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RACHEL DALVEN

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The
Sephardic Scholar
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The Sephardic Scholar is a Journal devoted exclusively to shedding light on the art, music, literature, language, history, religious customs and folklore of the Sephardim.

The question arises: how broadly has the term Sephardim been interpreted in the articles which appear in The Sephardic Scholar? As members of the American Society of Sephardic Scholars apply the term Sephardim, it embraces all non-Yiddish speaking peoples whose pronunciation of Hebrew is Sephardic, whose group languages may vary widely (Judeo-Greek, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Italian, Judeo-Persian, etc.), but whose liturgy and religious customs follow, in the main, the tradition of the Sephardim, even though they may not be or ever have been directly related by ancestry to the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, beside the scholarly articles representing aspects of the culture of the Spanish-speaking Jews of the Iberian Peninsula, we were fortunate to receive articles written by scholars innately and deeply immersed in studies representing the cultural identity of Sephardic communities in Greece, Libya, Syria, Turkey.

It is the sincere hope of the American Society of Sephardic Studies that some phase of the culture of other Sephardic communities scattered throughout the Diaspora, even as far as Cochin, India, will be represented in the pages of future issues of The Sephardic Scholar. Deeper knowledge and awareness of the Sephardic cultural experience in all parts of the world, will serve not only to bring us close to each other as Sephardim, but unite us more effectively as Jews.

Rachel Dalven
Editor-in-Chief
THE NAMES OF THE JANNINA JEWS

by Rachel Dalven

Probably nothing in diaspora history offers a more fascinating source of information on the origin, occupation, physical characteristics and character traits of the Jew than his given name, his surname and the nickname he is given by his coreligionists. Most varied and probably most interesting of all are the nicknames, which makes it impossible to give more than a sampling of these in any community.

Given Names

The original Greek-speaking Jews of Jannina, like the Sephardim, and unlike the Ashkenazim, name their children after living ancestors as well as those deceased. As one of my informants originating from Jannina explained, the reason for this practice is to make certain that the names of their parents and grandparents will be perpetuated. Inasmuch as longevity was not uncommon in Jannina, it was possible for a son and daughter to have passed the age when they would or could have children after the death of their parents. Thus they would no longer have the opportunity to perpetuate the names of their parents.1

As is customary among orthodox Jews everywhere, the order of naming offspring generally follows the same pattern for both the girl and boy. The first born son is named after his paternal grandfather, the second son becomes the namesake of his maternal grandfather. The next son born is named after the paternal uncle, the one following him is named after the maternal uncle. The same order is followed for girls favoring the father’s mother for the naming of the first born daughter.

However, in some instances, Hebrew given names are not necessarily those of relatives living or deceased. As Moisis points out, a son born during the month of Nisan (March-April), the month of miracles, is often named Nissim which is the plural of nes meaning

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miracle. If he is born during Purim, he is generally given the name Mordechai; if a girl is born during this holiday, she is named Esther. The name Menachem (one who consoles) is often given to a son born during the first nine days of the Hebrew month of Av (July-August) to commemorate the period of mourning for the second destruction of the Temple of Solomon. During that period the passage read in the synagogue is from the prophet Isaiah (chapter 40): “Nahamou, nahamou ami” meaning “comfort ye, comfort ye my people.” When the birth of a son follows another happy event which had occurred in the family, he may be given the name Simantov, meaning the lucky one. If it is a girl she is called Matzelev (lucky one).

In some cases where a son has survived after a serious illness, the name which had been given to him at the circumcision ceremony is changed to Hayyim (Life) or Raphael (one who has been cured by God). This is done by offering a special prayer before ten people to break the original verdict of the divine tribunal to end the life of the man. The man who has recovered is now considered to be another man.

In cases where a married woman who has been barren for years, finally gives birth to a son, the newborn baby is named Rachamim (also shortened in Jannina to Mini), meaning a son born of God’s compassion. If it happens that a woman gives birth to a son on Lag Be’Omer (falling between May eleventh to June eighth), after many years of marriage, she “vows” to name her son Simeon, after Simeon ben Yohai, famous halakhist of the second century, “a man in whose favor miracles often were wrought.”4

But whether the male given names perpetuate the names of forbears deceased or living, or they celebrate events or holidays, it is the tradition of all Jannina Jews to give their sons Hebrew names either biblical or historical. This is so, because the son is named officially at the ceremony of circumcision. Another reason is that the parents keep in mind that one day their sons will be called to the teva (the reader’s desk) for Torah reading.

I found only three Greek male names listed in Matsa’s compilation of Jannina names. Zoia, meaning Hayyim (Life), Rizos, derived from the Greek verb rizéō (to become rooted or fixed), and Antzelos (Anghelos) reminding us of the Hebrew Malach. What is unusual about these Greek names is that when these men were called to read the Sefer, they were addressed by their Greek names.

The name Shemo, common in the province of Epirus and Corfu as far back as 1585, has an Italian ending, like the name Beso. It is interesting to note that the Jannina rabbis of old did not associate this name with Shemuel.6

The given name of a man I knew in Jannina was Sabbetai, but he was always addressed as Hayirli, a Turkish word meaning good luck. Hayirli was his pet name because he was an only son. In time, however, he came to be identified as Hayirli rather than by the Hebrew name given to him at birth.

What is of particular interest about the male Hebrew names in Jannina, is that they are often Hellenized to fit the spoken idiom. Sometimes these Hellenized names differ so radically from the original Hebrew name that it is difficult to trace them to their source. It is possible that some of the differences found in the spelling and pronunciation of the Hellenized names may have been influenced by the variations commonly heard in the northern speech of Epirus. For example, Aarón becomes Arón, Aronákos, Arós, Harós, Nákias. Avraám is transformed to Avrám, Avramákos, Avrámís, Avramis, Avramikos, Avramoulä, Avramoulas, or the diminutives of this name: Mouls, Moulias, Mikos, Vamos, Macht, the last of which is the shortened form of Avramáth, which is the way Avramákis is pronounced in Jannina.7 The endings -akis, -atch, -oüs and -ouës are added as terms of endearment.

Behor, a Hebrew title given to indicate a first born son, is sometimes adopted as a given name and becomes Behoúaki, Hòr, Behoratchouli. The name Behorópoulos, with the final Greek ending poulos, the son of, was adopted in Jannina as a surname. In those cases where the title Behor is kept ‘hidden’ the boy is known by the name given to him at the circumcision ceremony. However, it must be noted that there is a special responsibility that all Behorim must assume. On the day before Passover, all first born sons are obliged to fast in commemoration of the day in the time of Pharaoh when the Egyptian first born sons were killed while the Jewish first born sons (Behorim) were spared.8

In Jannina David becomes Dav’djon, Djon, Davis, Davos, Davopoulos, Davoulas, Tchon, Tchónias. Gavrél also becomes Gavril, Gavrêl and Gavrilides, which is adopted as a surname, although the Greek ending idis means the son of Gavrêl.

My mother always pronounced my father’s name which was Israel, as Yisrêl or Yisrêl; however, in Jannina Israel is also known as Yisraël, Telkos and Têlia. My mother addressed her older brother as Jeoudá. When she spoke of him to others it was Jeoudaí, but in Jannina, Jeouda was also known as Jeoudakis, Jeoudoulis, Jioudás, Jioulis, Gicoulis, Gicoulas. Yesoula, unknown to the Ashkenazim, and
Married women were generally addressed by the husband's first name. In Jannina, Youslás became Youslás, Lás, Yousoulís, Yousouli's, Giousoúli's. My mother always addressed a younger brother of mine, named after my paternal grandfather, as Youslás. When she spoke of him to others, she referred to him as Youslás. None of us at home ever used the other variations heard in Jannina.

Another interesting bit of information offered by a native of Jannina is that during the years of the Turkish occupation of that city, some boys whose given name was Isaac were called Bir. Bir is an Albanian word meaning son; the Greek Jews added the o.9

Some male Hebrew given names of Jannina natives have been modernized. Avraám is now called Albértos. Hayyim has been changed to Victor. Yeshouah has been changed to Salvator. Yiaków is now Jack. Jeoudá is now known as Leon.

**Female Given Names**

The situation in the case of female given names is not as strictly traditional. A good many Jannina girls are still given Hebrew first names. Most familiar are Rachel, Esther, Sara, Hannah, Simcha, Hava (also Havoula), Rifká, Tová. And like the boys' given names, some of these have also been Hellenized to fit the spoken idiom. My mother whose name was Esther, was never addressed by that name by her sisters or brothers. As I recall they generally called her Stér (the most affectionate), Steroula or Estir. My maternal aunts, of whom there were six, were known to us children by one or two variations at most, depending on the context of my mother's reference to their names. She spoke of her sister Dina as D'noula; another sister as Malkóula, although in Jannina girls having the same name were also called Malká, Koúla, and Málko; her sister Simchá was Simhou; another sister was Matzálo, though others in Jannina with the same name were also called Matzaltóv, Mazaló, and Tzoula. My mother usually spoke of a younger sister as Hanoula, although in Jannina she was also known as Haná, Hanésio, Hàna, Anna, Annêta. It was the same with another sister whom my mother generally called Refkou or Refkoula, but in Jannina her sister was also known as Revékka, Rifka and Rivka. My own name Rachel was known both at home as Rahél, Rahil and Rahelina, the feminine ina added as a term of endearment. My sister whose given name was Simchá is better known as Simhou and Simho, although a paternal aunt with the same name was known to us only as Aunt Simhoula.

But not all Jannina girls were given Biblical names. Some of them had Greek names. As Matsa points out, "in olden times, rabbis approved of Greek names for girls, providing these were translations of biblical or historical names. No Christian or Turkish names were sanctioned."10 Nevertheless, one girl's given name in his compilation is the Turkish Sultana, but this appears to be an exception.11

In actuality, some of the Greek names were literal translations from the Hebrew: Matzaltóv, Matzálo, Mazaló, Tzoula, became Greek Efthychia, Efthymia and Kalomoria, all of which mean good luck. But we also encounter some old Greek names commonly used in the Byzantine Empire. Examples of these are Archónto (notable), Archontopoula (daughter of a distinguished family); Chrysoula (Goldie); Polychróno (long life). Kyrá (lady); Kalorini (good peace); Millá (apple tree) are others. Rizo, is the feminine counterpart of Rizos explained above; Stámo, from the verb stamati to stop; and Pérna, meaning pass over, are Greek names which were created to change an existing situation. In the case if Stámo, it appears that her mother hoped that with the birth of this baby girl, she would stop giving birth to daughters and start giving birth to sons. Similarly, the name Pérna, was given to a baby girl with the hope that this daughter would help the mother to "pass over" giving birth to girls and start giving birth to boys.12

Also heard in Jannina are a number of girls' names which may be either of Spanish or Italian origin. Clára, Flóra, Fortuña, Falcóna, Fina, Grátsia, Rozina or Róza are both Spanish and Italian. Bimbo (child), Rígina (queen) and Tz6ia (from Gioia meaning joy), are Italian names. Speranza (hope), Delicia (delight), and Diamanta (diamond) are of Spanish origin. We know that there were Jews settled in Jannina who had emigrated to that city from southern Italy. We also know that although most of the Spanish Sephardim exiled from Spain settled permanently in Salonika and other Macedonian cities, a few did remain in Jannina and assimilated with the Greek-speaking Jews of that city; however, they continued to give their children Spanish or Italian names, thus offering us a clue as to their origin.

In the register of the municipality of Jannina, recorded after the Greek liberation, Matsa discovered some modern names which are not all Greek names. Examples of these are: Aliki, Elda, Jouli, Jeanette, Jerusalem, Nelly, Leonína, Sándra, Sylvia, Stella, Mathildí, Yiaphoula.13 Rebecca has now become Erriéta; Esther has become Roula (from Estheroula); the Hebrew Léah is now Louisa; Miriam is now Mary, Mirëtta or Miránda.14

Married women were generally addressed by the husband's first
name with an added feminine ending. My mother was known as Yistrélin, which was the dialectal pronunciation of my father's name Israel with the feminine ending ina. She spoke of the wife of Behór as Behóra or Behórova. She addressed as Bélova a neighbor whose husband's first name was Bélo. In these cases the a or ova are feminine endings added to their husbands' given names. The wife of Dr. Confina, the last president of the Jewish Council before the Holocaust was called Konfinova. In her case the feminine ending ova was added to their surname instead of the more customary given name of the spouse, probably to show her greater respect.

Surnames

The Jannina Jews had no surnames except for Cohen and Levy, identified with their Hebrew tradition. Thus, the name Cohen was originally the title given to the priests who were descendents of Aaron. In like fashion, Levi who was the son of Jacob, came to be used as a title to identify the “Levites” who assisted the Kohanim in the temple. As surnames, Jannina offspring were given the first name of the grandparent and the patronymic, which was the surname of the father. For example, a man whose surname was Hayyim named his son Isaac, after the child's paternal grandfather; the son's full name was thus Isaac ben Hayyim. If Hayyim had a daughter, whom he named Hannah, she would be known as Hannah bath Hayyim. When Isaac married and had a son, he named him after his father, and the son’s name became Hayyim ben Isaac.

There are several Jannina natives who have the same first and last names stemming from this tradition: Joseph Josephs, Isaac Isaacs, Ezra Ezra, David David. In some cases the ben or bar has been retained and added to the proper name; i.e. Benezra, Benzion, etc. When a father whose first name was Avraam died, leaving his wife pregnant, the son born posthumously was given the deceased father’s first name as a surname as well as his first name. He could then be named Avraám bar Avraám.

There were a number of Hebrew teachers in Jannina who attended to the spiritual needs of the community, when the city boasted of a Jewish population of 5000 or more, and had two large active synagogues and two smaller family synagogues. All these Hebrew teachers were addressed by the title of Aham, which is the way the Jannina Jews pronounce Hakham; very possibly the pronunciation Aham is the result of the Sephardic pronunciation which drops the h and the Greek where the rough breathing has been dropped. Well-known in Jannina until the time of the Holocaust were Aham Avraám, Aham Yesoulá, Aham Yitshaq, Aham Micháel, Aham Dávos and others. These given names were used as their surnames. They were never known by any other name.

A statistical count from official listings found in the ledger of the Kahal Kadosh Yashan (Old Synagogue), for the years 1890-1910, shows no nicknames. However, two thirds of the community already had surnames, while the other third had patronymics which could be traced as far back as the sixteenth century. Surnames not derived from patronymics reveal a patchquilt pattern of origins, both from other lands and other parts of Greece, although we cannot always trace the name to the exact city of origin.

Surnames Originating in Other Lands

A number of surnames in Jannina indicate Italian origin. Examples of these are: Arkátos, Bacólás, Bellélis (a name made famous by Lazarus Belléli (Menachem), Greek polyglot writer and philologist born in Corfu in 1862, Carrárás, Cantió, Dóstis, Mástas (a city in lower Italy), Kalamáras (an Italian place name). Kalónymos is also the name of a prominent family originally from Lucca, Italy, who took a leading part for many generations in the development of Jewish learning in Germany. It is interesting to note that Benjamin of Tudela found a Rabbi Kalónymos (Hebrew pronunciation) at the head of the Jewish community in Narbonne, (in France) whom he describes as "the son of the great and illustrious Rabbi Todros of the seed of David, whose pedigree is established."

More numerous perhaps are surnames of Spanish origin in Jannina. Albala (from the province of Caceres) probably comes from Albalag, with the g dropped. Isaac Albalag was a philosopher of the second half of the thirteenth century who probably lived in northern Spain or southern France. Alkalal (from Alcala) is the Sephardic name of a prominent family of writers and translators living in Turkey in the latter part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Moisis, the name Battino is of Spanish origin and means an Ishmaelite. Kamónto, another name of Spanish origin found in Jannina, Trikkala and Constantinople, recalls the renowned name Camondo, of a family of Turkish financiers and philanthropists of Spanish-Portuguese origin. One of my informants originating from Constantinople, tells me that in the Galata section of the Turkish capital there is a place called "La Escalera de Camondo."

Other names of Spanish origin in Jannina are Confino, from the Spanish con fino meaning order; Nahmias, a well-known Spanish-
Jewish name which traces its origin to one of the most ancient and prominent families of Toledo, Negrin, Sarretas, Vide (life) Merkado (to pay ransom) Rouss (red). The name Sarfati (also Tsarfati), the Hebrew word meaning French, is identified with a Sephardi appointed in Jannina as director of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. Ashkenazi (Hebrew meaning German), was the name of another Sephardi who had settled in Jannina and assimilated with the Greek-speaking community.

Tepelenis, originated from Tepeleni in Albania. Politis, a name common among Greek Christians as well as the Jannina Jews, denotes that the forebears of the family either originated from Constantinople, or identified with that city through repeated visits for commercial reasons. Polis, which means city in Greek, was always used to identify Constantinople which was the city par excellence. Moisis relates the name Cabilli, well-known in Jannina, to Kabylia, a region in North Africa.

### Surnames of Greek Origin

A man in Jannina was known by the name of Castorianos, because he was a native of Castoria. Vrahoritis, a man still residing in Jannina, originally came to that city from the town of Agrinion, named Vrahori at that time, a name possibly derived from Evroiahori (a Jewish village). The name Kapsalis, a Romaniot name, was made famous by several Jews originating in Crete. Eliezer Capsali was a Talmudist at Constantinople in the second half of the fifteenth century. Elijah b. Elkanah Capsali was a Turkish Talmudist and historian born at Candia about 1490; Elkanah b. David Capsali was a Turkish Talmudist and philanthropist of the second half of the fifteenth century.

A man who had visited the village of Katacadoro came to be known as Katsanos. Malakakis was the name of a man who once visited the village of Malakasii, near Jannina. Metsovitis who lived in Metsovo, came to Jannina only during the holidays; however, he belonged to the Jannina community because there were only two Jews living in Metsovo. A man named Kamarias was identified by the neighborhood in Jannina where he lived. Salaoras was known by the name of Salaora, a village near Arta.

### Surnames of Turkish Origin

Some surnames are derived from Turkish words although we do not know their origin. Hatzl, a Turkish word meaning pilgrim was adopted as a surname by both Jews and Christians who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Hatzpoulos, with the Greek ending poulos meaning the son of, inherited the surname of a forebear who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Hakim, another surname in Jannina, is the Turkish word for judge, magistrate or ruler. Kaplan, a Turkish word meaning tiger, is also a well-known Ashkenazi name.

### Surnames of Hebrew Origin

A number of family names in Jannina are of Hebrew origin. According to Hartwig Hirschfield, the name Abdal is the Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew Obadiah. It may also come from the word hawdalah indicating the end of the Sabbath. Other familiar Hebrew surnames in Jannina are: Naphtali (a biblical name), Nahoum (full of comfort), Nissim (the plural of the Hebrew nes meaning miracle), Matsil (to save), Sadok (from Zadok, of priestly descent known to have officiated in the Temple); Zakar (male); Goudelia from Gedaliah (meaning God is great); Yomtov (holiday), Josephat from Jehosephat (meaning God will judge); Johanna, from Johannan (God has been gracious); Shibboleth or Shibolias (stacks of wheat); Hasid (the pious one); Hefetz (something desired) is also the name of a famous halakhist who lived toward the end of the tenth century. Lel, another Hebrew name is the shortened form of Shemuel. Paritz is a Hebrew name with a number of meanings: squire, landowner; it also means violent, wild, cruel.

### Nicknames

Despite the separate family names which predominated in the Jannina community, a good deal of confusion resulted from the similarity of Hebrew patronymics which were used legally as surnames. It became necessary to differentiate more distinctly between people, especially for legal purposes. As in other places, to meet this situation, the Jannina Jews invented nicknames or soubriquets, a tradition which is in practice in all of the province of Epirus. Not all nicknames became legal surnames for obvious reasons; however, in many cases the nicknames were pleasing enough to be adopted as legal surnames. For nicknames people resorted to three sources for clearer identification: occupations, physical characteristics and character traits.

### Occupations

The Greek, Turkish or Hebrew nicknames of the Jannina Jews, stemming from occupations throw some light on the vocational composition of the community. A man named Konduratze was a
Nicknames are Greek, since this was the maternal language of the
one who expects everything gratis) was bedavaci from the Turkish
more amusing than those derived from occupations. Most of these
nicknamed because he appeared giddy and distracted. Bidhavas,
An6nios, an alteration of the Greek word A6nios, meaning eternel,
never became a surname. An6nios, an alteration of the Greek word meaning
because of his surname. Patish was called to the Sefer, the rabbi who called him used the
surname, is the Hebrew word for hammer, although it is not known
Dalian was also the name of a river in Caria, an ancient district in
southwest Asia Minor, bordering on the Agean Sea.34 This may have
no bearing whatever to my name.

There are also some Hebrew nicknames derived from occupations, several of which have been adopted as surnames. Morenou in
Hebrew means “our teacher.” Samás (sexton) and Samasoulis (little sexton) are self-explanatory. Patish, which was finally adopted as a
surname, is the Hebrew word for hammer, although it is not known
why this family was so nicknamed. It is interesting to note that when
Patish was called to the Sefer, the rabbi who called him used the
Hebrew name Heféz which had been his surname.

A baker was nicknamed baboker, which in Hebrew means “in the
morning.” The story goes that he used to get up before dawn to bake houbanatsa, a cake made of cornmeal and honey, and generally
eaten at breakfast. Although baboker sold black-eyed peas in the
afternoon, it was his morning activity which impressed his coreligionists sufficiently to give him the appellation baboker. This
never became a surname.

Physical Characteristics

Nicknames given because of some physical characteristic are
more amusing than those derived from occupations. Most of these
nicknames are Greek, since this was the maternal language of the

Jannina Jews. As I have stated, not all of these nicknames were
adopted as surnames, but they remain vividly in the memory of the
Jews originating from Jannina and now settled in New York. In some
cases it is by the nickname that a coreligionist is remembered, and not
recognized at all by his legal surname.

Best recalled among these nicknames denoting a physical
characteristic are: Arápis, given to a man who was as dark as an
Arab; Calános, meaning blue-eyed, was the surname of my maternal
grandmother’s maiden name. Gavomátas, a word meaning blind, is a
blend of Roumanian and Greek. Kókkinos, from the Greek meaning
red, was adopted as a surname by an individual who was identified
by his red hair. Kókkinos is also a very common name among the
Greek Christians.

The man dubbed Katsikas, from the Greek katsiki meaning
goat, may have had a beard like that of a billy goat. Phrydis, from the
Greek phrydi meaning eyebrow, was so nicknamed because of his
bushy eyebrows. Kútkhos, from the Turkish kucuk, meaning small,
must have been a very short man. Kpaoulias, from the Greek
kapulia, meaning the hindquarters of a mule, was the nickname of
this as a surname, must have had something to do with bells. Kam­
pána in Greek is a large bell. One man was nicknamed plátonas
because he ran a store located under a plantain tree. The name
dalyan, the surname of my family in Jannina (it was changed to
Dalven in New York), is a Turkish word meaning fisheries or fish­
pond. My forebears may have had something to do with fishing, but
Dalian was also the name of a river in Caria, an ancient district in
southwest Asia Minor, bordering on the Agean Sea.34 This may have
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Physical Characteristics

Nicknames given because of some physical characteristic are
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nicknames are Greek, since this was the maternal language of the
the name given to a man who always expected things either free of charge or ridiculously cheap. A man was dubbed Blêtas, a dialect word in Jannina, because he always kept his shirt open at the neck. The man known as Zárkos, must have appeared underdressed to his coreligionists. Zárkos in Greek means naked. Daimónios was so named because he was reputed to be clever.

A baker who once burned himself while baking sponge cake, a happening which became known in the community, was forever after known as Kaikas, from the Greek word kaios meaning to burn. Noikokíris, adopted as a surname, was reputed to be a good householder. Térelidas was a man who was considered to be slightly mad. Trelós in Greek means crazy, but in Jannina the r is often transposed with l in the spoken idiom. A man who had been captured by bandits and branded with a cross before he was released, was identified as Stavromémos, which means crucified in Greek. Kasidhas was the nickname given to a person who was either literally scurvy-headed or haughty and disdainful. Svolós, the Greek word meaning a clod or lump of earth, probably identified a stubborn fellow. Pitzirlo, adopted as a surname, is an Italian word meaning a little bit.

There are also Hebrew nicknames inspired by unusual character traits. A man who used to sell novelties was nicknamed Birour. Could it have been derived from the Hebrew barur meaning clear? We may be certain that the person nicknamed Gehenna was never called this name to his face. Haméts (leaven) may have come by this name because he or one of his forebears had been discovered eating bread during the Passover holiday. A merchant was nicknamed Tzabiath, the colloquial rendering in Jannina of Tisha b’Av. Some say it was because he always appeared gloomy, others that he would not have breakfast until he made his first sale. When I met this man, I was warned to be careful not to address him by this unflattering nickname, which obviously he never adopted as a surname. My maternal grandfather who was a merchant in Jannina, was nicknamed Kalchamira (so pronounced in Jannina). The night before the eve of Passover, after the proper benediction, one makes the statement in Aramaic beginning with the phrase: “Kal haméra de ika birshute dela hazitei udelà biarte lehevei bat Vehashiv ke-afra de-arah.” (“May all leaven in my possession which I have not seen or removed be annullé and considered as dust of the earth.”) The story which has come down to us about Kalchamira, my mother’s maiden name, is that her father used to examine material as closely as if he were searching for haméts (leaven). A more plausible reason may be that he was probably selected as one of the men in the community called upon to help look for haméts in the homes of his coreligionists as a mitzvah (a praiseworthy deed in conformity with the commandments). It is possible that my maternal grandfather was one of those chosen.35 Kalchamira was adopted as a surname, although it is spelled Colchamiro in the United States.

There are also some Turkish nicknames in Jannina. Lafazan, adopted as a surname, is the Turkish word for braggart. Beis is a Hellenized form of the Turkish bey. A man in Jannina was dubbed Beiskkás because he presumed to be an aristocrat when his manners were crude. According to one informant, the nickname brakashá consists of two Turkish words: brak (put) and ashá (down). Brakasha used to peddle roasted chestnuts. The story goes that everytime a child tried to steal a chestnut, he would yell “brakasha!” In time he came to be known as Brakasha.36

I am indebted to Irving Isaacs for telling me about Bakabis, the most curious of all Turkish nicknames. In Turkish the word is bakabis, which refers to one who bargains. In Jannina, the man who was dubbed bakabis, was discovered to be cheating the peasants from whom he purchased eggs. When it became known, the community composed the following ditty about him which Isaacs recalled for me in Greek and which I translate literally:

Bakabis is the unlucky man
without a pentara or obol
he goes down to the horsemarket
finds himself a one-legged woman
with a nose like a cup
her lips like an eggplant
and a mouth like a cassata.37

There are, of course, many other surnames as well as nicknames created to distinguish members of the community. From the sprinkling given here, one or two objective conclusions may safely be drawn about the Jannina community as a whole. First is the fact that the Jannina Jews kept piously close to their Hebrew origins. Then, too, since their maternal language was Greek, most of the nicknames which they created imaginatively and with a relishing dose of humor, are in Greek. The Turkish nicknames also reveal that the Jannina Jews had friendly dealings with their conquerors. Again, although not all the surnames of the community are given here, it would appear that a considerable number of Jews of Spanish origin settled permanently in Jannina. But probably most apparent of all is the fact...
that Jannina was a colorful community of many origins, all of whom were assimilated with the indigenous Greek-speaking Jews whom historians and researchers now identify as Romaniote Jews.

NOTES

1. Irving Isaacs, in an interview.
3. Irving Isaacs, *ibid*.
8. Isaacs, *ibid*.
12. Matsa, in a letter to me.
16. Isaacs, *ibid*.
17. *Ibid*.
26. David Barocas, in an interview.
ANTI-SEMITISM IN TIRSO DE MOLINA'S
BURLADOR DE SEVILLA

By Joseph H. Silverman

There is in the second act of the Burlador de Sevilla an enigmatic passage which has constituted a small problem since the earliest publication of scholarly editions and translations of the play. Perhaps, since it would seem to have nothing to do with the personality of Don Juan, for it is really nothing more than an insignificant joke and, evidently, not too successful at that, no one has paid much attention to the passage. Or else, it was simply considered to be one of various defective sections of the play, characteristic of the poor state in which it has reached us.

Don Juan speaks with the Marquis de la Mota. In the original, the verses in question read as follows:

D. JUAN. ¿Qué casa es la que miráis?
MOTA. De don Gonzalo de Ulloa.
D. JUAN. ¿Dónde iremos?
MOTA. A Lisboa.
D. JUAN. ¿Cómo, si en Sevilla estás?
MOTA. ¡No vive, con gusto igual,
lo peor de Portual
en lo mejor de Castilla?

In the English of Walter Starkie it becomes:

DON JUAN. Whose house are you staring at?
MARQUIS. To Don Gonzalo de Ulloa, where my fairest dwells.
DON JUAN. Where [shall] we go?
MARQUIS. To Lisbon.
DON JUAN. Are still in Seville?
MARQUIS. So you are surprised?
Why wonder if the dregs of Portugal
Live on what's best in Spain?
DON JUAN. Where do they live?
MARQUIS. In Serpent Street you'll see Adam become
A Portuguese to woo the thousand Eves
Who haunt that sinful vale and offer us
Forbidden fruits and wheedle us of gold.
CATALINÓN. I should not like to walk by night along
That hellish street, for though by day you'll find
All fragrant as the honeycomb, by night
They void upon the street their filthy slops.
One night, alas, I did become a target,
And found I was befouled by Portugal.
Now it is worthwhile to examine some of the commentary that prestigious critics have written about these lines. For Américo Castro Lisbon is mentioned here in order to allude to the beauteous Portuguese women who must have lived on Serpent Street. Professors Hill and Harlan and later Professor MacCurdy observe that Lisbon is a street or district of Seville where, presumably, Portuguese prostitutes lived and practiced their trade. And this is affirmed despite the fact that there is no evidence at all of such a street or district ever having existed in Seville.

An outstanding translator of the play interprets the initial verses of the passage in this fashion:

DON JUAN: What’s the house you’re gazing at?
MARQUIS: That of Don Gonzalo de Ulloa.
DON JUAN: Well, it’s early yet. Where shall we go?
MARQUIS: To Lisbon.
DON JUAN: But we’re in Seville!
MARQUIS: Didn’t you know that half the whores of Lisbon live in the best part of Seville?

Now, to be perfectly frank, I was unaware of the fact that Seville — famous for the dazzling beauty and sensuality of its women — should be in need of Portuguese prostitutes. But the aforementioned scholars must have known things that I in my innocence never learned.

The notes to the most recent critical edition, prepared by Gerald Wade, express with absolute clarity . . . or confusion the meaning that has been attributed to the passage during the last sixty some odd years. On the reference to Lisbon he writes:

Lisboa — Don Juan is surprised to hear Mota use the name in reference to a district or street of Sevilla, and since the former is a resident of the city and surely knows it thoroughly — especially its vice district — his surprise is an indication that Mota has adopted the name for his own and don Juan’s amusement . . . He claims that Lisbon has sent some of its worst vice to Sevilla. We have found no record that Lisbon had in Spain an especially bad reputation for vice, and it might be suggested that Mota’s besmirching of Lisbon’s repute in favor of Sevilla’s is in its own way the pot’s calling the kettle black.

As for Serpent Street he states that “we have found no record that the street was noted for its vice although Mota’s reference to it . . . is to that effect.”

As Américo Castro and Bruce Wardropper have shown, the Burlador de Sevilla is much more than the dramatization of sexual and theological problems. It is at the same time a document of social protest, a criticism of corrupt nobility and a profound comment on the System and the abuses of power of a personal and Watergate-like nature. But let’s return to our passage to see if the socio-historic orientations suggested by Castro and Wardropper can lead us toward a more reasonable interpretation.

Students of the play will remember that at the end of the first act the whirlwind pace of the action, the result of Don Juan’s unbridled sexuality, is interrupted in order to present a eulogistic description of Lisbon as the eighth wonder of the world. The King asks Don Gonzalo: “Is Lisbon a fine city?” to which he responds: “It is the largest city in all Spain . . .” Yes, the largest city in Spain because — as is well known — between 1580 and 1640 Portugal was under the dominance of the Spanish crown. And to remember this small historical detail is to make possible the resolution of our enigmatic passage, in the following way. There was a large group of New Christians of Jewish origin, called simply Portuguese, who travelled back and forth with great regularity between Spain and Portugal. After the annexation of Portugal by Philip II, these Portuguese converts moved to Spain in ever increasing numbers until they were to constitute a class or sector of Hispanic society. The principal reason for this exodus is that those families that had amassed significant fortunes in Portugal saw the Spanish Empire as a rich new field for speculation and business deals of all kinds. Moreover, it was possible to live in Spain for a certain time without the fear of inquisitorial persecution, since the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions were autonomous entities. Having left Portugal out of fear or attracted by promising financial arrangements, the Portuguese converts, los portugueses de la nación, as they were called, trickled into Spain in small numbers, but — as the success of their endeavors became known — a large scale migration took place. Madrid, Seville, the ports of southern Spain in general as well as Hispanic America experienced a veritable invasion. In a communication from Lisbon dated 1633 we read that “In this city commerce is at an end and all businessmen of substance have moved to Madrid and Seville.” According to Francisco Manuel de Melo “there are parishes in Lisbon from which more than 2,000 individuals have departed, all of them of great wealth, and they have gone with their families to live in Madrid or Seville.” Speaking of this same period the great Portuguese historian Lucio d’Azevedo observes that “It was said that in Seville a quarter of the population
had been born in Portugal and that on certain streets Portuguese was spoken more frequently than the language of the country.”

Given the inquisitorial context of Hispanic life, corrupt politicians of Philip III’s regime took part in an obviously scandalous enterprise, by offering a general pardon to New Christians, which enabled many of them to be freed from prison, others to change their place of residence in Spain and still others to enter Spain easily from Portugal. This general pardon, which was most irritating to the intensely anti-Semitic masses and which was denounced by the Portuguese high clergy, was to initiate a new era in Spain; for with the death of Philip III and the ascendance to power of the Conde-duque de Olivares an even more intense campaign was carried on to attract Portuguese, — that is, New Christian, — capital to Madrid to help finance Olivares’ exorbitant enterprises and to liquidate the debts of his disastrous failures. Needless to say, these philo-Judaic policies of the Conde-duque brought him little popularity. And the presence in Spain of so many opulent Portuguese of Jewish origin was the cause for frequent outbursts of hostility, envy and hatred. A typical example is the following:

This afternoon, while Don Francisco de Meneses was riding in a coach with Don Jorge Manuel to see the procession, there passed by close to them two Portuguese, Don Jacinto de Lemos, of the Order of Santiago of Portugal, and a brother of his, Fernando Manuel, a financier. Because the latter did not lift his hat to them, he [Meneses] called him, among other insults, a Jew. Fernando Manuel drew his sword, and the two hurled themselves out of the coaches. Meneses dangerously wounded Fernando Manuel and, placing his foot on the latter’s face, and wishing to wound him again, he pierced his own foot with his sword . . . The pride with which these Portuguese businessmen [i.e., New Christians] go about Madrid is incredible. Those who in Portugal would not even dare to look at caballeros desire here, not only to equal them, but to exceed them.

That is to say, for a convert not to remove his hat was a display of arrogance, just as sitting down at the front of a public vehicle might have been so for a Negro in this country a few years ago.

And now let us recall our Burlador passage:

D. JUAN. ¿Dónde iremos?
MOTA. A Lisboa.
D. JUAN. ¿Cómo, si en Sevilla estás?

As I have already suggested, after Madrid it seems that Seville was the city most populated by Judaizers and converts, and sevillano businessmen of Judeo-Portuguese origin enjoyed, among other things, a kind of monopoly on business with the Indies. These Portuguese, we learn, were the largest number of residents on Serpent Street; Serpent Street, in fact, was their center. Would it be excessive, then, to suggest that Tirso de Molina was alluding to this situation which was such a great source of irritation to the Spanish lower class? Isn’t it likely that precisely when the number of inquisitional trials was on the increase in Spain, one of King Philip IV’s valets de chambre could write with dirge-like hyperbole: “Who can doubt that every single Jew remaining in Portugal or elsewhere will want to come here to live? Oh, woe unto the noble families of Castile! For if they were in danger when Jews lived in their midst, what will they do in the present trying circumstances?” Isn’t it likely, I repeat, that Tirso de Molina is giving voice to this same complaint, evoking this same insane reality?

So, going to Serpent Street was just like going to Lisbon, because on Serpent Street there lived what was for the intolerant and racist masses — that popular sector of the audience whose favor Tirso sought — “lo peor de Portugal,” the worst element of Portugal, that is, the Jews and converts of Portuguese origin, whose great wealth and socio-economic influence had become internationally famous — or notorious.

In this way — with this caustic allusion — Tirso presents another
crucial element of the confused, dolorous and conflictive reality of XVIIth-century Spain. Serpent Street, nowadays the Street of Serpents, is a symbol of that contentious chaos and — without knowing any of the details presented here, but with the infallible historico-aesthetic sensibility of a great poet — Aquilino Duque, a sevillano by birth, wrote of Serpent Street:

¿Por qué no eres como eras?
¿Por qué aparentas rectitudes
siendo toda revueltas y recodos
en el fondo del alma?
¿Te arrastras por el polvo
porque han talado el árbol de la ciencia
y del bien y del mal, ángel caído,
Sierpe en el corazón de la ciudad?
Why aren't you the way you once were?
Why do you feign straightness
when you're all twists and turns
in the depths of your soul?
Do you drag yourself through the dirt
because they have cut down the Tree of Knowledge
and of Good and Evil, you fallen angel,
Serpent in the heart of the city?

Serpent Street, where as Tirso de Molina had said, one can see "Adán vuelto en portugués," Adam — the Hebrew 'man' — converted into a Portuguese or Christian Jew.
Judeo-Spanish Romancero. Between 1904 and 1913, Benoliel kept up an intensive interchange of texts and letters with Menéndez Pidal. The extraordinary spirit and limitless energy of this admirable scholar — a veritable Sephardic uomo universale — is constantly reflected in the abundant correspondence on file in the Menéndez Pidal Archive: Among many other projects, Benoliel was teaching at various schools in Lisbon; editing a French-Portuguese dictionary; writing his own poetry and planning to translate Camoens and other Portuguese poets into Spanish, French, and Hebrew; had invented a machine to print the Braille system for the blind and had conceived of and constructed a unique device which was capable of printing five different alphabets. Professor, lexicographer, poet, and inventor, Benoliel must have taken an immediate interest in Menéndez Pidal’s ballad project. He understood at once both its importance and its inherent problems. Benoliel deserves credit for having conceived, during the first years of this century, the idea of a massive and systematic ballad campaign, similar to those carried out later by Manuel Manrique de Lara and other investigators. Unfortunately, Benoliel himself was never able to put into effect his well thought out plan for visiting all the Moroccan Judeo-Spanish communities, but, even so, what he was able to accomplish in Tangier and among Sephardic emigrants in Portugal deserves the highest praise. Thanks to Benoliel, a total of 155 ballads from Tangier were acquired by Menéndez Pidal. Almost alone, Benoliel’s texts constitute the first stage in the formation of Menéndez Pidal’s Judeo-Spanish collection. His contribution in itself made possible the publication of Don Ramón’s fundamental “Catálogo del romancero judío-español” (1906-1907). 1 Benoliel’s ballads are, therefore, invaluable and his efforts contributed in many ways to enriching our knowledge of the Sephardic ballad tradition in North Africa.

To Don Manuel Manrique de Lara, the Menéndez Pidal Archive owes its greatest group of texts collected by a single individual. Manrique de Lara (1863-1929) — painter, composer, brilliant musicologist, naval captain and soldier — first contacted Menéndez Pidal in 1905, when he accompanied Don Ramón on a small ballad excursion to the village of Las Navas del Marqués (Avila) to learn effective collecting techniques and become fascinated with the field work in which he would soon be so successful. 2 In 1911, with a grant from the Centro de Estudios Históricos, Manrique undertook his extraordinary expedition to the Eastern Mediterranean, where he visited each of the major communities: Sarajevo, Belgrade, Sofia, Salonika, Istanbul, Izmir, Rhodes, Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem.

In 1915 and 1916, he carried out equally massive investigations in Morocco, visiting Tangier, Tetuán, Larache, and Alcazarquivir. He collected, sometimes under rigorous, uncomfortable, and even dangerous conditions, many hundreds of versions — almost 2,000 in all. When we consider the primitive conditions under which Manrique was obliged to work,— all the texts had to be laboriously copied out by hand — the statistics of his collection become doubly surprising and admirable. In the Eastern Mediterranean communities, in 1911, he interviewed 87 identifiable individuals and collected a total of 1,133 texts; in Morocco (1915-1916), he interviewed 55 informants and brought together another 839 versions. In addition, he copied or collected some 17 different collections of ballads and songs in manuscript form. Manrique also went through various collections of Hebrew piyyutim in search of ballad incipits and assembled a good number of these as indispensable documentation for the latent centuries of the Sephardic Romancero. 3 Manrique added, in total, some 1,972 texts to the Menéndez Pidal collection, together with 354 precious musical transcriptions. 4 Manrique’s contribution makes up considerably more than three-fourths of the entire Judeo-Spanish collection at the Menéndez Pidal Archive. When, in addition, we take into account his vast, still uncatalogued field work in various areas of the Iberian Peninsula, Don Manuel Manrique de Lara emerges as one of the great heroes and champions of ballad studies, not only within the Hispanic area, but of general Pan-European balladry as well.

What might be called the “great epoch” of Menéndez Pidal’s Judeo-Spanish collection ends with Manrique de Lara’s copious field work in Morocco in 1916, but, all the same, a number of interesting contributions were to be made in subsequent years. In 1920, Don Ramón corresponded with the distinguished Sephardic scholar, Dr. Saúl Mézán, of Bulgaria, who sent him a number of ballad texts. Subsequently Menéndez Pidal’s Judeo-Spanish holdings did not grow again until some ten years later, when, around 1930, Mrs. Emma Adatto (Schlesinger) was to send him a series of interesting texts collected from Turkish and Rhodian Sephardic emigrants living in Seattle (Washington). 5 On February 19, 1934, the Cuban scholar, José María Chacón y Calvo collected four ballads in the little Moroccan town of Arcila, whose repertory — the veritable black sheep of the North African sub-traditions — was neglected by all the major field trips of the first half of this century and continues even today to be almost as unknown as before. 6 Around 1935, Professor Roberto Esquenazi Mayo sent in various songs which were part of a Sephardic festival in New York City and, in April 1937, he collected four
romances sung by Turkish Sephardic informants in Havana. On May 6, 8, and 12, 1935, Doña María Sánchez Arbós brought together a splendid collection of 23 ballads copied down by school children in Casablanca.

With the turmoil of the Spanish Civil War and the uncertainties of World War II, there were no new developments in the Judeo-Spanish collection until 1946, when Mr. Baruch Uziel interviewed in Tel Aviv a noteworthy ballad singer from Salonika, Mrs. Flor Tevet, who was about 60 years of age at the time. In April 1948, Diego Catalán carried out a brief, but very fruitful series of interviews, collecting from three informants in Tetuán a total of 32 texts, including various rare text-types. The last unedited Judeo-Spanish materials to enter the Menéndez Pidal Archive were the Salonikan texts, collected early in this century by Michael Molho and sent from Buenos Aires on July 15, 1957, and a partial transcription of the eighteenth-century manuscript ballads of David Behar Moshe ha-Cohen of Sarajevo, forwarded from Jerusalem by Moshe Attias on April 23, 1956.7

Together with the numerical abundance of its versions and the extreme rarity of some of its themes, one of the most important and valuable aspects of the Menéndez Pidal collection is the fact that it represents a chronological stage many decades older than that which is to be found — now often decadent and impoverished — in field work since World War II. At the beginning of the century, in the East and in Morocco, Manrique de Lara, Benoliel, and the other collectors were still in the presence of a fully vigorous tradition, a situation which is very different from that faced by Sephardic ballad collectors in more recent times. The vitality of that old tradition is reflected not only in the length and perfection of some of the individual versions, but also in the enormous and highly original repertoires of certain of the informants.

The collection's geographic scope is remarkably broad. It includes ballads from Vienna (Austria); Sarajevo, Belgrade, Istib (Yugoslavia); Sofia, Dupnitzia, Tatar-Pazardjik, Plovdiv, Ruse (Bulgaria); Bucharest and Rosiori (Rumania); Salonika, Karaferia, Kastoria, Larissa, Rhodes (Greece); Edirne, Istanbul, Bursa, Tekirdag, Chanak kale, Izmir (Turkey); Beirut (Lebanon); Damascus (Syria), and Jerusalem (Israel); and in North Africa: Tangier, Tetuán, Arcila, Larache, Alcasarquivir, Casablanca (Morocco), and Oran (Algeria); as well as from Gibraltar. Such a wide geographic representation offers the ballad scholar a unique and irreplaceable research instrument. In combination with the vast, unedited collection of ballads from other Hispanic regions and the fine library of printed sources assembled at the Archive, the Judeo-Spanish collection provides us with an unequalled opportunity to study the processes of variation and poetic recreation which are the very essence of the traditional life of the Hispanic Romancero.

The texts brought together by Menéndez Pidal during a period of over sixty years — from the first three versions from Oran in 1896 to the last Salonikan ballads sent by Michael Molho in 1957 — constitute the largest and richest corpus of Judeo-Spanish traditional poetry in existence. There are a total of 2,150 texts of Judeo-Spanish romances and other narrative poems and 217 other songs of diverse types (cumulative songs; lyric songs; dirges; para-liturgical poems). Throughout his life, Don Ramón turned to the Sephardic Romancero as an indispensable component for the reconstruction of Pan-Hispanic balladry. His collection will stand as a lasting tribute to his own intellectual endeavors and to the arduous field work of those who were inspired by him. The brutal and massive destruction during World War II of Sephardic communities and the progressive acculturation of the surviving Sephardim make it a certainty that we will witness within a few years the total disappearance of the precious Hispanic heritage preserved by the Spanish Jews of the Diaspora as a living culture. “Last minute” explorations of the Sephardic Romancero carried out after the last World War have produced invaluable discoveries. These recent efforts, however, had they stood alone, would not have saved from oblivion the greater part of the traditional poetry of the Spanish Jews. Present and future explorers of the limitless “promised land” of the Judeo-Spanish traditional ballad will ever be indebted to their venerable predecessor: Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal.8

NOTES


3. For research on Eastern Judeo-Spanish ballad incipits used as tune indicators in Hebrew hymnals, see the latest publications of H. Avenary, “Cántos españoles de antiguo mencionados en la literatura hebrea,” Anuario...
The Sephardic Scholar


4. An edition and study of all Manrique de Lara’s transcriptions of ballad music at the Menéndez Pidal Archive are currently being prepared by Professor Israel J. Katz.


8. Compare Menéndez Pidal’s moving statement concerning the future of ballad studies in Romancero hispánico (Hispano-portugués americano y sefardi), 2 vols. (Madrid, 1953), I, xi: “Con [estos dos volúmenes] doy principio a la obra, mezclando a los antiguos entusiasmos juveniles la melancolía con que Moisés, al fin de sus días, desde la cumbre del Monte Nebo tendió la mirada sobre la fértil Tierra Prometida, sabiendo que no la disfrutará él, sino sus sucesores.”

I wish to thank my friend, Professor Herman P. Salomon, for valued suggestions concerning the preparation of the present article.

Two Elegies on the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain

by Herman P. Salomon

For Sephardim the deep mourning and fast observed on the ninth day of the month of Ab commemorates three disasters: the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian Exile of 586 B.C.E.; the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans and the end of the Jewish Commonwealth in 70 C.E.; and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

Spanish reminiscences are associated with the liturgy of this fast-day in most Sephardic communities. The Spanish and Portuguese Congregations constituting the “Western Sephardim,” however, have not adopted into their liturgy qinot (elegiac poems) referring specifically to the decisive tragedy of their history in Spain. This is perhaps due to the fact that Menasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657), the famous rabbi who collated and first published the Sephardic liturgy in Hebrew for the use of the Spanish and Portuguese ex-Marranos in Amsterdam, did not have access to the two anonymous post-expulsion qinot which are the subject of this essay.

I have succeeded in tracing the first of the two compositions to the fast-day ritual published in Venice by Giovanni Vendramin in 1638. The fact that I have not found them in any earlier edition does not necessarily indicate that either or both were not composed before the 17th century. The content of poems, a dialogue between exiled Spanish Jewry and God, echoes one of the ancient qinot which is a dialogue between Zion and God. Much more violent than the latter, the recent poems reflect the profound spiritual disarray which beset the Sephardic world throughout the 16th century due to the prolonged agony following the expulsion from Spain of 1492. The questions asked by the poet(s) reveal a blend of personal despair and national futility. Why were the Spanish Jews singled out for such
cruel torment? If this was divine retribution, wherein lay their grievous guilt? These questions and the mood of purposeless suffering were expressed with intensity during the second half of the 16th century in the historical compilations of Samuel Usque (Consolacamás tribulatoeens de Israel), Selomoh Ibn Verga (Sebet Tehuda), Yosef Hakohen (Emeq Habaka). In the first of the two poems, the names of the Iberian cities and kingdoms from which the Jews were expelled during the final decades of the 15th century were not chosen at random. They indicate precise historical knowledge on the part of the poet. An edict of January 1, 1483, expelled the Jews from Seville. Six months later this edict took effect in Jerez de la Frontera. It was in Granada, on March 31, 1492, that Ferdinand and Isabella signed the edict of expulsion of the Jews from the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. On June 18, 1492, a similar decree was issued ordering the expulsion of the Jews from Sicily, which was under the Aragonese crown. It is estimated that 37,000 Jews had to leave Sicily by the end of January, 1493.

The second poem is even more reproachful towards God than the first. In the first poem, God has more lines than Israel (24 to 22). In the second, Israel and Zion have more lines than God (15 to 12). One might say: Israel takes the offensive. The theological implications of such outcries of revolted conscience are not at variance with the religious spirit of Israel, which imputed all national calamities to Providence, yet never accepted divine retribution untempered by justice and mercy. In the last stanza of the second poetical dialogue, God, as in His dialogue with Abraham, admits defeat, recognizing that His opponent argued his case better than He.

The form of the poems is rather complex. The first one consists of fourteen stanzas, which, except for the first two stanzas, have three lines. If we consider the first line to be the title, then the only irregular stanza is the second, consisting of six lines, three of which are taken up by the geographical names. The second poem consists of nine tercets and includes several echoes of the first poem, of which it is an outgrowth. A slightly changed context gives a verse of the second poem an entirely different resonance from a similar line in the first poem, attributing to Spain the epithet “glorious land.” The poet thus makes us aware that Spain, for the Sephardim, is not just another “land of exile.”

The intermixing of emotions, the continuous interplay between the various lands from which the Sephardim were expelled, to the point that certain phrases contextually directed towards the Holy
Land seem to apply more logically to Spain, are perhaps the most appealing feature of these poems. A good example is the verse in the second poem:

Our neighbors raised their voices in our Sanctuary.

The verse contextually refers to the Babylonian or the Roman soldiers who stormed the Temple of Jerusalem but evokes an image of Spanish Christians, driven by curiosity into the deserted Spanish synagogues, the day after the departure of their Jewish neighbors. An effect which I have not been able to reproduce in translation is the pun on the Hebrew ‘eres sebi ‘el sibya (“from a glorious land into captivity”) in line 8, and the Spanish place names, Jerez u-Sebilla, in line 14 of the first poem.

An indication that the two poems may be by different hands is the fact that the same place names are spelled differently from one poem to the other, within the same edition.12

The tercets follow an abab rhyme scheme in their first four hemistichs. In the first poem the second hemistich of each third line often has only one word, rhyming alternately with the refrains abinu (“our Father”) and alalay (“alas”). This rhyme scheme is less observed in the second poem. The poetic form(s) employed in the two poems do not have a parallel in the more ancient qinot. A thorough comparison, beyond the scope of this study, with Italian verse forms, might reveal the locale and the approximate date of composition.

Because of the fact, referred to above, that Menasseh Ben Israel did not include these qinot in his canon, they have not been translated into French, Italian, Dutch and English.13 Fast-day rituals for the Levantine Sephardic communities, published in Italy and later in Vienna, all have these two qinot, as well as other material of even more recent vintage. None of these books, however, includes a translation.14 I present, therefore, what I believe to be the first translation of these late additions to the Sephardic liturgy. The Hebrew text is reproduced for the reader’s convenience. I have selected for reproduction the Venice 1736 edition as the most legible, although in the translation I have taken into consideration and sometimes adopted variant readings from earlier and later editions.

Alas, our Father, is this the yearned for recompense?

Who is the father who raises children
to take vengeance on them,
to pour anger on them,
with great and fuming wrath?
We have sat on the ground;
We have also wept.
Why do you all cry out against Me?
Your murmurings have reached Me.
In My kindness I have daily saved you from sufferings:
you yourselves are My witnesses.
But you have not kept to My ways, alas,
My children, will you feud with Me?
Your brothers went as exiles from Jerez and Seville.
I saw their stubbornness.
I brought on the expulsion from Castile
and Sicily, Aragon, Granada, My children.

But even if we have sinned, where are Your mercies?
If in anger You expelled us, tell us wherein the children sinned,
whose kindnesses we have seen
with our own eyes.
I took you from the Holy Land
as exiles into bondage.
I saw your stubbornness.
You did not heed Isaiah or Jeremiah.
Therefore, I had no mercy on you, My children.

We have pondered Your mercies
now that several years have passed.
But we, Your witnesses, daily ask anew;
Is this the way a father treats his children?
We have drunk the dregs of gall and wormwood.
I examine the hearts of men,
Their inner feelings and thoughts.
Before your days of misfortune came
I surely recognized your good deeds.
But did I not, My children,
Remove you for your own sins?
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You ruled that our women be tortured,
young maidens and wives.
They were stripped of their clothes
and left naked for days and nights.
And we were shamed.
    You have rebelled against My Torah
    and have served other gods.
    I was jealous
    so I made you drink the bitter waters.
    You have strayed from my ways.
Is there no cure and healing
for all our pains?
Each nation has its kingdom;
but the glory of our honor is fallen:
our enemies have destroyed our stronghold.
    See, My Presence is in the midst of the nation,
    children of exile.
    Throughout your dispersion, I have revealed My
    glory to you
    each day and each night, My children.
If our sins and transgressions have increased,
yet we are Your people, the sheep of Your fold.
The hand of the Lord is against His flock's camp.
Have we rejected Your commandments and Your Torah?
    I know that My Name is profaned
    among the nations and peoples.
The chosen of priests and Levites,
    the righteous, upright and pure
are laid waste.
    No one spreads tents to shelter My flock.
Remember our ancestors; send us Redemption.
Ignore our evil ways,
our defiled souls.
Greatness is Yours, our Master.
Our Father: this is the yearned for recompense.
    I Myself in my majesty will crown this nation
and build the House of My Glory as it was in years past.
With sweet melody I shall awaken a song on My lyre.

II.

Who is the father who tortures his child
with afflictions of vengeance,
who violently pours out his wrath on him?
We have sat on the ground;
we have also wept.
    How can you speak thus, My children?
    How can you shout against Me in anger?
    I gave the Torah at Sinai
    and you have brazenly abandoned it.
    Was this not so?
    Surely you are to blame, not I.
We know, our Rock, that we have rejected
the sweetness of the teachings of the Torah.
But remember: we are made of dust.
This fact cannot have eluded You.
If we have sinned, You have not forgiven us
according to Your compassion.
Relent for the sake of Your mercy,
Merciful Lord of Hosts.
Forgive our sins and errors
in the abundance of Your kindness.
Do this as a good omen,
for we trust in You.
    Your brothers went out as exiles from
    a glorious land into captivity.
    I saw their stubbornness.
    I brought on the expulsion from Castile
and Sicily, Aragon, Granada, My children.
In Your wrath, You destroyed the strongholds
of the daughter of Judah,
You burnt Your land and Your Temple.
You did not accept thanksgiving offerings
from our hands.
    I destroyed My Temples because of your sins.
    As I have told My holy ones:
    I will dwell among you -- when you serve Me,
as the prophet explained. (Woe unto Me!)
But Zion said: what is my sin?  
Even if the children have transgressed  
You have uprooted the strength of my might,  
the trees, the stones;  
Our neighbors raised their voices in our Sanctuary.

Zion will be redeemed by justice.  
for she has prevailed in her suit with God.  
No more will Mount Zion be ploughed like a field.  
The eyes of My congregation will see  
the moment of Israel's salvation,  
the building of the Temple Altar.

Notes:


2. It has been suggested that the qina “Boré’ad’ana,” which has a Spanish version and a stanza referring to Christian persecution, may have been written on the occasion of the Spanish expulsion. This qina, now part of the Ninth of Ab liturgy, was formerly sung on the Sabbath preceding the Ninth of Ab. Cf. H.P. Salomon, art. cit.

3. Menasseh Ben Israel based his Spanish Orden de los cinco Tahanioth del año (Amsterdam, 1630) and his Hebrew Seder ‘arba’i tahaniyot (Amsterdam, 1631), which were the models for all subsequent Sephardic fast-day rituals published in Amsterdam, The Hague, London, Nice and Philadelphia, on earlier Venice editions (same titles). I have examined the Spanish one printed by Georgio Bizzardo in 1609 from the Leon H. Elamleh Collection in the Sephardic Reference Room at Yeshiva University and the Hebrew one printed by Giovanni Caleoni in 1624 from the David Montezinos Collection in the Ets Haim Library of Amsterdam.

4. There is a copy in the Klau Library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. I thank its librarians for their cooperation in sending me that copy. Davidson (Thesaurus) did not trace either poem further back than Venice, 1780.

5. There are to my knowledge no separate Sephardic fast-day rituals before the 17th century. I have examined Sephardic Mahzorim (Books of Prayers for the Liturgical Year) published in Venice in 1544 and in 1584 (Hebrew) and the Spanish Libro de Oraciones, Ferrara, 1552.


11. Although the second hemistich of line 14 in the first poem and of line 12 in the second poem are identical in the Venice 1736 edition which is reproduced here, the reading of both hemistichs varies from one edition to another. The reading I have adopted for the translation (sebi'el'sibya) occurs in the second poem in the Venice 1780; Leghorn 1825, 1840; and Vienna 1856 editions. As it stands in the Venice 1736 edition the hemistich reads: “from a land of bondage into captivity,” which makes no sense in the first poem. The earliest edition of the first poem (Venice, 1638) gives the last word of the hemistich as sibya, corrected to sebiya in the Venice 1780, Pisa 1797 and later editions. According to this version, the entire verse should read: “I took you as exiles from the land of bondage into the Holy Land.” This also makes no sense. It is precisely the poetic confusion between the Holy Land and Spain which accounts for these variants.

12. On the other hand, even within the first poem spelling of place names changes from one edition to the other. For instance, Venice 1638, line 10, gives 'arakon. The same word in Venice 1736 reads 'ara'gon.

13. As stated above (note 5), they are not to be found in the Spanish translation which appeared in Ferrara in 1552. They are not in any subsequent separate editions of the Spanish translation of the fast-day ritual.

14. Both qinet on the expulsion from Spain may be found in the following editions which I have consulted: Venice 1736 (Ishac Foa); Leghorn, 1743 (Abraham Meldola); Venice, 1780 (Meshullam Ashkenazi Finzi); Pisa, 1797 (David Cezana); Leghorn, 1825 (Moses and Israel Palagi and Salomone Belforte); Leghorn, 1840 (Eliezer Menahem Ottolenghi); Vienna, 1844 (Franz, Edler von Schmid); Vienna, 1856, 1877, 1889 (J. Knoeplmacher); Leghorn, 1921 (Salomone Belforte); Vienna, 1931 (J. Schlesinger). (This last edition has been reprinted a number of times in Israel.) the one fastday ritual I have consulted which is accompanied by an Italian translation (Leghorn, 1845, Moses and Israel Palagi and Salomone Belforte) does not contain them.

I should like to express thanks to Dr. Marc D. Angel, for suggesting to me the subject of this essay and for his invaluable help with the analysis and translation of the poems. I should also like to thank Haham Solomon D. Sassoon for his excellent suggestions all of which I adopted.
From Bayonne to Bordeaux: Two Portuguese Letters of 1741

by Gérard Nahon

Editor's Foreword

Early in the 17th century, émigrés from the Iberian Peninsula established a Jewish congregation in Saint-Esprit, a suburb of Bayonne, in several towns near Bayonne and in Bordeaux. Services were held in private homes and makeshift synagogues. Until 1723 the Jewish presence in Southwestern France, although tolerated, was not officially recognized. Toward the end of the 17th century the community of Bayonne adopted the Hebraic designation of Kahal Kados Nephusoth Yeuda ("Holy Congregation Dispersed of Judah"). It had a reputation, during the 18th century, of relatively greater piety than the various synagogues of Bordeaux. The Bordeaux community, on the other hand, was supposedly more affluent than its Bayonne counterpart.

A number of scholars have claimed that Spanish, rather than Portuguese, was the exclusive Iberian language of the "Portuguese" New Christians (afterwards "Portuguese" Jews) who constituted the Bayonne and the Bordeaux communities. It is an established fact that the official language of these congregations was Spanish until their adoption of French, in contrast with Sephardic Amsterdam, where congregational business was carried out in Portuguese until the adoption of Dutch.

While working on his still unpublished thesis dealing with the Sephardim of Southwestern France, Monsieur Nahon encountered in the Departmental Archives of the Gironde two letters written in 1741 by Jacob Pereyra Brandon of Bayonne to David Lindo of Bordeaux. Both letters are written in Portuguese, albeit with an admixture of Spanish, as well as of French. These letters demonstrate that an important member of the Bayonne-Bordeaux communities used Portuguese for some personal correspondence. The two letters allow us not merely a glimpse of a relationship between individual Sephardim of Bayonne and Bordeaux during the 18th century, but they present a tableau of the often picturesque reality of Jewish life in these congregations. They are extremely precious items, inasmuch as the social and religious life of 18th-century French Sephardim is still practically unknown to Jewish historians. M. Gérard Nahon has graciously allowed The Sephardic Scholar to publish these letters for the first time, in advance of their publication as an appendix to his exhaustively researched doctoral thesis. In addition he has done fresh research on the author of the letters and has come up with fascinating data on Sephardic commercial enterprise in 18th-century France, an entirely new area of Jewish historical investigation. M. Gérard Nahon's article follows the annotated English translation, by the editors of The Sephardic Scholar, of the Portuguese letters. M. Gérard Nahon's article, in turn, is followed by the transcription of the full Portuguese text, accompanied by photographic reproductions of the original letters. We now present, in our English translation, the two letters from Jacob Pereyra Brandon of Bayonne to David Lindo of Bordeaux:

Bayonne, 19 September 1741

Mr. David Lindo

Dear Sir,

Until now I could not answer yours of the 13th instant, and since today is the eve of that most holy day (on which may the Lord seal you in the Book of Life), there is no time to say anything but that your beloved Lindot is in good health and asks you and his beloved mother for your blessing with that of God which may cover us all. The child already goes to the Hebrew School of Riby Daniel Albares Pereyra who is the best teacher that we have here, and he gives promise of making progress every day because he has inclination and a good memory to which care will be applied. While working on his still unpublished thesis dealing with the Sephardim of Southwestern France, Monsieur Nahon encountered in the Departmental Archives of the Gironde two letters written in 1741 by Jacob Pereyra Brandon of Bayonne to David Lindo of Bordeaux. Both letters are written in Portuguese, albeit with an admixture of Spanish, as well as of French. These letters demonstrate that an important member of the Bayonne-Bordeaux communities

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In the same school and with another teacher he is learning to read French, and after the Festivals I shall speak with the dancing master, who lives in front of Riby Daniel, and he is a good dancer, so that he may begin to instruct him. The boy loves to go to Congregation because he always "gets the bells" which I purchase for him for a modest sum. And since, besides his great cleverness, he endears himself, he always goes with some one of my sons.
Bayonne, 18 December 1741

Mr. David Lindo

Dear Sir,

I trust that you continue to enjoy good health in the company of Madame and the rest of the family to whom my wife and I commend ourselves. My wife has again come down with ague. May the Lord cure her according to her need.

Lindot is well and every day he endears himself more to all by his ways and affability. As I advised our friend Medina, he has already started to write. He says the semah and midah every day like a man and within a week they will put him to the parnases. He never misses a day at Congrega and says he is already a better Jew than all Bordeaux. May God make him His servant and may you obtain from him and the others great satisfactions.

The bearer of this letter will be, God willing, Riby Yeuda who was Haham of Alexandria and went to Amsterdam as emissary from Jerusalem. He is a person of great merits and he came recommended to me from Amsterdam. As he knew of your kindness towards me and the reputation of your good heart, he asked me for a letter of recommendation which I could not refuse him. Thus I entreat you to sponsor him before the Gentlemen parnases so that he be well attended, which I expect from your benevolence.

By the same Riby Yeuda I am sending you a package marked D.L, which contains seventeen veal sausages for your lady wife, which you will be pleased to accept and I shall be most happy that she may find them to her liking. As the said Haham is about to leave there is no time to write further. May God guard your life many years,

Your faithful servant,
Jacob Pereyra Brandon

Friend Torres is in good health. Last Friday he went to take from the customs the package of clothing for the said youth. He disbursed the carrying charges and duties, which I am paying him and shall charge you. He found one new shirt missing. This package certainly came at the right time. It must have remained through an oversight in that city. This is all for the present, and remain in obedience to you whose life may God keep many years,

Your faithful servant,
Jacob Pereyra Brandon
When a merchant from Bordeaux declared bankruptcy, his accounts and papers were delivered to the judicature, consular jurisdiction, or Parliament of Bordeaux. Sometimes all his papers, commercial or otherwise, were seized and deposited in the judicial archives. These documents, all grouped together, may be found at present in the Departmental Archives of the Gironde where they have recently been excellently catalogued, thus allowing scholars to do systematic research among these myriads of documents. Thanks to intelligent use of these documents, a number of important scholarly works have appeared concerning the careers of Bordeaux merchants of the first rank. In this storehouse I have searched for letters originating in Bayonne and addressed to Jewish merchants of Bordeaux. I have mainly studied the Gabriel d’Silva and the David Lindo collections. These correspondences allow us to deal with the relations between the two major Sephardic communities in pre-Revolution France. Indeed, certain of these letters contain matters of community and inter-community interest which may shed new light on French Sephardic history. The letters presented above in English translation and in the Portuguese original at the close of this article derive from the David Lindo collection. This collection probably entered the judicial archives after David Lindo, a Bordeaux merchant in wines and colonial wares, declared bankruptcy in 1742.

The author of the two letters, Jacob Pereyra Brandon, was the head of an important Bayonne family which flourished throughout the 18th century. His birthdate is not known. His father was Duarte Lopes Pereira and his mother’s name was Brandon. He was born in Vila Flor, Portugal. His wife, Rachel Rodrigues Brandon, died in 1751. The couple had at least thirteen children, seven boys (Moyzé, Samuel, Aaron, Salomon, Elie, Izacq, Abraham) and six girls (Sara, Ribea, Abigail, Judith, Hana, Mirian). Jacob Pereyra Brandon died, no doubt at a ripe old age, on February 18, 1752.

Jacob’s successful commercial career can be followed in great detail over a period of fifty years, one of the longest of all those known to us in the Bayonne Jewish community. He traded in colonial wares, imported and exported on a large scale, carried out banking activities and dealt in maritime credit and underwriting. He was the head of what was surely one of the most important business houses of Bayonne.

In 1696, when the bankrupt French treasury put “family heraldic arms” up for sale, Jacob Pereyra Brandon was “honored” with the obligatory purchase of a crest of gold with one side in crimson (“d’or à une face de gueules”). In 1698 he was assessed the
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ninth highest among Bayonne business men: 2,500 livres.14 On October 16, 1725, Jacob Pereyra Brandon gave his daughter Sara a dowry of 30,000 livres when she married Samuel Vaez Faro, a physician.15

He actively participated in the life of Congregation Nephousoth Yeuda. In 1721-2 he was a member of the Mahamad (Board of Trustees). His name, as Parnas Presidente, is the first of four dignitaries to whom Haham Ishac de Acosta dedicated his voluminous Conjeturas Sagradas sobre los Prophetas Primeros, printed in Leyden, the Netherlands, in 1721 or 1722 (see illustration). Pereyra Brandon and his colleagues must have exercised their functions for a number of terms, to judge by the words of the Haham: "haviendo V Mds. exercitado juntos su gobierno con general aplauso tan repetidas veces, que ya les viene a ser como Arte natural el regir este K.K. . . ." (since your Honors have exercised your government with general applause so many times, that the government of this Holy Congregation has already become as a natural art for you . . .)

I have found a splendidly engraved stone in the middle of the ninth row of the old part of Bayonne's Jewish cemetery which bears his initials and title: "J.P.B. PARNAS."17

The person to whom the two letters were addressed is less well known than their sender. The Lindo Collection has still not been properly studied.18 A Manoel Vaes de Lindo signed the marriage contract of Jacob Pereyra Brandon's daughter Sara.19 During the eighteenth century a Claudine Lindo converted to Catholicism at the age of 17, became a nun in the Convent of Madeleine in Bordeaux and received an annuity of 200 livres from the king.20 It appears that the family was Portuguese. Not only did Jacob Pereyra Brandon correspond in Portuguese with David Lindo, but the latter's wife's tombstone in the old Jewish cemetery of Bordeaux is the first one of only two out of 300 to bear a Hebrew and Portuguese inscription, the others all bearing Hebrew and Spanish or Hebrew and French ones.21

In the early 19th century the name Lindo was still considered to be "one of the most important Spanish and Portuguese names" of Bordeaux.22 It has not been possible, however, to establish a relationship between the Bordeaux Lindos and the famous 19th century Lindos of London and the West Indies.23 From the linguistic viewpoint the letters, although influenced by Spanish, as well as French, suggest that the native language of the writer was Portuguese.24 It is of course probable that Jacob Pereyra Brandon could have written Spanish with the same or greater ease, considering the proximity of Bayonne to Spain and his frequent business transactions with that country. He may have used Portuguese out of courtesy towards his correspondent, David Lindo, who, as we have seen, seems to have had some special predilection for this language. It would be interesting to compare Pereyra Brandon's Portuguese style and spelling with Lindo's, but no Portuguese document by David Lindo is presently available to me.

These two letters may also confirm the impressions of Haham Joseph David Azulay (1724-1806) who travelled a number of times from the Holy Land to Bayonne and Bordeaux, to the effect that the Judaism of Bayonne was more profound than that of Bordeaux.25 Why, after all, would young Lindo have been sent en pension to Bayonne to obtain a Jewish education? The boy remarks that his newly acquired religious practices had made him "a better Jew than all Bordeaux." Would the emissary from the Holy Land, had he not received Jacob Pereyra Brandon's recommendation, have been a priori less well received in Bordeaux than in Bayonne? Does the present of seventeen kasher sausages perhaps imply that the quality of kasher meat in Bordeaux was inferior to that of Bayonne, or even the absence of such meat in Bordeaux? These questions, suggested by the contents of the two letters from Bayonne to Bordeaux, point to the need for a comparative study of religious outlook and practices in the two great pre-Revolution Sephardic communities of France.

Notes

6. The eve of kipur 5502.
7. The Portuguese wish has the traditional plural vidas (lives) which corresponds to the idiomatic Hebrew plural hayim. Cf. H.P. Salomon,

8. The writer does not furnish the first name of the boy, whose last name he spells with a final “t” apparently as a French diminutive of endearment (cf. “Jeannot” for Jean). (Ed.)


10. A Jewish dancing master by the name of Quiros (first name unknown) was involved in 1759 in a quarrel with the municipal authorities of Bayonne regarding his right to live in the city itself, where most of his pupils resided, rather than in the “Jewish” suburb of Saint-Esprit across the Adour. Cf. Archives de Bayonne, GG 34; H. Léon, Histoire, etc., 67-8; A. Hertzberg, op. cit., 110.

11. This designation for the synagogue corresponds to the Hebrew term qahal. (Ed.) The congreaga here referred to was perhaps the private third-floor synagogue called “Brandone,” to which the first specific reference occurs in 1752. Cf. H. Léon, Histoire, etc., 239; Hertzberg, op. cit., 201.

12. Pereyra Brandon uses the Hebrew word with a Portuguese plural suffix “haims” which stands for ‘es hayim (tree of life), the official designation for the twin silver bells used for crowning the scroll of the tora. These are also sometimes referred to as rimonim (pomegranates). In Spanish and Portuguese synagogues it is customary to give small boys the misvot of removing and replacing the “bells” and the “band” of the tora, before and after the reading of the weekly portion. (Ed.)

13. Such “purchase” is unknown in the Spanish and Portuguese synagogues of Northern Europe and the Americas. Perhaps the misvot in Bayonne were sold at auction, as is customary in Italian and Oriental Sephardic synagogues. (Ed.)

14. Customs duties (or droits d’octroi: city tolls) were levied in pre-Revolution France on all goods shipped from one city to another. This abuse was one of those done away with by the French Revolution. (Ed.)

15. The word sagal (youth) is here interpreted in the Spanish sense of zagal. (Ed.)

16. “Midah” stand for “amida” (silent supplication). If one may judge by this transcription, Pereyra Brandon’s knowledge of Hebrew would hardly appear profound. (Ed.)


19. This familiar form of the Hebrew word parnas (trustee) with a Portuguese plural suffix was also popular in Sephardic Amsterdam. (Ed.)

20. The Bordeaux parnasim, named on March 19, 1741, were George Francia, Phelipe Lopes and one Brandon. Cf. Archives départementales de la Gironde, Série J, Registre de la Nation Portugaise, no. 84, f° 23.

Her name is the first in the Jewish Burial Register (Enregistrement des Enterrements): "Le 26e mai est décédée demoiselle Rachel Rodrigues Brandon, femme de Jacob Pereyra Brandon, elle fut enterree le 27e dito au simitérre de la Nation Juive."

9. Various notarized deeds permit us to reconstruct this numerous progeny. We also have vital statistics concerning their death. A summons is presented to Jacob's son Izaq Brandon on March 13, 1720. (Arch. Pyr. Atlant., III E 4630). We have a marriage contract of October 16, 1725 between Moise Vaez-Faro and Sara Pereyre-Brandon, "fille de Jacob Pereyre-Brandon et Rachel du même nom" (ibid., III E 4635). On November 4, 1760 Abraham de Jacob Pereyra Brandon made his last will and testament in favor of his brothers Moyse, Samuel, Salomon, Elie, his sisters Sara, Rica, Judith, Abigail and Hana (ibid., III E 4672). He died the same day (Archives de Bayonne, 281). Ribca, Abigail, Judith and Hana made their last will and testament on November 28, 1765 (Arch. Pyr. Atlant., III E 4566). Another daughter, Mirian, died on May 2, 1755 (Enreg. Enterrements, 261). Jacob Pereyra Brandon made his testament before Maitre Laurent Delissalde, royal notary, around 1751. It is mentioned in the one made by his other daughters on November 28, 1765 (ibid., III E 4566) and is probably extant in the file of Maitre Delissalde (ibid., III E 4177).

10. Cf. Archives de Bayonne, 243. Concerning Jacob Pereyra Brandon's children a number of facts have come to light. Through Abraham's last will and testament it appears he was a merchant and lived a long time in Amsterdam. Salomon Pereira Brandon was married to Ribca Vaz-Faro who gave him a daughter named Rachel on July 5, 1761 (ibid., 41). He died on February 24, 1782 (ibid., 328). Elie Pereira Brandon married Rachel Nounes on October 5, 1709 (ibid., 129). She gave him eight children: Jacob (September 13, 1760), Rachel (December 23, 1762), Samuel (February 10, 1765), Sipora (July 26, 1767), a female child whose name is not mentioned (October 7, 1769), Abraham (November 21, 1773) and two more daughters whose names are not given (January 30, 1775 and November 15, 1776) (ibid., 39, 46, 53n, 57, 63, 72, 77, 81). Elie Péreira Brandon died on July 6, 1788 (cf. Arch. Bayonne, Suppl. GG Israélites 17, 1.) He must have been born around 1722, since his death certificate specifies that he was "about sixty-six years old." The last wills of Ribca, Abigail, Judith and Hana indicate that they were professional seamstresses. Hana died on October 6, 1782 and Judith on November 6, 1783 (Enreg. Enterrements, 323 and 325).

11. On January 18, 1695, he lent 500 livres "à la grosse aventure" to Pierre Hirigoyen, captain of the Ship Saint Pierre at 50% (Arch. Pyr. Atlant., III E 4103). On June 1 of the same year he received power of attorney from Giacomo Colombo, the captain of a Venetian ship (ibid., III E 4031). On February 6, 1705, he protested a bill for 258 livres. On April 1, 1705, together with the Bayonne merchants Léon Rol, Jean Pinkener and Bertrand Fourans, his factor George Cardone addressed a bill to Francis Louis France of Bordeaux. On April 18, 1705, it appears that, by a bill of April 24, 1704, he sold merchandise to Spanish merchants for 170 livres. On April 28, he addressed a bill to the Letang heirs for a credit of 300 livres. On August 31, he was in partnership with Anthony Alvarez to deliver West Indian cocoa to Spaff, in exchange for 86 bales of wool. On June 30 he protested a bill for 1,200 livres (cf., for all the bills of 1705, ibid., III E 4428).

On September 5, 1715, he replaced Abraham Atias de Neyra as official receiver for the creditors of Abraham Solla (ibid., III E 3789). On December 16, 1715, he was the receiver for the creditors of the widow Pinkeset and of van Oosteram and he received a bill from Menace Hazevedo, a Bordeaux merchant (ibid., III E 4439). On October 13, 1717, as a "merchant banker," he gave power of attorney to Joseph Garcia Vaquedano Tejado of Lombrèes in Castile (ibid., III E 4627). On October 14, 1718, he received a bill from Domingo de Guisla, merchant of La Palma, Canary Islands (ibid., III E 4628). On November 28, 1719, he gave power of attorney for a bill drawn on Amsterdam by David Perlere Brandon (ibid., III E 4629). On March 13, 1720, he protested a bill on Lisbon (ibid., III E 4630). On January 26, Jacques Alexandre summoned him to collect 3,700 livres, 4 sols. On March 21, 1725, the latter summoned him to collect 306 livres, 6 sols, 6 deniers (ibid., III E 4635). On January 19, 1725, in his capacity as a banker he was the receiver for some of the creditors of Abraham Solla (ibid., III E 4136). On November 10, 1725, he protested a bill for 1,217 livres, 15 sols, against Pierre Gontaires. On November 27, 1725, he lent "à la grosse aventure" 1,700 livres at 25% on a ship named the Saint Baptiste de Bayonne, leaving for Martinique (ibid., III E 4448). On January 4, 1745, he gave procuration to Maître Alboize, Attorney General and Seneschal of Carcassonne, to recuperate sums owed by one Bertrand. On September 30 of that year he gave power of attorney to Joseph Descasques, notary at San Sebastián in Spain (ibid., III E 4467).

12. The loans "à la grosse aventure" were, in fact, a form of maritime credit. Among the sums due to him I might mention 4,900 livres owed by one Marie Mendy, on March 22, 1723 (cf. Bibliotheque Municipale de Bordeaux, factum 395-2; cf. Z. Szajkowski, op. cit., no. 766, 70). His activity as an underwriter is attested to by a brief (factum) against Jean Escoubet, a ship captain from La Rochelle, after 1719 (cf. ibid., and Z. Szajkowski, op. cit., no. 1091, 95, also no. 1092).

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14. Arch. Nat., E. 370611, no. 289, f° 1v. The assessment was, however, mitigated on May 18, 1700 to 800 livres, 6 sols, 8 deniers. Cf. Arch. Nat. E. 370611, no. 198, f° 5v. Other Portuguese Jews of Bayonne were taxed far more heavily, e.g., Louis Mendes Dacosta, 2,000 livres. Cf. doc. cit., f° 4v.


17. The stone was lying next to the tomb of Yshak Gomes Brito, dated 19 de 7 [tern] bre 1741. The assessment was, however, mitigated on May 18, 1700 to 833 livres.

18. Arch. Nat. E. 370611, no. 198, f° 5v. Other Portuguese Jews of Bayonne were taxed far more heavily, e.g., Louis Mendes Dacosta, 2,000 livres. Cf. doc. cit., f° 4v.


24. The frequent substitution of a b for a v in the text of the letters, e.g., bespora, libro, bay, abansando, bolbeu, Albares, bitela, etc., is typical not only of Spanish speech but also of the Portuguese of northern Portugal. Similar substitutions of b for v may be found in the Portuguese writings of Amsterdam Sephardim, e.g., Menasseh Ben Israel, Theouro dos Dinim, Amsterdam, 1645. (Ed.)


Appendix: Original Portuguese Text of Letters

Archives départementales de la Gironde, 7 B 1595

S' David Lindo
S' meu,

On passado naõ pude responder a de vmd de 13ª deste é como oje he besbora de tam sagra[d]o dia (em q[e] o 5[enho] cele a vmd em libro de vidãs) naõ a tempo do deser outra cousa se naõ que seu querido Lindo ficá de saude. é pede a vmd é a sua querida muy sua bensão com a de Deus que nos cubra a todos. D[it]ª menino ja bay a escola hebraica de Riby Daniel Albares Pereyra, que he ó millor mestre que aqui temos, é promete irá abansando todos os dias; por ther incrinasão é boa memoria ao que se apricará cuidado.

Na mesma escola é por outro mestre, aprende a leçt francês, é depois de festas falarey ao da dansa que vive de fronte de d[it]ª Riby Daniel, é he bom dansarim, p[ar]ª que comense a insinalo.

D[it]ª rapas gosta muito de ir a Congrega por seu sempre ther os hipocres gue nos cubra a todos. D[it]ª menino ja bay a escola hebraica de Riby Daniel Albares Pereyra, que he ó millor mestre que aqui temos, é promete irá abansando todos os dias; por ther incrinasão é boa memoria ao que se apricará cuidado.

O amigo Torres fica bom, 6ª feira foy retirar da douana o pa­que[ett]e de roupa p[ar]ª d[it]ª sagal; é desembolsou o porte é direitos, é em llos pagando cargarey a vmd; achou de menos huma camisina nova; é pois 0 tal paquete virha ao dever; he preciso que por es­quecimento se dobrá fixado em essa, q[ue] he tudo 0 que de presente se ofresse é ficar a obed [ienç]a de vmd cuja v[id]ª g[uard]ª Deus nu[i]tos a[nos]

Muy servidor de vmd
Jacob Per[eyr]ª Brandon

Bayonna é 19 de 7 [tem] bre 1741
Lindot fica bom, é cada dia se faz mais querer de todos, por seus modos é afabilidade, é segum avisey ao amig)0 Medina, ja comensou a escrever; é dias a semah é midah todos os dias como hum homem, é dentro 8 dias ó poram de parah, não falta ninhum dia a congrega; é dias que ja he millor judeu que todo Bord[eu]b o fasa seu servo é que vmd6 veijam delle é dos demais grandes gostos:

O dador da presente será medjian)6 D[eu]b o s[enho] Riba Yeuda que foj H[a]H[am] de Alexandria é passou a Amst[erd]m por saliah de Yeruslaim; hé pessoa de todos meritos, é me beyo recomendado de d[it]6 Amst[erd]m é como soibe a mesced que vmd me faz é a reputasaõ de seu bom coração me pediu carta de recomendadaõ, o que naõ me pude impedir, é assim lhe suprigo se sirva patrocinio com os s[enho]6 parases p[ar] que baya bem despachado o que espero de sua benevolensia.


Muy servidor de vmd
Jacob Per[eyr]6 Brandon.

Don Quixote, Converso
Barbara Hillson Abramowitz

Examining the area of double meanings in Chapter 1, Part I of the Quixote, this paper builds on the work of Leo Spitzer (linguistic perspectivism), and América Castro (racial implications). Cervantes himself is the third authority. He clearly explains his method of intentionally including multiple meanings in the names created in this chapter (as we shall see in the case of Rocinante). And he directs us to seek more levels of meaning (as we shall in the case of Don Quixote).

This study, therefore, analyzes the etymological, literary, historical, and sociological aspects of the toponym de la Mancha. Documentary evidence discovered in these disciplines, when added to a careful reading of the text, support the conclusion that this part of the name revealed most specifically Don Quixote’s Jewish origins.

Cervantes intended to portray his immortal hero as a converso, a descendant of converts from Judaism to Christianity—also called a new Christian. He sketches quickly the picture of a guant, poor, low­echelon noble (an hidalgo) who is verging on fifty. He mentions the gentleman’s dress, eating habits, and daily activities before his inordinate addiction to reading novels of chivalry. The plot is summed up briefly, and the rest of the chapter deals with names, the focus of our attention.

Cervantes starts out in the very opening line by refusing to name the hero’s hometown: “In a certain village of La Mancha, whose name I do not wish to recall . . . 3 To the question of “Where?” we get a partial answer: somewhere in a region of Spain called La Mancha. But the next words do tell us when the action took place. No ha mucho tiempo ‘not long ago’ means a short time before 1605, the publication date of Part I. We know, then, that we are dealing with Inquisition Spain. And from the scholarship of recent years, starting with América Castro, we know, too, that sixteenth century Spanish society was obsessed with the concept of limpieza de sangre.

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'pure, old Christian blood'. Who had it and who did not, determined the professional and social structure of the country.4

The novel, then, is set at a time when all positions of prestige and power in the government, universities, and the church were open only to those who could prove the 'clean blood' of themselves and their forebears. Stephen Gilman cites the case, for example, of a candidate for a canonry in the Cathedral of Toledo, who submitted to the customary genealogical examination of his qualifications in 1616. Even a suspicion of converso lineage could finish aspirations to this most lucrative and exclusive of posts. An enemy accused him of having a blood relationship with the converso family of Fernando de Rojas, author of La Celestina. Two hundred and twenty seven witnesses were called and over 800 folios filled with their testimony. Such was the social insanity of the time.5

Because of this preoccupation with blood purity, a unique class struggle emerged. Humble peasant stock, it turns out, was the least tainted blood line in all of Spain. It was common knowledge that nobles, from King Ferdinand on down (his grandmother, Juana Henriquez, was a conversa), were intermarried with wealthy conversos. The haughty posture of the villanos 'peasants' in the Golden Age theatre, the facility with which they confront their noble overlords, and their obsession with honor is thus explained. Pure old Christian blood was their claim to superiority over the new Christians.

It is essential to keep in mind this historical background because the world of the Quijote is rooted as firmly in the contemporary society of the author as it is in his creative imagination.6 Understanding the converso problem helps us estimate the importance of the question 'Who?' and of the author's evasive answer to it. Cervantes teases us instead of telling us directly the hero's name: 'They say that his surname was Quijada or Quesada — for there is some difference amongst authors who write about this case, although by reasonable conjecture we can take it that he was called Quejana.'

The imprecision as to the protagonist's name, added to the glaring omission of genealogical data (a standard procedure in all novels before this one), leads us to think that the author was heeding the warning in one of Quevedo's sonnets: 'Don't seek out your ancestors — you may end up burned.'7 The Quijada/Quesada/Quejana vacillation is viewed by Americo Castro as a veiled allusion to name changes and anonymity pursued by fearful new Christians. It is probable, he maintains, that the instability of the names hints ironically at the desire to avoid those names exposed to disgrace in the churches by order of the Inquisition.8

Accepting Castro's analysis, the picture of the anti-hero is thus complete — an old, poor, ridiculous converso. He dreams of becoming a hero. From too much reading, the narrative continues, and too little sleep, his brain dries up, he loses his wits, and decides to become a knight errant in order to win eternal name and fame.

He turns to the business of inventing new names for his horse and for himself, a name suitable for the noble steed of the valorous knight. This project took twelve days! He spent four days pondering what name to give his horse, described by the author as a rocin flaco 'a skinny old nag'. "It would be wrong, he reflected, for the horse of so famous a knight, a horse so good in himself, to be without a famous name."

Most importantly, he wanted the new name to tell who the horse was before and who he is now. Cervantes describes in some detail Don Quijote's creative process:

So, after many names he formed, erased, rejected, added, took apart, and remade in his memory and imagination, he finally decided to call him Rocinante, a name which seemed to him high-sounding, pleasing to the ears, and meaningful in that it expressed what he had been when he was a plain ordinary nag, before what he now is, which is the first and foremost of all nags in the world.

Insisting on preserving within the name the true nature of the beast, Don Quijote wedes the unflattering description rocin 'nag' to a grandiloquent suffix -ante. But Cervantes tells us explicitly, with evident burlesque intention, that Don Quijote really had in mind the adverb antes 'before'. However, he stretches the word play one step further, and the suffix/adverb is also meant to have an adjectival force (first) so that, in effect he is the foremost horse of the kind he was formerly. So much meaning was packed into one component of one part of one name.

Though immersed in his illusory world, Don Quijote demonstrates that he is not out of touch with reality completely. He did not intend to ignore nor rewrite the history of his rocin flaco. It was no elite thoroughbred, and Don Quijote appears anxious to preserve an allusion to that humble, or perhaps infamous, origin. And he accomplished this by bending language to suit his purpose.

The same ingenuity is evident in the creation of his own name. And we find a similar awareness of self, a similar effort to have the invented name incorporate many levels of meaning, including a reference to who he was before he became a famous knight errant.
He spent, therefore, another eight days thinking about it, the text tells us. And finally he decided to call himself "Don Quijote, and that is no doubt why the authors of this true history . . . assumed that his name must have been Quijada and not Quesada, as other authorities would have it."

So, Don Quijote created his knightly name thinking of his "real" one. The Quij- of Quijote and the Quij- of Quijada are, of course, identical. And the Quij- of Quijote, in the same way as the rocin- of Rocinante, points to who he was before.

In addition, Castro believes that with the name Quijada Cervantes was alluding directly to the converso origin of the protagonist, or that he had in mind a new Christian character. The name Quijada was an historical one, of a "known" converso family which figured in Cervantes' private life.9

Quijote was also an appropriate name because it fulfilled his desire to evoke the chivalric world he was entering. Quijote is, of course, a common noun denoting a piece of armor, the thigh guard, or cuisse. The suffix -ote has a chivalric ring, too. It reminds us of that famous knight called in Spanish Lanzarote. However, at the same time, the -ote serves an ironic function since it is a comic suffix normally used for contemptible and ridiculous things. And a tension is created between the belittling ending and exalted title that precedes the name.

As to the don in the name, by the mid-sixteenth century, complete abuse of the title was rife and its indiscriminate use led eventually to its rejection by many noble families. The class structure of the Middle Ages was breaking down. A new middle class was emerging and it was comprised of many conversos. The confrontation of old and new Christians was growing more militant as everyone was grasping for honra 'honor'. The arrogation of the title don and the pretentious name were symptomatic of that crumbling world order, and of the tensions of that "age in conflict" as Americano Castro calls it. Other characters in the Quijote show an awareness of the controversy over the don and believe that its adoption by Don Quijote is illegitimate.10

Don Quijote continues creating his new name:

Pero, acordándose que el valerosos Amadís no sólo se había contentado con llamarse Amadís a secas, sino que añadió el nombre de su reino y patria, por hacerla famosa, y se llamó Amadís de Gaula, así quiso, como buen caballero, añadir al suyo el nombre de la suya y llamarse "don Quijote de la Mancha," con que, a su parecer, declaraba muy al vivo su linaje y patria, y la honraba con tomar el sobrenombre della.

But, reminding himself that the valorous Amadís had not been content with calling himself plain Amadís, but that he added the name of his kingdom and homeland (reino y patria) in order to make that patria famous, and called himself Amadís of Gaul; so, he decided like a good knight to add to his own name that of his patria and call himself don Quijote of La Mancha, with which it seemed to him, he clearly proclaimed his lineage and homeland (linaje y patria), and honored the patria by taking his surname from it.

Imitating the famous knight, Amadís of Gaul, Don Quijote has added a toponym to his surname. We have already noted the discord between the title don and the suffix -ote. The disparity between Gaul and La Mancha sustains the parody and underscores the hidalgo's mad concern for doing things como buen caballero 'like a good knight'.11

The addition de la Mancha, however, indicates not only where our hero is from, but also from whom. In the quasi-parallel phrases reino y patria/linaje y patria, the striking substitution of linaje 'lineage' for reino 'kingdom' makes us pause. Whereas de la Mancha clearly proclaimed his homeland, which is obvious, it also, he says, clearly proclaimed his lineage, which is curious.

Beyond the geographical and literary significance of this part of his invented name, there remains the sociological or historical. Mancha, literally "stain"; figuratively "dishonor", had a pejorative racial meaning which was widespread at the time of Cervantes. We have found that mancha was a common designation of the drop of Jewish (or Moorish) blood in one's veins and therefore of new Christian lineage. It signalled the absence of limpieza de sangre. Dictionaries, literature, historical documents, genealogical and theological treatises of the time all contain abundant examples of this usage of la mancha. Here are some which I came across.

The Covarrubias dictionary in 1610 defined mancha: 'Latin macula 'spot', whatever falls on clothes or a surface which changes and spoils its own color. By allusion, it signifies all which tarnishes and dishonors whatever of yours was good, such as mancha de un linaje 'stain of a lineage'.'12

The Enciclopedia Universal, under the mancha entry, lists: No es mancha de judio. It is a popular expression meaning that
whatever the infamy or dishonor may be, it is not as bad as that of being a Jew; i.e., “it is only a trifling thing” (Cassell’s).

For Américo Castro, Cervantes’ deep and moving references to limpieza de sangre and to lineage are a key to understanding the whole work (Los castizismos . . . , p. 100). In addition to Castro, Caro Baroja, Albert Sicroff, Domínguez Ortiz, Edward Glaser, Stephen Gilman and others have documented extensively the frequency of the insistence on the theme of converso lineage in Spanish literature of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. From popular poetry (coplas del provincial), to Quevedo, to books of jokes on the theme, the subject is treated. And the word mancha appears with regularity in this regard.

In the Golden Age theatre, we often find the literary medium which best echoes the voice of the people and the state of mind of the nation. In Guillén de Castro’s Don Quijote de la Mancha, honor and racially clean blood are equated. A peasant girl says to the Marquis who is courting her: “How would it be for you to manchar ‘contaminate’ your royal blood with mine?” And he replies: “Since the mancha of your blood is of the soil and not of the [Inquisition] fire, it will never offend my blood.”

In Lope de Vega’s plays the racially pure rustic boldly confronts the “tainted” nobility. In his famous plea before the king and queen, Lope’s Peribañez proudly declares: “I am a man,/although of the peasant class,/of clean, pure blood/never manchada [‘tainted’] by Jewish or Moorish blood.” In Lope’s Laurel de Apolo we are told that in the Biscayan mountains “Faith, blood, and loyalty were guarded, pure and clean and not manchada [‘sullied’]; maintained purer than snow.”

Aside from the peasant, only the Negro sees himself as uniquely free from the stigma of the mancha. Quevedo has a Negro play with the words and concepts: “Why don’t the whites consider that if one of us is an ink blot ‘bordón’ among them, one of them is probably a stain ‘mancha’ among us.”

Everyone else lived in fear of the mancha — either of having it, or being accused of having it, or needing to prove not having it. The Inquisition had spies in every city, town, and hamlet spreading fear and alarm. Informers often saw a chance to appropriate jobs, money, and titles belonging to the impure. Mateo Alemán, author of the 1599 picaresque novel, Guzmán de Alfarache (and a converso himself), expresses his anxiety in the chapter in which Guzmán soliloquizes against the vanities of honra ‘honor’: [‘Oh hap-

py art thou, carefree one . . . without fear of the mancha . . . Far removed from law suits, oblivious of legal proofs, free from false witnesses . . .’ (II, 4, p. 81).]

In addition to the literature of the Golden Age, historical documents also reveal how deeply ingrained was the concept and word mancha in the Spanish mentality. Caro Baroja reports that a letter written by Blanco White in 1798 shows the importance which was given even then to being “an old Christian, clean, unmixed and to lineage are a key to understanding the whole work (Los castizismos . . . , p. 100). In addition to Castro, Caro Baroja, Albert Sicroff, Domínguez Ortiz, Edward Glaser, Stephen Gilman and others have documented extensively the frequency of the insistence on the theme of converso lineage in Spanish literature of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. From popular poetry (coplas del provincial), to Quevedo, to books of jokes on the theme, the subject is treated. And the word mancha appears with regularity in this regard.

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When Don Quixote tells us that by adding de la Mancha to his name he clearly proclaimed both his homeland and his lineage, he is in effect calling himself “Don Quixote, Con verso, or “Don Quixote of the Tainted Blood.” With this kind of inheritance, the mad knight sallies forth into the country-side of sixteenth century Spain, armed with the ideals of chivalry and with the illusion that good deeds are worth more than good blood.

NOTES

1. See Leo Spitzer, “Linguistic Perspectivism in the Don Quijote” in his Linguistics and Literary History (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948). Spitzer studied Cervantes’ use of proper names; the instability and variety of the names given to certain characters (and the variety of etymological explanations offered for these names). Ultimately, he connects Cervantes’ linguistic ambivalences and his general spirit of relativism which has been recognized by most critics as characteristic of the novel.

Cervantes’ refusal to make a choice of one name (and one etymology) is deliberate, conditioned by his desire to show the different aspects under which the character in question may appear to others. He examines other linguistic details such as common nouns and phrases, and sees them as further evidence of this relativistic attitude of the author.

Cervantes consistently offers multiple perspectives and possibilities for the given names and words that he uses. This linguistic tolerance led Spitzer to conclude that perspectivism informs the structure of the novel as a whole, we find it in Cervantes’ treatment of plot and characters, of ideological themes, as well as in his attitude of distantness toward the reader. But the unity behind the perspectivism is the novelist-overlord. The only truth on which the reader may rely in the Quijote is the will of the artist who chose to break up a multifold reality into different perspectives. Cervantes uses linguistic perspectivism, Spitzer says, in order to assert his own creative freedom.

Américo Castro starts with the same preliminary observations as Spitzer, but, based on his own theories about the historical reality of Counter-Reformation Spain, establishes a connection between linguistic details and the whole work which add up to a completely different assessment of its historical significance. It is the role of the author as artist-dictator which captures Spitzer’s attention. It is the author as artist-verso which captures Castro’s. Castro believes that the Quijote was an invention made possible because Cervantes was a new Christian who lived and wrote in an age characterized by conflict between old and new Christians. See his La realidad de España 3rd. ed. (Mexico: Orwus, 1966); also De la edad conflictiva: El drama de la honra (Madrid: Taurus, 1961); Cervantes y los casticismos españoles (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1966). In this book, Castro states that a structural analysis of the work reveals that both Cervantes and his major character are new Christians (p. 164).

The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History (Berkley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1971).

2. The first and final lines of the chapter both contain the word nombre ‘name’. Textual citations are from the Martín de Riquer edition of El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha (Barcelona, 1944), 2 vols., 1, 1, pp. 35-40. English translations, unless otherwise noted in the text are by Barbara Abramovitz.

3. “En un lugar de la Mancha de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme…” (1, Ch. 1, p. 35). Commentators have explained this famous salvo in terms of the author’s intent, his style, and the great themes of the whole work. Some have emphasized the folkloristic quality and poetic atmosphere of the opening words. María Rosa Lida de Malkiel claims it is a simple story-telling formula as old as Herodotus and as modern as Boccaccio. She explains the troubling no quiero acordarme ‘I don’t wish to recall’ as a simple variant of the usual no me acuerdo ‘I don’t recall’. See her “De cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme,” RFH, I - (1939), 167-171.

Francisco Rodríguez Marin (Quijote ed. [Madrid: 1947], 10 vols., Appendix VI, vol. IX, pp. 76-84, and vol. I, p. 13, n. 5) discovered the very phrase En un lugar de la Mancha ‘in a certain village of La Mancha’ in an anonymous romance ‘ballad’. He even conjectures that Cervantes may have been the author.

But it was Cervantes himself who insisted that omitting the name of the town was intentional. In his concluding words of Don Quijote, Part II, written ten years after Part I, he says in jest that the original author’s purpose was to keep alive a contest among the villages of La Mancha to claim Don Quijote for its native son. As a result, no less than nine towns have been proclaimed the very one that Cervantes meant. Esquivias, the town where Cervantes married and lived for a while, currently is in the lead. Luis Astrana Marin is among those who give an autobiographical explanation for the reason why Cervantes didn’t want to remember the name of the place. He says that because Cervantes is dealing with a live model known to residents of Esquivias, he is merely showing good taste in suppressing the name of the town. See his Vida de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (Madrid, 1952), IV, 25-26.

The imprecision relative to the place of Don Quijote’s origin and name makes Casaldueño suspect that at that point the satire on chivalric literature begins. See Joaquín Casaldueño, “Explicando la primera frase del Quijote,” BH, 37 (1934), 146-148. Also in his Sentido y forma del Quijote (Madrid, 1949), p. 45.


The Spain of de Rojas

Barbara Hillson Abramowitz

Christian identity (this would parallel their adoption of super-Christian names, such as those parodied in Chapter 1 of Quevedo’s El Buscón: “Clemente Pablo, Aldonza de San Pedro, Diego de San Juan, Andrés de San Cristobal” (La realidad histórica, p. 361; 1954 ed., p. 514).


There may be a further chivalric allusion in the etymological meaning of the common noun mancha. An ancient military meaning of mancha was ‘lance’ or part of the cuirass. Seen from this etymological perspective, our hero’s name could be translated something like “Don Thigh-Guard of the Lance” or “Don Cuisse of the Cuirass.” An important piece of early Spanish literature, El libro de Alexandre uses it this way (See ex. in Enciclopedia universal [Madrid, 1926], 32, 709).

On this same page, another ancient etymology of mancha is given, which is one Cervantes may have intended. The origin of the geographic denomination Mancha is the Arabic manxa, a word which means tierra seca ‘dried-up land’. The Arabs called La Manxa that region of Spain which was very arid. And we should also recall that the gentleman who lived there, and who took its name as part of his own, lost his wits and imagined himself a famous knight errant because his brain had dried up (se le secó el celebro [1, Ch. 1, p. 37]). There well may be, then, in the toponym de La Mancha an allusion to the mad knight whose brain was a dried-up as the land he lived on, causing his name to be all the more significant.

The theory that insanity resulted from a physiological drying-up process was propounded by the sixteenth century Spanish physician, Huarte de San Juan. Otis Green has demonstrated the undeniable influence of Huarte de San Juan on Cervantes in “El ingenioso hidalgo,” HR, 25 (1957), 175-193.

10. Americo Castro attributes the beginning of the extension of don and doña to the concern of numerous fifteenth century conversos with their new
The Sephardic Scholar


16. Quoted in Rodríguez Martín 1947 ed. of the Quijote, VII, 80, n. 7.

17. Quoted by Mario Castro, De la edad conflictiva, p. 106.


20. Tizón de la nobleza; memorial de los linajes, attributed to Cardinal Francisco y Bobadilla, ed. Antonio Luque y Vicens (Madrid, 1849).

21. "Discurso acerca de la justicia y buen gobierno de España en los estatutos de limpieza de sangre; y si conviene o no alguna limitación en ella." Quoted by A. Sicroff, Les controverses... p. 203.

Fray Salcúcio complained to the Grand Inquisitor that the enforcement of absurd "blood purity statutes" had led Europeans to believe that all Spaniards were of Jewish descent and to call them all "marranos." For more on this, see I.S. Révah, "La controverse sur les statuts de pureté de sang, un document inédit: Relation y consulta del cardenal G[uévara sobre el negocio de fray Augustín Salcúcio (Madrid: 13 agosto 1600), BH, 73 (1971), 263-306.

22. The title of the first German translations of the Quijote reflect the "stained" meaning of mancha. In the editions of 1621, 1648, and 1669 de la Mancha was translated aus Fleckenland 'from stain land'. Published in Frankfurk, edited by Thomas Matthias Götzen, Don Kichote de la Manzhscha [apparently a transliteration] Das ist: JUNCKER HARNISCH AUSZ FLECKENLAND [apparently a translation; it is the main title, in heavy type centered on the frontispiece]. The 1683 and subsequent editions read: Don Quixote von Mancha. See Manuel Henrich, Iconografia de las ediciones el Quijote (Barcelona: Henrich, 1925), i, p. xvii; III, pp. 492, 493, 494 ff.; P. 501 ff. I am grateful to Raimundo Lida for suggesting this to me.

The Psychological Aspects of Sephardic Identity

by Metin B. Sevilya, M.D.

The Jewish people are made up of two main groups: the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim. As a symbol, these two groups together can be characterized as a pure gold disk, one face of which shows the Sephardim, the other the Ashkenazim. The Sephardim and the Ashkenazim are thus the two faces of the same pure gold disk. However, as a Sephardic Jew, I am going to discuss the identity of the Sephardim, the group to which I am proud to belong.

Unity of Man

Modern science tends to stress resemblances rather than differences among nations. When it comes to discussing the different groups in one nation having a common ancestry, a common history and the same religion, the stress should naturally fall more and more on resemblances, common goals and aspirations, all of which unite them as one people. If during twenty centuries of history, one group (either Sephardim or Ashkenazim) may appear to be superior to the other, or inferior to the other, this is because at times one group has lived in an unfavorable environment or has been out of touch with the main stream of civilization; otherwise, Jewish people are one united people.

Identity-Identical

In genetics, monozygotic (arising from one egg), as opposed to dizygotic (arising from two different eggs) refers to those species that are going to be identical. Thus we are referring to sameness and continuity.

When we speak in terms of psychology, we refer to something other than genetic identity. When a person incorporates within

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himself a mental picture of an object (a person) and then thinks, feels and acts in the same way as the original object (person) thinks, feels and acts, the process is called *identification*. The process is entirely unconscious. Identification is the most primitive method of recognizing external reality.

During this process of identification, a phenomenon of utmost importance must occur. For an individual to identify with an object (a person) he must love or admire the object (person). Otherwise, he would not want to be like that person, since one cannot identify with someone he dislikes. So here too, when we speak of identity, we are referring psychologically to a sense of sameness and continuity.

What are the traits, characteristics, skills of a person that gives his identity? This is what I am going to discuss now. In this way, perhaps we will be able to explain and understand better the concept of *identity crisis*, something we hear very often nowadays. Then I shall also attempt to discuss *individual identity* versus *group identity*.

In discussing *individual identity*, we must begin by asking ourselves what are the characteristics that give a person his own identity. It starts with his given name, his surname, his sex, body image, color of his skin, his race (such as Caucasian, Black, Yellow, etc.). Then come his country of birth, his nationality, and finally we come to his acquired skills and particular characteristics such as his maternal language, his religion, food habits, traditions (including superstitions), his behavior patterns, i.e., being generous or miserly, being a kleptomaniac or a pathological liar, handsome, ugly, perverse, homosexual, gamblers, alcoholic, drug addict etc. In psychiatric nomenclature, all these different traits and habits constitute “personality traits.” If these traits become exaggerated, appear anti-social, go against the moral code of our society, we call them “personality disorders.”

Referring to *group identity*, it is absurd, for example, to identify Sephardic Jews with *yaprakes-dolmades* (stuffed vine leaves), or with the pumpkin seed eating habit, which unqualified people often seem to enjoy doing. It is equally absurd to describe Sephardic men as those who walk on the street with their wives always following them a few steps behind. These remarks are stereotypes resulting either out of prejudice or ignorance and only serve to ridicule the people who make them.

The problem of identity is a very complicated one and very deep-seated in the personality, and the characteristics of identity are not so easy to define in such simple terms. Pumpkin seed eaters, herring or pickle eaters, sunflower seed eaters, etc., are not specific traits of any group of people and cannot be used to identify them. These are subjective neighborhood comments and nothing more. As a matter of fact, the significance of the Sephardic man walking on the street ahead of his wife and children, has nothing whatever to do with the analogy that is drawn in this country, to the Blacks in the South (hopefully in the past) who have had to sit in the back of the bus or sit in the last rows of a theater. The significance of this Sephardic tradition in Turkey is for the men to be in the vanguard; they are, as it were, avant scouts, opening the road and making certain that it is clear and safe for their women and children to pass. The meaning of this Ottoman Turkish tradition of the men walking ahead is a protective and positive one and cannot be construed as derogatory to women.

**The Identity Crisis**

The identity crises is the social role conflict as perceived by the person himself. It is a loss of the sense of personal sameness and historical continuity, and/or the inability to accept or adopt the role the person believes in and is expected of him by society. Identity crises are frequent in adolescence, triggered by a sudden increase of drives and sudden changes in the role the person believes in and is expected of him by society. Identity crises are frequent in adolescence, triggered by a sudden increase of drives and sudden changes in the role the person believes in and is expected of him by society. Identity crises are frequent in adolescence, triggered by a sudden increase of drives and sudden changes in the role the person believes in and is expected of him by society. Identity crises are frequent in adolescence, triggered by a sudden increase of drives and sudden changes in the role the person believes in and is expected of him by society.

As a kind of compensatory reaction, young people can also be remarkably clannish. United, they feel better and stronger, and in order to keep their group together, they also become cruel in their exclusion of all those who differ in skin color, age or cultural background, in taste and often in aspects of dress and gestures. As members of a group, they have the feeling of belonging somewhere, somewhere. In actuality, what they are missing most are their own families, their own homes, where they really yearn to belong. The dynamics of gang formation of youngsters in our society today is based mostly in their search for identity, the search for feelings of belonging to a group of people, at the same time to help them alleviate the deep painful feelings of rejection.

Each identity crisis in the growing adolescent is caused by inner and outer conflicts. And each time he re-emerges from each crisis with an increased sense of inner unity, an increased sense of good judgement, and an increase in the capacity to do well, according to his own standards, and the standards of those who are significant to him. It is like a purifying experience.

I guess the constant crises of Jewish people through the cen-
turies, with their strong drive for survival, has endowed them with a stronger determination or identity — they have come out of each crisis stronger, more determined and more united.

Now we come to the discussion of group identity and Sephardic identity. As I have already stated, the struggles and the crises that the Sephardim have lived through during the centuries will also give us the clues and the understanding as to how they reached their Sephardic identity. For this we have to go to the very roots of the process of identification.

The word Sephardic indicates those Jews who lived in Spain until their expulsion in 1492, to countries bordering the Mediterranean such as North Africa, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Israel of today. Now let us have a brief look into the history of the life of the Sephardim in Christian Spain. Before doing this, however, I would like to emphasize the coincidence of two events: the date of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 was also the year that Christopher Columbus discovered America. I wonder if there is any relationship between the two events which I assume there may very well be.

History of the Jews in Christian Spain

This period encompasses a life full of splendor and magnificence, ending unfortunately with the tragic downfall of Spanish Jewry by the end of the Middle Ages. The real trouble started in 586 when the Visigoth rulers changed from Arianism to another form of Christianity; namely, Catholicism. Since then, the situation of the Jews changed. A period of disturbances and persecutions with forced conversions began.

Moslem Spain

In Moslem Spain, Musa B. Mushair, the top commander of Arab armies in Northwest Africa, began to conquer southwest Spain in 712 and after occupying Seville, he did not leave behind Moslem soldiers to take care of the occupied territory; instead he mobilized the Jews of the city and established a garrison from among them. This was repeated in each city he occupied. In fact, the Jews rose up and volunteered aid to the Moslems in their war of conquest. This emphasizes a special character of this Jewish community which had no parallel in the history of other diaspora communities. In other lands Jews generally defended themselves only when attacked; whereas the Jews of Spain became accustomed to participate in wars and especially to defend the cities they inhabited. What was the source of this trait? Surely it can only be attributed to their deep-rootedness and attachment to the soil. Another reason for their behavior in this case is that Spanish Jews did not look upon themselves as a stratum of foreign colonists, but as an indigenous element of their country (Spain), that had adopted the customs of their fellow citizens in the land and lived according to their ways. (a very healthy adaptation).

Another significant factor, was their mode of life and their economic status. Many of the Jews of Spain were villagers whose livelihood depended upon agriculture and who of necessity had to defend their lives and property by force. There are striking similarities and parallels between the Jews of Spain and the Jews of today living in Israel near the southern border of Lebanon in villages and kibbutzim such as Maalot, Metulla, etc., where they have to be constantly on the alert to defend their lives and property, although many among them were craftsmen who earned their livelihood by the work of their hands.

In other words, the character of the inhabitants of the land of which the Jews were an indigenous element on the one hand, and their social structure on the other, crystallized the warlike trait of the Jews of Spain. Thus a type of Jew who was unique in the history of Israel in the diaspora was created, whereas the Jews in most lands in the Moslem east and Christian Europe were a minority, tolerated, persecuted and at times utterly helpless.

The Jews of the Iberian peninsula were proud and courageous, ready to draw the sword and seize the spear to be on close terms with the kings and nobles of the land.

History of the Sephardim in the Diaspora

Among the different countries, the Ottoman Turkish Empire was most important. The fifteenth century was a very glorious period for the Ottoman Empire. In 1453 the Turkish ruler Fatih Sultan Mehmed conquered Constantinople (Istanbul), capital of the Byzantine Empire. With this event, the Middle Ages came to an end and a new era began: the Renaissance. The Ottoman Empire dominated not only vast lands, but also the seas. Their armada under the leadership of Admiral Barbaros Harettin Pasha crossed the Mediterranean from one end to the other with no opposition whatever. It was Admiral Barbaros Harettin Pasha who transported the bulk of the Sephardim from Spain to Turkey and other conquered territories of the Ottoman Empire.

After the Jews were expelled from Spain, they began living in
lands around the Mediterranean such as those of the Ottoman Empire, France, Italy, Holland, North Africa and Palestine. Indeed, many of these exiled Jews emigrated to Palestine and added strength to the Jewish population there. These Spanish Jews took with them their Spanish dialect, Ladino, a mixture of Spanish and Hebrew, written in Hebrew characters.

Until the nineteenth century, the larger part of the Jewish population of Palestine was Sephardic. Besides living in the important communities in Safed, Jerusalem, etc., some Sephardic families led farmers' lives in faraway villages in Galilee. There were many famous rabbis among the Sephardim who became celebrated through their important writings on rabbinical subjects. During the years of Turkish rule in Palestine, the authorities recognized only the chief rabbi of the Sephardic community who had the title of Haham Bashi. The Jews conferred on him the honored title Rishon Le Tzion — first in Zion. Some well known rabbis in Spain emigrated to Palestine even before their expulsion in 1492. Among these were Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, the greatest Hebrew poet of the Middles Ages who emigrated to Palestine in the year 1140 and met his death facing the walls of Jerusalem. He is the one who said, "Ani bemaarav velibe be Mizrach." (I am in the West but my heart is in the East.” (Jerusalem). The Ramban — Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman (Nachmanides), the renowned Torah commentator went to Palestine from Spain in the year 1266 and laid the foundations of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

Sephardic Identity

And now we find ourselves asking the question what is the Sephardic identity? What factors created the Sephardic identity under these circumstances? Well, the basic pattern of their life style can be characterized by constant changes and instability, changes in their environment, in their surroundings and changes in their everyday life, filled with insecurities, not knowing what the next day would bring. But how were they able to survive under so many stresses, so many crises with threats to their existence and survival? There are two important factors which shed some light on our question. First despite the constant changes and instability in their everyday lives, they were steadfast in their faith; their faith was strong, full of determination to preserve their identity as Jews; confident in their firm belief in themselves. Their motivation to preserve their identity as Jews was enormous and unshakeable. What was the source of their determination and self-confidence? As I have stated, they came out of every crisis stronger, with greater resilience, and more and more determination. Each crisis was like a purifying experience; the more they were struck, the stronger and more united they became.

The second factor is their capacity for healthy adaptation. What is adaptation? How could they adapt to so many difficult conditions and situations? They did this by neutralizing the aggressive forces with hohma (wisdom). By so doing, they were able to preserve the Vital Equilibrium; that is to say, by means of a healthy adaptation, they were able to compromise psychologically between different conflicts (inner and outer conflicts), enabling them to adjust to their everyday life in their struggle for survival. Thus they had to adjust not only to the internal changes within their own land, but to the external changes taking place in the world. Indeed, it is of utmost importance to the era at the time of their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The whole world was changing with revolutionary forces of a new era, "The Renanissance". So it is in this light that we shall try to understand their problem of adaptation and the Vital Equilibrium.

Adaptation and the Vital Equilibrium

In the course of evolutionary development, all species have developed various mechanisms to adapt to the life condition confronting them. Some butterflies change their color, simulating the appearance of the flower on which they rest, so as to escape detection from their enemies. Since adaptation is very essential for life, man as the most highly developed species has developed anatomical and physiological means which protect him from his environment. At the same time, he also developed psychological devices to help him deal with his emotional needs and stresses. Although not at a conscious level, such defensive devices affect adaptation to protect oneself also from inner conflicts.

Such devices help a person to deal against extreme anxiety situations, help him to meet his emotional needs for love, affection and security. These protective mechanisms prompt the avoidance of approaching physical danger. In like fashion, the body through its biochemical processes, tries to maintain its physiological equilibrium, which in medicine we call homeostasis.

Man, through these unconscious psychological devices, tries to maintain a stability which will help him to preserve his identity, to feed his emotional needs and to enjoy life at a hedonic level of adaptation. The development of language as a means of communication with the development of the thinking process with sound judgment and reasoning (hohma), will assist him to adopt a "problem-solving
behavior" which is of utmost importance for human adaptive processes. This problem-solving behavior will, hopefully, be abundantly used in the attempt to neutralize aggressive and hostile forces coming from inner drives as well as from the outside world. By using the safety valves mentioned above, the individual who is flooded with strong drives and impulses will help himself by finding socially acceptable ways to discharge or to neutralize his impulses, at the same time keeping a harmonious equilibrium with his environment. In so doing, he preserves his integrity and identity.

The interaction between the individual and the outside world is manifested in the human being by feelings, thoughts and gestures, governed by the general principle of reciprocity and integration. In human behavior it manifests itself in the following way: the interaction between an individual and his environment is based on trying to get something out of each other; giving something to each other, and getting along with each other: the give and take of our everyday life. These adaptive processes are relatively satisfying to both individuals. This is described as a "good adjustment". If not properly and intelligently used, it is called "maladjustment".

It is by many modifications of this principle of give and take used with wisdom that will finally create a good adaptation in human behavior.

I believe that the Sephardim who have gone through continual crises for the last twenty centuries, have used the problem-solving behavior par excellence. They have succeeded in neutralizing many aggressive forces by their mastery in using the adaptive mechanisms. Thus they have manifested good judgement in dealing with their environment and have kept the vital equilibrium intact. It is by their mastery of using these adaptive devices that they have been able to survive and keep their identity to the present.

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The Piyyutim of the Jewish Community of Aleppo

by Rabbi Dr. Zvulun Lieberman

Hebrew poetry was already recorded literature at the dawn of our history. The Pentateuch contains many of the early lyrical expressions of our ancestors. Certainly man's greatest expression of religious, lyrical idiom is found in the matchless Book of Psalms, while Song of Songs remains enshrined in religious thought as the sacred, allegorical poem of G-d's love for Israel.

Over the centuries, Jewish creativity found expression in many forms of religious poetry, which continued to enrich and embellish the traditional liturgy. These sacred poems and penitential prayers (Selichot), beloved by the people, were quickly adopted to become an integral part of holiday and festival worship.

The Israeli poets of the Galilee, Yosi ben Yosi and the Kalir, were giants in the field, and Mesopotamian Jewry made its contributions through the works of Rabbi Saadia Gaon. With time, the center of creativity passed to the European continent.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Hebrew poets created new gems in verse and song. The Golden Age of Spain, with its chain of poetic luminaries, extended and brought the liturgical idiom to unparalleled heights. The never-equaled masters, Ibn Gabirol, Yehuda Halevi, Ibn Ezra, Shmuel HaNagid, Ibn Janach and so many others, remain to this very day, the pattern of accepted liturgical expression.

With the destruction of Sephardic communal life in Spain, the heritage of poetic tradition returned to Israel. The renaissance of Hebrew poetry within the kabbalistic mystique, found its birth in the holy city of Safed. Guided by the devout poetry and genius of Rabbi Luria (the Ari), his disciples created masterpieces of lyrical liturgy. Rabbi Solomon Halevi Alkabetz ("Lecha Dodi Likrat Kala") and Rabbi Israel Nadjara ("Ya Ribon Olam") were among the most respected names in a galaxy of metaphoric masters.

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The Jewish community of Aleppo continued this tradition of poetry with such masters as Rabbi Judah Samuel Abbas, composer of "Et Shaare Ratzon," and other liturgical pieces. In the nineteenth century, Aleppo Jewry produced Rabbi Raphael Anteby Taboush, a most outstanding poet, hazzan, and composer. Rabbi Anteby was blessed with an unusual talent for Middle Eastern music and poetry. His knowledge of Hebrew and his familiarity with Judaic scholarship were legendary. He listened carefully to the Middle Eastern tunes of his day, and composed Hebrew verses to these melodies. His purpose was twofold — the creation of Hebrew poetry, and the restraining of young Jews from singing secular verses in Arabic. His poems were set, therefore, in accordance with the makamot (modes) of the oriental, musical scale rust, mahhor, adjam, nahavand, biyat, husseini, sava, siga, hajaz). These supplications contain the outpouring of a Jewish soul, seeking G-d, forgiveness, and the salvation of Israel. One of the more famous pizmonim of Rabbi Raphael Anteby Taboush is "Ata El Kabir." This free translation is offered:

Thou art an exalted G-d, Compassion is Thy name. Take pity on a chosen people, for great is Thy compassion, without limitation or end... My soul thanks Thee, at all times and at all moments. Harken to my praise, O Faithful One! Have grace unto me through compassion... By day and by night, I shall not be silent. My tongue shall utter Thy righteousness. Desire, then, my speech as a sacrifice, and consider it in place of sacrifice and burnt offering... Behold, my Protector, the length of my exile. O! so many days; strangers and opponents have ruled over me. O! Speed the redemption. Glory and honor and strength shalt Thou give, to the son of David, Thy anointed, who gives forth songs every morning, in a voice of song and praise. My G-d, bless and strengthen the righteous people; carry them on the wings of eagles to great heights..."

The first letters of each paragraph spell in acrostic, Ani Raphael (I, Raphael).

The poetic traditions of Aleppo were brought to Congregation Magen David in Brooklyn by their first official cantor, Rabbi Moshe Ashkar, a student of Rabbi Raphael Anteby Taboush. He not only interpreted his many pizmonim, but took his rightful place as a composer of similar poetic works. Rabbi Ashkar composed these lyrics for special occasions — engagements, weddings, bar-mitzvahs, and dedicated these poems to the guest of honor. Not only were they set to the Middle Eastern musical modes, but this creative cantor was able to produce adaptations to American music and even Ashkenazi music as well.

Rabbi Moshe Ashkar composed many lyrical works which were adopted by the community as semi-formal sections of the prayer. An example of Cantor Ashkar's works is the poem 'Most Exalted G-d' ("El M'od Na'alah"). It is translated as follows:

Most exalted G-d, Whom I shall receive in song and praise, I shall enter His palace, as in the days of Moses and Aaron, I shall be brought to His dwelling place. If my cry could but ascend, and He would but hear my voice, and He would forgive my sin, and be of aid to me, hearkening unto my lips, and yet not perceiving my deeds. O G-d, exalt the bridegroom and his bride, in the merit of the great patriarch and his righteousness. Then shall the Queen Rachel rule, as King Solomon in his reign.

We note the allusions to members of the family, and the acrostic approach, spelling the name Elijah (the bridegroom).

The Use of Pizmonim Today in the Syrian Jewish Service.

Many of the original patrons and subjects of the poems of Rabbi Ashkar, the bar-mitzvah boys and grooms of a generation or two ago, are grandparents today. But the songs have been sanctified, and they are sung on special occasions. No sooner does the cantor announce the hatan bar-mitzvah, than the choir of Congregation Beth Torah or Shaare Zion, bursts forth in song with one of the many barmitzvah lyrics of the pizmonim. The same holds true for the call and announcement of arus (bridegroom). The father of a newborn baby girl, being called to the Torah, with the announcement of Avi Habat, will find his aliya accompanied by a special song, while the Avi Haben (father of a baby boy) will have his lyrics chosen from a section specially reserved from the circumcision ceremony.

The Sefer Torah is accompanied with the rendition of pizmonim by the choir. The Sefer HaPizmonim becomes the Syrian Jewish songster on the Saturday festive occasion known as the sebet or mazah. At the conclusion of the Sabbath service, and the barmitzvah boy's reading of the Torah, the congregation is invited to the home of the family, for the oriental-style, Sabbath kiddush. The table is laden with middle eastern delicacies — kibbee, pastel, lahmagin, tehina, humus, all types of meats and salads, with desserts of many assorted sweets, such as baklava. The highlight of this meal, in the Syrian community, is the singing of pizmonim, appropriate for
the Sabbath. The talented men of the community exhibit their cantorial skills, in the rhythmic, melodic, multitonal scale of Arabic music, with Hebrew lyrics.

**Bakashot (Supplications)**

In searching for the historical roots for the ceremonial singing of religious lyrics, one comes upon the beautiful custom of *bakashot* (supplication prayers of the Sabbath dawn). In the Aleppan synagogues of Israel, and in one or two congregations in Brooklyn, N.Y, the custom still abides, of greeting the Sabbath dawn with *bakashot*. They are sung in unison, to ancient melodies. Many of these works are anonymous today. They appear at the beginning of the book of *pizmonim*, but those poems whose authorship is still known to us, throw light upon the antiquity of this Sephardic custom. Amongst the more famous poets, whose creative quills have formulated these graceful verses, are Israel Nadjara of Safed, Abraham Ibn Ezra of Spain, Joseph Sutton of Aleppo, Shlomo Ibn Gabirol of Spain, Jacob Abadi of Aleppo, Samuel Murcia of Spain, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari of Safed; David, the son of Jacob, Pardo; Rabbi Nissim Lopez.

This poem is attributed to Israel Nadjara, the student of Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed.

I Will sing With strength, to Him Who searches the heart, and I will sing to the morning; daily shall I knock at His doors, and I shall come unto His sanctuary. I will relate His great miracles, and tell them in the morning. The heavens, like a tent, were stretched forth by Him, and the earth below was spread out. The gates of the east shall be opened by Him in the morning. The sun runneth forth, by His command, like a man who goes forth to his wedding canopy. No one can hide from his anger, from evening unto morning. By the light of the sun and its luster, man goes forth to his labor, to his work, and unto his travail, to arise in the morning. Come, send forth thy voice in song, which shall go forth for you, as a commemoration, before G-d, your Creator, with joy, together with the stars of the morning. For if you will sing His splendor in the night, by day He shall command to you His kindness. He shall give you of His glory, which shall fly to you by morning.

Thus we realize that the tradition of poetry, as formulated by the founding fathers of Sephardic Hebrew lyrics, has remained unto this day, a tradition in the Syrian Sephardic community, and is an integral part of its religious life, during public and private festivals.

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The **Customs of Libyan Jews**

by Yishak Sabban

In memory of Alberto Fellus

The customs of Libyan Jews have much in common with the customs of the rest of North African Jewry and other Sepharadic congregations. However, due to historic and geographic circumstances, they have developed several unique customs which are of special interest.

**Rosh Hodesh Nisan**

On the first night of Rosh Hodesh (New Moon) Nisan, called *Lei Lebesesa* ("The Night of the Mixture") by the Libyan Jews, the whole family gathers together at the father's house. The mother prepares a mixture called *besesa* made of roasted, ground and sifted wheat and barley to which is added sugar, almonds, and spices (coriander and cumin). The head of the family takes a key in his right hand and as he pours olive oil over the mixture with his left hand and stirs, he recites a Judeo-Arabic prayer.¹ The translation of this prayer is:

"The One (G-d) who opens without a key,  
The One (G-d) who gives without complaint,  
Bestow your blessings upon us and be influenced by our prayers.  
May the coming year be better than this one."²

After this ceremony the mother takes a piece of jewelry, usually a ring or earring, and puts it into the mixture where it remains all night. At dawn the family eats from the *besesa* believing in it as a merit (*segulah*). Slouschz claims that this custom was brought by the Jews of the mountains of Libya to the capital, Tripoli.³ A similar custom is found in Algeria among the Jews of Tlemcen, and some inland towns.

What is the origin of this custom? Generally, the Jews of Libya...
used to make a similar besesa, not only on Rosh Hodesh Nisan, but also whenever they entered a new house. The Lel Lebesesa commemorates the erection of the tabernacle, which took place on Rosh Hodesh Nisan. The jewelry put in the besesa by the women reminds us of the piety of the Jewish women who did not want to donate their jewelry for the golden calf, but willingly contributed it to the tabernacle.

The belief that this ceremony commemorates the erection of the tabernacle is supported by the fact that among the Jews of Messalata, a very old town about 100 kilometers south of Tripoli, this evening is called Besesat Al-Markuma. According to Slouschz this name refers to the embroidery in the work of the tabernacle (Exodus 26, 36). Slouschz claims that the Jews of Msellata also light a candelabra on Rosh Hodesh Nisan to commemorate the candelabra of the tabernacle.

Sabat Hagadol - The Sabbath Preceding Passover

The Jews of Libya read a special liturgical hymn on the sabbath preceding Passover. This hymn, Sabat Vegadol Nikreta ( سواء חגadol נקטה) is found in the prayer book Ereb Pesah ( erot בֵּית הָעֵזְבָּה) by Rabbi Hayim Cohen. This hymn has the acrostic - Sa’adia Hazak (סַאָדִיעוּ חָזָק). The prayer book Lel Simurim (ליל סומריים) by Rabbi Meborak Baranes, however, which is structured similarly to Ereb Pesah by Rabbi Hayim Cohen, does not include this hymn. Nor is it mentioned by Slouschz or Elamliach. At the present time, the author of this beautiful hymn is still unknown. This hymn relates the miracles of redemption from Egypt, and also tells about the paschal sacrifice. It expresses the hope that God will continue to perform miracles in our time and that we will be redeemed. Since this hymn appears for the first time in ‘Ereb Pesah’ by Rabbi Hayim Cohen and is not mentioned in previous works, we can assume that the custom of reciting this hymn began at the end of the nineteenth century.

Paschal Sacrifice

It is the custom among Libyan Jews to buy a sheep to be slaughtered in commemoration of the paschal sacrifice and to be used for the hagada plate. Elmaliach claims that in Libya in 1923 the custom was to slaughter one sheep for each person. This seems exaggerated, since he mentions that in 1923 more than one thousand sheep were slaughtered in Tripoli; however, the population of Jews there was far greater than one thousand. No other source was found to confirm or refute this claim of one sheep slaughtered per Jew.

Masot

The Jews of Libya used to bake fresh masot each day. Rabbi Abraham Adadi notes that the Libyan women were very industrious and diligent in baking masot each day. When the Passover oven was heated for the first time for the making of the masot, they threw in the shankbone (ילא אפר) from the previous year, and the palm branch ()value), the myrtle (שועל) and the willow branch (זרע) from the previous sukkot. The three masot for the hagada were marked with one, two or three thumb marks symbolizing, respectively, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Hagada

For the hagada plate the Jews of Libya use a large basket decorated with flowers and green leaves. Along with the traditional items of the hagada plate, it includes a large number of hard boiled eggs, one for each member of the family. Some people even include eggs in memory of the members of the family who have died. These eggs are then given to charity. In addition to the shankbone (ילא אפר) a piece of roasted liver and lung from the sheep is included.

During the hagada at ‘תנשא’ (breaking the middle masa at the hagada), the youngest member of the family puts half the masa of the afikomen, wrapped in a towel, over his shoulder and runs out. The rest of the family shouts joyfully after him - “thief, thief”. When he returns, he is asked where he has been and he answers, “in Egypt”. Then he is asked, “Where are you going?”. He replies, “to
Special Customs of the Jews of Messalata

The Jews of Messalata and the Jews of the mountains (Jebel, also known as Gharian and Tigerna) have a strange custom on the first two days of Passover. Even though it is stated at the beginning of the hagada that everyone in need is welcomed (יְהַבֵּר יְהָבֵר יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָ� לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָ� לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה לָךְ אֵין יְהוָה L

Among the Libyan Jews the plate is not only raised, but the mother and father also lift the plate over the heads of the whole family as they recite "הַמָּשָׁה מִשָּׁה" (why is this night different from all other nights). At one time the women would whistle a special festive whistle called in Judeo-Arabic "zaghruta". The stealing of the afikomen (afikomen) and the glass for Eliyahu are not practiced at the Libyan hagada.

Another unique element is a special rice dish that is cooked on the eve of Passover. The Libyan family eats from this dish and sets aside a portion which is left uncovered. It is believed that eating from this dish the next morning is a preventive measure offering protection from future danger.

In the Haggadah of the Jews of Libya and Jerba, after the passage: "But Jacob and his children went down to Egypt", (וַיִּצְאֶה כֹּל אֵלֶּה וַתְּלַקְחֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל נַעֲרֵי הַמָּיִם וַיֶּבֶן אִדָּם לַיְהוָה) there appears a story in Arabic jargon about how Abraham became a monotheist. After the hagada is completed, the Song of Songs is read, and the service is concluded with a jolly Judeo-Arabic song, "Let me get drunk at the celebration of my great-grandfather." 17

The 'Omer Salt

On the second night of Passover (in Israel on the first night of hol hamoed - the intermediate days of the feast), the sexton of the synagogue distributes a piece of crystalline salt. Each congregant puts the salt in his pocket, takes it out at arbit (evening prayer) and holds it in his hand while blessing the counting of the 'omer (benedictions). 18

This crystalline salt may symbolize the 'omer sacrifice, as it is written: "with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (לֹא נִכְרָא), Leviticus 2, 13). This custom originated in Libya as a reminder to count the 'omer. 18

There is a tradition that if you throw a piece of masa from the afikomen and salt from the 'omer into a stormy sea, it will calm down. Noy brings a folk tale about this miracle, in which it is said that a Jew saved the town of Messarat by using the salt from the 'omer. 18 Rabbi Hayim Cohen in 'Ereb Pesah says that the salt from the 'omer is like a cameo against sickness and evil eye. 18 The salt is also a symbol of the everlasting covenant of salt with God (Numbers 18, 19).

The Blessing of Trees

In the Haggadah of the Jews of Libya and Jerba, after the passage: "Let me get drunk at the celebration of my great-grandfather." 17

In the town of Messalata there also were families that would not taste wine during Passover, and fulfilled the mitsvah to have four cups of wine by using raisin juice (they would cook the raisins and use the water from the raisins).
When they arrive at the song about the crossing of the Red Sea the Jews of the town, including newborn babies, congregate at the synagogue, where this passage is sung by all. This custom is preserved even now among the Libyan Jews who have emigrated and settled in Uza and Shalva in southern Israel.

Children’s Hagada

On the eighth day of Passover the children of the Libyan Jews perform their own hagada. Each family has small pots and plates for the children to celebrate this occasion called “Taklit” (mixture). The small children gather together and read the hagada. In this way they imitate their parents and prepare themselves to be observant Jews.

In the afternoon, the children go from door to door asking for spices and sweets while chanting a Judeo-Arabic poem. The spices mentioned in this poem are used in preparing the maimuna. It is noteworthy, that by this custom they hint that the end of Passover is approaching.

Prayers on the Eighth Day of Passover

On the last day of Passover the Libyan Jews read the Song of Songs with the Arabic translation and Targum Yehonatan, all with a special melody. Each sentence is read and translated. The haftara on the eighth day is from Isaiah and describes Sennacherib’s attempt to defeat Judea. The Libyan Jews read this with the Arabic translation. Usually the rabbi lectures the congregation about the miracle of the defeat of Sennacherib.

Afternoon of the Last Day of Passover

The climax of Passover arrives during the afternoon of the eighth day when the streets of Tripoli are filled with thousands of pedestrians. The girls are dressed in their best clothes. This reminds us of the 15th of Ab and Yom Kipur about which it is written “young men raise your eyes and see.”

During the time of the Italian mandate in Libya, the ruler would visit the Jewish congregation on this day.

Lel Elkas Walnuwar

The evening of the eighth day of Passover is called “lel elkas walnuwar” (night of romaine lettuce and flowers). On this evening the head of the family comes home with romaine lettuce and flowers.

When he enters the house he pats each member of the family with the lettuce and flowers. The mother blesses everyone with the wish—“akkal dyer” — “let us hope we’ll live for next year”. The romaine lettuce symbolizes success and fertility.

Similarly, on this evening engaged young men send baskets ornamented with flowers and filled with sweets, oranges and romaine lettuce to their fiancée and are received with much joy.

Maimuna

Immediately after Passover, the Libyan Jews celebrate the maimuna. They bake bread containing the spice cumin, one for each member of the family. Before they put the bread in the oven, a whole egg is placed on top of the dough. This bread is eaten with hard boiled eggs. Other foods customary at the maimuna are scrambled eggs with a special kind of sausage called merkhez and dried meat called kadid.

Hirshberg discusses the origin of the custom of the maimuna among the Jews of Fez, Morocco. He says that there are several reasons for this celebration according to Rabbi Yosef Ben Nayim of Fez. One explanation is that the first redemption was in the month of Nisan, and it is believed that the last redemption will also be in Nisan. After Passover little of the month of Nisan remains and still the redemption has not arrived. Therefore, the Libyan Jews celebrate the maimuna to express the belief that they will still be redeemed in the month of Nisan.

Another explanation is that during Passover the joy of the holiday is not complete, and the full Halel (Psalms 113-118) is not read after the first two days of Passover. The reason for this is that we should not rejoice while the Egyptians are drowning, as it is written in the Gemara, “My creatures are drowning in the sea and you wish to utter song?” Therefore, the maimuna comes to complete the joy of the holiday.

On the day following Passover, Maimonides’ father, Rabbi Maimon died. Since a jubilation (ספירה) is not permitted during the month of Nisan, the maimuna is a sort of substitute for the jubilation (ספירה, mourning rite).

Between Passover and Pentecost

During the seven weeks between the beginning of Passover and Pentecost the children in Libya prepare all kinds of drinks — lemonade, sodas, and syrup. On these Saturdays they announce their
"merchandise" and "sell" the drinks for nuts and sweets. These drinks are called labsus. Frigia Zuares assumes that since the Torah is compared to honey ("Honey and milk are under thy tongue, thou son of man, Song of Songs 4, 11), therefore, the children are given sweets and nuts to remind them to anticipate the celebration of the acceptance of the Torah which is Shavu'ot.30

References
2. The original in Judeo-Arabic:
3. Nahum Slouschz, My Travels in Libya, (Tel Aviv, 1943) I, 238.
6. Ibid.
7. Rabbi Hayim Hacohen, Ereb Pesah, 1844, 54-5.
10. Abraham Elmiach, op. cit.
11. Professor E. Fleisher, Hebrew University, an authority in Jewish liturgic hymns, has stated in a letter to the author that apparently this hymn was composed by a Libyan poet, since no other reference was found.
15. Indeed there is a similar custom throughout all North Africa, however, the escapee is called "thief" only here.
17. The author's knowledge of the existence of this custom is from his parents' home and from inquiries made among Libyan Jews.
19. Dov Noy, Jewish Folktales from Libya, AC7 (Jerusalem 1965), 53-55.
22. Rabbi Meborak Baranes, op. cit., 16a, b.
THE ROMANSO, 1900-1933: 
A Bibliographical Survey

by David Fintz Altabe

Although much has been written regarding the Judeo-Spanish language and its literature, relatively few studies mention the existence of novels written in Ladino by the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire. Michael Molho's comprehensive work, Literatura sefardita de Oriente (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1960), contains only two paragraphs on the novel or "romanso" as it was called in Judeo-Spanish. Without going into detail regarding this genre, other critics, such as Djaen, Jopson, and Spitzer, generally conclude that the novels were mainly translations from the French and of scant literary merit.¹ I believe, however, that in view of the large number of such works listed in the bibliographies mentioned below, the 'romansos' deserve a more thorough analysis, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This present survey is statistical in its approach. Its aim is to determine the true nature of the Ladino novel.

For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to limit myself to the novels listed in the Catalogue of Judeo-Spanish Books in the Jewish National and University Library [of Jerusalem] published by Abraham Yaari in 1934. This is by no means a complete list of the works published, for we find that Besso's bibliography of Ladino Books in the Library of Congress includes a number of novels not listed by Yaari.² The catalogue printed by Sherezli, a Ladino novelist and bookseller in Jerusalem, gives additional titles.³ The seven part bibliography of works held in the Sephardic Reference Room of Yeshiva University compiled recently by Rabbi M. Mitchell Serels also contains romansos not listed elsewhere. Furthermore, there are titles listed on the back pages of Judeo-Spanish novels which are not found in any bibliography. Thus, one would have to cross index these various lists in order to attempt to determine the number of novels that were actually published in book form. I say, "in book form," because romansos appeared in the various periodicals which appeared in the Judeo-Spanish speaking communities, which, for one reason or other, were never printed separately. We assume that only the most popular works were published as books after their audience appeal had already been tested. The Yaari catalogue is the most extensive listing of Ladino books, and has the advantage of being categorized according to genre.

There are 263 works listed by Yaari under the category of "sippurim" meaning stories or novels. In analyzing these, I find that nine are reeditions; thus, the total indicated in the table below comes to 254 works.

Table I gives the number of works listed as translations, the immediate source of the translations, those which appear to be original works, and the year of publication divided into four main periods. There is no title listed as having been published from 1914 to 1920. We assume that this is so because of World War I and its aftermath. It may have been because of the chaotic conditions of the time or a definite suppression of all publication.

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The designation "source unknown" represents those works which are indicated as translations on the title page, but fail to mention from which language they were translated. It often happens that even when the language of the original is stated, the title and author of the original are not. Of the fourteen works, I would venture to say that eight are from French, five from Hebrew, and one from German, basing my opinion on the title and place of publication.

It should be pointed out that the word "adaptado" is often used instead of "treladado", meaning that the works are adaptations rather than exact translations in such cases. They are in many cases abridged versions of the originals. Thus, the Judeo-Spanish edition of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, published in Jerusalem in 1912 comes to twenty pages. Victor Hugo's, *Les Misérables*, appeared in a 119 page summary in New York, published by the periodical *La Amerika* in 1931. One might wonder why such liberties were taken with classics like these while a work of relatively lesser importance, Eugène Sue's, *Les mystères de Paris* filled no less than 3,000 pages in its Judeo-Spanish translation in 1891.

I have classified adaptations and summaries as translations in the chart. Also, works such as Maxim Gorky's, *Childhood*, which came to Judeo-Spanish through French, as indicated on the title page, have been classified according to the language from which they were translated, rather than the language of the original.

The table reveals the following information:

1. The majority of the works in all periods, except before 1900, were original.
2. The most productive years of publication were those between 1920 and 1933, a time when many of the scholars who were writing studies on the Judeo-Spanish language were predicting its demise. It may be that this period represents the swan song of Judeo-Spanish literature.
3. After French, the greatest number of translations were made from Hebrew. Indeed, in the period before 1900 and between 1900 and 1908, translations from Hebrew exceed those from French.
4. There was a heightening of translations activity in the period between 1920 and 1933, in that slightly less than 50% of the works are original, whereas the reverse is true for the previous years, except for before 1900. One might expect that as time passed, translations would have played a lesser role in the literary activity of the writers.

5. Although the majority of the translations come from either French or Hebrew, there also exists works which were translated from English, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, and Turkish. While one is not surprised to find translations from Greek, Italian, and Turkish, considering the proximity in which the Sephardic Jews of the Balkans and the Near East lived with these languages, the popularity of English works does strike one as unusual.

6. There are no adaptations into Judeo-Spanish of works of Spanish literature. It may be that such novels may have circulated in the original, or that there was little interest in them. We know from Angel Pulido's, *España/es sin patria*, that he had been in contact with some of the major literary figures and intellectuals of Levantine Sephardic milieu. He was encouraged to send book and periodicals to the area, which he did. According to the recipients who wrote to Pulido, these works were read with interest; the language, Modern Spanish, seemed strange, but not unintelligible. The style of some Judeo-Spanish writers seems to have been influenced by it, but by and large, the average Sephardic Jew, had little exposure to the Castilian language or its literature.

Among the works of French literature translated into Judeo-Spanish are the following:

- Bernadin de Sain Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*. Jerusalem, 1912. 23 pages (Yaari No. 561)
- Lamartine, A. *Gravina de Sain Peter*. Izmir, 1913. 157 pages (Yaari No. 520)
- Prevost Abbé (Antoine Françoise). *Manon Lescault*. Jerusalem, 1905. 82 pages (Yaari No. 609)
- Sue, Eugène. *Les mystères de Paris*. Istanbul, 1891. 3,000 pages
A fairly complete translation of *The Arabian Nights* (832 pages) was made into Judeo-Spanish from the French. Works of Russian literature which appeared in French that were translated were, in addition to Gorky's *Childhood* mentioned above, Leo Tolstoy's, Polikushka, and *Cement*, a novel of post-Revolutionary Russia by Feodor Gladkov. The sole work of Russian literature which was translated directly from the original was *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoyevsky.

A work of Tolstoy's also came into Judeo-Spanish via the medium of Hebrew. It's title in Judeo-Spanish is *Oio vazio* meaning the greedy one (possibly the tale, *How Much Land Does a Man Need?* The translation is only 16 pages in length. It was published in Jerusalem in 1895. Another translation of interest is that of the modern Hebrew novelist, Yehuda Burla. He was of Sephardic origin, born in Izmir, and spoke Judeo-Spanish, but wrote all his works in Hebrew. His novel listed, *Sermes de patria*, deals with Jewish settlement in Palestine in the twentieth century. A number of Haskalah works dealing with the life of the Jews in Spain prior to 1492 were also translated from Hebrew, for example, Ludwig Philipppson's, *La ernoza Hulda de Espanya*, which was originally written in German, *Don Miguel San Salvador* by Abraham Loeb Shalkovich who used the pseudonym, Ben Avigdor, and *Don Yosef, Primo Ministro de Espanya* whose author is not given. Other Haskalah authors whose works were translated were: Judah Leib Gordon, Samuel Gordon, Theodore Herzl, Pesah Kaplan, Abraham Mapu, Nahum Schaikewitz, Kalman Schulman, and Nissan Turov.

The Judeo-Spanish novel had its development in the press which inserted serialized translations from novels in other languages. These serials served a twofold purpose; they brought the readers into contact with modern literature, and they helped sell newspapers by keeping interest alive from issue to issue. When a serialized work was successful, it was bound separately and sold as an independent volume. Most of the books were published in this way, and the authors and translators were also directors of periodicals. Fortunately for our purposes, Yaari's catalogue mentions the periodicals responsible for the publication of many of the novels. The title pages of these also indicate the periodical with which the author or translator was affiliated. I have listed below the major ones.

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Note that the last entry does not appear in Yaari, but in Besso's bibliography. I have not bothered to list works by lesser known French authors, such as, Assolant, Bouloz, Decourcelle, Gaborieau, Sales, and Valrose, nor of less important works by the authors listed above, although these are not many. The vast majority of the works designated on their title pages as originating from the French do not, as I mentioned before, indicate the original titles or the authors, making them difficult to trace.

Goethe's *Werther* is the only major novel translated from German; the other three are on Jewish themes by lesser known writers. The American novels are mainly detective stories recounting the adventures of Nick Carter or Nat Pinkerton. Two works that are not, are Upton Sinclair's *Oil* and 100%: *The Story of a Patriot*. The summary of Gulliver's *Travels* is the only novel of English literature. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet* appear in narrative prose renditions.

Of the translations from the Greek, most of these appeared in Salonica after 1920 when the city had become part of Greece. One work translated is the novel *Condemned* by Konstantinos Theotokis, two others are of Russian origin, *Genouweu* is the title of an adaptation from the Greek which was published in Salonica in 1922 and in Istanbul in 1923. *Vaninka Germayelot*, published in 1904 in the periodical *El Meseret* of Izmir and later separately in Jerusalem was a 26 page adaptation of a Russian work. A more extensive translation of a Russian novel that came to Judeo-Spanish via Greek is that of *El barkero de Volga* by Ivan Belugin (or Bilogin). This three volume work totaling 588 pages dealing with the Russian revolution is the story of the leader of a band of partisans who falls in love with a young girl of the aristocracy because of her sympathy with the lot of laborers along the Volga. Apparently the novel had been made into a film because the book contains reproductions of film still photographs.
TABLE II

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<th>City</th>
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The publisher, Benyamin Behor Yosef, was active in Istanbul as a translator and author as well, but there is no journalistic activity associated with his name. Sherezli in Jerusalem maintained a bookstore and his catalogue and price list is a source of information in this area. It contains 191 titles in Ladino, mostly “romanos”, i.e. novels, and 69 in Hebrew. He also published a two volume Judeo-Spanish-French pocket dictionary.

In pursuing this serialized method of publication, the authors and periodicals involved were following the established pattern of the French feuilletonists of the early nineteenth century. Among the first of these were Eugène Sue and Ponson du Terrail. It is worthy of note that among the first novels to be translated were those of these authors. As indicated above, Sue’s *Les mystères de Paris* appeared in Istanbul in 1891 translated by David Fresco, and Ponson du Terrail’s, *Henri Quatre* in 1912 by Sherezli of Jerusalem.

The authors of the Jewish Enlightenment also had many of their first works printed in the Jewish Press, before seeing them in book form. Indeed, the early Haskalah writers were known as “measfim” the gatherers, taking their name from *Ha-measef*, the monthly journal they published. A later “maskil”, proponent of the Enlightenment, Kalman Schulman (1821-1899) translated Sue’s *Les mystères de Paris* into Hebrew. It was one of the first romantic novels to appear in the newly vitalized language.

The feuilletons were also a common literary medium in Turkish, and many translations and original works of modern Turkish literature made their first appearance in these. We do not know how many Sephardim were able to read the Turkish press; we can assume by the criticism of both Turkish nationalists and Sephardic assimilationists that their number was not high, but there were some intellectuals who could do so. The schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle introduced Turkish into their curriculum at a very early stage of their development.

Thus, we see patterns in the development of the Ladino novel that parallel similar literary innovations elsewhere. To some extent, these processes may have been consciously copied, nevertheless they also reflect the natural growth of literature and of the commercial enterprise and techniques that makes publication possible.

The large number of translations were possible only because of the familiarity of many of the writers with foreign languages. It is obvious that these men of letters were interested in bringing to their brethren the fruits of their reading experience in French, Hebrew, English, etc. Sometimes, their motivation was religious, zionistic,
socialistic, or humanistic, meaning by that term, the desire to spread knowledge of the humanities. In many cases, the aim may have been simply to entertain by re-telling a good story, one of love and adventure and intrigue that would delight the reader. Speaking to many Sephardim who were already young adults when they left Turkey and the Balkans immediately before or after World War I, they have told me that those who wished to do serious reading would turn to the masterpieces of French literature in the original, or to religious works in Hebrew. The Judeo-Spanish novels were designed for light reading. They were the literature of the masses. The movie industry was in its infancy, radio and television did not exist. One bought a penny novel and read it for an evening's entertainment. It is mainly this need that was filled by this popular genre.

The adjectives that appear on title pages, which were used by the authors or the publishers to describe their works, and promote them by giving the prospective reader an idea of the contents, are as follows: "aratente", "divertente", "dramatico", "extraordinario", "ezmoviente", "interesante", "istoriko", "kurioko", "moderno", "moraliko", "palpitante", "sensacional", "sentimental", "savoroso", "tražiko", "verdadero", or "de amor", "de aventuras", "de brigandaž", "de dolor", "de drama", "de eroismo", "de crimenes salvajes", "lyenos de intriga", "de pasion", "de la vida gudiya", etc.

These adjectives tell us that the novels are love stories, detective stories, stories of Jewish life in various countries — ancient Israel, Austria, France, the Orient, Poland, Russia, Spain, etc. There are historical novels, gothic novels, romantic pulp stories, tales of adventure, of lurid crime, and of gambling and other vices — themes that are constants in literature, and continue to delight the average reader. 5

It hoped that this brief survey will provide future researchers into this area with more concrete data on which to base their conclusions. The statement made by some critics that the novels are mainly French translations has been proven untrue. As seen in Table I, these comprise only 25% of the total. New studies based on more accurate information may bring about other revelations. One thing that remains to be done is a critical revalorization of some of the major authors and their works in order to reach a more careful assessment of their literary merits.

### Footnotes

1. Articles by Sabetay Djaen, N.B. Jopson, and Leo Spitzer relating to Judeo-Spanish linguistics and literary style appear in Volume VII of the magazine *Judaica*, which was published in Buenos Aires in 1939. The entire issue is devoted to Sephardic studies.


4. Angel Pulido y Fernandez, *Españoles sin patria*, (Madrid, 1905), pp. 109-125. These pages contain a review of Pulido's first book *Los israelitas de origen español y el idioma castellano*, (Madrid, 1904) and a general discussion of which language merited cultivation by the Jews of the Orient: Spanish, French, Hebrew, Turkish, or Judeo-Spanish. Rabbi Abraham Cappon of Yugoslavia wrote to Senator Pulido (p. 93), attributing the corruption of Spanish partly to the inadequacy of the Hebrew alphabet to represent vowel sounds clearly. Rabbi Cappon is the author of several plays written in Judeo-Spanish. His style reflects a conscious effort to modernize the language.


8. Speaking of Ladino literature in general, the noted Sephardic scholar, Henry V. Besso, quoting Moses Franco in his opening remarks, states the following:

"Judeo-Spanish literature has undergone a notable change in the 19th century. For a long time, in the past, the Rabbis seemed to have had a monopoly, as it were, of the literary productions both in Judeo-Spanish and in the Hebrew language." As in the preceding three centuries, the Sephardim of the Orient had produced in the 19th century a vast rabbinical literature. But the non-religious writers, the lay writers, began to take over and take away what used to be the prerogatives of the rabbis... These new writers in their own way wanted to moralize and educate the public.

Acknowledgements

To my son, Richard, for his assistance in the compilation and tabulation of the data.

To Mr. Nahman Yohai who introduced me to the “romanso.”

To Prof. Peretz Tishby, former Director of the Gottesman Library of Yeshiva University, and to Mrs. Ruth Nussbacher and other members of the staff of Yeshiva University libraries for their assistance and cooperation.

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the quote is from Moses Franco, Essai sur l’histoire des Israélites de l’Empire Ottoman. (Paris: Durlacher, 1897) p. 269.

Family Tree of the “Guerco”, Stock Character in Judeo-Spanish Ballads

Royce W. Miller

The most remote ancestor of the “guerco” is the “Horkos” of Hesiod. In his well-known work Works and Days, the author, in attributing certain characteristics to each day, speaks of the fifth day, and says that one must avoid doing things related to oaths on that day, since it is the birth day of “Horkos” (whose name means “oath”). Horkos is the son of Eris (whose name means “contention”); the Erinyes (or Furies) were present at his birth; thus, this day is a day filled with ominous portents and must be respected.

Horkos, God of the oath, is one of the Gods of the underworld, and is in charge of those who have broken their oaths. Sometimes, in his classical role, he is also one of the Gods of the dead, in the role of the one who, in mercy, kills those who have been mortally wounded.

This brings us to a later ancestor, the “harcus” of Latin literature, the implacable God of Hades. In Virgil’s Aeneid, the name sometimes seems applicable to the chief God of Hell, and other times seems to refer to Hell itself.

As the literary offspring of the Greek Horkos and the Latin Horcus migrated to other parts of the world, they acquired new characteristics without losing entirely their Greek and Latin distinctiveness.

In the Germanic world, we find the orccneas of Beowulf, a spirit associated with malevolent spirits; this one may be considered a spirit of the woods or a monster of the sea. In our own generation, many of us have traveled in our imagination to the land of the Orks in the books of Tolkien.

In the Latin world, the orc is not greatly different from the Germanic one. For example, we may look at the orc in Orlando Furioso.
by Ariosto, from whom Rogero saves Anglica; this one is a monster who comes from the depths of the ocean.

Of special interest is the huerco/uerco/giierco/giiercho(? in the Judeo-Spanish tradition.

This huerco is not unknown in the Spanish Peninsular tradition: Juan Ruiz, the Arcipreste de Talavera, Juan de la Cueva, and the Romancero, all refer to the huerco as the devil, or the angel of death, always in a repugnant or horrifying sense.4

The Judeo-Spaniards refer to him in their ballads and their proverbs: "If you see the huerco, your face will always look that way" says one proverb. Another says that a woman in labor has power over the huerco.5

In the ballad of Philomena (a version of the ancient legend of Procris and Philomela) the word huerco is used as an epithet, when the evil brother-in-law is mistreating Philomena ("What kind of huerco are you?" etc.) Some versions use the word diablo (devil) at this point.

In the ballad "La muerte ocultada" ("Secret Death"), the huerco fights with the protagonist for his soul.

Uezo wounded the Huerco in his heel,
The huerco wounded Uezo in his will;
Uezo wounded the huerco with his sword,
The Huerco wounded Uezo in the fabric of his soul...6

In another ballad, which seems to be a variant of the preceding one, the huerco, still an infernal being, has a house and family in the poet's imagination:

In Oficio's house
They weep and lament;
In the huerco's house,
they make happy music and clap their hands.7

This huerco has added another diabolical function to his mission of robbing souls from earth, that of poisoning the waters:

The huerco passed this way
To poison the waters...8

In one Judeo-Spanish ballad the huerco is transformed into puerco (pig) (an easy association, given the similarity of the words, and the repugnance of both):

He saw the puerco befouling the river;
Don Hueso got up and fired a shot (shot an arrow?)
It hit the puerco in his heel,
But wounded don Hueso in his heart...9

In other ballads, the huerco is clearly the angel of death without other roles. He speaks:

"Enough words, enough excuses,
I am to carry away one hundred souls
Before daybreak;" 10

or

"I am Death, who separates
Brother and sister,
Husband and wife;
I gather them up
And take them where they can never be seen again."

The connection between this huerco and the classical one has not been lost. For example, in the "Death of Prince John", the famous ballad on the death of the son of Ferdinand and Isabella, we see:

While they were saying these words, the guerco arrived:
He stood in front of them, and spoke in haste:

"Don't look at yourself, son of the King,
I came to take your soul."

"I will give you all my possessions,
if I may keep my soul".

"A curse on your possessions,
and on anyone who might want them."

While these words were being uttered, the son of the King died.11

In variants on this ballad, the huerco does not appear in person, but is, at least, still clearly in his role as God of the Underworld:

The huerco wants no payment
nor money when you are in your coffin12
The huerco is swift,
and can enter through a locked door.13
This brief study of the word horcus, with its development within the Judeo-Spanish tradition, shows currents which are seen throughout the Romancero. There is the continuation of pre-Exilic traditions. This conserving tendency links us with an antiquity which is sometimes lost in the Peninsular tradition. Nevertheless, we see here, as elsewhere, the creative genius of folk literature, adding new dimensions to traditional situations.

NOTES

1. Cf. Pemptas d’exakasthai erei, halerai te kai ainai. En pempti gar phasin Enyias amphipoleiein Órkon yeinómenon ton Éris teke, pim epíorkios — quote from Hesiod, Days and Works, (Gr. ed.)
3. Aeneid, Book 9, verse 527: ... quisque virum demiserit Orcu.
   Book 6, verse 273: ... in faucibus Orcl.
   Book 8, verse 296: ... te ianitor Orcl.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
15. Idem, romance 85.