic *romance* from Salonika, which, in itself, would seem to have nothing to do with the problem at hand. We have called this ballad *La princesa y el bozađi* ('The Princess and the Drink Vendor'). It concerns a highborn, but rather shameless young lady, who falls in love with and woos a lowly street peddler:

Debašo'l kioprí de Larso,
avía'na mosa zarif.
El su padre l'ay guardado
para lindo chelebí.
La mosa, komo era mala,
se fu'a vežitar el vezir.

Under the bridge of Larissa,
there was a fair maiden.
Her father has kept her guarded
for a handsome lord.
The maid, who was shameless,
went to visit the vizir.

Por en medio del kamino,
kontró kon un bozaği.
Bozağiko regalado,
tú ke seas para mí.
Trokemos los aniyikos;
mos daremos kidušim.
¿Kómo viene a ser, iżika,
de kazarme yo kon ti?
Tú, iżá de un rey de Fransia;
yo, iżo de un bozaği.⁵

Along the way,
she met a *bozaği*.
"Fine little *bozaği*,
I want you for my own.
Let us exchange rings
and take marriage vows."
"How is it possible, my girl,
that I could marry you?
You, daughter of a king of France,
and I, son of a *bozaği*."

The ballad itself is of little interest to the problem we are considering here: That is the possibility of Greek influence on the narrative poetry of the Sephardic Jews. Its initial verse, however, offers a problem. It does not seem to be in accord with the rest of the narrative. We might well ask why this princess, who subsequently goes running after the drink peddler, is first represented as being *under* the bridge of Larissa or *imprisoned under* the bridge, as in certain other variants. In context, this initial circumstance seems quite incongruous. When the great Sephardic ballad collector, Moshe Attias, first recorded the *romance*, he asked his informants about this rather singular circumstance: Why is the girl under the bridge? And his aged singers answered by telling him the following little story:

The River Pinios [Pēneiós] flows through the city of Larissa. Many years ago they wanted to build a bridge which would connect the two banks of the river and thereby the two parts of the city, but all attempts were unsuccessful and every bridge that was set up was washed away in December, when the river overran its banks. Everyone believed that the reason for this was that the bridge was not erected upon a solid foundation. This continued until an engineer came who had a very beautiful daughter. He sacrificed her and set her as a foundation for the bridge and from then on the bridge stood and was not washed away any more.⁶

Though he did not explore the implications of this anecdote, Moshe Attias had, in fact, discovered an important piece of evidence for a possible connection between Judeo-Spanish and Balkan narrative poetry. One of the most famous of all the ballad narratives known to the various peoples of the Balkan Peninsula concerns the motif of a foundation sacrifice, in which a woman — usually the wife of the master builder — is sacrificed by being walled up in the foundations of a newly

constructed fortress or bridge.⁷ The immediate source of the Sephardic anecdote — and of the first verse of our ballad of *La princesa y el bonzaği* — is undoubtedly a Greek ballad, known variously as *The Bridge of Arta*, *The Bridge of Tricha*, or sometimes indeed *The Bridge of Larissa*. Here is an English translation of the initial verses of the Greek song, in a version from the Island of Corfu:

Forty-five craftsmen and sixty apprentices:
three years they labored on the bridge of Arta.
All day long they would build it, at night it would fall in ruin.
The craftsmen lament and the apprentices weep:
"Alas for all our labors, our work is all in vain;
we build all day, the bridge falls at night."
And then the spirit answered from the rightmost arch:
"Unless you devote a human life, no wall is firmly founded;
and sacrifice no orphan, no foreigner, no wayfarer,
but only the beautiful wife of the master craftsman."⁸

One of the problems pertaining to the editing of the extensive ballad collection, which my colleagues Professors Joseph H. Silverman, Israel J. Katz, and I have brought together, has been to identify both the Hispanic and the Pan-European analogs of the Sephardic ballad text-types we have collected.⁹ Around 1960, we undertook the rather formidable task of going through representative ballad collections from all the European linguistic traditions. And when we came to the modern Greek collections, we found that the anecdote discovered by Attias was indeed far from being unique in its connections to Balkan ballad tradition.

There are in Menéndez Pidal's "Catálogo" of 1907 certain ballad types, which in every way look like authentic Hispanic *romances*, although in each case the narrative in question has never been recorded outside the Sephardic tradition.¹⁰ It was simply to be assumed, barring some evidence to the contrary, that these were, in fact, ancient ballads of Spanish origin, which, for one reason or another, had disappeared everywhere else or at least had never been recorded from any other branch of the Pan-Hispanic *Romancero*. Our readings in Modern Greek balladry were to show that the facts of the matter were very different indeed.

The first correspondence between Sephardic and Hellenic balladry that we discovered concerns a Judeo-Spanish *romance*, which, stylistically speaking, is indistinguishable from any similar poem of medieval Peninsular origin. The ballad, which we have called *El pozo airón* (freely translated, *The Bottomless Well*), is, in its style, in its formulaic diction,

and in its traditional topoi, a perfect Hispanic *romance*. The following is a synthetic version representing the tradition of Salonika:

Ya se van los siete ermanos,
ya se van para Aragón.
Las kalores eran fuertes;
agua non se les topó.
Por en medio del kamino,
toparon un poĝo airó.
Echaron pares i nones;
a el chiko le kayó.
Ya lo atan kon la kuedra;
ya lo echan al poĝo airó.
Por en medio de akel poĝo,
la kuedra se le rompió.
La agua se les izo sangre,
las piedras kulevros son;
kulevros i alakranes,
ke le komen el korasón.
Si vos pregunta la mi madre,
la dirés: iatrás kedó!
Si vos pregunta el mi padre,
le dirés: ial poĝo airó!
Si vos pregunta la mi muĝer:
ibivda mueva ya kedó!
Si vos preguntan los mis iĝos:
igüerfanikos nuevos son!¹¹

Now the seven brothers depart;
now they depart for Aragón.
The heat was intense;
they found no water.
Along the way,
they found a deep well.
They threw lots;
it fell to the youngest.
Now they tie him to the rope;
now they lower him into the well,
half way down that well,
the rope broke.
The water became blood for them;
the stones are serpents;
serpents and scorpions,
serpents to eat out his heart.
"If my mother asks you,
you will tell her: 'He remained
behind!'
If my father asks you,
you will say to him: 'In the well!'
If my wife asks you:
'She has just become a widow!'
If my children ask you:
'They have just become orphans!'"

Yet despite its thoroughly Hispanic appearance, this Sephardic ballad turns out to be a rather close translation of a Greek ballad, known as *Tò Stoicheioméno Pegádi* ('The Haunted Well'). Here is an English translation of a representative version from Chalkis, one of some thirty texts we have consulted:

Four and five they were, nine brothers,
They heard about the war and armed themselves.
As they are going along the road, they become thirsty.
They find a well and it was very deep,
Fifty fathoms was the width and a hundred deep.

They cast lots to see who would go down,
and the lot fell to the small Constantine:
"Bind me, brothers, and I will go down."
The brothers bind him and lower him down.
They try to pull him up; they could not.
They tried again; the rope was broken.
"Go, my brothers, go to our good mother.
And if our mother asks you what has happened to me,
don't go and tell her that I drowned.
Only tell her that I have married
and have taken a sorcerer's daughter and a witch's child.
Let her sell the clothes she is making for me
and let her try to marry off my betrothed."¹²

In all, we have indentified six different Greek ballad narratives which have been translated into Judeo-Spanish as *romansas* and have become traditional in the Eastern Sephardic communities. Several of these songs have subsequently also migrated to Morocco and become popular there. We have, I believe, demonstrated the presence of a rather important increment of Greek text-types in the Sephardic ballad tradition. Another related problem must, however, be discussed before closing. The adaptation of Greek themes by Sephardic balladeers shows that the latter were intimately acquainted with certain aspects of Balkan balladry.¹³ The question must then be posed: What influence did the singing style of Balkan traditional poetry have upon the Hispanic texts and music which the Sephardim brought with them into exile? The answer is that the influence was quite considerable indeed, if not overwhelming. My friend, Professor Israel J. Katz, has recently demonstrated, in a fundamentally important monograph, the essentially Balkan and Near Eastern character of Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic ballad music.¹⁴ In recent articles we have also called attention to the Judeo-Spanish adaptation of Balkan lyric, as well as balladic texts and also the presence of Turkish and Arabic refrains and of other Near Eastern elements in various Sephardic songs.¹⁵ The Judeo-Spanish ballad tradition thus emerges, not only as a marvellous treasure trove of multi-secular mediæval survivals, but also as a complex synthesis of Jewish, Hispanic, and Balkan elements. Such factors are an index of the rich diversity of sources which, over the centuries, have contributed to the formation of the Sephardic cultural heritage as we know it today.

NOTES

1. R. Menéndez Pidal, "Catálogo del romancero judío-español," *Cultura Española*, 4 (1906), 1045-1077; 6 (1907), 161-199; pp. 1045 and 1048.

2. "Poesía popular y poesía tradicional en la literatura española (1922)," reprinted in R. Menéndez Pidal, *Estudios sobre el Romancero* (Madrid, 1973), pp. 325-356: 335-336.

3. See Menéndez Pidal, "Catálogo," pp. 1054-1055.

4. D. Catalán, "Memoria e invención en el Romancero de tradición oral" (parts I and II), *Romance Philology*, 24 (1970-1971), 1-25, 441-463: pp. 13-14.

5. This version was sung by Esther Varsano Hassid, 65 years old, and was recorded by S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, in Van Nuys (California), on August 21, 1957. A *bozaği* is a vendor of a certain fermented drink made from millet and called *boza* in Turkish.

6. M. Attias, *Romancero sefaradí*, 2d ed. (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 162; S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, "A Judeo-Spanish Derivative of the Ballad of *The Bridge of Arta*," *Journal of American Folklore*, 76 (1963) 16-20: p. 17.

7. See "A Judeo-Spanish Derivative," pp. 16 and 18-19, nn. 2-5.

8. A. Passow, *Tragoúdia rômaiikà: Popularia Carmina Graeciae Recentioris* (Athens, 1860), No. 511 (pp. 388-390). For other published versions, see "A Judeo-Spanish Derivative," p. 19, n. 13. See also Rae Dalven, *Modern Greek Poetry* (2nd edition, N.Y., 1971), 43-44.

9. Concerning our collection, see S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, "Hispanic Balladry among the Sephardic Jews of the West Coast," *Western Folklore*, 19 (1960), 229-244; "Para un gran romancero sefaradí," *Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios Sefardíes*, ed. I.M. Hassán, M.T. Rubiato, and E. Romero (Madrid, 1970), pp. 281-294; *The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Yacob Abraham Yoná* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1971), pp. vii-viii; J. H. Silverman, "Hacia un gran romancero sefaradí," *El Romancero en la tradición oral moderna*, ed. D. Catalán, S. G. Armistead, and A. Sánchez Romeralo (Madrid, 1973), pp. 31-38.

10. See Menéndez Pidal, "Catálogo," nos. 124 and 129 (also 68, first part).

11. We follow Attias, *Romancero*, No. 83; an unedited text collected by S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman (New York, 1959); and others belonging to the Archivo Menéndez Pidal. For other versions, see M. Molho, *Usos y costumbres de los sefaradíes de Solónica* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1950), pp. 264-266, and *Literatura sefaradita de Oriente* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1960), pp. 176-178; I. Levy, *Antología de liturgia judeo-española*, 9 vols. (Jerusalem, 1964?-1977), IV, 225-237 (nos. 210-211).

12. L. Ross, *Reisen auf den griechischen Inseln des ägäischen Meeres* (Stuttgart-Tübingen, 1845), p. 186.

13. Dr. Rina Benmayor has recently discovered a ballad singer from one of the Bosphorus communities who provides a modern, living confirmation of such hypothetical bi-lingual or multi-lingual ballad singers of an earlier time. The

repertory of Dr. Benmayor's informant, who is from Marmara (Turkey), includes both Judeo-Spanish and Greek narrative poems. See her article, "A Greek *Tragoúdi* in the Repertoire of a Judeo-Spanish Ballad Singer," *Hispanic Review*, 46 (1978), 475-479.

14. See I. J. Katz, *Judeo-Spanish Traditional Ballads from Jerusalem: An Ethnomusicological Study*, 2 vols. (Brooklyn, N.Y. 1972-1975).

15. See S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, "A Judeo-Spanish *Kompla* and its Greek Counterpart," *Western Folklore*, 23 (1964), 262-264; "Selví: Una metáfora oriental en el romancero sefaradí," *Sefarad*, 28 (1968), 213-219; "Las *Complas de las flores* y la poesía popular de los Balcanes," *Sefarad*, 28 (1968), 395-398; "Exclamaciones turcas y otros rasgos orientales en el romancero judeo-español," *Sefarad*, 30 (1970), 177-193; "Arabic Refrains in Judeo-Spanish Romance," *Iberoromania*, 2 (1970), 91-95; as well as our forthcoming book, *En torno al Romancero sefaradí* (see headnote).

WOMEN IN THE JUDEO-SPANISH FOLKTALES

Reginetta Haboucha

Jewish historical tradition is predominantly patriarchal. Written down by men over a period of approximately 3,000 years to perpetuate a male-dominated society, the classical writings of Judaism nevertheless unfold the important role of women within this patriarchal milieu.¹

One can hardly speak of a single Jewish attitude toward women. The ambivalence which emerges is striking:

1. One question which, for some, has not been settled satisfactorily is whether God created the first human beings in His image, as male and female produced simultaneously,² or first created man as male and subsequently fashioned woman from one of his ribs.³

2. It appears momentous for the history of humankind that the foundation of marriage is set forth in the first pages of the biblical narrative, where man is fated to leave his parents and "cleave unto his wife: and they shall become one flesh."⁴ Shortly afterwards, however, Eve incurs the displeasure of God for leading Adam astray and loses her equal status when she is told that he will thereafter rule over her.⁵ That verse may have laid the foundation upon which the inferior social status of women has been based throughout the ages.

3. According to Jewish writings, women are often depicted as grasping, lazy, jealous, querulous, prying, unreliable, and talkative.⁶ Yet the Torah is often represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride;⁷ the Proverbs praise the virtuous woman,⁸ and the Prophets compare the love of God for Israel to the love of a husband for his wife, for, in Judaism, a husband is directed to love and honor his wife as much if not more than himself.⁹

4. For centuries, Orthodox Jewish men have been reciting a traditional daily blessing from a talmudic tractate which gives thanks to the Lord for not having created them women.¹⁰ Yet, Jewish women are traditionally respected and occupy an important and influential place in the family.¹¹ A primary aspect of their role is to communicate the

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fundamentals of Jewish belief and practice to their children and to encourage their husbands to study the Torah,¹² a duty from which, however, they themselves are exempt.¹³

Representative Judeo-Spanish tales collected from oral tradition reflect some of these traditional values, as well as non-traditional beliefs related to women, and present a picture of sexual roles, behavior, and psychology in a Sephardic milieu. They provide additional evidence in support of Franz Boas' widely accepted view that the events, materials, and customs of daily life are reflected in tales.¹⁴

To my knowledge, no comprehensive study of women in Jewish folktales has been undertaken to date.¹⁵ Jerome Mintz, in his book, *Legends of the Hasidim*,¹⁶ points out that one facet of Hasidic life that is barely touched upon in Hasidic folktales is women. This, in itself, is characteristic of the Hasidic culture in which women do not take part in the bustling activities surrounding the house of study.¹⁷ Storytelling became an established and flourishing custom in the early Hasidic courts, particularly on Shabbat, and is still preserved today as a part of the integral structure of the religious and social life of the group in the New World.¹⁸ Although Hasidism, which is believed to have given women an honored position, has Hasidic heroines and female Hasidic "rabbis,"¹⁹ the Hasidic hierarchy of values nonetheless accords women less importance than men,²⁰ with women given no ritual role in the religious life of the community. According to Mintz, "the chief religious duties of women consist of the preparation of the food, the bearing of children, the religious training of the young, and the maintenance of the purity of the house by careful attendance at the mikveh and observation of the attendant sexual regulations."²¹ In older printed tales,²² Hasidic wives are depicted as passive and unquestioning, patiently satisfied with their role as providers while their husbands piously dedicate themselves to learning.²³ "The tales, however, generally reflect the European image of relationships in marriage. Since the tales are told by men rather than by women, they contain the accepted male attitudes."²⁴

In contrast with these Hasidic tales, the Judeo-Spanish stories do not picture a strict ritualistic way of life. They depict the daily lives of the common people, portraying customs at times closely related to religious beliefs and practices, and, also, stressing traditional Jewish values.²⁵ The collections analyzed here were drawn from the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Moroccan Sephardic communities in the first half of this century.²⁶ They include texts collected in Monastir, Skoplje, Bucharest, Salonica, Istanbul, and Tetuán, and published by linguists and collectors of folktales: Wagner,²⁷ Luria,²⁸ Crews,²⁹ and Larrea Palacín.³⁰

One of the first things that stand out as one looks at three of these major Judeo-Spanish folktale collections is the apparent limited performance by women tellers. One collector does not identify his informants at all — either by name or by sex. He also gives neither the age nor the profession of his tellers. His collection, therefore, although it forms the largest portion of the total corpus studied here, cannot be examined from the perspective of its narrators.³¹ Of a total of twenty-seven Eastern Mediterranean informants, on the other hand, only nine are women. Seven of these are storytellers who performed for a female field worker (Crews) and produced twenty-five stories. It is striking that in Bitolj, for example, where both Crews and Luria interviewed narrators within two years of each other, Luria lists thirteen informants, only one of whom is a woman, while three of the four tellers tapped by Crews are women and the fourth is a male informant whom she shared with Luria who had preceded her. One wonders at such disparity. Were female informants unavailable to Luria or was the choice entirely up to him? The comments of Crews are noteworthy. She writes, "...he [the teller] adapted his stories to a woman listener so that my versions are not only shorter than Luria's but also remarkably different as far as vocabulary is concerned."³² We may assume, therefore, that the sex of the collector and the sex of the storyteller may have colored the performance and character of individual tales and, consequently, perhaps also of the entire corpus gathered.³³

Only when a substantially increased collection of Judeo-Spanish tales is examined in depth can we reach significant conclusions in regard to women in folktales (as characters) and women in folklore (as tellers). The significance of what they tell will shed light on the images of women as seen by themselves as well as by others. Factors to be weighed will include: 1) sexual distribution of storytellers; 2) influence of 1) on choice of tales narrated; 3) sex of collector; 4) influence of 3) on choice of tales narrated or elicited; 5) choice of motifs within each tale and/or collection, and frequency of occurrence; 6) collector's field methods; 7) criteria for selection of raw material for publication; 8) tastes and preferences of individual informants and other factors.

Of the 222 tales examined here, 136 have a woman as a primary or secondary heroine. This number is significant when compared to Hasidic folktales on the one hand and classic fairy tales on the other. The complete Grimm's collection, for example, is made up of 210 tales, only forty of which have female heroines, most of them "mildly abused to severely persecuted."³⁴

Another significant aspect of the Judeo-Spanish tales is that the

successful trickster who in universal tales is frequently identified as a sexton, a male peasant, or a male servant, almost always appears as a woman,³⁵ as in *Not One Penny Less*,³⁶ *Who Gives his Own Goods Shall Receive it Back Tenfold*,³⁷ and *The Priest's Guest and the Eaten Chicken*.³⁸

In collections of folktales such as Grimm's, Andersen's, and Perrault's, there are four principal roles for women, "the princess, the poor girl who marries the prince, the fairy godmother or wise woman, and the wicked stepmother or witch,"³⁹ each of which has traditional attributes and adventures. In the Judeo-Spanish collection, many heroines conform to these traditional roles. Stereotypes such as the innocent beauty victimized, the wicked stepmother, the victorious youngest daughter, the good versus the bad woman, often according to the beautiful versus the ugly stereotype, appear in the Sephardic tales. The heroines who are young are either princesses or lowly maidens on their way to becoming princesses. They are described in terms of their natural attributes. They have an inherently sweet nature and a beautiful appearance. They show excessive kindness and patience, and quietly wait to be chosen as brides for their beauty, to be won as passive prizes in competitions by the most enterprising of men, or to be given away to animal husbands who eventually are disenchanting. Their freedom is often restricted because of their extreme beauty and their virtue protected by isolation. They may be locked up in towers or isolated castles because of the jealousy of a wicked mother, stepmother, or stepsister, or as a protection against the threat of male sexuality, in order to be kept pure for their husbands.

Other female characters in the Sephardic tales are wise old women, witches, gypsies, or evil relatives (stepmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, or stepsisters). Their role in the tales is often casual, secondary, or instrumental to the development of the tale. They are never associated with a husband unless they substitute themselves for the true bride. Acting either as helpers or as wrongdoers, they often attempt to compete with heroines and to harm them, but they are usually found out and punished.

The heroines in the Sephardic tales may be victims, but they are seldom martyrs. Although they may be slandered, banished, or mutilated, their virtue remains intact and they are victorious in the end. Despite the inaccessibility of the maidens, suitors do present themselves, usually attracted by the famed beauty of the heroines. If the suitors are lecherous, the maidens virtuously reject their advances and frequently suffer the consequences (e.g., slandered as unchaste). If, on the other hand, the right wooers appear on the scene, the heroines demonstrate determination and resourcefulness. They facilitate the

entrance of their lovers by permitting them to use their long hair as a ladder or, if the men make their way unaided into the maidens' chambers, the secret of their presence is kept from others to prolong the adventure. Therefore, although these heroines appear to be submissive and helpless, they are in fact only passive as long as they wish to remain so. As soon as the right opportunity arises and they fall in love, they stop being inaccessible and become aggressively active. Nothing can stop them, neither respect for or fear of parents nor the concept of chastity. They act as wooers themselves. They elope and elude the pursuit of their parents through transformation flights. They lie and falsify documents in order to foil attempts to kill their fated bridegrooms. No unpredictable physical and social characteristic, therefore, distinguishes the heroines of the Sephardic narratives from their universal sisters.

Perhaps the best way to describe the traits which differentiate the Judeo-Spanish tales is through illustrations. In the tales, women appear a great deal more enterprising, and, more often than not, as heroic as their male counterparts. They are competent and active, frequently demonstrating initiative and courage. Quite often they woo and win a husband of their choice, although this is generally no easy task. They cannot simply remain passive and pretty. They have to show courage, intelligence, and endurance. The resourceful youngest daughter, for example, usually succeeds because she acts and overcomes obstacles. She outwits the prince by answering his riddles with other riddles and by tricking him into embarrassing positions. She keeps his secrets; follows him incognito; pays him nightly visits; secures tokens; shows him the absurdity of his tasks; and, in the end, makes him fall in love with her. In the tale in which the heroine (youngest of seven sisters), for example, sets out to prove that daughters can, after all, be more of a blessing than sons,⁴⁰ the daughter works as a seamstress in the royal palace, earns a good salary, and wins the love of the prince, while her male cousin foolishly gambles away his inheritance. In a society which often prized the birth of a boy more than that of a girl, this tale is very significant. Michael Molho, the well known student of the customs, mores, and oral tradition of Salonica's Jews uses economic and religious reasoning to explain this hope for male progeny. A son prolongs the family line and later becomes his father's right hand at work; he also recites the *kaddish* after his parents' death. Molho also provides us with a proverb which unmistakably expresses this preference: "Quien niño cría, oro fila; quien niña cría, lana fila; a la fin del año o puliada o pud-

rida."⁴¹ A daughter apparently was considered a financial burden for her parents, as they had to secure a husband for her, as well as provide her with a trousseau and a dowry. Preparation for the bridal trousseau began almost upon the birth of the female infant, as witnessed by this common saying: "La fija en la faja, la axugar en la caxa."⁴² If equipping one daughter was a hardship, what was the father of numerous daughters to do? The situation is faced squarely in the following colorful *refrán*: "Una fija, una graviina; dos, con sabor; tres, mal es; cuatro, crevanto; cinco, suspiro; sex, sex fijas para la madre y mala vida para el padre."⁴³

Daughters were often kept at home until they married, thus providing help for the mother. They were seldom taught to relax or write. Their only preparation for life was the apprenticeship for their future roles as wives and mothers. In the words of Molho, "...la mujer judía estaba desprovista de toda instrucción, laica o religiosa, aun cuando fuese educada en el temor de Dios, en el respecto a los padres y fuese frecuentemente imbuída por la conciencia de los deberes de su sexo."⁴⁴ At their parents' home they acquired culinary and other traditionally Sephardic household skills. They were taught to sew, to embroider, to knit, to crochet, in short, to make a perfect *balabaya* (Heb. *Ba'alat bayit*) or housewife.

In many Sephardic tales, the positive female characteristics which are stressed are the pillars of righteousness in Judaism: charity and hospitality, humility and faith. These characteristics save the heroines from death, bring about a change of fortune, win them a glorious place in heaven, or produce a miraculous cure. Interestingly, the heroines often appear contrasted with their opposites — also women — who are greedy, uncharitable, haughty, and envious. While in some of the tales kindness is associated with physical beauty and unkindness with ugliness, no such association is made in many other tales. Such women are often poor widows who have very little to offer or they have husbands who play a secondary role in the tales. In several stories,⁴⁵ the envious sister-in-law or a neighbor makes an unlucky attempt to imitate the heroine's good fortune. In other stories, there is no negative counterpart; the favorable attributes are praised in a traditionally Jewish way. One charitable woman earns a shiny gold chair in heaven⁴⁶ because, as the proverb says, "she stretches out her hand to the poor and reaches forth her hand to the needy."⁴⁷ Her husband is miraculously taken to see her heavenly seat and, as a result, he learns to become as virtuous as his wife. In another tale, a beautiful and charitable queen gives away her crown

to a beggar and is mutilated and banished in punishment. Miraculously cured, however, she brings riches to the poor and forgives a repentant king.⁴⁸

A particularly interesting tale is one in which a man dreams of his wife's death. He tries to avert it by forcing her to change her plans for the day. She is only saved by her kindness to an old beggar.⁴⁹ The importance of this tale is that it tells us a great deal about Jewish beliefs and marital relations, as well as about a woman's daily life in Tetuán. To begin with, although the *hakham* (Heb. *hakham*: wise man) attempts to interfere with his wife's program for the day, she is actually the mistress of the house, "la soberana de su hogar,"⁵⁰ and, once her husband is gone, she does as she pleases. Her domestic chores are described. First she prepares the dough for the bread; then she sets up her laundering procedure while the dough is rising. As baking is not completed in the house, for lack of baking facilities, it has to be sent out to the communal village oven with someone other than the housewife who does not leave her home. Strongly influenced by the Moslem tradition of female seclusion, Sephardic women seldom left their houses.⁵¹ Our heroine rushes to finish her laundry before the return of her husband. She wrings out the clothes before going up to the roof to hang them out to dry. The sun is the clothes dryer for the obvious reasons of climate and economics. This custom is typical of the Middle East and North Africa, where poor housewives do not enjoy the amenities of modern technology. After the bread is brought back from the public oven, other household chores are described. The housewife cleans and tidies up, and then patiently waits for her husband. When he finally appears and questions her about her day's activities, she does not lie to him but tells him frankly that she disobeyed his instructions. When he finally discovers how she escaped the evil decree, he blesses her affectionately: "Bendita seas."

Other feminine traits mentioned in the Judeo-Spanish tales are more universal. They are cleanliness (king marries maiden under whose bed he finds no dust),⁵² honesty (needy old woman finds lost purse and returns it to male owner who then claims she has stolen from it),⁵³ motherly love (Judgment of Solomon — dividing the child),⁵⁴ discretion (keeps secret of enchanted husband),⁵⁵ thrift, and cleverness in various forms. The moral of these tales is evident: those who are clean, thrifty, and clever marry well.

Negative characteristics of the heroines are stupidity (she gives away her life savings and ends up having to provide magically for her husband),⁵⁶ lack of common sense (in carrying out household

chores),⁵⁷ curiosity and indiscretion (Solomon's advice — do not tell a secret to your wife),⁵⁸ gossipry (the scandal monger cannot rest in her grave until daughter becomes a prostitute),⁵⁹ unnatural cruelty to children (refusing bread to son causes him to deceive his mother),⁶⁰ unfaithfulness (several heroines who uncover unfaithfulness of others marry the scorned husband). Envy, competitiveness, and greed appear repeatedly in these tales and cause murders, slanders, lies and, in general, reprehensible behavior.

These are all personal characteristics that serve to reinforce societal values and condemn misbehavior in the best Jewish tradition. For example, they stress how necessary it is for a young woman to acquire good housekeeping habits before she becomes a bride; otherwise she may not find a husband or may end up with a poor one. A person who demonstrates honesty will be richly rewarded, while one who stupidly squanders away the family's little fortune will have to find a way to make up for it. Maternal love overcomes all obstacles, while the opposite alienates children. Being unfaithful to one's husband is condemned. Sooner or later the action is discovered and the culprit exposed to public shame. Molho explains: "Los casos de adulterio eran muy raros. Sin embargo, el castigo impuesto a la adúltera era muy severo: montábasela sobre un asno vuelta de espaldas y con la cola del animal entre sus manos. En esta forma vergonzosa y burlesca se le [la] paseaba por los barrios judíos, siendo abucheada por el populacho. Esta costumbre parece ser de origen musulmán."⁶¹ Interestingly, adultery is condemned in the tales solely in relation to the wife. Philandering husbands are never an issue. They simply don't appear. Whenever prostitution is mentioned, it is always the heroine who is forced into the situation by fate or a dream. The resolution of the dilemma she faces is facilitated by the assistance of a helpful woman (a good stepmother, a neighbor, etc.). Illicit sexual encounters never occur with more than one man, who is usually a prince or a king from whom the heroine secures tokens. After she bears children, the heroine cleverly displays her tokens and marries her love, thus bringing the event around full circle and turning a repulsive and unacceptable behavior into another way of winning a worthy husband. Reparation has been made. Although there are no overt sexual references in the tales, sexuality definitely appears in them. Heroines visit their lovers' chambers and children are subsequently born to them out of wedlock. But, as shown above, the situation is always legitimized after recognition of secured tokens takes place.

The slander episodes that occur in the Judeo-Spanish tales

always revolve around the two major traditional Jewish obligations of women: chastity and ability to bear healthy children. The slanderer can be another woman, usually a jealous stepmother, sister-in-law, ex-wife, a gypsy (a typical character in the Balkan tales), or a scorned lover. The victims are not given a fair hearing before they are punished by their fathers, brothers, or husbands, but they always are vindicated.

Judeo-Spanish heroines seldom work outside the home. Whenever they are given an occupation, however, it is always within the traditional social roles for poor, unmarried women. They may be housekeepers, milliners, seamstresses, shirt makers, midwives, nursemaids, wetnurses, or menial workers. Although they may undertake tasks and quests after they marry and may have heroic adventures, they do not work again.

What interests us most in these tales is precisely this cultural coloring which is expressed in many of them. Three tales from Tetuán, for example, show the motif of the Moorish man who falls in love with a beautiful Jewess and surreptitiously succeeds in marrying her by pretending to be a pious Jew.⁶² This possibility must have represented a real threat to parents of young, pretty girls living among Moslems. Sephardic women were famed for their beauty in youth above that of their non-Jewish counterparts. Molho writes that, outdoors, they used to cover their heads and faces, leaving only their eyes exposed, in order to hide from view their attractive features and attires: "Personas de edad que vivieron durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIX nos han referido que en aquellos tiempos, en que los malhechores no judíos de toda laya aterrorizaban las juderías, la mujer judía no se aventuraba fuera de su casa como no fuera disfrazada con traje de hombre, de mujer turca o bien, lo que era más general, llevando una especie de abrigo largo, de color rojo, llamado *kiurdi*, y con la cabeza envuelta en una pieza de paño blanco, llamada *maramán*."⁶³

The heroines of the tales were given in marriage by their tradition-loving fathers, who obviously considered piety and Jewish learning an important asset in a son-in-law. In Molho's words, "...era frecuente ver que las familias ricas, llamadas *ğebirim*, entroncaban con familias de rabinos, que constituían entonces la clase intelectual... Padres ricos y de situación social elevada frecuentemente tenían a gala el admitir en su seno a un yerno rabino, que era siempre objeto de la adulación y la consideración de toda la familia."⁶⁴ Sephardic girls were not permitted to follow their inclination in the selection of

their husbands to be. They were not even consulted about their suitors. Such concerns were left to the care of the parents, and, in particular, to the fathers. The bride and groom scarcely saw each other before their betrothal and never spent any time alone even after. Their wedding night was often the first time they found themselves unchaperoned. Not until the late 1800's did it become customary for the suitor to visit his chosen once or twice a week, thus giving the couple the opportunity to become acquainted before becoming engaged. The heroines of our three tales neither oppose the marital match, nor do they have the power to walk out of the marriage when they discover the deceit of the Moors. They escape only through the power of prayer or the help of God's angel. The offense of the Moor is so great and the impotence of the offended so obvious in a Moslem surrounding that the punishment has to be meted out miraculously. When the Moorish husbands are killed, however, the heroines also lose their children, raised in the Moslem faith. This defies Jewish law, which claims as Jews the children of a Jewish mother, but complies with laws in Moslem lands where children follow their father's religion. These tales indicate the concern of Jewish parents for losing daughters to non-Jewish spouses or abductors. They also show a lack of trust in the integrity of Moslem neighbors.

A similar tale depicts a married heroine who succumbs to the power of a magic spell cast by an enamored but unconverted Moor.⁶⁵ The spell almost succeeds in making her forget her Jewishness, her chastity, and, worst of all, the most sacred of holy days in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. As she is about to share a meal with her would-be seducer on that fast day, she removes the magic garment which has bewitched her and recovers her memory. Of course, it is inconceivable to the tellers that a Jewish heroine would knowingly break the laws of Judaism by desecrating the holiest of days. In this tale, the heroine averts the danger by her own actions. Not only does she safely escape to her Jewish home, but she also whisks away a priceless rug filled with gold coins, to the despair of the Moor. Both resolutions of the conflict, brought upon by the deceitfulness of Moslems, are significant because they indicate the only ways by which Jews in Moslem lands believed they could save and avenge themselves — either with the help of God or through their own ingenuity.

It is interesting that the only time a non-Jewish woman falls in love with a Jew in the Judeo-Spanish tales, she has to renounce her throne and her faith to marry him because of his firm adherence to Judaism. When they become separated and he dies of love-sickness,

she is the one who comes to him and resuscitates him with the force of her love.⁶⁶ It is the reverse of the episode in *Sleeping Beauty* where the prince awakens the seemingly dead princess with a kiss. In the Judeo-Spanish version of *Sleeping Beauty*, however, the kiss is eliminated altogether, perhaps because direct physical contact is never overtly described in the tales. The princess only comes to life after her father has paid the full price for his mistake of slighting the wicked witch, and tells the story of his misfortune to the prince. Love later develops between the young people, and they both resist parental pressure to marry others.⁶⁷

The dichotomy of Jewish attitudes towards women is well depicted in the *Tales of the Talking Birds*⁶⁸ which show the two faces of Eve. This beautiful narrative includes a frame tale in which Solomon, seeking the hand of his beloved, is asked by her to secure feathers from all species of birds. All comply except the owl and the nightingale, each of which explains why in a separate tale. The owl tells the tale of the *Matron of Ephesus*⁶⁹ in which a woman mournfully weeps by her husband's grave. Because of her tears, the execution of a man about to be hanged is postponed and the condemned man escapes. He is replaced at the gallows with the corpse of the dead husband while the merry widow runs off with the executioner. The nightingale tells the story of a poor good girl who marries a rich bad boy. It is a version of the *Cat and the Candle*.⁷⁰ Under the influence of his kind wife, the man mends his ways and becomes a good person. He later seeks adventures in a land of cheaters and is tricked into prison in a gambling game. The wife, disguised as a man, frees her husband and takes him home, humbled. In both of these tales, women are challengers who confront the world. In the first tale, the widow mourns the death of her loved one but soon realizes the necessity of looking out for herself. The moral of the tale, of course, is that not only is she indecently disloyal to the memory of her dead husband, but she also permits indignities to be committed against his body. In other words, women are fickle and untrustworthy. In the second tale, the opposite is demonstrated: behind any good man stands a good woman. This is proven twice. The first time right after the marriage takes place and then, again, when the man thinks he can make it on his own and is tricked and imprisoned. His wife, on the other hand, being wiser, does not succumb to the same stratagem and cleverly manages not only to free her husband but also to humble him, thus clearly stressing the superiority of women.

It is impossible at this time to draw definitive conclusions about

the performance and creativity of women in the Judeo-Spanish folk narratives because of the paucity of identified storytellers within the published collections. It is expected that this preliminary study will be expanded at a later date to include a rich and thoroughly documented collection of Sephardic tales from Israel⁷¹ in which performances by women are abundant. For the time being, however, we have no way of proving whether the tales contain accepted female attitudes or reflect male views.

Certain preliminary conclusions are, however, possible. Based on the frequency of their appearance as protagonists in the Judeo-Spanish folktales, it is clear that women play a major role in the corpus of tales. Although the stories preserve many of the traditional elements of universal folktales, they alter others in order to make them credible within their own social and religious traditions. Often used as a technique of social control and as a guide of conduct for women, these tales also served the function of creating a permissible fantasy world for them. Because in the reality of Sephardic life women were confined to the home and betrothed at a young age to a barely known suitor, folktales provided the acceptable outlet for their imagination. The tales emphasize the beliefs and customs characterizing the women's subgroup, but they also permit their heroines to be active and competent, and suggest a society in which women are, in fact, as powerful as men.

While some of the narratives may serve to acculturate women to traditional roles, there are many others full of female initiative. They often do not permit the prediction of outcome or fate according to sex. Since such tales hardly represent traditional male attitudes, it may be safe to assume that many of the unidentified North African storytellers were indeed women.

NOTES

1. See Gen. 12 to* 50 for the lives of Abraham and Sara (as well as Hagar); Isaac and Rebecca; Jacob and Rachel (as well as Leah). See also Delilah, the seductive woman (Judges 16:4-21). Three major Hebrew heroines are Deborah (Judges 4 and 5), Esther (Book of Esther), and Judith (Judith: Apocrypha). In Gen. 21:12 Sara is superior in prophecy to Abraham.

2. Gen. 1:26-27. See also Zohar, Genesis, 49b-50a. The respect of the Kabbalists for women was based on the doctrine of the *Sefirot* and the doc-

trine of the *Shekhinah* which made it incumbent on men to give firmness to their faith by being always 'male and female' through prayer and the resulting union with the *Shekhinah*. See Cf. *Jewish Values*, (Jerusalem, 1974,) p. 154.

3. Gen 2:21-23. Cf. also Gen. R. 18:2; quoted in *Jewish Values*, p. 152: "God said: I will not create her [woman] from the head that she should not hold up her head too proudly; nor from the eye that she should not be a coquette; nor from the ear that she should not be an eavesdropper; nor from the mouth that she should not be too talkative; nor from the hand that she should not be too acquisitive; nor from the foot that she should not be a gadabout; but from a part of the body which is hidden, that she should be modest." For a discussion of these contradictory accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve, see J. G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, (New York, 1975), pp. 1-3.

4. Gen. 2:24.

5. Gen. 3:16.

6. Gen. R. 45:5; Kid. 49b; Shab. 33b. Cf. *Jewish Values*, Rabbi Dr. L. Jacobs' section on "Attitudes to Women," pp. 150-155, especially pp. 152-153. Refer also to Solomon's sayings in Eccl. 7:26 and 28.

7. Ex. R. 41:5.

8. Prov. 31:10-31.

9. Yev. 62b.

10. Men. 43b: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has not made me a woman." Women say: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made me according to Thy will."

11. *A Rabbinic Anthology*, Selected and Arranged with Comments and Introductions by C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe (New York, 1974), chapter 23 (The Family: The Wife), pp. 507-515.

12. Ber. 17a.

13. Sot. 3:4.

14. Franz Boas, "Tsimshian Mythology," *Thirty first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, D.C. 1916), also *Kwakwilt Culture as Reflected in their Mythology*, *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, vol. 28, (New York, 1935).

15. Haim Schwarzbaum examines the anti-feminist bias in Jewish folklore in his article "Female Fickleness in Jewish Folklore," in *The Sephardic and Oriental Jewish Heritage, Studies*, edited by Issachar Ben-Ami (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 589-612. In regard to non-Jewish folklore, in the introduction to her book, *Women and Folklore* (Austin, 1975), Claire R. Farrer surveys scholarship in the field of women's behavior in folklore, as well as women's folklore. For a summary of women in universal fairy tales, see Marcia Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale," *College English*, Vol. 34 No. 3 (Dec., 1952), pp. 383-395.

16. Chicago, 1968.

17. Mintz acknowledges this shortcoming in his collection while stress-

ing the significance of this omission as a distinctive cultural trait of the Hasidim.

18. Mintz, p. 4.

19. For names of Hasidic heroines and "rabbis" see *Jewish Values*, p. 155.

20. In *Legends*, p. 83 n. 10, Mintz relates the example of Hasidim threatening to whip a man who has become the father of a girl (S. Maimon, *Autobiography*, trans. J. C. Murray, London, 1954) and the example of a Hasid who receives an amulet from the BeShT and gives him a contribution, despite the fact that a daughter is born to him (*In Praise of Baal Shem Tov [Shivhei ha-BeShT]*, *The Earliest Collection of Legends about the Founder of Hasidism*, trans. and ed. by Dan Ben Amos and Jerome Mintz, Bloomington/London, 1970), no. 109.

21. Mintz, p. 79.

22. For the analysis of the role of women in Hasidic tales collected in the United States, see Mintz, pp. 82-88.

23. Because talmudic learning and dedication to prayer are very important in Hasidic life, a pattern of women tending small shops while men are immersed in their studies developed in Eastern Europe. For an example of the virtuous wife, see M. Gaster, *Ma'aseh Book*, 2 Vols., (Philadelphia, 1934), Vol. 1, p. 68.

24. Mintz, p. 86.

25. Michael Molho, *Usos y costumbres de los sefardíes de Salónica* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1950), (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Arias Montano, Biblioteca Hebraicoespañola, Vol. III), p. 155, points out that Judaism was reflected in every aspect of Sephardic life.

26. To complement this existing published corpus, I have accumulated a major collection of folktales from various areas of Israel during the past several summers. When this appears in print, it will represent the largest corpus of tales collected from the Sephardic tradition.

27. Max L. Wagner, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Judenspanischen von Konstantinople*, (Wien, 1914), (hereafter referred to as W).

28. Max A. Luria, *A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo-Spanish* (New York, 1930), (hereafter referred to as L).

29. Cynthia M. Crews, *Recherches sur le judéo-espagnol dans les pays balkaniques* (Paris, 1935), (hereafter referred to as C).

30. Arcadio de Larrea Palacín's, *Cuentos populares de los judíos del Norte de Marruecos*, (Tetuán, 1952-1953), (hereafter referred to as LP).

31. Although Larrea Palacín's two-volume collection is intended primarily for the folklorist, the editor did not conduct his research in a scientific manner. (For example, for linguistic studies and the investigation of the tellers' narrative techniques and styles, Larrea's texts are practically useless.)

32. Crews, *Recherches*, p. 13: "...[il] a adapté ses histoires à une auditrice, de sorte que mes versions sont non seulement plus courtes que celles de Luria, mais aussi profondément différentes quant au vocabulaire."

33. In *Folktales and Society*, trans. by E. N. Schossberger, (Bloomington, Ind., 1969), Linda Degh investigates Hungarian folktales and their tellers. She considers reasons for the general lack of public performances by women and aspects of their creativity and individual style.

34. Kay Stone, "Walt Disney Never Told Us," in Farrer's *Women and Folklore*, p. 43.

35. For type numbers listed here, two type-indices have been used: A. Aarne and S. Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* (Helsinki, 1961), (hereafter referred to as AT), and R. Haboucha, *Classification of Judeo-Spanish Folktales*, Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1973 (hereafter indicated with **).

36. LP Tale No. 63 (AT 1543).

37. L Tale No. viii and C Tale No. viii (Bitolj) (AT 1735).

38. L Tale No. vi and LP Tale No. 66 (AT 1741).

39. Alison Lurie, "Witches and Fairies," *New York Review of Books*, (Dec. 17, 1970), p. 6.

40. LP Tale No. 52 (**875*).

41. Molho, p. 52. "Whoever raises a son spins gold; whoever raises a daughter spins wool; at the end of the year it will be moth-eaten."

42. *Ibid.* "The daughter still in diaper, the trousseau in the trunk."

43. Michael Molho, *Literatura sefardita de Oriente*, (Madrid-Barcelona, 1960), (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Arias Montano, Biblioteca Hebraicoespañola, Vol. VII), p. 56. "One daughter, a carnation; two, a delight; three, it is bad; four, frightening; five, a sigh; six, six daughters for the mother and a rotten life for the father."

44. Molho, p. 93. "... the Jewish woman was deprived of any education, whether lay or religious, although she was taught to fear God, to respect her parents, and was repeatedly imbued with the consciousness of the obligations of her sex."

45. LP Tales No. 12 and 78 (**504), 15, 101, and 156 (AT 676), 64 and 122 (**752D); W. Tale No. xi (**751C); C Tale No. 2 (Skoplje (**368D*).

46. LP Tale No. 148 (**809)

47. Prov. 31:20.

48. LP Tale No. 133 (**706E).

49. LP Tale No. 29 (**934F).

50. Molho, *Usos*, p. 154.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

52. LP Tale No. 96 (**1453A).

53. LP Tale No. 132 (**926F).

54. LP Tale No. 106 (AT 926).

55. LP Tale No. 135 (**1464).

56. LP Tale No. 92 (AT 1541).

57. L Tale No. xxii (**1384A).

58. LP Tale No. 121 (**910A*).

59. LP Tale No. 10 (**873A).

60. LP Tale No. 59 (**1540B*).

61. Molho, *Usos*, p. 165. "Adultery was rare. The punishment imposed on the adulterous woman, however, was very severe: she was made to ride a donkey backwards, holding the tail of the animal in her hands. She was paraded through the Jewish quarters in this shameful and ridiculous way and was jeered at and hissed at by the mob. This custom appears to be of Moslem origin."

62. LP Tales No. 25, 74, 98, (**783).

63. Molho, *Usos*, p. 30. "Elderly persons who lived during the second half of the XIXth Century have told us that, at that time, when non-Jewish brigands of all kinds terrorized the Jewish quarters, the Jewish woman did not venture outside her home without the disguise of a man's frock or the attire of a Turkish woman. More often, she wore a long red coat, called *kiurdi* and wrapped her head in a white cloth called *maramán*."

64. *Ibid.*, p. 16. "... it is common to see rich families, called *ğebirim*, contracting matrimony with Rabbinic families, which constituted the intellectual class of the time. Rich parents, belonging to a high social class, often took pride in welcoming to their midst a Rabbi as a son-in-law; he quickly became an object of adulation and consideration for the entire family."

65. LP Tale No. 17 (**582).

66. LP Tale No. 103 (**612B).

67. C Tale No. 7 (Salonika) (AT 410).

68. C Tale No. 5 (Bitolj) (**538).

69. At 1510. See Schwarzbaum's study of the type in *The Mishlé Shu'alim [Fox Fables] of Rabbi Berechiah ha-Nakdan, A Study in Comparative Folklore and Fable Lore*, (1979), pp. 394-417, which he cites in his "Female Fickleness," where he examines several Jewish Oriental and Sephardic versions of our folktale, pp. 603-612.

.70. AT 217 and AT 888A.

71. See n. 26 above.

Una elegía judeoespañola: la *quiná*
por Flor Ḥasid

por Paloma Díaz Más

Entre las elegías en judeoespañol dedicadas a personajes sefardíes de mayor o menor relevancia¹ se cuenta este poema aljamiado, en el que se lamenta la muerte de una señora llamada Flor Ḥasid.

El texto nos ha llegado en una hoja suelta² sin pie de imprenta, en letra *raši* con algunas palabras resaltadas en cuadrada de cuerpo mayor. Tiene una mancha de 147 por 155 mm. y la encabeza un epígrafe que reza³:

Qiná! — / por la muerte de la señora Flor de la familia Ḥasid, la diña consorte del señor / Selomó Sabetay Ḥasid desaparecida en tamúz de 5672⁴ a la edad de sesenta años

cuya palabra inicial está enmarcada por un dibujo que representa una guirnalda de ramas de roble. El texto está a dos columnas, separadas por un filete. Ofrecemos aquí su transcripción⁵:

- 1 Fue arancada la flor, el botón fue cortado,
la lampa reluciente fue amatada.
Despareció una existencia de valor,
murió la mujer virtuosa,
e se fue a su lugar reŕservado,
se espartió de noŕotros la mujer pía, hasidá.
- 2 Era ĝenerosa y honesta,
se interesaba a los probes,
sostenía los estudiantes de la Ley,
acercaba los temedores de Dio,
e hacía la caridad,
eŕezaba el bien haĝer.
¡Llorad por la que se va!
¡Endechad la desaparecida!
¡Regretad la que nos abandona!

Paloma Díaz Más teaches at the Instituto Arias Montano in Madrid, Spain.

- j En vida era estimada,
hermoŕa en cualidades
y en su muerte no será olvidada.
- 3 ¡Paz a tu tumba,
oh, Flor Ḥasid!
Tu alma pura
more en el lugar eterno
- e en la morada de los ĵustos.

Notas Al Texto:

v.1b. — *amatada* 'apagada'. El poeta compara a la difunta con una *lampa* 'lámpara'

v. 1e. — Se entiende *reŕservado* para el descanso eterno en el otro mundo.

v.1f. — *Se espartió* 'Se separó, se marchó'. Se completa el juego de palabras onomástico entre el apellido *Ḥasid* (heb.) 'Piadoso, devoto' y su feminino *hasidá* (cfr. J. Nehama *Dictionnaire du Judéo-espagnol* [Madrid: CSIC, 1977] s.v. *jašid*).

vs. 2b-f. — Los elogios que se dedican a Flor Ḥasid son los tópicos para una dama de calidad: no sólo era caritativa (vs. 2b, 2e-f), sino que también ayudaba a los jóvenes que querían estudiar la *Torá* (v.2c) y reunía en torno de sí a las personas pías y temerosas de Dios (v. 2d.). La construcción *se interesaba a (b)* es galicisimo *s'intéresser à*.

v. 2i — El galicismo *Regretad* (cfr. fr. *regretter*) significa la idea de añorar, echar de menos.

Comentario

Nuestro texto trata de uno de los poemas de circunstancias surgido en comunidades sefardíes del Oriente con motivo de la muerte de una persona de relativo relieve⁶; en nuestro caso sería probablemente la propia familia Ḥasid la que encargase la composición de una breve loa a la difunta, susceptible de ser impresa y repartida a modo de esquila entre familiares, deudos y amigos y que cumpliera la misión de anunciar la muerte, honrar la memoria de Flor Ḥasid y ... seguramente también dar a cierto lustre social a la familia. Probablemente sería recitada en el transcurso de las pompas fúnebres.

Siguiendo tales directrices el autor ha compuesto un centón de tópicos adecuados para servir de elogio fúnebre a una dama de posición social acomodada: era virtuosa y religiosa (vs. 1d, 1f), se dedicaba al ejercicio de obras pías (vs. 2a-f), su muerte fué muy sentida por quienes

la conocieron (vs. 2*g-i*), su alma reposa en el Paraíso (vs. 1*e*, 3*a-e*) y la fama de sus buenas obras la hará vivir en la memoria de los que con ella tuvieron trato (vs. 2*j-l*).

En resumen, podríamos definir el poema como un epitafio sobre papel: epitáficos son los tópicos elogios a la difunta, la mención de los familiares desolados y las fórmulas con las que se desea el eterno descanso de la muerta. La comparación de las formulaciones del texto con las de algunos epitafios procedentes de lápidas sepulcrales sefardíes pone de manifiesto las claras resonancias epitáficas del poema. Así los versos 1*a-c*:

Fue arancada la flor, el botón fue cortado,
la lampa reluciente fue amatada.
Despareció una existencia de valor

tienen evidente paralelo con las siguientes inscripciones fuenerarias:

desparesites komo el relampago
a la flor de tu bivir⁷;
el dia se eskuresio
de la vida desparesio⁸;
su vida se le akorto
subito su luz se amato.⁹

Y el verso 1*f*

Se espartió de nošotros la mujer pía, ḥasidá

se asemeja a los

mužer y madre kerida
se despartio de la vida¹⁰

de otro epitafio sefardí. El "en vida era estimada" de nuestro v. 2*j* incluso rimaría con el "era de todo el mundo amada"¹¹ o con el "Por su famiya adorada"¹² de lápidas sefardíes. El tópico de los supervivientes que lloran y recuerdan a la difunta ocurre en nuestros vs. 2*g-i* y 2*l*

¡Llorad por la que se va!
¡Endechad la desaparecida!
¡Regretad la que nos abandona!
y en su muerte no será olvidada

y aparece también en losas:

Su ermano yora en vano;
Ermanas oran por su alma¹³

La mención de la bondad de la difunta en nuestros vs. 1*d*, 2*k*, etc.)

murió la mujer virtuosa;
hermoša en cualidades

es también frecuente en epitafios:

Madre i mujer devuada;
Aktiva derecha sin visios
Sembol de la buendad
Korason yeno de amistad¹⁴

Los versos finales de nuestro poema (3*c-e*)

Tu alma pura
more en el lugar eterno
en la morada de los justos

son casi idénticos a las expresiones que desean el eterno descanso de los muertos en muchas lápidas:

tu alma repoze
en el paradizo¹⁵;
Ke su alma repoze en pas¹⁶;
tu alma repoze en Gan Eden¹⁷;
en gan-eden eya ke kalme¹⁸.

Y todo el poema podría resumirse en este otro epitafio:

Aki esta repozada
mužer virtuada
su vida a
karidades dada
de todos yorada
a los 62 mankada¹⁹.

NOTES

1. La autora conoce diez poemas de este tipo, que están reseñados en su tesis doctoral *Temas y tópicos en la poesía luctuosa sefardí* (Madrid: Univ. Complutense, 1981): p. 10 y notas 35-38; en el mismo trabajo se han editado algunos de ellos: vid. los núms. 1, 2 y 3 (que es el texto que aquí se presenta). Vid. también nota 6 *infra*.

2. Manejo fotocopia del ejemplar del Instituto Ben Zvi (Jerusalén), conservada en la Biblioteca de Estudios Sefardíes del Instituto "Arias Montano" del CSIC (Madrid). Aprovecho la ocasión para agradecer a mis compañeros del Arias Montano su imprescindible ayuda para la realización de este trabajo.

3. Para la transcripción del texto aljamiado nos atenemos al sistema expuesto por I. M. Hassán "Transcripción normalizada de textos judeoespañoles", *Estudios Sefardíes* 1 (1978) ps. 147-150.

4. Correspondiente a junio-julio de 1912; es de suponer que la hoja se imprimiera también por esas fechas, poco después de la muerte que se lamenta en el poema. No hemos podido precisar el lugar de impresión.

5. Se mantiene la división de "versos" (o más bien, líneas) del original y numeramos las estrofas. Separamos de acuerdo con la norma castellana algunas palabras que aparecen unidas en la aljamía: v. 1e) *asu*; 2b) *alos*; 2c) *dela*; 3a) *atu*.

6. Poemas parecidos se publicaron con cierta frecuencia en la prensa periódica sefardí. Citemos por ejemplo el que, como colofón de una extensa nota necrológica sobre un tal Moise L. Manoach, apareció en el periódico de Turnu Severin (Rumania) *Luçero de la Paciencia* año IV núm. 1 (30 kislev 5649/22 noviembre [greg. 4 dic.] de 1888) p. 16. Se reproduce aquí, respetando la grafía en caracteres latinos y la presentación tipográfica del periódico (para éste, vid. M. D. Gaon, *A Bibliography of the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) Press* [en. heb.] [Jerusalén: Inst. Ben Zvi, 1965], núm. 152):

Moise L. M. no murió!

Por que su fama no se perdio

Jamas se va deperder

De todo quien vido de el pueder

Sus plaseres son sin cuenta

sus bien voliencias rosas de la guerta

Su fama como el sol relumbrara

y a sus limunantes Dios condelara (sic).

7. Altabé, David F. "Epitaphs in Judeo-Spanish Verse", *The Sephardic Scholar*, Series 2 (1972-73) pages. 61-75: núm. VII vs. 2a-b.

8. Altabé, núm. XIV, vs. 1-2.

9. Altabé, XVIII, vs. 3-4.

10. Altabé, núm. X, vs. 1a-b.

11. Altabé, núm. XIX, v. 1.

12. Sephiha, H.V. "Monumentos Djudios de Turkija en Perikolo", *Aki Yerusahlayim*, III.10 (jul. 1981) pags. 16-18, núm. II v. 2.

13. Sephiha, núm. III, vs. 4 y 6.

14. Sephiha, núm. II, vs. 1 y 4-6.

15. Altabé, núm. XVIII, vs. 8-9.

16. Altabé, núm. II, v. 6.

17. Altabé, núm. III, v. 8.

18. Sephiha, núm. III, v. 7. Formulaciones semejantes se encuentran también en lápidas en hebreo, tanto en España como en otras partes: vid. F. Cantera y J. M. Millás *Las inscripciones hebraicas de España* (Madrid, 1956) ps. 447-454; y M. E. Romero "De epigrafía sefardí: dos lápidas de Pérgamo", *Sefarad* XXVII, (1967) pags. 429-435: pags. 430-435.

19. Altabé, núm. XV.

MOSLEM INFLUENCES IN THE FOLKTALES OF CANADIAN SEPHARDIM

André E. Elbaz

In 1976, the Canadian Center for Folk Culture Studies of the National Museum of Man, in Ottawa, asked me to prepare a study of the folktale of Moroccan Sephardic immigrants in Canada, in order to evaluate its aesthetic value, its originality and its importance in the field of popular literature.¹

In the last two decades, about 15,000 Moroccan Jews have emigrated to Canada. They have settled mainly in Montreal and Toronto. In a relatively short period of time, I was able to collect 203 folktales, legends and anecdotes, out of a total of 341 narratives, from forty-three informants of both sexes, who used the three languages spoken by Moroccan Jews: about two hundred narratives were recorded in Judeo-Arabic, about one hundred in French and about thirty in Judeo-Spanish.

The rich popular literature of Maghreb Jews is the only fiction they ever had, since they were cut off from the mainstream of Western culture and Belles-Lettres up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus it constitutes an imaginary universe which reveals their specific culture and their way of life. In the past, it represented a kind of symbolic language which revealed the true soul of the people. Throughout the centuries, a vast body of folktales and legends eventually became a natural form of expression of the traditional Moroccan Jewish community and of its culture. Basically, the folktale had become a kind of depository of the old wisdom of past generations, conveying the deep aspirations, the religious and mythical beliefs, as well as the customs and traditions which constituted the collective consciousness of Moroccan Sephardim.

The folktales that Moroccan Sephardim brought with them to Canada are certainly very different from those of either the French or English Canadians. But they are also quite different from those of the Ashkenazi repertoire of the Canadian Jews, most of whom are from

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Central and Eastern European stock.² This originality of the folktales of Canadian Sephardim stems from the profound influence of Islamic and Berber traditions and beliefs of Maghreb Jews. This influence, caused by the centuries-old daily coexistence of Jews and Moslems, produced a certain symbiosis of life-styles, which eventually gave North-African Jewry its Judeo-Moorish individuality.

These Arabo-Berber influences are naturally present in the folktales and legends that I collected in Canada. Folklorists have always recognized the constant interplay between popular oral literature and the culture, the customs and values of the society which created this popular literature. In the words of Melville Herskovits, "a substantial body of folktales is more than the literary expression of a people. It is, in a very real sense, their ethnography which, if systematized by the student, gives a penetrating picture of their way of life... In addition to reflecting the life of a people of the period when a given story of a living lore is told, folklore also reveals much about their aspirations, values and goals."³

According to André Chouraqui, the importance of the Moslem presence in the "matrix" — or socio-cultural context — of the folktales of Moroccan Jews is due to the fact that "Jews and Moslems in the Maghreb were both grafts on the original Berber trunk"⁴. In fact, Moroccan Jews shared with their Moslem neighbours not only their origin, but also their language. Until very recently most of them spoke only Arabic, or rather Judeo-Arabic, and, in southern Morocco, they spoke the Berber dialects. In Canada, Judeo-Arabic remains the mother language of most immigrants who were born in Morocco, even though they now use French or English. As was noted above, most of the narratives in my collection were recorded in Judeo-Arabic.

Moroccan Jews also used Arabic surnames and first names, such as Khalfon, Sultan, Aziza, Elbaz, Yahya, Mess'od, Aicha, Rahma, Nejma and even, according to David Corcos, Khalef-Allah⁵, or Berber names like Gozlan, Ohana, Abú, Ifergan, Idder, 'Ayyush,⁶ etc....

Because Moroccan Jews shared with their Moslem neighbours the same language and, on the whole, the same way of life, it comes as no surprise that they had integrated numerous Arabo-Berber elements in their traditions, their music, their popular medicine, and even in some of their religious practices. In fact, the uneducated often did not differentiate between religion, superstition, or even pagan beliefs and magic. Thus it is only natural that this intermixture of

Arab, Berber and Jewish cultures and traditions is reflected in the oral literature of Moroccan Sephardim. Arabs, Berbers and Jews listened to and often transmitted the same folktales. As late as 1960, I witnessed a significant scene in a corner of the picturesque Djem'a-El-Fna Square of Marrakech. Squatting on the pavement among the Berber audience, a dozen Jews from the Atlas Mountains, hardly distinguishable from their neighbours, were eagerly listening to the Moslem storyteller who was reciting in the center of the group.

In the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim, the important corpus of non-religious tales, that is the stories about the *jnun*⁷ and *ghuls*⁸, the narratives about the *baraka*⁹, most magic tales, which are often drawn directly from the *Arabian Nights*, as well as the anecdotes on popular comic heroes like Jha, all have an Arabo-Berber origin.

Thus the dozen *jnun* stories which I collected in Canada tell about the evil-doings of these malevolent spirits, ever present among the people with whom they mix freely, to the point of carnal relations, and they propose various ways of getting rid of these invisible trouble-makers. One of our Montreal informants, an old rabbi from southern Morocco, mentioned a well-known *jennia* — or female *jinn* — named Aicha Kandisha, who, according to the distinguished ethnologist Edward Westermarck, is none other than the biblical *kedesha*, the sacred temple prostitute of the Canaanite cults, or Ashtoreth, the ancient goddess of fertility, whose tradition the Berbers inherited from the Phoenicians who had settled in North Africa during the first millennium B.C.¹⁰

Similarly, the *ghulin* and *ghulat*, the ghouls who abduct unsuspecting people to kill and devour them, are present in a number of tales. They are quite different from their European counterparts. One of these *ghoulat*, who roams in cemeteries, is called *Beghlat-el-kborat* — the mule of the graveyards — She is covered with gold, which gives her a radiant appearance, and she sometimes spits sparks and fire.¹¹ Several Canadian informants referred to this frightening Berber mythical animal. Fortunately, one storyteller added that this *ghul* is no longer dangerous since a Marrakech rabbi cast a *nidduy* on her¹² at the turn of the century, thus protecting all Moroccan Jews from her vicious attacks. However, a related ogress called *Bghelt-el-lil* — the mule of the night — is believed to be still active in the region of Fez¹³.

Certain Arabo-Berber beliefs are indistinguishable from very ancient Jewish beliefs, such as the evil eye. The Moslem *ayn* is similar to the talmudic *ayn hara*. Here we have a phenomenon of convergence of cultures, of parallelism, rather than a direct influence. In

fact, this ancient belief is spread throughout the Mediterranean area, and it is difficult to draw the line between specifically Jewish elements and foreign variations.

A Toronto informant recalled quite appropriately a Berber tradition which claims that two-thirds of mankind die because of the evil eye: *Layn 'and a tultayn fi lmqâbar*¹⁴. Our narrator went so far as to attribute 99% of human deaths to the power of the evil eye. As is frequent in this type of borrowing, he gave his story a Jewish twist by having a rabbi investigate the dreadful power of the *ayn hara*. Naturally, the rabbi arrived at this figure when he directly questioned the dead in a graveyard.

Dreams play an important role in the folktales of Moroccan Sephardim. They usually allow the hero to forecast the future, to communicate with the dead and with people living in distant places. They may also reveal a solution to a problem, or a medicine for an illness. Edward Westermarck cites many Berber parallels of this belief in the relationship between dream and reality.¹⁵

Arabo-Berber influences are particularly evident in the legends of miraculous rabbis, *šadiqim*, or *saints*, as they are called in the Maghreb. Out of 203 tales collected, sixty-eight, or roughly one-third, are about the supernatural deeds of the saints. Legends of the saints are very frequent in popular literature, whether Christian or Jewish. In the Aarne-Thompson International classification of the folktales, they are numbered AT 770 to AT 849.¹⁶ However, these stories have a distinctive flavor among Moroccan Sephardim, because North-African Judaism has received the unmistakable imprint of the local Moslem cult of the marabouts ('Moslem saints') which is very popular in the Maghreb. As a result, a parallel cult of the Jewish saints has developed, almost always tolerated, and even recognized by Moroccan rabbinical authorities.

In fact, many cases of religious syncretism have been documented in Morocco. In his survey of the *Pèlerinages Judéo-Musulmans du Maroc*,¹⁷ Louis Voinot recorded that Jewish and Moslem pilgrims visited indiscriminately the shrines of about one hundred different saints of either religious denomination. Sometimes, a saint's shrine is claimed by both Jews and Moslems, who address the saint under different names.¹⁸ Among the Jewish saints revered by Moslem pilgrims, Solica Hašadiqa¹⁹ and Ribī Amram Ben Diuan²⁰ occupy a prominent place in the folktales collected in Canada.

This Arabo-Berber stamp is conspicuous in all the aspects of the cult of the saints mentioned in these tales. In addition to his *zekhut* —

his personal merit — the Jewish saint, like the Moslem marabout, possesses the *baraka*, a mysterious beneficent aura that makes him a source of benediction for those who surround him. The saint can transmit his *baraka* to any person or any object coming into contact with him, or with his tomb. Logically, the *baraka* of the tomb where the saint is buried is greater than the *baraka* of the living saint.²¹

Part of this *baraka* may be transmitted to the saint's close relatives or descendants, who sometimes derive a benefit from it. Thus, in a small Montreal apartment, a descendant of the famous Ribī Ḥaim Pinto of Mogador²² has organized a kind of memorial chapel devoted to his illustrious ancestor. There, thousands of miles from the saint's tomb, Moroccan Sephardim come on pilgrimage. I had the privilege of attending one of these unusual pilgrimages in the heart of the great Quebec metropolis. While I was interviewing a sixth-generation descendant of Ribī Ḥaim Pinto, nine persons arrived, led by a venerable grandmother who carried on a copper tray the traditional offerings she used to bring during Moroccan pilgrimages: boiled chicken, roasted almonds, pastry, a bottle of *mahya*²³ and a carton of coca-cola, no doubt to add a Canadian note to this typical *ziara* — or pilgrimage. These Montreal Pilgrims were utterly convinced that the descendant of Ribī Ḥaim Pinto had brought with him a portion of his ancestor's *baraka* when he emigrated to Canada.

In several legends, some minor and obscure Jewish saints are identified only by their names, like many Moslem marabouts about whom nothing is known but their names and forsaken *kubba* — or mausoleum.²⁴ Nobody remembers when and where they lived, but their fame is based on miracles attributed to their tombs by the faithful. Other saints, whose very names have been forgotten, perhaps never existed: popular piety and imagination made an anonymous grave fashionable by first ascribing miracles to it, then calling its occupant a saint. To me certain saints' legends seem to have been created only to justify the cult of the believers.²⁵

Like his Moslem counterpart, the miraculous rab is chiefly considered as a healer and a magician by simple folk.²⁶ He too has prophetic gifts and can forecast the future, and he has knowledge of events occurring in distant places.²⁷ But, dead or alive, his miracles are the source of his prestige and the origin of the pilgrimages organized around his tomb.²⁸ Indeed, the importance of these pilgrimages is in direct proportion to the number of miracles attributed to him by his faithful. Both Moslem and Jewish holy men can tame wild animals, especially lions and snakes,²⁹ and subdue *jnun*,³⁰ and even the

Angel of Death who, in exceptional cases, can be prevented by powerful saints from harming their *protégés*.³¹ A few eminent Jewish saints know how to use the most sacred name of God, the *Šem Hameforaš*, that the common man is forbidden to pronounce, in the same manner as the marabouts make use of *el-ismu-el-'adem*³² to acquire supernatural powers.

In both Jewish and Moslem legends, it is interesting to note that the desecrator of a saint's shrine receives the same punishment, that is, he is always seized by a paralytic stroke.³³ Westermarck mentions that Moroccan Berbers believe that the body of a marabout is not subject to decay after his death.³⁴ Similarly, one of our informants pointed out that the body of Solica Ḥašadika was miraculously preserved, long after she had been buried.³⁵

In some of our legends, pilgrims are said to leave a rock, a coin, or a bottle of water on a saint's grave, in the typical Berber fashion. These objects are later recovered, once they have been permeated by the miraculous powers of the saint's *baraka*.³⁶ Like their Moslem neighbours, Jews often consider the tree which grows over the saint's grave as sacred, for they believe that the saint has conferred part of his attributes to this tree.³⁷ In Morocco, the most famous of these trees is the gigantic olive-tree that shades the tomb of Ribī Amram Ben Diuan, mentioned in several legends collected in Canada.

The ceremonies surrounding Jewish pilgrimages, as described in our tales, are strikingly similar to the rituals of the Arabo-Berber *ziara*, as they are detailed by Westermarck.³⁸ Even the animals slaughtered traditionally offered in certain Moslem shrines are also present in Jewish pilgrimages.³⁹

The wonders performed by Jewish saints also have local Moslem parallels. Thus, in one of our tales, Ribī Efraim Enkaoua, a fourteenth century Sephardic rabbi, rides a lion to travel from Marrakesh to Tlemcen.⁴⁰ The marabout Sidi M'Hammed Ben Auda is reputed to have used the same means of transportation.⁴¹

In one of our legends, the Jewish hero uses the strange Arabo-Berber custom of the '*ar* to put pressure on Ribī Daud Boussidan, a saint buried in Meknès, to heal his sick daughter. The '*ar* is a conditional curse used by Moroccan Moslems to compel someone to grant a request. It may be cast on living men, dead saints, or even *jnun*.⁴² In his foreword to *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, Bronislaw Malinowski dwells on the importance of the Berber concept of '*ar* to illuminate the universal problem of taboo.⁴³

In general, all these Moslem elements are so pervasive that the

exhaustive inventory of Arabo-Berber customs, beliefs and traditions drawn by Westermarck could be perfectly illustrated by examples taken from our collection of Sephardic folktales from Canada.

Yet, despite this significant crisscrossing of cultures, the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim remains remarkably distinct from the Moslem repertoire. Naturally, purely religious tales and legends rooted in the Bible or the Talmud are uniquely Jewish. But even narratives where the Arabo-Berber influence is unmistakable remain quite distinctive.

First of all, religion still plays a prominent role in our repertoire, which clearly reflects the piety of the older generation from which most of our informants were recruited. In Canada, most Sephardic narratives revolve around the notion of holiness, as they did in Morocco. Thus saints are exalted because they are privileged witnesses of God and of his Torah. For the traditional raconteur as well as for his audience, the eminence and the supernatural powers of the saints always have a divine origin. The Jewish saint is never supposed to perform miracles on his own. His powers are conferred to him directly by God. He is only a mediator between man and God. Consequently, the primary purpose of the saint's legend is to explain, to illustrate and to confirm traditional Jewish values. The traditional narrator does not consider himself as a mere entertainer. He wants primarily to teach, to moralize and even to preach. In other words, the saints' legends have essentially an educational function. They propose to the audience models to be imitated and clearly warn potential transgressors against breaking the rules of religion and ancestral tradition.

This moralistic stance is evident in our tale dealing with the 'ar. Westermarck had noticed that certain marabouts are "ready to help those who invoke them even for the most wicked purposes",⁴⁴ especially when the 'ar is cast upon them.⁴⁵ Such conduct would be unthinkable among Jewish saints, whose only obligation is to carry out God's will. In our edifying legends, evil acts are always punished, worthy deeds are always rewarded.

Another important feature of the folktales of Moroccan Sephardim is the general tendency to Judaize the foreign elements they have integrated. Thus the typically Arab *jnun* have in a way been "adopted" by Jewish scholars in Morocco, who have simply likened them to the talmudic *mazikim* and *šedim*,⁴⁶ thus giving them a seal of respectability. As mentioned earlier, some legends were apparently created only to justify pilgrimages to unknown graves. Thus, the

tragic events in one of our narratives entitled: "A mother saved by her son's tomb", under the guise of exalting filial piety, represent in fact an attempt to justify the pilgrims' visits to the famous overturned tombstone of Er-Rkieze, in Tlemcen.⁴⁷

What are the chances of survival of the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim in Canada, now that it is cut off from its original North African matrix? In Morocco, this literature, with its high content of Arab and Berber elements, was an integral part of the traditional life of the Jewish community. In Canada, it still looks very much alive among older immigrants, many of whom have preserved substantial repertoires. Immigration did not radically alter overnight a generation whose culture is still deeply rooted in North-African Jewish traditions. The persistence of the use of Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish in the North-American context certainly favors this remarkable continuity. The deliberate use of a dialect by a narrator who, in addition, knows at least French or English is never accidental: the storyteller who chooses to speak in his mother tongue knows instinctively that it alone can adequately convey his most intimate thoughts and feelings.

Nevertheless, this vitality of the folktales of Moroccan Sephardim in Canada may very well be deceptive. If a sizeable number of folktales has been collected, it is only because all the informants were born in Morocco, where they learned their stories long before their emigration. In other words, the Canadian context could not have influenced them significantly. Considering that 27 out of 43 narrators were more than 50 years old, the passing of this generation of immigrants may very well spell the end of this popular literature in this Continent. These newcomers have been unable to transmit their heritage to their children, who are rapidly assimilating in Canada.

Most young Sephardim, who were already in a process of westernization in Morocco, do not speak, nor understand the Judeo-Arabic or Judeo-Spanish of their parents any more. Many of them are totally anglicized, and do not even speak French. The Moroccan Sephardic heritage of their parents is becoming alien to them. They are gradually abandoning the traditions of their ancestors. It is not surprising then that these young people often do not know any folktales, as they have never had the opportunity in Canada to attend a story-telling session in their family milieu. This widespread ignorance of the young in this domain is certainly not a healthy sign for the survival of the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim in Canada. Extensive fieldwork and scholarly research are urgently needed if this original part of the Moroccan heritage in Canada is to be saved from oblivion.

To conclude this brief survey of Moslem influences in the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim:

— Folktales can provide us with valuable information on the traditional life of Moroccan Sephardim, and particularly on their relationship with their non-Jewish neighbors. In Morocco, Jewish and Moslem cultures and traditions were closely related, even though inter-community relations were not always cordial.

— Finally, Arab and Berber influences have given the popular literature of Moroccan Sephardim its unique character in world and Jewish folklore.

NOTES

1. A larger study is to be published shortly by the National Museum of Man, in Ottawa, Canada, under the title: *Sephardic Folktales in Canada*. The material in this article is not included in the larger study.
2. For a study of the folktales of Canadian Ashkenazim, see the unpublished thesis of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: *Traditional storytelling in the Toronto Jewish community: a study in performance and creativity in an immigrant culture* (Indiana University, 1972.)
3. *Man and his works*, (New York, 1948), p. 418. See also Marie-Louise Ténéze, "Du conte merveilleux comme genre", in *Approches de nos traditions orales* (Paris, 1952), p. 63; and Camille Lacoste-Dujardin, *Le conte kabyle, Etude ethnologique*, (Paris, 1970).
4. André Chouraqui, *Between East and West, A History of Jews in North Africa* (Philadelphia, 1968), p. 54.
5. "Quelques aspects de la société juive dans le vieux Maroc, les prénoms juifs marocains", in *Folklore Research Centre Studies*, vol. III (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 144-229.
6. David Corcos, "Réflexions sur l'onomastique judéo-nord-africaine", in *Folklore Research Centre Studies*, vol. I (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 1-27.
7. See below.
8. ogres (Arabic).
9. See below.
10. Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926), vol. I, pp. 395-396.
11. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 405-406.
12. He decreed a ban on her.
13. Westermarck, vol. I, p. 406.
14. Arabic. See Westermarck, vol. I, p. 414.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 49-53.
16. Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale, A Classification and Bibliography*, F.F.C. no. 184, (Helsinki, 1961) pp. 254-284.

17. (Paris, 1948).
18. Cf. Westermarck vol. I, p. 72 and p. 195; Pierre Flamand, *Quelques manifestations de l'esprit populaire dans les juiveries du Sud-Marocain* (Casablanca, 1960), pp. 41-48; Emile Dermenghem, *Le Culte des saints dans l'Islam maghrébin* (Paris, 1954), pp. 50, 126ff.
19. Sol Hatchuel (1820-1834), a young Jewish girl from Tangier who preferred death to forced conversion to Islam. She was beheaded in Fez, and her tomb became a center of pilgrimages.
20. A famous eighteenth century rabbi, born in Hebron, who died in Ouezzan, in Northern Morocco. His tomb still attracts thousands of pilgrims every year, during the Hilula festivities.
21. Westermarck, vol. I, p. 159.
22. Moroccan Kabbalist of the first half of the nineteenth century, famous for his miracles. His grandson, Ribi Haim Pinto II, buried in Casablanca, is also considered a saint.
23. Traditional alcoholic beverage of Moroccan Jews.
24. Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 49-51.
25. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 49; many cases are recorded by Rabbi Joseph Ben-Naim, in *Malkhey Rabbanan* (Jerusalem, 1930.)
26. Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 155-158, 164-167; vol. II, p. 307, etc.
27. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 158-159 (Cf. our tale no. 54).
28. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 148-153, 162-164 (Cf. our tale no. 41).
29. Cf. our tales entitled: "Le lion volant du Rab de Tlemcen", and "Rabbi Samuel Benouaich dompte un lion".
30. Cf. our tale entitled: "Rabbi Haim Pinto ordonne á un djinn de guérir son disciple"; and Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 167, 333, 350, 315, 363, 364, 389.
31. Cf. our tale entitled: "La charité sauve de la mort".
32. Arabic, the most powerful name of God; Cf. our tales nos. 65 and 66.
33. Westermarck, p. 191 (Cf. our tale no. 7).
34. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 159.
35. Cf. our tale entitled: "Le martyre de Solika Hatsadika".
36. In the beautiful films of the 1978 Hilula of Ribi Amram Ben Diuan, by the Moroccan film directors Mohammed Maradji and Lotfi-Bouabid, a score of bottles of mineral water can be counted on the grave.
37. Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 66-69, 74-77; Dermenghem, pp. 136-141.
38. Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 49-87, 148-228; Dermenghem, pp. 111-169.
39. At least one bull was sacrificed during the 1978 Hillula of Ribi Amram Ben Diuan (Cf. Maradji's film, *supra*, note 36)
40. Rabbi and doctor born in Toledo, Spain, from where he escaped during the Inquisition persecutions of 1391. He is buried in Tlemcen, where imposing pilgrimages were organized at his tomb until Algeria's independence in 1962.
41. Dermenghem, p. 12.

42. Cf. our tale entitled: "Le serpent de Rabbi Daoud"; also Westermarck, vol. I, pp. 188-189.
43. *Ibid.*, vol. I, foreword, iv.
44. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 181.
45. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 181, 188-189.
46. Hebrew: supernatural beings who play a role similar to the role of the *jnun* in rabbinic literature.
47. Cf. Isaac Rouche, "Un grand-rabbin à Tlemcen au XVe siècle", *Bulletin Trimestriel de la Société de Géographie et d'Archéologie d'Oran*, tome 64, 1943, pp. 43-72.

SOME MODERN GREEK PROVERBS — JUDAIC OR CLASSIC IN ORIGIN?

by Rachel Dalven

"The age of most proverbs is extremely great, many of them going back to pre-literary times," wrote Reinhold Stromberg.¹ Trench, another scholar in the field of proverbial literature, is more specific: he cites the precepts of Ptah-hotep, preserved in the oldest book in the world, and dated 3400 B.C.² In his study of the origin of the proverb, Whiting asserts that the natives of Africa and the islands of the Pacific have proverbs much akin to those of Europe.³ How then can we discover whether the modern Greek proverbs spoken by the Greek-speaking or Romaniote Jews of Greece, are Judaic or Classic in origin?

From what Alonso writes, the objective way to approach this question, is to try to discover whether two similar literary phenomena (in this case the proverbs), in two different cultures, are linked in a literary way, thus creating a tradition.⁴ The renowned German philologist Ernst Robert Curtius (1886-1956) calls these literary links *topoi*, or commonplace topics.⁵ A *topos* or link, as Alonso explains it, exists between two literary products when "a series of assertions (two at least) resemble a series of judgments... or, if that does not happen, then an assertion must resemble others, not only in the concept itself, but in its literary coinage."⁶ In cases where there is no literary link or *topos* between two cultures, and the concept and literary coinage differ, we have what is known as *polygenesis*, that is to say, the literary expression is an independent parallel, simply because, as Alonso puts it, "human minds in different places and at different times have created the same or similar productions;" in other words, "they are not so much commonplaces of literature as commonplaces of life, of the social conduct of mankind in all ages and all countries."⁷ Even when an individual borrows some literary reminiscences from other cultures, his original expression will still be personal;⁸ the proverb will still be an independent parallel.

* * *

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My curiosity about the origin of the modern Greek proverbs I heard in my Greek-speaking Orthodox Jewish home, was aroused after I had read several well-known collections of modern Greek proverbs, and discovered that the proverbs familiar to Greek natives in most parts of Greece, were also familiar to my parents, and to my Greek-speaking co-religionists. Delving more deeply, I found that in most of these Greek collections, the compilers generally identify the proverbs with the provinces in Greece where they are most commonly spoken.⁹ In a few collections, the Greek compilers have limited their study to these proverbs spoken in only one particular province in Greece, such as the work of Savvantidi, whose book is on the proverbs commonly spoken in *Dodoni* (Epirus).¹⁰ Hatzioannou's book is on the fables of Cyprus.¹¹ Jannaris did a study on Cretan proverbs.¹² Beretta has a short collection which establishes parallels between modern Greek proverbs and classical proverbs.¹³

Foreign scholars on proverbial literature have done considerable work on the relationships between modern and ancient Greek proverbs, with some references to Biblical sources. Kryzek is cited for his book on "Modern Greek Proverbs Related to the Maxims of the Ancient Greeks."¹⁴ In his book entitled *Lessons in Proverbs*, Trench devotes one page to proverbs in the Scriptures.¹⁵ Archer Taylor has a section on Biblical proverbs.¹⁶ There is a fine article on "Proverbs ancient and Modern Greek Proverbs," with a short section on proverbs found in the Talmud, in the 1868 American edition of the *Quarterly Review*.¹⁷ Only one Greek author, Demitrius Loukatos, whose unpublished dissertation I have been unable to find, wrote on "The Bible in the Proverbial Speech of the Greek People."¹⁸ There may be other Greek books which trace modern Greek proverbs to Biblical sources, but I have found none here in New York.

My astonishment increased when I found parallels to all the modern Greek proverbs I know from my own home, in the Book of Proverbs, in Job, Deuteronomy, in Micha, and scattered in other books of the Old Testament as well. I also found parallels in several tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, the Ecclesiasticus of the Sage Ben Sira, who flourished in Palestine about 190 B.C., and in Pirque Abot ('The Ethics of the Fathers') which, according to Birnbaum, "contains sayings and proverbs over a period of nearly five centuries from the time of the last prophet to the end of the second century."¹⁹

Montefiore writes that "there is a curious parallel between the ideals of Sira and the Rabbis, and that of Aristotle and some of the Greek philosophers."²⁰ Yet, although the translators of the Book of

Sira admit that "tinges of Hellenic influence are to be discovered here and there," they warn the reader to guard against seeing them where they do not exist. "Ben Sira," they write, "has here and there thoughts which at first sight look like traces of Hellenic influence, but are not in reality; they are independent parallels." The translators of Ben Sira are convinced that "the Judaic elements in the book preponderate to an overwhelming degree."²¹

We have ample evidence to prove that Jews populated parts of Greece as early as the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C.²² We know that after the conquest of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) Greek became the *lingua franca* of the ancient Greek world, and lasted for several centuries after his death. Hebraic and Hellenic contacts were particularly close in antiquity, especially after the time of Alexander the Great. There is no question that there was some integration and an exchange of ideas between the Diaspora Jews and pagan Greeks, created by the economic, social, and political demands of the time.

The subject of the influence of ancient Greek culture on the Hebrew and vice versa, has been discussed by a number of eminent scholars. Those who highlight the influence of the ancient Greek on the Hebrew, point out that proverbs are found in the verses of Homer, Hesiod, Aristophanes, Pindar, the writers of tragedy, the Greek gnomic poets like Theognis and Solon, Phocylides and the great lyric poets who preceded them. Greenstone reminds us that the spoken language of the Jews of Palestine at the time of the compilation of the Jerusalem Talmud, written from the third to the fifth century of the common era, had a substantial admixture of Greek words and phrases.²³ Saul Lieberman writes that "Greek penetrated into all classes of Jewish society in Palestine. The rabbis took whole sentences from Greek proverbs current amongst the people from Greek legal documents, literature and other sources."²⁴ Rudolf Meyer stresses that "elements of Platonic myth found an entrance in Palestinian Rabbinic lore as preserved for us in the Talmud and the Midrashim, undergoing changes and adaptations." He mentions Rabbinic reference to the books of Homer in the Mishna Yadaim 4, 6.²⁵ Francis Glasson states that "an unexpected extent of Greek influence betrays itself in the most infrequent occurrence of Greek loan words in Rabbinic Hebrew... modified Greek concepts have been taken up and naturalized within Judaism."²⁶

However, the references these scholars offer to show that it was ancient Greek culture which influenced the Hebrew, do not square with the history of the exiled Jews who settled on Greek soil. In the

Diaspora, Jews differed markedly from their Hellenic neighbors in the spheres of language and religion. "It is in the sphere of religion that our Greek and Hebrew texts are worlds apart," observes Gordon. "Hebrew scripture is addressed to the children of Israel."²⁹ Further, as Bacher points out, "the Jewish people in the Diaspora," entered a new phase of historical life, and had become almost completely an Aramaic speaking people." Aramaic was "the vernacular tongue of international intercourse in Asia Minor in the time of Assyrian and Babylonian domination."²⁸ Gordon notes in another of his works that "outside of a Hellenistic uppercrust, and a number of Greek cities (notably Alexandria) the Semites of Asia were speaking not Greek but Aramaic."²⁹ Greenstone also concurs with the above statements. He writes:

The popular language of the Diaspora Jews or exiles was Aramaic, which was current among the masses and used in their everyday dealings... a large number of proverbs were used to convey a lesson or emanated from the preachers who sought to impress their listeners with a truth for which well-known aphorisms in the vernacular were used as illustrations.³⁰

And from what Schinedling writes, "of the Semitic languages, Aramaic is closest to Hebrew. The two languages are akin in structure, vocabulary and syntax. The relationship is especially close as to vocabulary since many of the consonantal stems are the same in both languages."³¹ It is true that borrowings from the Greek are found in Aramaic dialects, but these loan words were probably incorporated into the language after the conquests of Alexander the Great when Greek became the *lingua franca* of the whole ancient Near East.

Holtzman, who made a study of Jewish proverbs, regards them as the product of the Ptolemaic period during the second century of the common era when the gradual spread of Hellenic culture made many Jews turn their attention to the general and universal elements of their national religion.³²

The Diaspora Jews living in pagan Greece were even more closely attached to their monotheistic religion, to help them survive as exiles, keep open contacts with their coreligionists in Palestine as well as with Jewish communities in other parts of the world, and keep alive their hopes of returning one day to their homeland. It was to their Judaic heritage that the Diaspora Jews turned for their concepts, their moral principles, their inspiration to create.

Recent research in this field has brought forth compelling argu-

ments that show that the Diaspora Jews exerted an even stronger influence on the Greek; that the Greeks borrowed from the Jews. I quote Gordon again who stresses that "while the Greek indebtedness to the East cannot yet be measured, that the indebtedness is there cannot be doubted."³³

Ernst Robert Curtius, whom I have already mentioned, writes that "Judaean-Christian apologetics, and later, the Alexandrian catechumenical schools taught that the Old Testament was earlier than the writings of the Greek poets and sages; that the latter had known the Old Testament and had learned from it. This led to the establishment of parallels between the teachings of the Bible and pagan myths."³⁴

John Ashley makes a convincing case to prove that it was Hebrew culture which influenced the Greek. "Now whatever Egypt and Phoenicia may have been for Greece," he points out, "and Greece in turn may have done for the world, upon proper examination *all* are found to be *debtors* to the Hebrew."³⁵ He draws out of ancient Greek literary history an impressive list of writers to substantiate his conviction. The philosopher Thales of Miletus (640?-546 B.C.), visited Egypt and there learned from the Hebrews respecting the Supreme Being.³⁶ Pythagoras, active about the same time, spent two years in Phoenicia, went to Egypt and from there to Babylon. One of his instructors was the prophet Ezekiel.³⁷ Hermippus (5th century B.C.) says of Pythagoras, "he took a great many laws of the Jews into his philosophy."³⁸ Eusebius (260-340 A.D.) reports that Aristobulus (fl. 160 B.C.), the Alexandrian Jew and Peripatetic philosopher, wrote that Homer, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato were all acquainted with a translation of the Talmud which had been made before the conquest of Egypt in 525 B.C.³⁹ Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), is cited for borrowing directly from the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah.⁴⁰ Eupolemos (2nd century B.C.), the Egyptian Jewish author who wrote a book *On the Kings of Judaea*, asserts that "the Hebrews gave letters to the Phoenicians and the Phoenicians to the Greeks."⁴¹ The Roman historian Tacitus (c.55-c.117 A.D.), states that "Hebrew books were written centuries before the Greeks knew the use of letters."⁴²

Curtius calls our attention to what is probably the most telling reference concerning the influence of the Jews on the ancient Greeks; namely, that although the Greeks regarded the Phoenician Cadmus as the bestower of writing, the fact is that "they adopted letters from the ancient east: *alpha, beta, gamma, delta* are Semitic words. The

Hebrew are *aleph, beth, gimmel, dalet*.⁴³ Katzenstein elucidates further that "the Phoenician language of the later period belongs to the northwest Semitic group. It is strongly related to Hebrew."⁴⁴

But the writer who dwells on the subject of Jewish influence on the Greek is Josephus. (37-?100 A.D.). In *Against Apion*, he writes: "Pythagoras of Samos, (580-500 B.C.), a person superior to all philosophers in wisdom and piety toward God... did not only know our doctrines, but was in a very great measure a follower and admirer of them."⁴⁵ Josephus also writes about Clearchus who "was the scholar of Aristotle." In his first book concerning sleep, Clearchus has set down Aristotle's own discourse with a Jew which Josephus records:

This man was by birth a Jew, and came from Celesyria; these Jews are derived from Indian philosophers *Calami*, and by the Syrians *Judaei*, and took their name from the country they inhabit which they call Judea; but for the name of their city, it is a very awkward one, for they call it *Jerusalem*. Now this man, when he was hospitably treated by a great many, came down from the upper country to the place near the sea, and became a Grecian not only in his language but in his soul also; inso-much that when we ourselves happened to be in Asia about the same places whither he came, he conversed with us and with other philosophical persons, and made a trial of our skill in philosophy; and, as he had lived with many learned men, he communicated to us more information than he received from us.⁴⁶

"The narrative of Clearchus of Soli quoted by Josephus and Cle-ment of Alexandria," writes Baron, "may be regarded as substantially authentic."⁴⁷ We know that Aristotle went to Asia Minor after the death of Plato and spent three years from 348 to 345 B.C. at the court of his friend Hermias.⁴⁸

* * *

Some of the modern Greek proverbs I heard in my home, only a few of which will be included here, appear to be linked to the ancient Greek because of similarities in meaning and even in manner. However, when we examine the proverbs in Judaic sources which show similarities to the modern Greek proverbs spoken today, we discover situations related to religious concepts and a different "literary coinage," which leads one to believe that these proverbs are independent parallels.

A modern Greek proverb familiar to me from my own home states, "One commits an act, good or bad, and another is blamed or

rewarded." A variation of this proverb states, "some dig and prune, others drink and get drunk." We find many similar proverbs in the classics. In his *Theogony* (lines 597-604), Hesiod (750-700 B.C.) complains that the drones garner the hard work of the bees.⁴⁹ In his fable "The Two Dogs," by Aesop (620-560 B.C.), one dog boasts to the second dog that his master taught him "not to work, but to eat what others work for."⁵⁰ Libanius (314-392 A.D.), the Greek sophist and rhetorician, wrote in one of his *Epistles* (1458), "some do the work and others reap the profit."⁵¹ The poet Callimachus (310-240 B.C.), has a proverb in his "Hymn to Demeter," where the goddess is hailed to "nurture peace, that he who sows may also reap."⁵²

Turning to our Judaic sources, we find that several sententious remarks parallel the ancient Greek examples given above, but the situation which may have contributed to the evolution of his proverb, is found in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 19:15, we read, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin that sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, shall a matter be established." In Pessahim 113b, a tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, we learn that a certain person named Zigud went to Rabbi Papa and told him that he had seen a certain Tobias commit a sin. Rabbi Papa ordered that Zigud be flogged, since the testimony of one witness is not admissible; apparently Zigud intended to hurt Tobias's reputation. The popular proverb which evolved in Babylon out of this situation states, "Tobias sinned and Zigud is flogged." A variation of this same proverb appears in Midrash Rabba Genesis 25:3 which states that "Shila sins and Jonathan is punished." This proverb also appears in the New Testament. In John (4:37) we read "one soweth and another reapeth."

Another popular modern Greek proverb states, "drop by drop the water wears away the marble." The epic poet Choerilus (5th century B.C. wrote: "By constant dripping a drop of water hollows out a rock."⁵³ Bion (2nd century B.C.) wrote in *Idyll 11*, "from the frequent drop, as the saying is, ever falling, even the stone is bored into a hollow."⁵⁴

We find a parallel to this proverb in Job 14:19: "The waters wear the stones." Again it is from a Judaic source that we learn of the legend which probably gave rise to this proverb familiar to most Greek natives today. The story goes that Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph (2nd century B.C.) once noticed a stone at a well that had been hollowed out by the drippings from the buckets, whereupon he remarked, — "if these drippings can by continuous action, penetrate

this solid stone, how much more can the persistent word of God penetrate the pliant, fleshly human heart, if that word be represented with patient insistency."⁵⁵ The concept in the Judaic legend is obviously a religious one.

There are many more parallels in Hebrew and ancient Greek writings on the wisdom of a few words. As I heard my father use this proverb it states: "superfluous words induce blame." Occasionally he varied it by saying, "use a few words so that they will be of value." In Megilla 18a, we read: "the best medicine of all is silence," and again, "a word is worth a sela (coin), silence two selas." In Pessachim 99a, we read: "silence is good for the wise; how much more so for the foolish." In Ecclesiasticus 20:5, Ben Sira writes, "one keepeth silence and is accounted wise, and another is despised for his much talking."

Turning to the ancient Greek writers, we find Euripides (480-407 B.C.) using a similar proverb in his drama *Orestes* (line 638) when he has Meneleus say: "There are occasions when silence would be better than speech." In *Ajax* (line 293) Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) has Tecmessa say, "Silence is the grace of woman." In *Agamemnon* (line 548) Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) has the leader of the Chorus say: "Sole cure of wrong is silence, saith the saw," And the Stoic Zeno (335-263 B.C.) is credited with saying, "the reason that we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may hear more and speak less."⁵⁶ There are many more ancient Greek proverbs on silence, as there are parallels in Judaic sources and in other languages as well. But as can be seen, both the concept and the literary coinage of the proverbs found in Judaic sources, are unlike the ancient Greek, and appear to be independent parallels.

Another modern Greek proverb my parents often applied to instruct us children is "the camel cannot see its own hump;" in other words, no one can be completely objective about himself, or a man observes everyone's faults but his own. In Negaim 2:5, another tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, we read, "a man may examine all leprosy signs except his own." Euripides wrote, "he heals others but himself with sores is covered,"⁵⁷ which is a very close parallel to the Babylonian proverb. We also find this in the New Testament. Jesus applies this parable when he says: "Physician heal thyself." (Luke 4:23).

The harmful consequences of quarreling are stressed in the proverbs of both Hebrew and ancient Greek writers. My father would say, "Quarrels cause poverty." On occasion he would vary this for greater emphasis: "Strife creates either orphanhood or death." Phoc-

ylides (6th century B.C.), the Greek gnomic poet of Miletus, wrote in one of his gnomes (Sent. 78) "Most helpful is persuasion, but strife begets strife."⁵⁸

The parallels to this proverb found in our Judaic sources, which I heard in my home, are different in concept and language. In one instance, in the tractate Sanhedrin of the Babylonian Talmud, (7a) we read: "Strife is like the aperture of a leakage; the aperture widens so the stream of water increases"; again, "strife is the plank of a bridge; the longer it exists, the finer it becomes." In the same tractate (102b) we read: "He who gives vent to his wrath, destroys his house."⁵⁹ It is stated a little differently in the Book of Proverbs 17:14: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before the quarrel break out." In Ecclesiasticus 28:8, Ben Sira writes: "Keep far from strife and sins will keep far from thee."

Another modern Greek proverb, frequently quoted by Greek-speaking Jews, and known to most Greek natives, is found in the Book of Proverbs 27:10 where we read: "Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off." My mother would say, "My neighbor and not my brother." A variation of this proverb heard in the Romaniote community of Janina states: "God and my neighbor." In need, a neighbor is closer than a brother who may be far off. The closest parallel I found in ancient Greek is an anonymous classical proverb which states, "better a friend at hand, than a brother at a distance."⁶⁰ which reflects the concept and the literary coinage of the proverb found in the Book of Proverbs.

Another popular modern Greek proverb which has many parallels in the classics as well as in other languages states: "Better one in the hand than waiting for ten." In Aesop's fable "The Nightingale and the Hawk," the hawk tells the nightingale who begs him to spare his life, "I would be a fool if I let go the food on hand and went off after some I had never seen."⁶¹ Hesiod wrote in one of his fragments (234), "He is a fool who leaves a certainty to pursue an uncertainty."⁶⁴ Theocritus (310-245 B.C.), the Greek idyllic poet, wrote in *Idyll 11:75*: "milk the cow that is near, why pursue the one that flees."⁶³ The English proverb "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," has its parallel in Ketubot 83b which states: "a young pumpkin in hand is better than a full grown one in the field," which is closer to the modern Greek proverb I heard in my home.

I once heard a Jewish father in Janina rebuke his eighteen year old daughter for refusing to accept the mate he had chosen for her because he was twenty-five years older than she. In a sharp voice her father said

repeatedly, "Don't look at his crooked foot, look at his straight luck!" This parent also used another proverb to persuade his daughter to accept the older mate: "The donkey is not a cripple because he has long ears!" This modern Greek proverb seems to have its roots in Pirque Abot 4:27, for there we read: "Look not upon the flask but on what it contains." A parallel to this proverb are the words of Aesop to his master: "We must look to the mind, and not to the outward appearance."⁶⁴ In English we say, "don't judge a book by its cover."

One of my coreligionists recounted to me the anecdote which seems to have given rise to this folk saying which is now familiar to most Greek inhabitants. It appears that a prince was admiring the wine he was drinking, and he wondered why it had been stored in such an ugly wooden barrel. "Then have your father who is a king, put the wine in silver ewers. The prince told this to the King who had the wine placed in silver ewers. After a few days the wine turned sour. "Only in wood," my coreligionists explained, "does wine age."

Many proverbs are found in the works of ancient Greek writers on the evils of an unbridled tongue. Menander (342-290 B.C.), the chief poet of the New Comedy, wrote, "the tongue hath many to destruction led."⁶⁵ Phocylides wrote, "the tongue is a sharper weapon than the sword."⁶⁶ Theophrastus (372-287 B.C.), the successor of Aristotle in the Peripatetic school, wrote, "Sooner trust an unbitted horse, than an unbridled tongue."⁶⁷

Turning to our Judaic sources we find that Ben Sira wrote in Ecclesiasticus 28:17, "the stroke of the tongue breaketh bones." In the Book of Proverbs 25:25, we read, "a soft tongue breaketh the bone." The modern Greek proverb which most Greek people know, states succinctly "the tongue has no bones, yet it breaks bones." Obviously, the modern Greek proverb is closer in concept and literary coinage to the proverbs in our Judaic sources.

Another proverb my mother often applied to advise us to trust our own judgment, states, "ask counsel of thousands, but do not abandon your own thoughts." In Ecclesiasticus 37:13, we read, "Do thou also take knowledge of the counsel of (thine own) heart, for thou hast no one more true to thee." Apollodorus, the Athenian grammarian and historian who was active about the same time as Ben Sira, writes: "Of all my kin, I am my only friend."⁶⁸

One form of a modern Greek proverb familiar to me, states that when a person has been bitten by a snake, a piece of rope terrified him. According to Trench, the folk saying sprang from a fisherman

who in his over anxiety to ascertain the contents of his net got stung by a scorpion. "Now that I am stung by a scorpion, I shall be wiser," he remarked.⁶⁹

There are several parallels to this proverb in the writings of the ancient Greeks. In his drama *Agamemnon* (strophe 3, lines 176-178), Aeschylus has the Chorus say: "Men shall learn wisdom by affliction schooled." In Aesop's fable "The Dog and the Butcher," when the butcher discovers that a dog had stolen some meat, he remarks that he will be more watchful from now on.⁷⁰ Homer (8th century B.C.) has a line in Book XVII (32) of the *Iliad*, which states, "by the event is even a fool made wise."

In Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah (7:1) Rabbi Ben Levi offers an Aramaic sententious remark which demonstrates that mishaps often become lessons. The modern Greek proverb I heard at home states, "whoever burns himself or herself with the porridge, blows at the yoghurt." The similarities are evident in both the ancient Greek and Judaic proverbs.

Proverbs abound in the Bible, the Talmud, and among the ancient Greek writers about money. Menander wrote, "when a man is in trouble, friends stand aloof." (Sent. 32).⁷¹ Theognis (560-500 B.C.), the Greek elegaic and gnomic poet states in one of his maxims: "If you are rich, you will have many friends, but if you are poor you will have but few, and will no longer be the good man you were before."⁷² The sophist Zenobius (second century B.C.), wrote (IV, 12) "Boil pot, boil friendship."⁷³ In his drama *Medea*, Euripides has the tragic heroine tell Jason (line 554), "for well I know that every whilom friend avoids the poor."

Turning to our Judaic sources, in the Book of Proverbs 14:20, we read, "the poor is hated even of his own neighbor, but the rich have many friends." In 19:4 of the same book, we read: "wealth addeth many friends, but as for the poor, his friend separateth himself from him." In Midrash Rabba Esther 2:4, we read, "If you have not money, no one respects you." We find a similar proverb in the New Testament. In Timothy I (4:10) we read, "for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

Greek natives today are much more philosophical and positive in their adaptation of this modern Greek proverb. Some say, "Money gets you into trouble and money saves you." Others say, "he who has money in his purse, can have fresh fish even on the mountain," or they say, "you have money, you have a tongue." They also say, "money talks, money sings, money converses." The older Greek-

speaking Jewish natives often prefer to say this proverb in Hebrew: *yesh mamon yesh kabod* ('You have money, you have honor').

There are some modern Greek proverbs which I heard at home, and which are familiar to most Greek natives, which appear to be more directly related to Judaic sources. One of these states, "as the mother, as the father, so the son and daughter." Sometimes this is varied: "Mother and daughter, a key and its chest." I found a parallel to this proverb in Ezekiel 16:44 which states, "as the mother so her daughter." I also found a parallel in Ketubot 63a which states, "One sheep follows the other, and a daughter follows the mother." From the same Talmudic source we discover the legend which may have given rise to this proverb. Rabbi Akiba had married his wife Rachel when he was a poor shepherd. Later on their daughter followed the mother's example by marrying Ben Azzai when he was unknown and poor. The Hebrew says "ewe follows ewe," (since Rachel means ewe), but the meaning is that "a daughter's acts are like those of her mother."

Another modern Greek proverb which reflects a Judaic moral principle states: "Do a good deed and cast it on the seashore." This proverb also appears in Ecclesiastes 11:1 where we read: "Cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it after many days."

Another favorite modern Greek proverb found in a Judaic source, states, "Don't ask the doctor, ask the sufferer." In Yoma 83a, another tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, we read: "A sick person is fed at the word of experts, and if no experts are there, one feeds him at his own wish." As one of my Janina informants explained this proverb, if on a fast day a person goes to his doctor and asks his advice whether or not he may fast that day, if the doctor tells him that he may fast, since there is nothing wrong with him, but the patient still feels weak and ill, you listen to the patient and not to the doctor.

Another sententious remark found in Kohelet Rabba 7:9, a Midrash on Ecclesiastes, evolved into a true modern Greek proverb. It states, "if a man spits into the air, it will fall on his face." The commentary of Rabbi Judah explains, "when the kettle boils over, the boiling water pours on its own side." The modern Greek proverb which I heard at home states: If you speak against your house, it will fall on you and crush you." A more positive use of this negative proverb which my mother often said is, "If your house esteems you the whole world esteems you."

Another popular modern Greek proverb which appears to be

identified more closely with a Judaic source, asks: "Why is your eye gouged out so deep?" The speaker answers his own question: "because my brother took it out." A parallel proverb, found in Micha 7:6 of the Bible, states: "a man's enemies are the men of his own house." This proverb, as one of my coreligionists observed, is true, because our families know all our weaknesses.

There are several folk proverbs, familiar to all Greek natives, which have parallels in the Aramaic, Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, that speak about daughters-in-law, and mothers-in-law. Traditionally, in Jewish homes in Janina, it is assumed that mothers-in-law will always find fault with their daughters-in-law. The one I heard most often says: "the groom cannot become a son, nor the bride a daughter." Another variation of this is probably used to avoid hurting the feelings of an in-law. It states, "I say it to the window so that the door will hear it." In other words, it was said to the daughter, so that the mother-in-law would hear it. The folk proverb spoken to deride this prejudice states: "all the cakes that come out wrong are made by the bride."

There are a number of Judaic sayings on the evil eye which are found in modern Greek collections. In Proverbs 23:10, we are warned: "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye." In Midrash Rabba Leviticus 26:9, we read that Saul cast an evil eye upon David after he had clad him with his apparel. When Saul saw that they fitted David, he instantly cast an evil eye upon him. In Midrash Rabba Numbers 23:14, we read of a king who, when he was about to give his daughter in marriage, gave her an amulet and said to her: "Keep the amulet upon you so that the evil eye may have no power over you anymore. And again in the same book 20:10, we read: "Balaam possessed three qualities, an evil eye, a haughty spirit, and a greedy soul." The modern Greek folk saying states: "may no evil eye see you." We also say, "spit so you will not be bewitched." Spitting had a superstitious connotation which dissolved the power of the evil eye.

A Hebrew proverb which evolved into a modern Greek proverb states: "One father can feed seven children, but seven children cannot take care of one father." In Ecclesiasticus 33:21, Ben Sira wrote: "for it is better that thy children ask of thee, than that thou shouldst look to the hand of thy sons."

Still another favorite modern Greek proverb appears in Proverbs 10:5, which states, "A wise son gathereth in summer." In Aboda Zara 3a, another tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, we find a parallel

sententious remark which is phrased both as a question and as an answer. "He who took trouble (to prepare) on the eve of the Sabbath, can eat on the Sabbath, but he who has not troubled on the eve of the Sabbath, what shall he eat on the Sabbath?" The modern Greek proverb which our Greek-speaking Jews apply to instruct their children to prepare ahead of time, states: "Sensible children prepare their food before they are hungry." Sometimes I heard them say this proverb a little differently: "Light your candle before night overtakes you," or they say, "the good householder is seen in winter."

I was reminded of a folk saying I heard often at home, when I read in Midrash Rabba Leviticus 36:1 that Rabbi Simon bar Yoḥai thought heaven and earth were created in no other manner than that of a pot and its lid. When our Greek-speaking coreligionists want to convey that two people are alike in character and behavior, they say: "The pot turned over and found its cover." In English the comparison is "like two peas in a pod."

There are a number of proverbs which the Greek-speaking Jews prefer to say in Hebrew, which I include here to demonstrate once again that the Greek-speaking Jews referred most frequently to their own Judaic sources. Our English proverb, "every dog has its day," has its Hebrew counterpart in Pirque Abot 4:3 where we read: *'en dabar she'en lo makom ve ein Adam ein lo sha'a'* ('everything has its place and everyone has his day'). Another proverb from Pirque Abot 11:5 advises conformity to established custom: *al tifros min hašibur*, ('separate yourself not from the community'). This sententious remark, as Dr. Cohen reminds us, was the advice of Hillel, i.e., "do not be eager to be an exception," probably derived from the proverb in Ketubot 17a which states: "a man's mind should always be attuned harmoniously to that of his fellow-creatures."⁷⁴ Still another proverb which the Greek-speaking Jews prefer to say in Hebrew is found in Pirque Abot II, 6. It states: *ein bur yere het, velo am ha-aretz hašid* ('an ignorant man is not afraid of sin, and an illiterate person cannot be pious.') Still another proverb heard in Hebrew which is both alliterative and rhythmic is *bekiso, bekoso, bekaaso* ('you can judge a man by his purse, his drink and his wrath.'). Another proverb which the Romaniote Jews often say in the Hebrew is *osnayim lakir* ('walls have ears'). The source, according to one of my informants, is King Solomon's statement: "Don't curse the king in your mind, because walls have ears and your secret will be revealed." Still another proverb in Hebrew, *tebet kai shevat katse kame rehat*, consists of Hebrew, Greek and Turkish words. Tebet falls at the end of December, and

Shevat is part of January. This proverb, pertinently applied during the cold winter weather, advises us to take it easy during these two months. Usually business is slow during the winter months.

Many more parallels can be culled from the large storehouse of proverbs which all Greek-speaking Jews know by rote, most of which are also familiar to Greek Christians. There is no doubt that both Jews and Greeks of the ancient East influenced each other to some extent. But, as has been stated, the Diaspora Jews who settled in pagan Greece, spoke in Aramaic, which they knew far better than they knew Greek. More significantly, they knew much better their Hebrew heritage to which they clung "with fierce and passionate love," in order to survive as Jews.

Proverbs are created out of a folk, maternal idiom, and are derived from sources which are familiar and revered by the masses. It would appear from the sampling of modern Greek proverbs given above, all of which I knew from my own home, that they evolved out of the sententious remarks made by our rabbis of old, whose teachings and preachings were steeped in the concepts and language of our Judaic sources. Some of these must have evolved into the modern Greek proverbs spoken by most Greek natives to this day. If my assumption is correct, then the Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews of Greece made a distinct contribution to Hellenic proverbial literature which Greek compilers of modern Greek proverbs ought to recognize.

I was prompted to make this initial investigation, when I found only six references to Judaic parallels scattered in the first four volumes of the colossal six-volume work of Nicholas Polites, the best-known and most comprehensive of all our Greek compilers of modern Greek proverbs.⁷⁵ While we cannot know for certain whether the modern Greek proverbs used familiarly by our Greek-speaking Jews, originated in the Old Testament, or in the Talmud, or whether they originated with the ancient Greeks, or in any other language or culture for that matter, the examples given above show evidence that parallels were found in both the Judaic and the ancient Greek writings, which are seldom noted in Greek proverbial literature. A more general recognition of the relationship of these parallels in both cultures, would help to create a better understanding and respect for both the Greek and the Judaic, not only among the Greek Orthodox and the Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews, but among people in other lands as well.

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74. Hillel, quoted by Cohen, p. 187.
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THREE TRADITIONAL JUDEO-GREEK HYMNS AND THEIR TUNES

by Rachel Dalven and Israel J. Katz

Among the Jewish communities of the Greek mainland, the least documented, musically speaking, are those of the Romaniotes or Greek-speaking Jews. Janina (Ioannina), the capital of the northeastern province of Epirus, remained the spiritual center of the Romaniotes throughout their history under the Romans (168 B.C.E.-330 C.E.); Byzantine Christians (330-1082); the Franks (1082-1204); the Byzantines from 1204 to 1328, followed by intermittent conquests of Bulgarians, Serbians, and Albanians until the Ottoman Turks conquered the city in 1431 and held it to 1913. Janina has continued to be the spiritual link for those who have survived the Nazi Holocaust.

However, a new dimension was added to Judeo-Greek history, when, during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, thousands of Jewish exiles from the Iberian Peninsula settled along the eastern seaboard of the Ottoman Empire. There these Sephardim or Spanish-speaking Jews established a number of prominent communities, the most important of which was Salonika, a seaport in south central Macedonia, and Istanbul. The Jews of Salonika, whose total population outnumbered all the Romaniote communities in the Balkan Peninsula, and whose cultural heritage was superior to the Romaniotes, succeeded in influencing the Greek-speaking communities to adapt the basic prayers of their own Romaniote liturgy to those of the Sephardic rite.

Leo Levi, an Israeli musicologist, has contributed what is perhaps the most recent attempt at a succinct overview of the Jewish musical traditions of Greece, i.e., Sephardic, Romaniote, and Italian. Along with Janina, he included such isolated communities as Trikkala, Arta, and Chalkis, where one could find traces of Byzantine musical and liturgical traditions. He also alluded to an indigenous hymnodic tradition among the Greek-speaking Jews "which developed independently during the 16th-18th centuries" (1971: col. 882), albeit without offering

any musical illustrations, notated sources or additional bibliographical material. It appears more than likely that no such documentation for the Judeo-Greek musical tradition survived the many wars and invasions.

By coincidence, during the summer of 1970, two scholars visited Athens, where several Romaniotes — natives of Janina — were resettled in the capital. Both chanced to meet at the home of Victor Borbolis, hazzan of the Janina Synagogue on Melidoni Street, where they simultaneously recorded several liturgical songs sung by him. One of them, Professor Rachel Dalven from New York, was gathering material for her forthcoming book on *A Lost Jewish Community: The Jews of Janina, Greece*, while the other, Professor Amnon Shiloah of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem, sojourned for the sole purpose of recording the extant sacred and secular musical traditions of the Romaniotes, Sephardic and Judeo-Italian communities throughout the Greek mainland. Prof. Shiloah has already published some of the material which he obtained during that trip (1971, 1972a and 1972b), and he also produced an excellent recording entitled *Greek-Jewish Musical Traditions*, which includes but a sampling of the three aforementioned traditions.¹ Regrettably, he has provided us with only one recorded example of a Judeo-Greek item, namely, the hymn, "Ein addir kadonay," sung alternately in Hebrew and Judeo-Greek by the informant M. Cohen, a resident of the Romaniote community of Chalkis.

Before that memorable trip, Prof. Dalven was in possession of the book *Yianniótika 'Evráika Tragoúdia ('Janina Hebrew Songs')*, containing sixteen Judeo-Greek hymns transcribed, edited with critical notes, and published by Joseph Matsa (Janina, 1953). Matsa acquired the hymns from two manuscripts, whose dates were given as 5613 (1853) and 5630 (1870), respectively. The hymns, written in Hebrew characters, are characteristic of the Judeo-Greek dialect of that epoch, spoken by the Janina Jews at home and at work. Because the vocalization, i.e., vowel points, were missing in the first manuscript, Matsa took care to supply the accents according to the meter and pronunciation of the Janina idiom. He also transliterated the original hymns utilizing Greek characters for the Judeo-Greek and Latin for the Hebrew, which he then translated into Greek for Greek readers. This was indeed a most meritorious task, since the hymn texts were never before published.

According to Matsa, the hymns bore a threefold classification: (1) those whose verse and rhyme scheme followed the original Hebrew texts; (2) distichs which were purely Janina creations; and (3) hymns whose distichs alternate between Hebrew and Judeo-Greek (1953:12). Those hymns which exhibited the style of the liturgical poems by

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renowned poets of the Spanish Golden Age of Jewry (such men as Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Yehuda ha-Levi, and Abraham Ibn Ezra of the eleventh and twelfth centuries), Matsa regarded as the oldest (*ibid.*:13). Some of the hymns are quite lengthy, comprising from four to six trochaic syllables, and employing the same rhyme scheme in each of their stanzas. However, Joseph Matsa maintains that the Janina Jews borrowed many folkloric elements from the Greek (*ibid.*:16).² Moreover, he included in an addendum, entitled *Epimetro*, four musical notations for three of the hymn texts (*ibid.*:60-61).

Here indeed was a rarity: four melodies from the extant Janina tradition preserved in modern musical notation. At a glance, the melodies appear as hymn tunes, whose musical strophes carry not only metric time signatures with Italian tempi designations, but also their respective metronomical values, enclosed in parenthesis. Joseph Matsa shed no further light on the music, other than to mention their relationship to the demotic ('vernacular') Greek poetry of Epirus (*ibid.*:1).

Of the published melodies in Matsa's book, the first three hymns were sung by the late Anna Raphael, the last by Anna Matsa. All were notated by Anast[aseos] Remoundo. Yet, the only way to verify their hymn-like character was to seek out additional performances by other Judeo-Greek informants.

Fortunately, there reside in New York a number of Greek-speaking Jews, natives of Janina, three of whom we had the pleasure to record. From the outset it was extremely interesting to learn, upon interviewing our informants, that each could not recall tunes for texts other than those for which the musical notations were given in Matsa's collection. Thus were we able to record additional renditions for the same three texts, and were afforded the opportunity to compare our transcriptions with the published notations, thereby gaining further insights into their performance, formal structure, the modal structure. Since we were not interested in obtaining variant texts, we provided each of our informants with the respective texts in question, recording only those for which they knew a tune.

What follows are some critical notes, a translation, and a musical analysis of the transcriptions of each of the three hymns in this study.

I. "Kina glossa" ('Start to Speak O Tongue') (Matsa 1953:21-26)

This Purim hymn consists of fifty quatrains, which were derived from the Book of Esther. The hymn, known by its *incipit*, "Kina glossa," was circulated widely, and young and old sang it at parties during the

holiday of Purim. As Matsa explains (*ibid.*:), in olden days it was printed in a pamphlet with Hebrew characters; in more recent years it was printed in Greek, neither of which he was able to find. However, he made a more accurate transcription from a manuscript inserted in the pages of an old prayer book, preserved in the Municipal Museum of Janina. Both manuscript collections, from which these hymns were taken, are written in a clear hand, and have vowel points. Below is a translation of the first four quatrains.

Purim Hymn

Start to speak O tongue
of miracles unsung,
awaken those who inertly recline,
make them inebriate with wine.
Eat, drink, in reveling delight,
in feasting and gladness and light,
forget not the All Highest,
make God's freedom manifest.
Forget not the poor brother,
send gifts to one another,
invite alike both rich and poor,
praise the Lord with voices pure.
Before Haman's blow could injure,
God himself prepared the cure,
and myrtle Esther reigned,
our liberty ordained.

ΤΟ ΤΡΑΓΟΥΔΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΥΡΙΜ (Κίνα γλώσσα)

Μoderato (180 J)

Κι να μι- λω- ρα- τά μι- λή- σης θά μα- τα
νά μι- λω- ρή- σης κοι- μι- σμύ- νους τά- ξυ- πνή- σης
μή- υπα- ει- τά- τούς- με- θύ- σης

Example 1: "Kina glossa" (Matsa 1953:60)

A renotation (Ex. 2a) of Example 1, provides a much clearer view of the formal structure, which is a quatrain strophe, ABCC. Each melodic phrase is two measures long, and each carries its respective octosyllabic verse. The mode is unquestionably that of the Gregorian Hypomixolydian, based on the *finalis* ('final tone') \underline{f} . By adding the major pentachord above the *finalis*, and the trichord below, the tune's *ambitus* ('range') equals a minor 7th. All but the initial phrase contain the characteristic cadence, comprising a descending major 3rd (\underline{a} to \underline{f}); the initial phrase (A), although ending on \underline{a} , appears to be linked gravitationally to the *finalis*, which is the initial tone of the succeeding phrase.

Example 2: "Kina glossa"

Mr. Sam Samuel's renditions of "Kina glossa" (Exs. 2b and 2c) were recorded three weeks apart, i.e., on June 19 and July 10, 1981, respectively. A closer glance at the musical transcriptions of each of his initial strophes bears out a similarity with the printed notation (Exs. 1 or 2a) in: 1) formal structure, with melodic variants in the third and final phrases, 2) modality, although with coloration on the third and seventh degrees in the third and final phrases, 3) *ambitus*, although Example 2c encompasses a minor 6th, since Mr. Samuels omits the lowest tone \underline{d} , and 4) adherence to the basic cadential pattern.

It is also interesting to compare the metric schemes of both Samuel's renditions with the original notation (see Table 1).

Table 1: Comparative metric schemes

While there is a significant difference in tempo, it is suggested that the metronomical designation for Example 1 (or Ex. 2a) should be equivalent to an eighth-note rather than a quarter, as shown. The most striking feature of the comparison, however, is borne out by the ornamented melodic phrases in Mr. Samuels's renditions.

II. "Yarabi" ('God') (Matsa 1953:43-47)

This hymn, which deals with the sacrifice of Isaac, is still sung in Greece today, and chanted during the dinner given by the father in honor of the birth of his new born son, after the circumcision. The feast is called *salamatia* (possibly from the Greek phrase, *s'alla matia* 'before others' eyes'). In the earlier manuscript, this hymn was found without vowel points; the newer manuscript has vowel points. The first verse of the hymn is the same as the Greek song in N. G. Politis's collection (Athens, 1914: Song 128).³

The Sacrifice of Isaac

1. God, You who dwell on the heights, and gaze on the earth below, look not upon my sins, reckon not my sins to know.
2. Cast each of my transgressions into the bottom of the sea, for the divine grace of Abraham who obeyed Thy decree.
3. Abraham underwent ten searching tests, these are not concealed, to the seventy-two tribes his name is proudly revealed.
4. I will relate to you the tenth trial, a very harsh ordeal, this is what happened to us, so very heartrending and real.
5. When Abraham was a very old man, God gave him a son, he was a hundred years old, he loved the boy, his only one.
6. Thirty-seven years later, God ordered him to slay his son, and he did not wish to alter God's wish, though he felt undone.
7. He rose up early in the morning, as it started to dawn, he saddled his donkey, though miserably sad and forlorn.
8. And he loaded his dear son Isaac with the wood he had cleaved, his mother's only dearly loved child, for whom now he grieved.
9. And he carried in his hand both the torch and the knife, he led him up the mountain, said nothing of taking his life.
10. He also took two other young men with him; with his own young men, who understood not a thing, they resembled the donkeys then.
11. He lifted his eyes upward, he looked all around, he saw the spot in the distance, a fire shining on the mound.
12. He also asked Isaac, to find out if he had seen it too. The boy answered him respectfully as he was wont to do.
13. "I see a fire in the mountain, and a canopied cloud, there at the navel of the earth, a peak select and proud."
14. Then he took his son and they went off together as a pair, he let behind his two young men and the donkey down there.
15. On the way Isaac asked, "Without the lamb where are we going? I behold only the wood and fire, but no burnt offering."
16. To Isaac's question, Abraham heartbreakingly replied, "Son, the lamb for a burnt offering, God himself will provide."
17. When Isaac and Abraham came to the spot God had selected, he knelt the boy down at once, Isaac looked calm and collected.
18. Abraham was an old man, the boy, a brave and obedient lad, he stood and bound his son, as if it was a ram he had.
19. He built the altar, laid the wood in order, to God's command, laid Isaac on the altar, seized his knife, stretched forth his hand.
20. And just as he was about to slay his son, had marked his neck, the angel of the Lord called out in terror his hand to check.
21. "Touch not the lad," he cried, "stretch not thy hand to take his life. Do nothing whatever unto him, only throw down the knife.
22. "For now I know for certain, since you have been put to the test, you are a God-fearing man, offering thy son, you are blest."

23. Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld a ram caught by his horns in the thicket, it was his to take he thought,
24. For the ram was also created at the end of Creation, ready for Abraham to slaughter, a divine obligation.
25. And now the moment had come, and Abraham went for the ram, but Satan had tied it to the trees, and held fast the ram.
26. As soon as he saw Abraham, he knew the ram was the one, brought there for Abraham to sacrifice instead of his son.
27. The ashes of the ram, and his two horns as well, God the Master took them, placed them before him to foretell,
28. That these two horns of the ram, would symbolize our salvation, they were divinely preserved for our final liberation.
29. The one shofar was blown together with a lightning streak, then at the time when our Torah was given at Sinai's peak.
30. And the other shofar is blown to make us totally free, we supplicate God to see it soon, this is our fervent plea.
31. And the hide of the ram became the prophet Elijah's belt, who will come one day soon, heralding the news that God had dealt.

Η ΘΥΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΙΣΑΑΚ (Παράδοση από την Ελλάδα)

Ανταντίνο (σολ)

Example 3: "Yarabi" (Matsa 1953:61)

Η ΘΥΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΙΣΑΑΚ
Άλλη παραλλαγή της μελωδίας

Ανταντίνο (σολ)

Example 4: "Yarabi" (Matsa 1953:61)

Two rather intricate melodic versions are given for the hymn "Yarabi" (Exs. 3 and 4). A renotation of both melodies (Exs. 5 and 6) will prove useful in dissecting their internal strophic components:

Example 5 exhibits the formal structure, $A^{a+b}A^{a+b}B^{b'+c+d}B^{b'+c+e}$, in which the latter phrases B carry repetitions of the third and fourth verses, respectively, and which differ only in their cadences. The exponential motive b appears in all the phrases, and it can be seen that, in total, five motives are distinguished in the melodic structure. Inasmuch as the tune comprises a minor tetrachord, built on the *finalis* \underline{a} and beginning on the subtonium \underline{g} . The overall ambitus is a perfect 5th.

Example 5: A renotation of Example 3

Example 6: A renotation of Example 4

Example 6, on the other hand, contains eight internal motives, with repetitions of b and d. The tune's structure, seen as a quatrain strophe, ABCD (ex. 7a), agrees with Mr. Hametz's rendition (Ex. 7b; recorded on July 5, 1981), except that in the former tune the last two phrases are repeated, both melodically and textually.

Example 7: "Yarabi"

Both Examples 7a (= Ex. 6) and b are based on the same *finalis* \underline{f} , although Example 7a is in a mixed Major/Mixolydian mode as expressed by the tone \underline{e} , notated both as a raised *subtonium* [*subfinalis*] and as a flattened-seventh degree. Example 7b comprises a Major hexachord. There is no doubt that both examples are related, particularly from the second through final phrases, where they also share the same cadential tones. Note also that Mr. Hametz's rendition is one-and-a-half times faster.

III. "Mi m'aphi'nes tin psychi' mou" ("Do Not Abandon My Soul")
(Matsa 1953:55-56)

This hymn, which is appropriate for the night before the circumcision, is popularly known as the "Three Keys: Birth, Rain, and Resurrection." It is still sung today. Matsa explains that the technical motif of this hymn consists of fifteen-syllable trochaic verses similar to the fifteen-syllable rhyming verses. It is written in distichs followed by a Hebrew refrain. The acrostic reveals the name of the composer, Yitzhak Shemuel, who, it appears, was childless, and who longed to leave an offspring. Matsa found the hymn in both the first and second collections, as well as in a small eight-page pamphlet which attests to the hymn's popularity. In the first collection, the Hebrew had no vowel points; in the second, they were included. The hymn was published by Abraham Danon under the title, "Un hymne Hébréogrec," in *Revue des Études Juives*, 75:89-92 (Paris, 1922).

Do Not Abandon My Soul

1. God of mine, You know that my desire is related to Thee,
Do not abandon my soul in this world, this is my plea.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
2. All my days, from my youth, sorrow and privation have found me,
I have overcome all, only one sorrow still crushes me.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
3. Thy compassion will console me with an offspring at my side,
So my name will not be lost in this world where I am denied.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
4. I cried out loud from the depths of the earth, out of the dense dark,
God of mine, the three keys are in Thy hand, Thine the divine spark.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
5. You heard the cry of the barren woman, You opened her womb,
This is the first key, to bless her with child, and make her life bloom.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
6. From Thy heights, You will open for us they heavenly treasure,
Our rains in their season will pour down in plenteous measure.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
7. At the resurrection You will open the graves of the dead,
As the prophet predicted: then my spirit by Thee will be led.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.

8. I believe in the Lord, and in Moses and his divine law.
Brought down to us from the skies, I read and reread it with awe.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.
9. Free us for Thy sake, and we will say Hallelujah to Thee,
God of mine, from Thee we await the day to be truly free.
Living and Merciful God, trustworthy King.

ADONAI ATA YADATA (μειχτό βραβαιοελληνικό τραγούδι)

Αηδαντε (150 J)

Example 8: "Mi m'aphines tin psychi mou" (Matsa 1953:60)

Example 9: A renotation of Example 8

Again, resorting to a structural renotation (Ex. 9) of Example 8, light can be shed on some interesting internal melodic relationships, in both the initial strophe and refrain. Taking *g* as *finalis*, the mode is clearly the natural minor, and the tune begins on the *subtonium*. Phrase A is repeated, phrase B repeats the text of phrase A, and phrase C carries the second textual hemistich, in the manner

AABC
a a a b.

The initial strophe contains three basic motives (a, b, and c).

The Hebrew refrain, "El hai rahman melek ne'eman," is broken up in a somewhat similar manner, i.e., the text "el hai rahman" is repeated three times, followed by "melek ne'eman," whose scheme can be depicted as DDEF

c c c d.

Also notice that the combined phrases E comprise four measures, while phrases E and F each contain two. Like the initial strophe, there appears to be greater ornamentation in the repeated phrases in contrast to the more condensed tune-text relationship in the latter phrases.

Example 10: "Mi a'aphines tin psychi mou"

By comparing the renditions of Mr. Joseph (Ex. 10b; recorded on July 5, 1981) and Mr. Samuels (Ex. 10c; recorded on June 19, 1981) with the notated example (10a or 9), one will immediately notice how elaborate (highly melismatic) theirs are. They agree in their cadential tones with the textual stanza, although Mr. Joseph deviates considerably in the first cadential phrase (E) of the refrain, and somewhat in the second.

The most interesting feature of Joseph's and Samuel's renditions is their treatment of the bilingual text, Hebrew and Greek. Mr. Joseph alternates between the Hebrew [Heb.] and Greek [Gr.] text in the following manner, albeit his performance was not consistent:

A B C C B C	Refrain	A A B C B C	Refrain	A A B C B C	Refrain, etc.
a a b a a b		c c c d c d		c c c d c d	
Heb.	Gr.	Heb.		Gr.	

Mr. Samuels sang the hymn:

A A B C A B C	Refrain	A B C A B C	Refrain, etc.
a a a b a a b		b c d b c d	
Heb.	Gr.	Heb.	Gr.

The tempo designation given for the printed notation (Ex. 8 or 10a) is most doubtful in view of Joseph's and Samuels's renditions. In their performances, the initial phrases (A) were rendered somewhat rubato, the B and C phrases rather metrically strict, and the refrain strophe with drawn-out individual phrases.

In conclusion, had transcriptions been made of the entire performance of each of our informants, together with more detailed analyses, we would have been able to provide far greater insights concerning the Janina tradition in terms of oral transmission. What we have offered here is but a perfunctory glance at an important Diasporic tradition, one for which very few notated musical examples have been preserved. Yet we were most fortunate in being able to verify the tunes of three Judeo-Greek hymns, to witness that their continuation in oral transmission (performance) was indeed imbued with the characteristic ornamentations of generations past, together with the adherence to the melodic structure and cadences (an important element of modal structure), and with the assurance that the notations inscribed in Joseph Matsa's invaluable study were nothing more than skeletal.

NOTES

1. Ethnic Folkways Records FE 4205 (New York, 1978). See I. J. Katz's forthcoming review of this recording in *Ethnomusicology* 27(1) (1983).

2. For an informative essay, rich in bibliography, concerning the borrowing of Greek folklore among the Sephardic Jews, see Samuel G. Armistead, "Greek Elements in Judeo-Spanish Traditional Poetry," *Laografia* 32:134-64 (Athens, 1979-81 [1982]). Prof. Katz identified a number of popular Greek melodies that were taken over as contrafact tunes by the Sephardic Jews in his paper "Sephardic Balladry in the Context of Greek Folksong Scholarship," which he presented at the Modern Language Association Annual Meeting (San Francisco, 1979) and which he is preparing for publication.

3. Profs. Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman were most kind in allowing us to contrast the Greek version of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* with their translation of an unedited Judeo-Spanish version (collected from the informant Sra. Luna Farache, 78 years old, in Tetuán, Morocco on August 7, 1962):

- God in heaven, Abraham,
God in heaven, worthy Isaac!
- 2 Nine tests did God give
to our father Abraham.
And to complete the ten,
a dread thing did he demand:
- 4 "Give me your son, Abraham,
give me your son, worthy Isaac.
You will make of him a sacrifice
on the mountain, as I command.
- 6 With all his heart and soul
Abraham did obey.
Now father and son depart,
to the wilderness they depart.
- 8 And Sarah followed after,
a league and a half they'd gone.
"Give us your blessing, mother,
to the wilderness we depart."
- 10 "You have my blessing, both,
may you come back safe and sound."
Now father and son depart;
the boy was loaded with wood.
- 12 And they went up the mount,
Isaac to his father spoke:
"Where is the ram, my father,
for I do not see it bound."

- 14 "You, Isaac, are the ram,
for that is God's command."
"If that is God's command,
then do not fail to obey.
- 16 Father, bind my feet,
and, father, bind my hands.
I do not wish to sin
at the moment of my death.
- 18 Father, cover my eyes,
so I do not see your grief."
With the cord of the kindling wood,
he bound him hand and foot;
- 20 and with a purple sash,
he covered up his eyes.
Now he's about to strike him,
but still he delays the blow.
- 22 He heard a voice from the heavens,
to Abraham it did call:
"Stop, Abraham, stop,
do not kill worthy Isaac!
- 24 For God of all the heavens
has tested you well enough."
A bearer of evil news
went off to speak with Sarah:
- 28 When Sarah heard this news,
She fell down in a swoon.
And the bearer of evil news
Went off to speak with Abraham:
- 30 "Abraham, if you only knew
what befell today through your fault.
Regarding Sarah, your wife:
she fell down in a swoon."
- 32 Now father and son return,
shoeless, in hooded capes.
With a hundred silver marks.
they purchased for her a shroud.
- 34 And in the Hebron field,
there they laid her to rest.

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THE HAHAMIM OF THE SERERO FAMILY

Rabbi M. Mitchell Serels

It is not often one reads of a family who can trace its lineage for almost five centuries. It is even more unusual when we read that a family consists of an unbroken line of Judeo-Spanish scholars and renowned rabbis. Such was the Serero family, who, after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, chose to resettle their lives in the Imperial city of Fez, Morocco, once known as "the seat of learning and the pride of Islam."

It was no surprise to learn that since that early illustrious beginning, the Serero family has spread out in six different countries where twenty-six descendants are keeping that long proud lineage alive. The majority of these descendants live in Israel, Switzerland and France.¹ A few live in Canada and the United States. The spelling of the family name has been altered somewhat, due perhaps to the language of the adopted land, or suggestions for change made by immigration authorities to avoid confusion, or simply due to Hebraisms.²

No living descendent knows for certain the origin of their Serero name. Some of them claim that their name is a corruption of the name Seranos; others trace their name to the Spanish city of Siero in the north of Spain.³ Still others claim that the name Serero comes from the Spanish *esterero*, meaning mat-maker.⁴ Any of these derivations is possible; we know that occupations have been a common source of surnames in all lands.

The first settlers of the Serero family were prominent members of the *Megurašim* ("Spanish exiles") who were expelled from Spain in 1492, and are recorded today as one of the most prominent families of Fez, whose long line of distinguished rabbis fostered the religious, social and cultural advancement of the Jewish community of Fez.

Rabbi David Serero was the first member of the Serero family to arrive in Fez with other *Megurašim*, exiles. As is usual in close com-

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munities, they created matrimonial alliances with other *megurašim*. The first of these alliances was with the Sarfati ('French') family which was also known as Hasarfati. The Sarfatis claimed to be descendants of Rabenu Tam, and through him from the eminent Rashi (1040-1105). Rabbi Vidal Hasarfati, a native of Fez and author of *Sof Dabaš* ('Honeyed End') arranged this first matrimonial alliance with David Serero which was to continue almost in an unbroken clan-like relationship down to the nineteenth century.

Saul Serero I (1575-1655), son of David, served as Rabbi of Fez for nearly fifty years, and became a renowned respondent who signed the *Taqanot* ('decisions') which fostered the legalism between the *Megurašim* community and the *Tošabim* ('native') community. Rabbi Saul faced some almost insurmountable difficulties during his rabbinate, which he handled with significant leadership. First of these were the conflicts between the *Megurašim* and the *Tošabim*. Second was a famine which lasted from 1604 to 1607. About 800 Jews were victims of the early days of the famine, among whom was Rabbi Jacob Benatar, the famous Fez talmudist who died on the 28 Adar II.⁵ On the Sabbath of 2 Kislev 1606, they declared a fast day despite the fact that fast on the Sabbath was prohibited. Some flour arrived on the 20th of Adar, but it came too late, and it was too little to save the community. When the famine ended, about 3000 Jews had died of starvation, and 2000 had converted to Islam. In the last year of the famine, ten to twenty Jews died daily.

Rabbi Saul also had to cope with marauding Arab factions who did not differentiate between the *Tošabim* and the *Megurašim* groups, which forced these groups closer to each other. About 600 Jews converted to Islam at this time. There were even a number of suicides of Jews who saw only certain death within the city, and no safe way out. On the 2 of Elul another tragedy befell the Jewish community of Fez. Prince Barijon of Fez, forced the Jews to pay a tax of 10,000 *okiot* ('a local coin') for his protection of the community from attacks.

Despite these trying ordeals, Rabbi Saul left his mark on Fez as a miracle worker, and as a respected leader. He was well versed in contemporary philosophy. In 1608, he wrote *Urim ve Tumim*, an index on the *Sulkhan Arukh*, and sermons which reveal him as an original thinker. He amended this work in 1610. He wrote *Dibrei-ha-Yamim* ('Chronicles'), a chronology of events of this period.

Later he wrote *Hanokh Lana'ar* ('Education for the Youth') a book on the Kabbala. He also wrote *Pereq Ha Ši'urim*, a book on the weights and coins of the Bible and Talmud, which were published in

Zehut Abot ('Merit of the Forefathers'). Unfortunately, most of his sermons and some philosophical works which he wrote in Spanish are lost. Rabbi Saul Serero continued to write works which have disappeared, to be mentioned only in the works of other authors.⁶ Saul sired David Serero II, who sired Menahem Serero I (1628-1701), a "fiery preacher," an outstanding halakhist authority, who handled responsibly a number of queries concerning the *Taqanot* of the *Megurašim* and their customs. Rabbi Menahem signed the reinstatement of the *Taqanot* of 1698.

It is through his sons that Rabbi Menahem is more readily remembered, for all of them became outstanding rabbis: Emmanuel Serero I (c. 1610-1680); Joshua Serero I (1670-1740) and Mattityahu Serero I (1700-c.1788).⁷

Emmanuel Serero I (also known as Manuel) son of Rabbi Menahem, was appointed *dayyan* of Fez. A number of his responsa were published in the works of Moroccan rabbis. He co-authored with Samuel Benzaquen *Peri Megadim Ve Gefen Porea* ('The Excellent Fruit and The Vine that Flowers'). As a leader of the *Megurašim*, he was called upon to sign the *Taqanot* of 1660 enforcing the Spanish regulations upon the Jewish population of Fez, regardless of ancestry.

Joshua Serero I, Menahem's second son, was a scribe, preacher and poet. He invested his money in real estate and became very wealthy and influential. However, he was close to his rabbinical heritage, and wrote a number of Torah Scrolls, and manuscript novellae dated 1697. He left a journal of reminiscences on the scribes of the *bet din* of his time, and a number of his *piyyutim* were published in *Yisrah Yisrael* ('Israel Will Rejoice') and in *Šir Yedidut* ('A Song of Friendship').

Joshua Serero had three sons, all of whom became outstanding rabbis. His first born son, Menahem Serero II (1692-1718) was named after his paternal grandfather following the traditional Sephardic custom. Before his marriage to the daughter of Rabbi Jacob Abenzur, Menahem wrote *Seqina Harefa* ('The Sharp Knife'), a book on laws of the knife during ritual slaughter. Saul Serero II (1696-1718) Joshua's second son, died when he was only 22 years of age. Rabbi Hanania Benzecri of Meknes wrote to Rabbi Joshua Serero I a moving letter on the death of his son Saul. Emmanuel Serero II (c.1705-1775) was rabbi, poet and author. Emmanuel wrote a commentary on the Haggadah when he was 14 years old. He wrote a collection of nearly two hundred *piyyutim* entitled *Sefat Emet* ('The True Language') a number of which were published in Sephardi mahzorim.

Emmanuel is also cited in the volume *Arba'a Gibe'em* ('The Four Bulwarks').

A third son of Menahem Serero I, Mattityahu I (1700-1788), lost his father while he was still an infant and was raised by his maternal grandfather Rabbi Jacob Abenzur, who also became his teacher. Mattityahu was one of the five outstanding Talmudist pupils of Rabbi Abenzur, and one of the five members of the Fez *bet din*. Many miracles were attributed to Mattityahu while he was still a child. Some of his legal decisions were published in *Zehut Abot* and in the works of Moroccan rabbis.

Mattityahu had seven sons which made him the real head of the family. Menahem Serero III (1744-1780) was the first born son, and was named after his paternal grandfather. He was a talmudist and dayyan. He wrote *Laqah Tob* ('A Good Possession'), when he was only seventeen. Menahem died while his parents were still living, and left a young son named Pitahya who celebrated his Bar Mitzva after his father's death. Haim David, Menahem's third brother, wrote the Bar Mitzvah speech. Many dirges were written, including one by David Hassin in *Tehelot le David* ('Praises to David'); others were written by Haim David Serero in *Egerot u Melilot* ('Letters and Documents').

Mattityahu's second son was Joshua Serero II (1748-1814), possibly named after an uncle. Joshua was a rabbi and dayyan. During his rabbinate, he and his brother, Haim David Serero, along with Samuel Abraham Abenzimra and Judah Benatar established a *bet din*. Several of his legal decisions were published in the works of Moroccan rabbis. Upon his death, Bensultan wrote a eulogy in *Dibrai Hahamim* ('Words of the Sages'), although he erred in citing the date of his death as 1817. Joshua had two sons, Reuben Serero I (d. 1855), who signed a rabbinical court ruling in 1852,⁸ and Joseph I, who will be discussed later on as an important branch of the family.

Mattityahu's third son, Judah Serero (d. 1834), was a rabbi, dayyan, a research scholar, a grammarian and an expert in the commentaries of Rabbi Abraham Benezra, which he frequently recited. His death due to a cholera plague, was a major blow to the Jewish community of Fez. He had two daughters both of whom married prominently. One married Rabbi Vidal Sarfaty IV; they had one son, Abner Israel Sarfaty (1827-1884), who became a rabbi and was revered by everyone as a pious man and halakhist. He wrote many responsa, all of which are still in manuscript form. He wrote *Yahas Fez* ('Prominent Fez') a book on the rituals of his native city.⁹ All

people still honor him and relate anecdotes of his cordial reception of Muslim leaders who sought his advice. He is also renowned for his learning and his handwriting as a scribe which is exemplary. People still honor him and go to pray at his grave. He welcomed the poor to his home and invited them to eat with his family as equals. He amassed an amazing library which remains a major inheritance of the Serero Family. He wrote a number of books on the *dinim* and *responsa*, which are still in manuscript form.

The second daughter of Judah Serero married her first cousin Mattathias Serero II, (Mattityahu) son of Haim David Serero. They had three sons, all of whom became renowned rabbis: Haim David Serero II; Emmanuel Serero II; (1843-1878) and Judah Benjamin Serero (1833-1920). Rabbi Judah Benjamin was most noted for his piety and as a miracle worker.

Haim David Serero I (1750-1826), the fourth son of Mattityahu Serero I, was a rabbi and dayyan who wrote novellae on the tractate *Pesahim*; letters, proverbs and legal decisions, some of which were published in the works of other Moroccan rabbis. He studied for the rabbinate under Eliyahu Cohen, and became renowned as a miracle worker in Fez. He married twice. His first wife, the daughter of Abraham Monsano, bore him one son: Jonathan Serero (1775-1837) whose son was Abba. Haim David Serero I had three sons from his second marriage: Semah Serero, born Sivan 2, 1781, and so named because of the biblical phrase *Ve Haqimoti le David Semah* ('I will establish for David a Shoot'); Mattityahu Serero II (1806-1891), named for Haim David's father; the third son by this second marriage was Menahem Serero IV (b. 1809) who died as a child.

One of the many anecdotes they tell of Haim David Serero I, the fourth son of Mattityahu, is that one Friday night a passerby could smell the odor of the *etrog* coming from his house. Haim also wrote *dinim* and many *responsa*. He left a large volume of letters, advice, *qinot* ('laments') and even jokes in manuscript form. David Hassin wrote a poem in his honor in *Tehelat le David*. Haim David now called a *Šadiq* ('A Saint'), died while he was reading and studying.

The fifth son of the elder Mattityahu Serero I was Jacob Serero (1769-1851). Whenever Jacob ruled in a case before his rabbinical tribunal he presented all necessary sources to the culpable party. He left only daughters. The rabbi was very pious, a kabbalist who constantly read and studied, and a popular religious leader. He could always be found with an open book in his hands.

The sixth son of Mattityahu Serero I was Saul Serero III (1807-

1857). His eulogy was written by his pupil Raphael Aaron Monson-ego in the book *Na'ot Midbar* ('Pastures in the Desert'); he was also a miracle worker. Once it is reported that a Jew and an Arab came before his rabbinical tribunal for a case. When the case was inclined to favor the Jew, the Arab hit the rabbi with a rifle; the rifle misfired and the bullet lodged in the Arab, killing him instantly. The other Arabs tried to blame the rabbi for the murder of the Arab. Another Arab came to the rabbi's rescue.

Upon the death of the rabbi, the people of Fez lit candles in the name of the *Šadiq*. Another story reveals the awe which the people felt for the rabbi. A man fell asleep in the bed of the rabbi while the candle was lit. The rabbi came to him in a dream and rebuked him. The son of Rabbi Saul Serero III was Samuel Mimu Serero (b. 1831), who served as a rabbi in Fez until he emigrated to Israel.

The seventh son of the Mattityahu Serero I was Nahman Serero who was known as a pietist. He had no children, and little else is known about him.

Jonathan Serero, son of Haim David I, marks the modern period of the Serero rabbis. Jonathan was a dayyan in Fez, a poet, a respondent, a miracle worker and a kabbalist. Some of his poems are still recited in Morocco. He wrote a long poem about Purim which is still read in Fez for the *Se'udat Purim*, the festive meal of the day. The poem deals with various Magrebi foods. He was extremely knowledgeable about miracles and many are recounted to this day. One story is told of his efforts to collect funds to build a synagogue. He succeeded in collecting the money needed and the synagogue was built in 1812. However, while his synagogue was in the process of being built, some people reported falsely that it was to rival a mosque. Despite the objections of the Moslems, the king suddenly gave Rabbi Jonathan permission to have the building completed as he had planned. From then on, that day was celebrated in the Serero synagogue as a special Purim. Rabbi Jonathan wrote a poem *Šire Keder* ('Songs of Keder') which tells of these events. The synagogue was in existence for a hundred years before it collapsed.

Another story they tell about Rabbi Jonathan is that one night he arose from his sleep to get a drink of water. He dropped the pitcher, which broke, and he was forced to return to sleep without quenching his thirst. The next morning they discovered that a snake had drunk the water and died of it.

Still another story they tell about Jonathan is that when he went to collect donations, he stayed at the inn of a wealthy man in Algeria.

The rabbi slipped on pitch outside the house, and dirtied the floor when he walked in. The wife called the rabbis of Morocco "donkeys," which astounded the rabbi. That night, while the rabbi shared a room with her husband, they heard a donkey bray. The husband was amazed because there were no donkeys nearby. He got up to see and walked outside. There he found his wife sitting and braying like a donkey. They sent for a doctor who could not find a cause. Finally, the rabbi felt that God had punished her for what she had said. He called for the woman, blessed her and forgave her. She was immediately healed.

During his rabbinate, the Nagid, the Titular Head of the Jews representing the community with the government of Fez, tried to make trouble for the rabbi. Towards the end of his life Rabbi Jonathan suffered from paralysis which prevented him from leaving the house. Once, because of the drought, the Jews held a public prayer on the streets of the city. Due to his paralysis, the rabbi could not leave his home. Two Jews of the community led him to the public prayer in a sedan chair. After the prayer was over, the Nagid ordered the two men to bring the rabbi before him which they did. The rabbi reacted to the torment of the Nagid, prophetically appealed to the Almighty saying "Master of the universe, if this Nagid still has many years to live then take me now, for I will not see him again." Two weeks later Rabbi Jonathan died.

Another branch of the Hahamim of the Serero family was that of Joseph Serero I, son of Joshua II. His son was Joshua Serero III who was also known as Raphael Joshua Zion Serero (1818-1897). He was a dayyan, pietist and kabbalist. His son Reuben Serero II (1858-1878) died of Cholera during his father's lifetime. Joshua left two sons: Joseph Serero II, named for his grandfather, and Mattathias Serero III (d. c.1935), head of the Bet Din in 1929.

Joseph Serero II was known as a kabbalist. He was born 14 Tishrei 1843 and died Tishrei 1902. He had no children. He collected a large library which began as a family collection inherited from his father. His own library which contained many family works dealt with all aspects of Judaism. During a local attack in 1912, the Yeshiva was set afire and the collection burned. A number of his responsa appear in other works including *Ašer Lešlomo* and *Le Yizhaq Reah*. He maintained the family custom of not eating questionable meat even if ruled permissible. He took a vow of silence and spoke only when absolutely necessary. He had his own synagogue where he was recognized for a special holiness.

Of the later Hahamim of the Serero family, Mattathias Serero III was widely known and respected as the president of the Rabbinical tribunal of Fez. In keeping with the family tradition, Mattathias Serero III was followed by his son, Haim David Serero III, who was dearly beloved and an expert in *Yore De'a* (part of the *Sulkan Arukh*) as well as President of the rabbinical tribunal of Fez. Another son of Mattathias Serero III was Jacob, also widely respected.¹⁰

With the arrival of Moroccan independence and Jewish flight from the country, this remarkable family has been scattered and its chain of rabbinic leadership shattered. But the dedication to the Serero family heritage has not weakened.

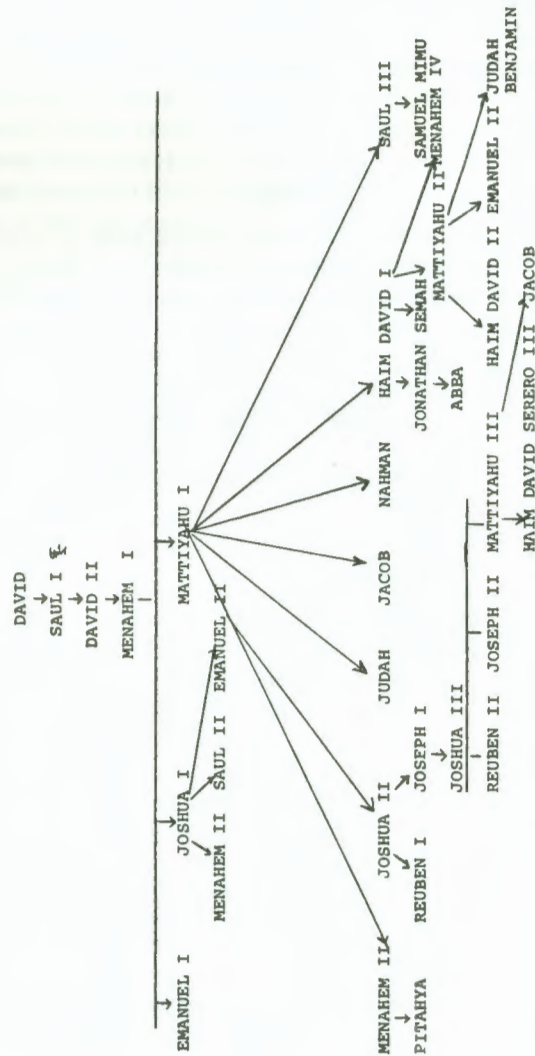
NOTES

1. Most of the information contained in this paper is from personal accounts and family histories. Of particular assistance have been M. Mathias Serero of Lausanne, Switzerland, Mr. Rapheal Serero of Kiryat Mat, Israel; M. E. Serero of Paris, France; M. B. Serero of Fez, Morocco; Madame Rebecca Arrouas of Aix-en-Provence, France; Madame Sybile Serero of Paris, France, amongst others.
2. The name is spelled in Greece as Cerero and Hebraicized as Sarel and altered as Serels.
3. Abbou, I.D. *Musulmans Andalous et Judeo-Espagnols*. (Madrid, edit. Antar, 1953). This work contains brief references to a few members of the Serero family on pages 301, 302, 313, 323, and 372-373.
4. Laredo, Abraham I. *Les Noms des Juif du Maroc*. (Madrid, Instituto Arias Montano, 1978). Pages 897-899. Laredo has compiled an accurate listing of many important members of the Serero family with a one-line description of each.
5. Ovadia, David. *Fez Vehahameha*. (Jerusalem, 1979). Vol. I, pg. 2. Erroneously gives the date of death as The New Month (R"H) instead of the 28 (K"H).
6. It had become a common practice on the Ketubot ('marriage contracts') of members of the Serero family to trace their family history back to Rabbi David Serero the son of Saul, who came from Spain. Just such a Ketuba was issued on February 23, 1969 in Fez for Moses Mosonogo and Esther Serero, a copy of which is in my possession.
7. Ben-Naim, Joseph. *Malkhe Rabanan*. (Jerusalem, Hama'ariv, 1931.) This work deals with a great many Moroccan rabbis. However, it is listed alphabetically by first names, making usage thereof, difficult. This work has been utilized to verify, wherever possible, familial reports.
8. Toledano, Jacob Moses. *Ner Hama'arav*. (Jerusalem, A. Milonetz,

1911). This is an early attempt to describe the leading rabbinical figures of Morocco. This work has been utilized to verify, whenever possible, familial reports.

9. A manuscript of *Yañas fez* by Rabbi Abner Israel Sarfaty is in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and printed in David Ovidia, Fez Vehahameha. (Jerusalem, 1979).

10. The latter-day generations are listed in the Ketuba of Benjamin Serero to Solica Benzimri, dated January 30, 1977, a copy of which is in my possession.



HOLOCAUST POETRY: THE FORGOTTEN SEPHARDIM*

by Isaac Jack Lévy

In a reprint of a letter which appeared in the *Sephardic Home News* concerning Professor Rachel Dalven's new, moving, arresting, and provocative play entitled *A Testimonial to Life*, David Hyatt, President of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Inc., expresses his deep appreciation for attending the first reading of the play which he calls "a little known chapter of the Holocaust tragedy,"¹ and his dismay that "very few people are aware of the fact that the Holocaust profoundly affected Athens and Greece." Thus, he adds, the "... play is an important contribution to the Holocaust literature that has been developed since World War II."²

In the last two decades, my research on the Sephardim of the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean Basin has uncovered a rich source of written and oral materials dealing with what I have always believed to be the various phases of their communal life. Hyatt's comments, however, have brought to light one aspect of Judeo-Spanish literary expression that has been ignored by scholars, historians, even by the Sephardim themselves — that is, a treatment of the Holocaust.

My only awareness of poetic renditions on the subject was limited to two items: a poem sung to me in 1959 by Mrs. Stella Hason, a victim of the Holocaust³ and four poems composed and written in long hand, in Judeo-Spanish, in the back of a booklet entitled *Kozas pasadas*, printed in Cavalla, Greece, in 1929.⁴ Already cognizant of the Sephardic inclination and sense of obligation to express

*The poems which appear within the body and at the end of this article have been translated by this author from Judeo-Spanish, except the first—*Geneological Tree* — which was translated from the French. The Judeo-Spanish poems are the exact reproductions of the originals; the spelling has not been altered.

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poetically their inner feelings and daily activities, and in the light of Hyatt's comments, I decided to embark on an earnest and dutiful re-examination of records and creative works among my people, the Sephardic community of Atlanta, Georgia, and of documents and tape recordings which I had collected and stored since 1959. The results were astonishing, the accounts of the outrages of the worst massacres imaginable were not excluded from the literary creation of the Spanish Jews. In a short span of a few weeks in Atlanta, I was able to obtain from my gracious sources a nineteen-page text by Marcel Chalom, entitled *Poèmes Juifs*, comprising both nationalistic and religious pieces; one selection is an elegy on the extermination of all but one member of his brother's family, two others are in praise of a young survivor as the blessed remnant of the Chosen.⁵ Mrs. Isaac Benschushan also made available to me a book, *Les Martyrs Juifs de Rhodes et de Cos*, written by her cousin, Hizkia M. Franco, in which he unfolds in his native Spanish dialect — Judeo-Spanish — his bereavement over the suffering of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Cos, and their subsequent extermination at the hands of "those civilized savages of Hitler's Germany."⁶

A superficial search through my own library gave additional proof of the wealth of Sephardic oral and written compositions. I found not only a book of poems by the Turkish-born Esther Morquez Algranti, a journalist and author highly respected in some Judeo-Spanish circles, but also five issues of the Judeo-Spanish newspaper, "El Tiempo," given to me by Itzhak Ben Ruby, one of its contributors, during my visit to Tel Aviv in 1968.⁷ To my astonishment, out of these few copies, three articles — one an eyewitness testimony — and a long poem, "Listen My Brother" were uncovered. Furthermore, among the papers which I had collected in Jerusalem were two anonymous poems — "Exile" and "Sacrifice."

These preliminary findings attest to the creative mind of the Jewish descendants from the Iberian Peninsula and to their continuous sharing of their traditions and literary production with their Jewish brethren and the world at large. These preliminary findings and the life-giving necessity for personal expression by the group in question, convinced me that the theme of the Holocaust has become an important part of the Sephardic tradition. Indeed, I am now taking steps to continue my research in this country and abroad. Interviews with the surviving victims, discovery of manuscripts and books in private libraries, and a thorough examination of newspapers in Judeo-Spanish published in Israel and Turkey must be undertaken without

delay. Time is of the utmost importance because of the advanced age of the few survivors of the death camps. Misplacement of manuscripts due to emigration has, according to one of my sources, resulted in the loss of individual records. Moreover, the desire on the part of some of the survivors — the remnant — to erase from their memory a sorrowful span of life — has been the cause of deliberately forgetting or distorting many incidents; some even refuse to believe that the tragedy ever took place.

As for my own investigation, once I completed the basic research and analyzed the material at hand, I examined a select number of texts on the massacre of Jews and on the German "Final Solution" in order to ascertain not only the diverse approaches taken by authors belonging to the different areas of the Humanities and Social Sciences, but also the major themes presented in them so as to embark on a comparative study with the newly discovered Sephardic writings. It was quite perplexing to discover that of the hundreds of pages I perused, few mention — and barely at that — the genocide undertaken by the Nazis on the Jewish populations in Italy, in the Dodecanese Islands and in Greece; it is almost as if the Jewish members of these communities were not a part of European Jewry.

The manuscripts and published materials located by this investigator attest to the wide variety of topics Jewish scholars dealt with in the course of their long history. It is amazing to find that many of the recurring themes, by no means influenced by previous writers, were the result of their perception and first-hand experience of life and of their Hebraic make-up.

These recently discovered poetic and prose compositions, including my translations of the renditions which appear in this study, strongly lay the blame upon Hitler and his Nazi Party for the brutality that befell the Jewish people. Their main concern, however, is the fervent, almost pathological, need of the authors — those who were in the camps and those who learned from them — to vent their inner conflicts between the longing to forget the expulsion, dispersion, oppression, and extermination of their brothers,⁸ and the contradictory compulsion, as a sacred task, to remind the other ethnic groups who were not part of that terrible inferno of the Holocaust, about the unimaginable crimes that actually transpired there, lest the World forget.⁹ However, the primary duty of such writers as Algranti, Ben-Ruby, Chalom, and Franco is not the verbalization of the "message" itself, but, rather, to use this message as a means of retaining their own identity through the remembrance of their fallen brothers:

I call you my brother
 Because you are:
 Of lineage,
 Of blood,
 Of faith....¹⁰

and as a commitment to Jewish survival, unity, and collective destiny:

Stay [my dead brother]
 I shall spend with you
 This chill night...
 But tomorrow,
 O tomorrow!
 A bright sun
 Will shine on your face,
 And hand in hand
 With a firm step
 We shall walk together,
 Not so? My brother,
 On the road
 Of human dignity
 And of liberty.¹¹

The desire and responsibility to be the voice of the annihilated community account for the authors' sense of alienation from that body and their feelings of personal guilt; it also explains the subsequent personal accusation as expressed by Algranti's thoughts on the anniversary of the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto:

Forthwith my trial begins.
 My prosecuting conscience questions persistently:
 "Well now, speak, answer. Why are you still alive,
 When six million others lost their lives?"¹²

In order to alleviate their "innocent" guilt, the living victims must submit to the catharsis of their suffering:

God charges me to feel remorse:
 "Go into mourning, do penance, lament,
 Grieve for this disaster, for this wickedness,
 For this Holocaust in the annals of Man."¹³

The intense pain occasioned by the perplexing thoughts "Of that terrifying Nazi-contrived agony," projects a panoramic tableau in order to cope with the writers' mental anguish, as exemplified in Ben-Ruby's "Listen My Brother":

And look still further.
 The machine guns that riddle,
 The bodies that fall,
 And the infernal
 Black angels of death
 Shove them
 Into the holes
 That they hurriedly cover
 With shovels of dirt.

The conflicting voices of hope and despair, of faith and doubt, as well as the final realization that no rational explanation has ever been given for this crime against Humanity (any more than had come forth after the transgressions against the Jews by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Romans, Spaniards, Russians, and other oppressors through the ages), has provoked the question as to the validity of the Covenant between the God of Sinai and Israel. While some have challenged the existence of God and have rejected Him for not fulfilling the divine promise, the information I have gathered so far from the Sephardic Jews approaches but does not quite embrace blasphemy:

Lord of the Universe, Lord of the Universe.
 If you were a man,
 I would bring you to judgement even in
 your Holy name
 But you are not a man and I blaspheme.¹⁴

For the Sephardim there is no question of God's greatness. Unlike Bialik, who takes God to task and confronts Him after the Kishinev massacre of 1903, in thought they seem to follow Abraham and Job. However, this does not preclude the intellectual sounding of God's role and of the excruciating "Why?":

When will it end — O Holy Father!
 The tragedy of Your people....

Like their Ashkenazic counterparts, the Sephardic poets further question God's intent in His choice of the Jewish people. As a cry of despair but with no malice toward others, they, as in the following Yiddish poem — Kadia Molodowsky's "God of Mercy" — ask their Creator to sanctify another land "...for the Jews can no longer afford the price exacted by the Law they were chosen to receive."¹⁵

O God of Mercy
 For the time being
 Choose another people
 We are tired of death, tired of corpses,
 We have no more prayers.
 for the time being
 Choose another people.¹⁶

Although they are totally unaware of Molodowsky's poem, the Sephardim express a similar sentiment:

It is time you take pity on him [the Jew]
 And praise other nations;
 You should laud their virtues
 No more aversions for the wretched Jews.¹⁷

Unlike Jacob Glatstein's statement, "If the God of history has indeed been involved in the Holocaust, then the Jews must sue for divorce from Him,"¹⁸ the poets of Sepharad accept the omnipotence of the Lord and recognize that "there is no 'life' without Him." The sacrifice made by those survivors who have endured humiliation, horror, and indescribable brutality, and by those who have perished in the slaughter-houses and gas chambers will not be in vain, for God has preserved a remnant; the resurrected Israel.¹⁹ The model of a proposed statue entitled "Death and Hope of Survival" commissioned by G. Vrouchos and Maurice Soriano, mayor of the Island, honors the martyrs from Rhodes; it is a portrayal of God's assurance of the continuity of the faithful — the remnant — as exemplified years ago in Bialik's "The City of Slaughter":

A story of a suckling child asleep
 A dead and cloven breast between its lips....²⁰

This study is an introduction to the literary expression of the children of Sepharad concerning a phase of the Holocaust that has been slighted by students of the World War II "Odessey of Horrors." The themes discussed represent a limited number of topics found in the poetry of the Spanish Jew. It is of the utmost importance to proceed immediately with further investigation in order to uncover in Sephardic oral and written materials more data to support the themes discussed above and to consider other themes such as the place of messianism and historical continuity in the interpretation of this, the worst massacre in the history of the world.

I
 GENEALOGICAL TREE
 by Marcel Chalom

My dear Jewish child! Live in
 glory!
 Your mother died in a crema-
 tory furnace,
 Your father lies in Poland
 In a mass grave,
 Your brother was still-born....
 But you, the last bastion,
 You are
 their
 RESURRECTION.

I
 ARBRE GÉNÉALOGIQUE...
 By Marcel Chalom

Mon petit Juif! Vis dans la
 gloire!
 Ta mère est morte dans un four
 crématoire,
 Ton père est en Pologne,
 Dans une fosse commune,
 ton frère fut un mort-né...
 Mais toi, dernier bastion
 Tu es
 leur
 RESURRECTION!



II
 LISTEN MY BROTHER
 by Itzhak Ben-Ruby

I beg you to listen
 My brother.
 That is the only favor
 I request from you
 On this chill night
 As cold as your heart.
 I call you my brother
 Because you are;
 Of lineage,
 Of blood,
 Of faith....
 There is something I must tell
 you,
 To you, and to no one else.
 And I want you to listen,
 My brother.
 I beseech your attention
 On this chill night
 As cold as your heart.

II
 ESCUTCHA MI HERMANO!
 by Itzhak Ben-Ruby

Te rogo ke me eskutches,
 mi hermano.
 Es el uniko favor
 ke reklamo de ti,
 en esta notche fria,
 komo tu korazon!
 Te yamo mi hermano,
 Porke lo sos;
 de raza,
 de sangre,
 de fey...
 I algo tengo a desirte
 a ti, no a otro;
 I kiero ke me eskutches,
 mi hermano,
 imploro tu atension,
 en esta notche fria
 komo tu korazon!

Give me your hand and look;
 Look with me
 At that which I am seeing:
 There, over there, this child
 Seized by the foot
 And hurled against the wall...
 Then to fall on the ground
 With a broken head.

Behold, behold,
 and do not be afraid....
 You are at peace,
 Here where you live
 Look, look,
 There, do you see those naked
 Maidens
 Shivering
 As leaves in the wind?

Demons,
 Spewed out from Hell,
 Thrust against the virgins
 Bloodhounds
 Who satiated their sexual
 Thirst
 On their martyred
 Bodies.

Do not be afraid
 And look further....
 There, over there, in the distance,
 Those flames
 That rise toward the heavens
 As a moaning of
 All humanity —
 A wounded
 Humanity —
 Human bodies
 Of your brothers
 Of lineage,
 Of blood,
 Of faith,
 That fed the fire.

Dame tu mano i mira,
 mira kon mi,
 lo ke yo esto viendo:
 Ayi, ayi este tchiko
 aferrado por los pies
 i lanzado kontra la pared...
 para kaer al suelo
 kon su kavesa rota!

Mira, mira,
 Por favor, no te espantes...
 tu estas trankilo
 aki onde bives.
 Mira, mira,
 ayi, ves estas hijas
 desnudas
 ke temblan
 komo ojas al vienta?

Demonios
 vomitados del infierno
 lanzaron kontra eyas
 perros-lovos,
 ke apasiguaron sus sed
 sexual
 sovre sus kuerpos
 martirisados!

No te espantes
 i mira mas...
 ayi, ayi, al fondo,
 estas flamas
 ke suven al sielo
 komo un gemido
 de la Humanidad entera,
 la Humanidad
 ferida...
 kuerpos humanos
 de tus hermanos
 de raza,
 de sangre,
 de fey
 alimentaron el fuego!

And look still further.
 The machine guns that riddle,
 The bodies that fall,
 And the infernal
 Black angels of death
 Shove them
 Into the holes
 That they hurriedly cover
 With shovels of dirt.

Look, look.
 There. The earth shakes?
 Does it move?
 Among the dead they
 Buried
 Victims that were still
 Alive...,
 To whom they did not accord
 The stroke of mercy
 That compassion demands
 Even for criminals.

And so they died,
 Two, five, six million
 Of your brothers
 Of lineage,
 Of blood,
 Of faith.

...And now, leave,
 Leave and take with you
 Your heart, cold
 As is this chill night.
 Your eyes, are they shedding
 tears?
 Alas. Crying was for nought.
 Leave, leave, my brother

Of lineage,
 Of blood,
 Of faith.
 You stay?
 Your hand, cold

I mira mas ayi
 las mitraliosas de krepitan,
 los kuerpos ke kayen,
 i los infernales
 angeles pretos de la muerte,
 arrojar estos kuerpos
 en foyas
 ke apresuradamente serran
 kon paletadas de tierra!

Mira, mira,
 Ayi la tierra tembla?
 se mueve?
 Entre los muertos
 enterraron
 viktimas ke todavia
 bivian...
 a las kualas no dieron
 el golpe de grasa,
 ke la piedad ordena
 mismo para los kriminales!

I ansi murieron
 Dos, sinko, sech millones,
 de tus hermanos
 de raza,
 de sangre,
 de fey!

...I agora, vate,
 vate i yeva kon ti
 tu frio korazon
 komo esta notche fria!
 Tienes lagrimas a tus ojos?
 Ma los yoros no sirvieron!
 Vate, vate, mi hermano,

de raza,
 de sangre,
 de fey!
 Te kedas?
 Tu mano fria

As is your heart,
Reaches for my hand
And holds it steadfastly?
Your eyes no longer cry,
But look at me and speak?

Stay.
I shall spend with you
This chill night....
But tomorrow!
O tomorrow!
A bright sun
Will shine on your face,
And hand in hand
With a firm step
We shall walk together,
— Not so? My brother, —
On the road
O human dignity
And of liberty.

III
EXILE

Anonymous

Enough, O Lord!
The agony of your children
Who, having been chosen,
Are the paradigm of pain.
Since the creation of the Universe,
The instant of Your blessing,
They appalled Humanity
With their eternal suffering.

Let it be enough — O Eternal
God! —
The sacrifice of Isaac
Who, being his beloved son,
Abraham presented as an
offering.

komo tu korazon
buchka mi mano
i la estretcha?
Tus ojos mas no yoran,
ma me miran i me avlan?

Kedate!
Vo pasar kon ti
esta noche fria...
Ma, maniana,
Oh! maniana!
Un sol resplandesiente
iluminara tus karas,
i mano a mano,
kon pie firme,
kaminaremos, mi hermano,
verdad?
en los kaminos
de la dignidad humana,
i de la Libertad!

III
DESTERRADO

Anónimo

Abastado sea, Dio,
La agonía de tus ojos
Por ser ojos escojidos
Son el ejemplo del sufrir.
Desde la creasion del mundo,
La ora de tu bendision,
Eyos estremesieron tota la
Umanidad
Con su eterno dolor.
Abastado sea, Eterno Dio,
El sacrificio de Ishak
Ke por ser el su amado
Avraam lo entrego en korban.

When will it end — O Eternal
Father! —
The tragedy of Your people,
Humiliated by the decrees
Of every Haman.
O Lord! Let it be enough.

Cuando si escapara, Eterno
padri,
La tragedia de tu puevlo,
Rebashados por los decretos
de todo Aman.
Adonay! Abastado ya mos sea.



IV
TO THE VICTIMS OF THE
WARSAW GHETTO

by Esther Morguez Algranti

The skies were covered with
dark clouds,
Nature in mourning cried
unceasingly,
Tens of thousands of youth
perished in the crematoria.
O, All-Powerful God! Tell me:
Wherefore Your choice to ex-
terminate them?
Lovely maidens reduced to ashes,
Precious daughters vanished
from Earth,
Blooming flowers untimely cut.
O, All-Powerful God! Tell me:
Wherefore were they massacred?

Infants with pleasant and grace-
ful smiles,
Innocent angels hurled from
balconies,
Why should your fate be so
agonizing?
O, All-Powerful God! Tell me
Wherefore were they massacred?

IV
A LAS VIKTIMAS DEL
GHETTO DE VARSOVI

by Esther Morguez Algranti

Los sielos de nuves pretas se
kuvieron.
La Natura en dolio yora sin
kedar.
Miles de mansevos en el fuego
murieron.
Dio Grande dime? Porke a eyos
kijites exterminar?
Jovinas ermozas en siniza
trokadas.
Ijas de valor del mundo despa-
residas.
Flores freskas muy presto aran-
kadas.
Dio grande dime? Porke sovre
eyas estas firidas?

Çikos minios a la sonriza dulce
i ermoza.
Anjelikos sin pekados de los
balkones roncados.
Porke ke vuestra suerte seya
tan dolorioza.
Dio grande dime? Porke eyos
fueron matados?

Talmide hahamim* who prayed
for us,
Men who eternally revered their
God,
Were cast into the fiery furnace.
O, All-Powerful God! Tell me:
Wherefore were they, too,
annihilated?
To you the aged was shown
no mercy,
Shot at, slain, cremated, such
was your hopeless fate.
— Merciless enemy who respected
not even the aged!
O, All-Powerful God! Tell me:
Wherefore their brutal death!
Heavenly Angels, forever pray
for these martyrs,
For their souls to rest among
the Just.
Innocent victims eternally etched
in our hearts,
For you we intone: "Yitgadal
veyitqadash šemey Raba."***

*Jewish scholars/sages ***"Exalted and hallowed be the name of God"

NOTES

1. David Hyatt, *The Sephardic Home News*, May/June 1981. col. 1-2, p.
- 2.
3. Isaac Jack Lévy, *Sephardic Ballads and Songs in the United States* (Iowa City: n.p., 1959), pp. 232-234.
4. The four poems which were originally located by Prof. David F. Altabé at the Sephardic Reference Room of Yeshiva University Library had been written in the back of a book while the author was hidden from the Nazis by friendly Greek natives. The poems were titled and dated as follows:
 - a. "The First cry in Anguish"
Olympiada — March 17, 1943 (Wednesday)
10 Veadar 5703

Talmide Hahamim ke por nozo-
tros rogavan.
A los ornos ardientes fueron
eçados.
Ombres ke la Providensya siempre
adoravan.
Dio grande dime? Porke ke eyos
tambien seyan kamados?
Viejos i viejas, por vozotros
non uvo piyadad.
Fuziyados, matados, kemados,
tala fue vuestra triste suerte.
Enemigo salvaje ke non respekto
mezmo la edad.
Dio grande dime? Porke a eyos
esta krueel muerte?
Anjelos de los sielos, por estos
heroes siempre azed orasion.
Porke sus almas repozen en
Olam Aba.
Viktimas inosemtes siempre
gravadas en nuestro korason.
Por vozotros dizimos: Yitgadal
ve Yitqadaş šeme raba.

Dedicated to the Jews of Serres, Drama, Cavalla, Zante,
Gumulgina and Dedeagatch.

- b. "The Second Cry in Anguish"
Varvara — March 30, 1943 (Tuesday)
23 Veadar 5703
Dedicated to the Jews of Salonica.
- c. "The Third Cry in Anguish"
Athens — May 16, 1943 (Sunday)
11 Yyar 5703
Dedicated to my good and faithful friend Daryo Levy.
- d. "After the Catastrophe"
Salonica — August 8, 1945 (Wednesday)
29 Av 5705
No dedication.

The poems seem to be signed by a certain Yehuda Hayim Altcheck. The note in French tells of his escape and briefly comments on the rumors of the fate of his brethren. Professor Altabé informs me in his letter of January 4, 1982 that he has learned from members of the Salonica community of Brooklyn, New York that the true author was Perahia. Altabé's translations of the four poems into English appeared in the *Sephardic Brother*, 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1978), 4-6.

5. Marcel Chalom, *Poèmes Juifs* (Istanbul: Becid Basimevi, 1949), p. 5.

6. Hizkia M. Franco, *Les Martyrs Juifs de Rhodes et de Cos* (Elizabethville, n.p., 1952).

7. Itzhak Ben-Ruby is also a renowned Israeli radio commentator for the station "Kol Israel," a prolific humorist on the life of the immigrants and on historical events, *aqui vos avla Chimon Chimon*, and a serious author having to his credit several novels and plays, some of which deal with the Holocaust — the novels *Fuego*, *Sangre y Amor* and *El sekreto del mudo*, and a three act play, *Locos con seriedad*.

8. The strong desire to obliterate from one's mind an important yet horrifying personal experience is vividly expressed in the following excerpts of the poem "Don't Show Me" by Ruth Beker, a Viennese victim of the Holocaust now living in Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel:

Don't
Don't show me any more pictures.
I don't want to know
about children in horse carts
about men in cattle carts
about women being taken away
about mass goodbyes, unearthly cries.

* * *

No. My grandparents were not murdered.

No. My parents were not slaves.
No. My arm has no number.

* * *

Don't show me anymore.
Don't tell me anymore.
Don't.

See: Howard Schwartz and Anthony Rudolf, eds., *Voices Within the Ark* (New York: Avon Books, 1980), pp. 772-773.

9. See: Yehuda Bauer's chapter "Against Mystification: The Holocaust as a Historical Phenomenon," in *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 30-49.

10. Izhak Ben-Ruby. *El Tiempo*, April 4, 1962, cols. 1-4, p. 3. The Judeo-Spanish title is "Escutcha mi Hermano!" It was written to commemorate 96 of the Jewish population of Salonica, victims of World War II.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Esther Morguez Algranti, "My Thoughts on the Warsaw Ghetto," in *Elylul. Poesias, 1975* (Istanbul: Baski Baykar, 1975), n. page.

13. Algranti, *Ibid.*

14. Yehuda Hayim Altcheck, "El tercer grito" ("The Third Cry"). See note 4.

15. Edward Alexander. *The Resonance of Dust: Essays on Holocaust Literature and Jewish Fate* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979), p. 205. Molodowsky's poem was translated by Irving Howe.

16. Alexander, *Ibid.*

17. The writer discovered this stanza of an anonymous poem "Korban" ("Sacrifice") in Jerusalem in 1968.

18. Alexander, *Ibid.*

19. For the self-immolation of a hero and his readiness to die for others to live see Hanna Senesch's poem "Blessed is the Match," in Marie Syrkin. *Blessed is the Match: The Story of Jewish Resistance* (London: Victor Gollanez Ltd., 1948), title page.

20. Chaim Nachman Bialik. *Selected Poems*. English translation by Maurice Samuel (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), p. 110.

SEPHARDIM AND NEO-SEPHARDIM IN LATIN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Edna Aizenberg

In discussing Sephardim and neo-Sephardim in Latin American literature, there are three topics that I would like to touch upon. The first is what I call the Sephardic reality of Latin-American literature; the second is what I term the Sephardic mythology of that literature; and the third is the not uncontroversial issue of neo-Sephardism. All three are important components of the Sephardic presence in the belles-lettres of Spanish-speaking America, and together they give that presence a unique dimension, one which, I believe, makes it unlike the Sephardic presence in the literature of any other area.

Let me begin, then, by examining the Sephardic reality in the literature of Spanish America. I use the phrase "Sephardic reality" to refer to the fact that since colonial times and down to our own days there have been Sephardim creating literature *in* Spanish-America, *in* Spanish. The earliest Jewish settlers and thus the earliest Jewish writers in the region *were* Sephardim; in the period between discovery and independence, members of the Marrano diaspora who emigrated to Spain's New World dependencies; then, immediately after independence, Sephardim of Curaçaoan background who were among the founders of modern Latin-American Jewry. Their numbers were small — because the Jewish communities they lived in were small; and, for reasons ranging from newness in the environment to lack of talent, their production was not necessarily of the first order. But they were there, present, part of the literary life of Latin America.

In sixteenth-century Mexico we have the figure of Luis de Carvajal, a Spanish-born Crypto-Jew who was martyred by the Inquisition. Carvajal, the author of prayers, religious poetry, a memoir and other works, was probably the earliest of the Sephardic writers.¹ He was followed, three centuries later, when the independent South American republics abolished the Inquisition and made it possible for Jews to

live openly in the region, by such authors as Abraham Z. López-Penha in Colombia and Eliás David Curiel in Venezuela. Both were poets of Sephardic-Curaçaoan descent who were quite likely the first aboveboard Jews to make a contribution to Hispánico-American letters.² In their wake came other writers of Judeo-Hispanic stock. For example, in the Dominican Republic, another López-Penha with roots in Curaçao, Haim Horacio López-Penha, a novelist active in the 1930's and '40's;³ and, again in Venezuela, Isaac Chocrón. Chocrón, a product of the most recent Sephardic wave of immigration to Latin America — the North African and Middle Eastern one — is a leading contemporary Latin-American dramatist and the most prominent of the writers I have mentioned, having achieved considerable stature both in his country and abroad.⁴

Like all realities, the Sephardic literary reality in Latin America is multifaceted and contradictory. It includes a Carvajal, who makes his beleaguered Jewish faith the very core of his writing, and a Curiel, whose poems in the then-fashionable *modernista* style deal largely with the pleasures of the flesh and the bottle as an escape from the angst of provincial life. It also includes a Haim Horacio López-Penha, a free thinking Mason coming out of the small, inter-married Dominican Sephardic community, who presents an impassioned defense of Jews and Judaism in his 1936 novel, *Senda de revelación* ['Path of Revelation'], as well as a Chocrón, an author with a much stronger Sephardic background, who paints a scathing portrait of Sephardic family life in his play, *Animales feroces* ('Ferocious Animals'), which was presented in 1963.⁶

The writings of Sephardim in Latin America are as varied as the authors' divergent inclinations, life experiences, and historical comments. There is even variation within the same writer, with Chocrón, for instance, taking a more positive attitude towards his Sephardic inheritance in the 1975 epistolary novel *Rómpase en caso de incendio* ['Break in case of fire'].⁷ The book chronicles the journey of self-discovery of a Venezuelan Sephardi named Daniel Benabel, a journey which takes him back to the Sephardic sources — Spain and North Africa. In the work, Chocrón touches on an aspect of Sephardic reality in Latin America which is particularly interesting because it is peculiar to the region: the phenomenon called *resefardización*, that is, the renewed integration of Sephardim into a wider Hispanic context.⁸

One would expect Jews marked by Hispanic culture and character (to use Mair José Benardete's phrase⁹) to adapt easily to an Iber-

ian setting — despite religious and other differences; to find that their Jewish culture and their general culture can complement each other and even mesh together. In the case of Chocrón, this certainly seems to be true. Speaking through his protagonist, Benabel, Chocrón indicates that he considers his Sephardic identity to be part of the same Spanish-Moorish complex as his Venezuelan identity. "You forget that I am a Sephardic Jew," Benabel writes to an American friend, "so African, so Spanish and so Venezuelan that *los yiddish de Brooklyn* [the Ashkenazim, in other words] would consider me a heretic" (pp. 229-30).¹⁰ Chocrón's predecessors, the writers of Curaçaoan origin, also found their at-homeness in Latin American culture facilitated by their Sephardism. Abraham Z. López-Penha was born in Curaçao, and only settled in Barranquilla, Colombia as an adult. Yet the fact that like most of the Sephardim on the Dutch island he was fluent in Spanish, and familiar with the Hispanic ethos, undoubtedly smoothed the way for his rapid entry into the literary circles of *fin de siècle* South America.¹¹ As for the Dominican Haim Horacio López-Penha and the Venezuelan Curiel, they were members of communities whose Sephardism had been such an effective tool of assimilation that their very survival as Jews was threatened. For López-Penha, Judaism is a meritorious ancestral heritage which blends in very well with his Dominican identity; while Curiel's alienation is not that of a Jew from his Hispano-Catholic surroundings, but that of an artist from an uncomprehending milieu.

So, despite their diversity, the Sephardic authors in Latin America share the benefits of a real Hispanic patrimony on which to draw in the process of acculturation to Spanish America. But what about the Ashkenazim, the Jews of non-Hispanic extraction? Ashkenazi Jews and Ashkenazi authors far outnumber their Sephardic brethren in the region. Though the first Jewish immigrants to Latin America were, as I noted before, Sephardim, by the beginning of this century the influx of Russian and Eastern European Jews, particularly to Argentina, not only increased the numbers, but also changed the face of Latin-American Jewry. Today, probably 80-85 of the some 550,000 Jews living south of the border are Ashkenazim.¹² For them, feeling at home in Latin America did not come painlessly or naturally. They arrived in the New World speaking Yiddish, with traditions and an outlook developed in a Germano-Slavic milieu. There was nothing in their experience to connect them to the unfamiliar Iberian *ambiente*. Or perhaps there was? Couldn't the *rusos*, as the Russian and Polish Ashkenazim were popularly called, also use the Sephardic

heritage to link Judaism and Hispanism? Couldn't they create a kind of Sephardic mythology for themselves — and a myth *is* a story of origins which gives meaning to the present — in which they too, were cast as sons of Sepharad, part of an old Hispanic heritage which allowed them to blend easily into the new one? Indeed they could. And that is exactly what some of the outstanding first-generation Ashkenazic intellectuals in Latin America did. The most notable example was Alberto Gerchunoff, a Russian-born writer who emigrated to the agricultural colonies founded by the Baron de Hirsch at the turn of the century on the Argentine pampa-plains. In 1910, Gerchunoff published *Los gauchos judíos* [The Jewish Cowboys].¹³ The book is a collection of stories which tell of the trials and tribulations of the Jewish greenhorns as they try to adapt to the ways of the pampa and its archetypal inhabitant, the gaucho (hence the title). Despite the strangeness of the surroundings — Gerchunoff makes clear in the work — the newcomers *do* have a legacy which anchors them in Argentine soil: it is the legacy, to translate the words of the book, of “those noble, truly Hispanic eras when in the towns of Spain, Jews banded together in learned brotherhoods of sages and poets” (pg.98).¹⁴ Gerchunoff emphasizes this point again and again. He recalls the love the Jews had for Spain, for its excellent soil and climate; he quotes the well-known verses of the Sephardic exiles: “Hemos perdido a Sión,/hemos perdido a Toledo./ No queda consolación”;¹⁵ and — significantly — he speaks of “the time when our brethren lived peacefully under the protection of the kings of Castille” (p.100),¹⁶ as if to say to the people and government of Argentina: remember, Jews led a peaceful existence in a Hispanic setting while we were protected. We adapted, prospered and enriched our Hispanic homeland. The same can happen here. The thrust of Gerchunoff's Sephardic mythology is, then, two-directional: to give the Ashkenazic immigrants a sense of belonging, but, just as important, to convince their non-Jewish neighbors that they indeed belonged.

His efforts, which could not, of course, singlehandedly bridge the real gap between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and between Eastern European Jews and Hispanic Christians, nonetheless had resonance among both Jews and non-Jews. For instance, the Argentine critic, Francisco Luis Bernárdez, writing of Gerchunoff, picks up on his mythology and notes: “Being Jewish, he had much of the Spaniard in him.”¹⁷ Carlos M. Grunberg, an Ashkenazi intellectual of Gerchunoff's generation, sounds much the same theme in a sonnet dedicated to his co-author and friend:

We are, Alberto, the Hispanic section
Of the prophets and rabbis...
...The Castilian squaring
Of the Jewish circle, sons of Sinai
To put it plainly, Sephardic Torah scrolls.
Psalms and lamentations in the Toledan style.
You have been our high priest...¹⁸

The poem, which celebrates Gerchunoff's proposition that Jewish life and creativity in Latin America are but a continuation of the Jewish experience “in the Toledan” or Sephardic style — Toledo having been the major city of Jewish Spain — displays Grunberg's own brand of Sephardism: the references to the Judeo-Hispanic heritage, but even more, the Sephardized, medievalized style.) And the Middle Ages is the period most associated with Jewish life in Spain). The poem abounds in words like *nabíes*, *rabíes*, *ladino*, *almenar*, *taled* (‘prophets, rabbis, Judeo-Spanish, candelabrum, prayer shawl’), all of old Spanish or Judeo-Hispanic origin. Grunberg's most famous work, the poetic collection *Mester de judería*, which dates from 1940, is so full of such vocabulary that Grunberg includes a glossary in the back.¹⁹ The very name of the anthology, *Mester de judería*, is likewise a conscious throwback to the medieval Spanish tradition: to the two poetic modes, the *mester de juglaría*, the style of the minstrels, and the *mester de clerecía*, the style of the learned poets — some of the poems in the book do in fact evoke the *clerecía* form with its monorhymed quatrains — and to the *juderías*, the Jewish quarters of pre-Expulsion Spain.²⁰

Grunberg and Gerchunoff, then, saw the Sephardic door as the most appropriate way to enter Latin-American culture.²¹ Does that make them neo-Sephardim? Mair Jose Benardete, to whom I made reference, claims to have invented this neologism and that would be entirely in character since he and others, like Henry Besso, who shared his views, saw Latin America as a sort of Promised Land for Judeo-Spanish culture.²² There, not only would Sephardim be re-Sephardized, but Ashkenazim would be neo-Sephardized, losing their Yiddish cultural baggage and taking on the quality of Hispanic Jews. Thus, by Benardete's definition, Gerchunoff and Grunberg are without a doubt neo-Sephardim, all the more because of their deliberate and enthusiastic adoption of the Sephardic heritage as an acculturative tool. But are all non-Sephardic Jewish intellectuals in Latin America neo-Sephardim? True, they write in Spanish, and true, they reflect a Judeo-Hispanic symbiosis in their works, but most don't use

the Sephardic entranceway to Latin-American culture and don't feel that they are keepers of a Sephardic flame or continuers of an interrupted Sephardic tradition. (One reason for this is that Gerchunoff's Judeo-Spanish mythology was largely a first-generation, immigrant, desire-to-belong phenomenon. Later, native-born Ashkenazic writers — whatever their doubts about their acceptance in the milieu — speak as Latin Americans, and thus have no need to look for other Hispanic roots.) If that is so, can they be considered neo-Sephardim?

The whole notion of neo-Sephardism has in fact been questioned by Sephardim as well as Ashkenazim. Moshe Attias, an Israeli educator and participant in the First Symposium on Sephardic studies held in Madrid in 1964, states flatly: "You cannot say that there is neo-Sephardism. Sephardism is a historic idea, and we cannot create new Sephardim."²³ Benardete reports enormous resistance to the term on the part of Spanish-speaking Ashkenazic Jews (*Actas*, p.410). León Pérez, whose study on Sephardism in Latin America I have already cited, attempts to explain such opposition. He notes that for Jews a sense of identity is closely tied up with the past, with the cultural types — Ashkenazim, Sephardim — forged in the course of Jewish history. Therefore, says Pérez, Jews reject what they see as a usurpation of consecrated names or notions. Recognizing that, he does not slap a fixed, completed label — "neo-Sephardim" — on the Ashkenazim of Latin America, but rather proposes a process, which he calls *sefardización secundaria* ("El area," p. 144). This secondary Sephardization is not a two-way dialogue between Ashkenazim and the Spanish-America matrix society, but a three-way conversation among Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Latin-American culture. Out of this threefold exchange, Pérez argues, will merge a new "Sephardic cultural type," the neo-Sephardi, if you will (p. 144). For Pérez, in other words, neo-Sephardim are *not* the Spanish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews; they are the future Jewish inhabitants and creators of Iberian America, who may be of any single or mixed Jewish stock, but whose continuous and living intercourse with Hispanic civilization will, as time goes on, result in a neo-Sephardic ethos and a neo-Sephardic literature.

While it may be convenient or flattering to speak of all Jewish writers in Latin America as neo-Sephardim, I personally believe that Pérez's model may be more useful in thinking about the problem. As of now, even if all Latin-American Jewish writers are not neo-Sephardim, both Ashkenazim and Sephardim can take pride in the Sephardic reality in South American letters; in the Sephardic mythology of Latin-American literature; and in the possibility for the emer-

gence of a truly neo-Sephardic culture in the area — though there I would like to add a caveat: providing that the internal and external forces which threaten Jewish life in Latin America allow such a neo-Sephardic culture to develop.

NOTES

1. On Carvajal's life and works, see Martin A. Cohen, *The Martyr* (Philadelphia: 1973), and Seymour B. Liebman, *The Enlightened* (University of Miami Press, 1967).

2. Abraham Z. López-Penha is discussed in Itic Croitoru Rotbaum, *De sefarad al neosefardismo*, Vol. 1 (Bogotá: Editorial Kelly, 1967), 174-6; for Curiel's writings, consult Elías David Curiel, *Obras completas* (Caracas: n.p., 1974) and Edna Aizenberg: "Elías David Curiel: influencias y temas," *Revista nacional de cultura* (Caracas), 32, (Nov.-Dec., 1971), 94-103.

3. Haim Horacio López-Penha and the Dominican Sephardic community are studied in Enrique Ucko, "La fusión de los sefardis [sic] con los dominicanos," *Cuadernos dominicanos de cultura*, 2 (Nov. 1944) 55-82.

4. Information on Chocrón and his writings can be found in *Teatro* (Caracas: Ediciones El Nuevo Grupo, 1977), pp. 9-11; 15-67, and *Echad: An Anthology of Latin-American Jewish Writing*, ed., Roberta Kalechofsky (Marblehead, Mass.: 1980), pp. 216-28.

5. Haim Horacio López-Penha, *Senda de revelación* (Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial Listin Diario, n.d.) The novel, which histories of Dominican Literature date from 1936, is dedicated to the memory of two other López-Penhas, the Colombo-Curaçaoan writer, Abraham Z., and David, a Dominican-born intellectual and philanthropist. Set in Germany (where López-Penha studied), *Senda de revelación* tells of the love between Gretchen, a German girl of Jewish descent, and Enrique, a Dominican student. The date of the work and its setting gives the Judaic aspect particular significance.

6. Isaac Chocrón, *Animales feroces in Teatro* (Caracas: Universidad central de Venezuela, 1968), pp. 203-406.

7. Isaac Chocrón, *Rómpase en caso de incendio* (Caracas: Monte Ávila, 1975). Sections of the book are translated into English in Kalechofsky, pp. 216-227. During a visit to Caracas in 1979, I interviewed Chocrón. He explained that biographical elements appear both in *Animales feroces* and *Rómpase en caso de incendio* and that his Jewish inheritance undoubtedly "functions" in his works.

8. The term *resefardización* is used by the Argentine scholar León Pérez in his paper "El area de sefardización secundaria: América Latina," which appears in *Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios sefardies* (Madrid: 1970), pp. 141-48.

9. Mair José Benardete, *Hispanic Culture and Character of the Sephardic Jews* (New York: 1953).

10. "Olvidas que soy judío sefardita: tan africano, tan español y tan venezolano que los yiddish de Brooklyn me considerarían hereje."

11. Frances P. Karner in *The Sephardics of Curaçao* (Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Co., 1969) discusses the familiarity with the Hispanic language and culture of the Curaçaoan Sephardim, p. 28.

12. Estimates of the Jewish population in Latin American and its composition can be found in Judith Laikin Elkin, *Jews of the Latin American Republics* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980), particularly pp. 72, 77, 191 ff.

13. I have used the 1964 edition of *Los gauchos judíos* published in Buenos Aires by the Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires. Selections in English from the book appear in Kalechofsky, pp. 30-35.

14. "...las épocas castizas en que los hebreos formaban, en las villas españolas, doctas corporaciones de sabios y poetas."

15. "We have lost Zion,/We have lost Toledo./There is no consolation."

16. "...el tiempo en que nuestros hermanos vivían tranquilos al amparo de los reyes de Castilla."

17. Cited in Elkin: "Por ser judío, tenía mucho de española [sic]," p. 62.

18. Somos, Alberto, la sección hispana de los nabíes y de los rabíes...

...la cuadradura castellana del círculo judío, sinaíes en buen romance, toras sefardíes, salmos y trenos a la toledana.

Tu has sido nuestro sumo sacerdote.

The complete poem "A Alberto Gerchunoff," is found in Manuel Kantor, *Alberto Gerchunoff* (Buenos Aires: Ejecutivo Latino Americano del Congreso Judío Mundial, 1969), p. 17.

19. Carlos M. Grunberg, *Mester de judería* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Argirópolis, 1940).

20. Santob de Carrión, the major Spanish-language Jewish poet of medieval Spain, wrote his *Proverbios Moraels* ('Moral Proverbs') in the *clerecía* form. Perhaps Grunberg also had him in mind when he wrote.

21. I would like to make passing reference to a very famous Latin-American writer who has travelled precisely in the opposite direction: that is, as a non-Jewish Argentine he has used the Sephardic door to enter Jewish culture. The writer is Borges, whose interest in Judaism is well known and who has alleged that he has Jewish ancestry through his maternal forebears, the Acevedos, supposedly Portuguese Marranos.

22. See Benardete's comments on *neosefardismo* in *Actas del Primer Simposio de Estudios sefardíes*, p. 410; also Henry Besso's presentation in the same volume, "Decadencia del judeo-español. Perspectivas para el futuro," p. 259.

23. "No se puede decir que hay 'neo-sefardismo': el sefardismo es una idea histórica y no podemos hacer sefardim nuevos," *Actas*, p. 411.

Kina de Tesha beAv —
5742

por David Fintz y Altabé

Ay koza triste en ser Sefaradi,
i pensar en sivdades ke deshi,
las glorias del pasado ke perdi,
i la soledad en ke me kayi.

Yerushalayim en la antigüedad,
onde viviyamos kon santidad
i gozo, algriya i temeridad,
se maos fue kitada en Tesha
beAv.

Dos vezes esta kayida sufri,
prirnero a manos de los
Babelim,
i mas tadre kuando los
Edomim
izieron a los gidys esparsir.

A Espanya me fuyi para morar:
al prinsipyo desharon repozar;
tuve en Granada vida de alavar,
i en Toledo, templos vide
fraguar.

Qinah (Lament) for the
9th of Ab 5742

by David Fintz Altabé

There is something sad in
being Sephardi
In thinking of the cities I
abandoned,
The loneliness into which I've
fallen,
The glory of the past that is
lost to me.

Jerusalem in antiquity,
Where we lived by the Holy
Law
In joy, and gladness, and awe,
On the 9th of Ab was taken
from me.

Twice, I suffered this defeat,
First, at the hands of the
Babylonians,
And later when the Romans
Scattered the Jews overseas.

I fled to Spain to reside;
At first, they left me alone;
In Granada I had a palatial
home
And in Toledo, I saw temples
rise.

Segundo Yerushalayim era ayi
asta ke nuevo Haman en
Purim
mos dio noventa diyas a partir;
en Tesha beAv eramos de ir.

Kamino de galut otra vez tomi,
koryendo de aya, eskond-
yendome aki,
el rey turko me invito a Salonik,
a Stambol, a Izmir, a Chanakali.

Otra vez kon yugo me meti a
sembrar
nuevos rayises en tierra de pas,
fundandome kazas y kehilas
i famiyas, butikas i meldar.

Ma era atrazado el payiz
Ozmanli,
i kuando de la Amerika senti,
ya no keriya mas kedar ansi
i de padre i madre me despedi.

Esperando kon sudar i lazdrar
ke a ser bien riko iva a yegar,
ke a mis ijos podriya edukar
i no tener ke penar i pensar.

En Salonik entraron los nazis.
Guay, los gidynos ke viviyan
ayi!

There, it was like a second
Jerusalem
Until a new Haman on Purim
decreed
That we had ninety days in
which to leave.
Till the 9th of Ab... we had
to leave then.

Once again, the path of exile
I took,
Running there, hiding here
Until the Turkish king invited
me
To Salonica, to Izmir, to Is-
tambul.

Once again, with rigor I under-
took
To plant new roots in a land
of peace,
Founding homes and
communities,
Families, stores, and schools.

But it was backward, the Otto-
man Empire,
And when word of America
reached my ears,
I no longer wished to remain
thus year after year,
And so, to father and mother
I bid good-bye,

Hoping that with toil and sweat
I'd eventually accumulate riches
And be able to educate my
children
And no longer have to struggle
and fret.

The Nazis entered into Salonica.
Oh, pity the Jews who had
remained!

Guay, los proves ochenta i
sinko mil
ke mos fueron kemados en
Auschvitz!
Pariantes de madre no se ven
mas,
i los de mi padre... onde
estaran?
En Argentina, Cuba, Stambol,
Bat Yam,
Manchester, California i Florida.

En todas partes del mundo vivi,
i pedasos de mi alma abandoni,
i ansina vengo asolado a dezir
ke ay koza triste en ser
Sefaradi.

* * *

Pity the eighty-five thousand
slain,
Cremated in Auschwitz and
Treblinka!

My mother's relatives can no
longer be seen,
And my father's... where can
they be?
In Argentina, Cuba, Istanbul,
Bat Yam,
Manchester, California, and
Florida.

All parts of the world have
been home to me;
In all, pieces of my heart
remain,
And thus, I come alone to
exclaim,
There's something sad in being
Sephardi.

HEPTASILABOS

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De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Ya que tú me has mirado
cual David arrobado
he bailado y cantado
mis versos te diré.

De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Ojos de capulí
mirada de alhelí
en mis versos birli
siempre te dejaré.

De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Risa que desvanece
aletea así en florece
ave herida parece
rosa garrida haré.

De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Ni Salomón cantara
a otra que te llegara
amor que me alumbrara
siempre dentro traeré.

Tomás L. Ryan de Heredia is an attorney admitted to practice in New York and in Mexico.

De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Gracias doy al gran Dio
que bella te formó
para mí te apartó
bendiciéndole iré.

De ojos me enamoré
dos almendros sembré.

Al alba centinela
 vislumbra una gacela
 de lejos línea fina
 apenas se adivina
 mas luego si se aleja
 a la vista huella deja
 un sueño perdurable
 en el alma imborrable.

Si dices que me quieres
 ¿mas por dónde andarás?
 dices que me amas tú
 mas ya no te me das
 si dices que me quieres
 mas así a mí me tratas
 dices que me amas tú
 mas tú ya me maltratas
 si dices que me quieres
 mas cuán presto me dejas
 dices que me amas tú
 mas tú ya te me alejas
 si dices que me quieres
 mas sin mí bien la pasas
 dices que me amas tú
 mas tú ya te me vas
 si dices que me quieres
 mas ya no te me entregas
 dices que me amas tú
 ¿mas no es querer que das!

...y palidieron los ángeles

En celestes regiones
querubim ardedores
tronos dominaciones
ansí podestadores
virtudes en su coro
principados del oro
los grandes cuatro arcángeles
también todos los ángeles
tu voz tener desearen
para cantar mejor
en los coros que alzaren
las glorias del Señor.

