

Between Sepharad and Jerusalem

# The Iberian Religious World

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# Between Sepharad and Jerusalem

*History, Identity and Memory of the Sephardim*

*By*

Alisa Meyuḥas Ginio



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Cover illustration: Taken in 1924, this image displays Moreno Meyuhas (1901-1985), departing for Paris to study engineering, taking leave of his grandmother Vida Leah Eliachar (1844-1949). It presents the traditional way of life of the Jerusalemite Sephardim (the grandmother wearing the Sephardi garb) on the one hand; and the modern (the grandson wearing a European business suit) on the other hand. The grandson is leaving for Paris to study engineering, and giving up studying in a Yeshivah and becoming a Rabbi, like his predecessors used to do for many centuries. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN FROM THE MEYUHAS FAMILY COLLECTION OF PICTURES. REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION.

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*For my family*





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FIGURE 1 *The City of Jerusalem. A panoramic view*  
YAD BEN ZVI PHOTO ARCHIVES. THE KANTOROWITZ COLLECTION. PHOTO ARCHIVES OF YAD YITZHAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.

# Introduction: Who is a Sephardi?

The tragedy of our culture is that our parents did not speak to their children in their mother tongue

RUTH LEVIN on Yiddish culture in Russia, in a feature, “Light-blue Twilight” by Noam Ben Ze’ev, *Ha’aretz*, Thursday, 11 November 2010



## Jerusalem Once upon a Time

In 1998, I participated in a researchers’ conference held in Tudela, Spain. As accepted at academic meetings, arranged in the lobby was a display of books and publications likely to interest the participating scholars. Among the items, I came across the book by Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*.<sup>1</sup> The title attracted me. At that time, I had only a meager notion about this Spanish physician and senator, Dr. Pulido Fernández and his activity, but “the Sephardi community” (*la raza sefardí*), which appeared in the title stimulated my interest. On side of my father, Moreno Meyuḥas, I am the scion of a Sephardi family whose members immigrated to Jerusalem from Salonika in the second half of the seventeenth century, and live in it to this day.<sup>2</sup> As I browsed through the book, which includes a survey of the communities of the Sephardi Jews in Europe and the Orient, I encountered the picture of the rav Yissa Berakhah – Rabbi Ya’akov Shaul Elyaschar [Eliachar] – the Rishon Le-Zion for the Jews of Palestine [The Land of Israel – Eretz Ysrael], who was my father’s great-grandfather on the side of his mother, Simḥa Meyuḥas née Eliachar. The report about Rabbi Yissa Berakhah was given to Pulido by Mr. Albert Antébi, the representative of Alliance Israélite Universelle in The Land of Israel, and Mr. Moisés [Moshe] Azriel, a printer and publisher in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*, facsimile ed. (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993). The original publication: (Madrid: E. Teodoro, 1905).
  - 2 Abraham Ben-Yaacob, *Jerusalem Within the Walls: On The history of the Meyuḥas Family* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1976) [Hebrew].
  - 3 Pulido, *Españoles*, 460–67. On Albert Antébi, see chapter 3, n. 2 below. Moisés Azriel edited, together with Haim Ben Attar, the journal *El Liberal*, and its supplement, *Yerushalayim*, in the period 1909–1918. See María Sánchez Pérez, “Entre escritura y oralidad: cuentos tradicionales

This informed me that the Sephardi Jews of Jerusalem were among the target audience to whom the Spanish senator aimed his writing. Thus, I had before me material about the Sephardi Jews in general and about the Sephardi community in Jerusalem in particular. Yet, only after I completed my academic role, fulfilling my obligations to Tel Aviv University, where I dealt with the teaching of western-European medieval history and was about to retire, I turned to treating the world of the Sephardi dispersion.

In the beginning were the yearnings. In tractate Sabbath,<sup>4</sup> we read about “a son yearning for his father” and the suggestion of Rabbi Ḥama bar Guria on how to assuage them. Even though in his interpretation, Rashi does not ascribe this cure to women, saying “This cure does not apply to women, since, from the beginning, the father does not care for them so much that they would yearn for him,” for me, who has already lived the greater part of my life, I was struck by yearnings for my parents, for my Sephardi family, against the landscape of my youth and the intimate, modest world of Jewish Jerusalem in the first half of the twentieth century. The writer A.B. Yehoshua described “the divided Jerusalem of the sixties – a provincial city but content with its clear boundaries”.<sup>5</sup> The author Eli Amir described little Jerusalem, to which he came in 1954: “A city entirely of military zones and borders yet intimate, small, and beautiful that enters the heart with clear centers”.<sup>6</sup> Of interest is the use the two writers, each separately, make of the adjective “clear”; as “clear borders” and “clear centers” of the city of Jerusalem. Apparently this reflects a contrast to the city’s current situation in the twenty-first century.

My parents, my father’s family, and their Jerusalem – all of these alike have ceased to exist. I especially longed to listen to the foreign yet still familiar sounds of Jewish Spanish, which in Jerusalem was called *Spanyolit*, that I heard, but did not understand, from my grandmother and her daughters – my aunts. In our family, the generation of my father (b. 1901) was the last for whom *Spanyolit* was their mother tongue. My generation spoke Hebrew as its mother tongue, through a clear-cut decision by our parents to integrate into the modern, Zionist society that was taking shape in The Land of Israel. Moreover, my

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en el periódico sefardí Yerushalayim (1909)” in Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez (eds), *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo. Identidad y mentalidades* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas [CSIC], 2010), 103–202. See also below chap. 3 n. 3 and chap. 4 n. 2.

4 TB, Sabbath 66b.

5 A.B. Yehoshua, *The Retrospective* (London: Halban Publishers Ltd, 2013), 43.

6 Eli Amir in an interview with Ron Cohen: *Bein Ha-Shurot* [Between the Lines] in the “In the City” section of the newspaper *Ha’aretz*: 9 September 2011 [Hebrew].

father and his brother Yosef (b. 1907), married Ashkenazi women, and in their homes *Spanyolit* was not spoken. Despite all this, I was well aware of the ring of this language, and I was even familiar with a few of its expressions. In the early 1950s, my parents left Jerusalem and moved to Tel Aviv. By that time my grandmother, her sisters, and her brothers had already passed away. In Tel Aviv, I found myself in a new, different world, and my link with the Sephardi familial past was essentially broken. Nevertheless, I can point out the time when I once again turned my attention to my Sephardi origins: This was some twenty years later, when I was listening, in Jerusalem's Beit Ha'am, to a performance of *Romancero Sefardí*, which included entr'actes written by Yitzhak Navon.<sup>7</sup> About a year later, I saw for the first time the play *Bustan Sefaradi*, it too by Yitzhak Navon.<sup>8</sup> It was especially the melodies and tunes that I heard in these two performances, most of which I remembered as sung by my aunts in the family home in Kiryat Moshe in Jerusalem, which brought to memory the by-gone days and renewed my connection with the Sephardi heritage of my father's home. Of note, in this context, is the study by Ella Shoḥat that notes that many *mizraḥim* [Oriental Jews] found the way to extricate themselves from the pillory of Israeli culture, which tends to reject all Diaspora past, and in particular, the past of Oriental Jewry – Shoḥat speaks of Arab-Jewish past – by reconnecting with the musical tradition that they knew from the world into which they had been born. Shoḥat calls this step “the practice of returning to the Diaspora” which is the opposite of the “Return to Zion.” It is sufficient to mention, for example, the tremendous popularity of *Ha-Gashash Ha-Hiver* comedy group, starting in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

In sum: in Sephardi families in Jerusalem, my generation, those born in the 1930s and 1940s, were privileged to meet the extended family, the great majority of whose members lived in that city; to participate in the multi-family Pass-over *seder* celebrations, during which they read the Haggadah in Hebrew and *Spanyolit*; to visit and pay respects to the family elders on Sabbaths and holidays; to get to know the *nono* – the Sephardi grandfather, engulfed in the cloak [*antari*, *antiri*] and the turban [*posh*] on his head – and the *nona* – the Sephardi grandmother, with a kerchief [*yazma*] on her head and an apron [*devantal*]

7 This performance, in which Yehoram Gaon starred, was first performed in Jerusalem in 1969.

8 Yitzhak Navon, *Bustan Sefaradi*. The play was first performed at the “Bimot” Theater, produced by Ya'akov Agmon and directed by Yosef Milo, in 1969. In 1998, a new production of the play was performed at “Habimah” Theater. This play has been performed, to the time of the writing of this note, over one thousand times and still continues to be staged.

9 Ella Shoḥat, *Three essays on Zionism and the Mizraḥim*, ed. Inbal Perelson (Jerusalem: The Center for Alternative Information, 1999) [Hebrew].

around her waist, who could speak only *Spanyolit*. This is the point to cite the heartfelt words of A.B. Yehoshua that strike a chord in the listener: “My grandfather who went about in his black cloak and Turkish tarbush in the streets of Jerusalem ... walking about in a completely different Jerusalem, which belonged to him more than it did to all the East European immigrants, but was already slipping through his fingers.”<sup>10</sup> Our parents, who were the grandfathers and grandmothers of our children – and we are speaking especially about the social elite of the families of the rabbis, *gevirim* [the rich men], and the bourgeoisie<sup>11</sup> – were already educated in modern schools, prided themselves on

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- 10 A.B. Yehoshua in his introduction to a selection of the writings of his father, Ya’akov Yehoshua, *Old Jerusalem in the Eye and Heart* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1988), 10 [Hebrew]: “My grandfather who went about in his black cloak and Turkish tarbush in the streets of Jerusalem, whom I would sometimes encounter in the street with my friends from the “Hebrew Gymnasium,” a bit confused and embarrassed. My friends’ grandfathers were, perhaps, similar to him, but they were simply no longer alive, they had been lost there in the Diaspora, in the Holocaust, while mine was alive and well, walking about in a completely different Jerusalem, which belonged to him more than it did to all the East European immigrants, but it was already slipping through his fingers.”
- 11 Here I am employing the terminology of the scholars Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez (eds), “Los Sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo” in: *Los sefardíes*, 14. The class distribution among the Sephardi communities in the nineteenth century was similar to that common in the traditional oriental society within which they lived: at the top of the social pyramid stood the ‘*Hakhamim*’, the rabbinic elite; the rich men, or *señores* [in Hebrew: *gevirim*], who were great merchants and even, at times, bankers; the middle class [*medianeos*] of petty merchants, and artisans who were called *balebatim*; and the poor: peddlers, laborers, and whoever needed public charity. Once a year, *Kimḥa d’Fiša* was distributed to those who were registered on the “lista” [list]. See also Penina Morag-Talmon, “The Integration of an Old Community within an Immigrant Society: The Sephardi Community in Israel” (PhD thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980) [Hebrew]. At the turn from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, a change occurred in the social system noted, when there began to grow among the members of the Sephardi community a new level of bourgeoisie, which had received western education. Usually, these people were the children of the old elite groups: the *Hakhamim* and the *gevirim*. From among the various possibilities available to it for integrating into the new Zionist society that had developed in the country, the Sephardi stratum under discussion chose to establish new community organizations, which were oriented toward Zionist activity; thus, the *Histadrut Ḥalutzei Ha-Mizrah* [Federation of the Pioneers of the Orient] (1919); *Histadrut Ha-Yehudim Ha-Sepharadim* [The Federation of Sephardi Jews] (1920). The organizations, however, did not last long. The reason highly likely for this is that the social-organizational tradition that had developed among the Sephardim, against the backdrop of the political structure of the Ottoman Empire, did not include preparation for establishing political parties of the type that was common among European Jews,

Western garb, and drove cars. At the center of their lives stood the nuclear family, whose number of children was much lower than half the number born to their parents.<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew language and its nurturing are what stood at the center of Zionist-social awareness that the members of the social elite of the rabbis, *gevirim*, and the pillars of the community adopted for themselves. This Sephardi elite, however, which was one-generational, numbered only a few dozen members, all belonging to the same socioeconomic class and each of whom was related to the others through familial and social ties. The sociologist Penina Morag-Talmon stresses that this elite distinguished itself from other groups among Sephardim and Jews from oriental countries. Despite the lip service this Sephardi elite paid toward the goal of promoting and educating members of the lower social classes among their brethren – its members did not meet this task.<sup>13</sup> To sum up: our parents chose to speak Hebrew. Abandoning Jewish Spanish or *Spanyolit* indicated the end of the existence and culture of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem.

The Jewish Spanish language, which was preserved for hundreds of years among Sephardi Jews, is what caused Dr. Ángel Pulido to take an interest in its speakers and their fate. The first book he published on this topic was called *Intereses nacionales: Los israelitas españoles y el idioma castellano*,<sup>14</sup> and in it he clarified his stance on the supreme importance ascribed to preserving the Spanish language among the Sephardim. For motives on which we shall focus in the ensuing, Ángel Pulido came to the conclusion that renewal of connections between his homeland, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Sephardi Jews,

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in light of the political structure of the countries in which the latter lived. Thus, it happened that young, promising teachers, such as, for example, Yehudah Burla (1886–1969), chose to join existing parties, in this case – *Mapai*. The result was that the veteran leadership of the Sephardim was bereft of reserves among the young. An additional factor for this situation among the Sephardi Jews derived from the location of their historical center in the city of Jerusalem while the focal point of political activity in the pre-state *Yishuv* was in Tel Aviv.

12 My parents had three children. My grandmother and grandfather on the Meyuhas side had nine children of whom six reached adulthood: two boys and four girls. Three boys from among the nine children my grandparents had, did not reach their first birthday.

13 P. Morag-Talmon, "Faith in Democracy and the Democratic Activity of the Sephardi Elite in the Yishuv Period", in A. Gal et al. (eds), *In the Democratic Way: On the Historical Sources of the Israeli Democracy* (Sdeh Boker: Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2012), 303–30, especially, 323 [Hebrew].

14 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Intereses nacionales: Los israelitas españoles y el idioma castellano* (Madrid: E. Teodoro, 1904).

descendants of those who were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula toward the close of the Middle Ages, would benefit his mother country, which was undergoing a serious crisis owing to the defeats it had absorbed in 1898 and the loss of the last colonies – Cuba and the Philippines – that it still had, a vestige of the colonial period in its history.<sup>15</sup>

In the ensuing chapters, I wish to present to the reader the world of the Sephardi community that was in Jerusalem; the changes that befell it at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, ultimately leading to its decline and disappearance from the social landscape of the State of Israel. At the focal point of the discussion, I shall present the test case of my family – Meyuḥas – : a typical family of *talmidei ḥakhamim* [Torah scholars], residing in Jerusalem since the mid-seventeenth century. The history of the Meyuḥas family truly reflects the social and cultural changes which moulded and shaped the history of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem: The Sepharad that was in Jerusalem.

In his book *Ha-Yoshevet Ba-Ganim* [She That Dwellest in the Gardens],<sup>16</sup> the writer Ḥaim Hazaz, who had lived in Jerusalem since his immigration to the country in 1932, described the different Jewish communities residing in the city. The Sephardim he depicted as “proud poor who are finishing off the

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15 Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire 1898–1923* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

16 Ḥaim Hazaz, *She That Dwelleth in the Gardens* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved: Sifriyah La'am, 1959), 5 [Hebrew]. The first edition of the book appeared in 1944, and its plot takes place during the World War II. Ḥaim Hazaz wrote that “More than in any other city in the Land of Israel, Jerusalem was agglomerated from the entire world and was a type of model for seventy nations and seventy languages and a certain mirror for the entire world from one end to the other. Many ethnic communities and splinters of ethnic communities are in it, cross-cut by cross-cut, unit by unit, and none is like the other, but each is special in itself and deals with it as its main location as in the beginning, everything by its being a state and by its being a country. Ashkenazim audacious and seeking profits, insolent and twisted, disputants and tempestuous and people in authority and all bad things, shocking the world with their speech and overseeing public affairs like charity collectors and dealing with their capital like bankrupts and the entire land is in their hands and everything is for them, and the other creatures cannot hold their heads high before them. Sephardim of imposing appearance and proud, well mannered, when they are wrapped as “descenders” of the forefathers and everything about them is from the past and they have no coming future, for they preceded all the Jews in their tribulations and martyrdom and they have wearied from the rebukes and from the consolation and they have nothing but to finish off their forefather's holdings and they are steeped in the calm of idleness and they stand outside the link.”

holdings of their fathers.”<sup>17</sup> The author’s stance underscores the disgrace of the Sephardim,<sup>18</sup> as people who depend upon the largesse of their fathers and do not support themselves, and it faithfully reflects the attitude of the New *Yishuv* to the Old; at the same time, however, Hazaz did take note of a basic element of the existence of the Jerusalem Sephardim: despite their poverty – and in the 1940s this community had already lost the cultural and social hegemony that it had prevailed over until the end of the nineteenth century – the Sephardim were proud people for whom the concepts of honor [honra] and nobility [grandeza] held the highest position in their lives. ‘Honor’ and ‘nobility’ are key concepts in the Iberian ethos; and the Jews, who lived in the Iberian peninsula for over 1,500 years,<sup>19</sup> imbibed, even adopted, for themselves segments of this ethos even prior to the expulsion from Spain (1492–1498) and continued to preserve some of them for the next 500 years in which the Sephardi dispersion existed in the Mediterranean basin. Interesting testimony on the standing of nobility [grandeza] in the Sephardi ethos is found in the book by the scholar of Mediterranean cultures, Naḥum Slouschz, *Be-Iyye Ha-Yam*.<sup>20</sup> The author, Naḥum Slouschz, an Odessa-born Ashkenazi Jew,<sup>21</sup> who at one time had been a professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, told of his travels in the Mediterranean, and raised the idea, as early as 1919, in which he believed: “the existence of a human race that is unique and it is the Mediterranean man.”<sup>22</sup> In his travels throughout the Mediterranean Sea, Slouschz met Sephardim, who spoke Jewish Spanish in Tetuán – he took care to differentiate between them and the Moroccan Jews, who were Jewish Arabic speakers – and in Gibraltar. Slouschz, who was familiar with the history of Spain and read Spanish belles lettres of his

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17 Ibid., 1.

18 The phrase “finish off their forefathers’ holdings” alludes to the rebellious son who “at the end, after dissipating his father’s wealth, he would [still] seek to satisfy his accustomed [gluttonous] wants but being unable to do so, go forth at the cross roads and rob his fellow man.” TB, Sanhedrin, 72 a.

19 H. Beinart, “¿Cuándo llegaron los judíos a España? Los comienzos del judaísmo español” *Estudios* 3 (1962): 1–32.

20 Naḥum Slouschz, *Be-Iyye Ha-Yam* [In the Sea Islands] – (from: The Book of Travel) – (New York: Kadima Publishing, 1919) [Hebrew]. See also A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “The Mediterranean World Discussed by Naḥum Slouschz (1871–1966) in His Work *The Book of the Sea* (1948)”, in Tamer Gök et al., *Mersin, The Mediterranean World and the Twentieth Century: Intersecting Trajectories* (Mersin: Mersin University, 2009), 1–10. See also ch. 6 n. 80 below.

21 Slouschz, *Be-Iyye Ha-Yam*, 6.

22 Ibid., 16–17.

day, quoted the novel by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867–1928), *Luna Benamor*,<sup>23</sup> which treats hopeless love between a young Jewish woman and a Spanish Christian man. “This novel,” wrote Slouschz, and “its resolution, show us that the best of the Spanish people understand the special psychological situation of the descendants of the Jews who were exiled to their country. Yet, it also proves to us that they have not reached the point of understanding that Israel is not subservient and that its honor is still fresh. For they have not yet understood that if a Spaniard has “*grandeza*” [greatness], the Jew also has the lineage of his father and national pride that is no less than the pride of the Spaniards.”<sup>24</sup>

Twenty years before Ḥaim Hazaz, David Tidhar (1897–1970), who had grown up in Jaffa’s Neveh Shalom neighborhood and had served as an officer in the British Mandate Palestinian police, described, in the introduction to his book *Ḥot’im Ve-Ḥata’im Be-Eretz Yisrael*,<sup>25</sup> the “inhabitants of the Land of Israel” upon whom his memoirs were focused. Tidhar did not deal with sociological research, but he had a sharp eye and was well acquainted with the types of characters he depicted in his diary. He preceded the “sketches from the diary” with an introduction in which he described the “inhabitants of the Land of Israel,” including the Jews. He began with the Ashkenazim and then moved on to the “Sephardim”. “Called by this term,” so wrote David Tidhar, “are not necessarily those who stem from Spain, but almost everyone whose language is not Ashkenazic-Yiddish. They are different types by their origins. One finds among them: natives of the land, Aleppines (people from Aram Tzova),<sup>26</sup> Urfalis (from Ur of the Chaldees),<sup>27</sup> Persians, Maghrebis, Iraqis, Hispaniolis, Yemenites, Bukharans, Georgians.”<sup>28</sup> On the Hispaniolis Tidhar wrote: “The Hispaniolis – they are the real Jews of Spain, who are still fluent in the broken [sic!] language of Spain. They are noble in their traits and mores of family life. Their lineage is their glory. They are polite and moderate. They also produce many rabbis and people learned in Torah. In addition, they are also not overly zealous in their

23 Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, *Luna Benamor* (1909); modern edition: *Luna Benamor* (Barcelona: Plaza and Janés Editores, 1978).

24 Ibid., 111. Cf. the article by Yaron Ben-Naeh, “El onor no se merka kon paras’: Honor and its meaning among Ottoman Jews”, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 23 (2005): 9–38.

25 David Tidhar, *Ḥot’im Ve-Ḥata’im Be-Eretz Yisrael* [Sinners and Sins in The Land of Israel: Notes from a Journal] (Jerusalem: Rohald Brothers’ Zion Press, 1924) [Hebrew].

26 Ḥaleb; Aleppo.

27 From the city of Urfá.

28 From Georgia in the Caucasus. In Hebrew they are sometimes called: *Gruzinim*, Tidhar, *Ḥot’im*, Introduction, 25–26.

religiosity the way the Ashkenazim are. Most of them are handsome, noble. They all are literate and take care to educate their children.”<sup>29</sup>

From the words of David Tidhar and Haim Hazaz one may come to understand the status of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem at the beginning of the twentieth century. Both of them stress the nobility of the outward appearance of the Sephardim and their moderateness alongside a lack of status and authority in the ways of the world. We see that David Tidhar includes among “Sephardim” everyone whose language was not Yiddish. Yet, he still notes that the Hispaniolis – who are still fluent in Spanish – “are the real Jews of Spain.” In both instances he sets the language – Yiddish on one side and the language of Spain on the other – as an identification sign of the relevant ethnic group.

Why did Tidhar think to include among the Sephardim all those whose language was not Yiddish, even though he knew to distinguish between Aleppines, Urfalis, Persians, Maghrebis, Yemenites, Bukharans, and Georgians, with each group having its own language: Jewish Arabic, Jewish Persian, Jewish Georgian and others? I believe that at the time that Tidhar wrote his book – the 1920s – the political, social, and culture hegemony of the Ashkenazim already had the upper hand. They knew how to differentiate between those who were like them, having grown up in Yiddish-language culture and all the others who were not raised in this culture. But they did not pay attention to the cultural differences among these others: all of them were the Other, the different, and their common characteristic was their being non-Ashkenazi. Obviously, the non-Ashkenazim were perceived as inferior to the Ashkenazim, since the latter stemmed from Europe. At that time, Europe in general and western Europe in particular were considered the symbol of progress and modernity in outrageous contrast to the oriental nations and their culture that was considered, by everyone – themselves included – as inferior and backward.<sup>30</sup> A sign of this attitude can be found in the lack of oriental poets from the canon of Israeli poetry. The literary scholar Ktzia Alon<sup>31</sup> is “convinced that the poetic history of

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29 Ibid., 28.

30 S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism and Modernity* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publications, 2002) [Hebrew], 47-59.

31 Ktziah Alon, *Efsharut Shlishit Le-Shira: Iyyunim Be-Po'etika Mizrahit* [Oriental Israeli Poetics], Musag Series (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuḥad, 2011) [Hebrew]. See also: Yochai Oppenheimer, *From Ben-Gurion Street to Shāri' al-Rashīd. On Mizrahi Prose* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East. Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2014) [Hebrew].

Hebrew poetry is the direct continuation of the denial of the Orient that stood at the base of Israeli culture from its very beginnings.”<sup>32</sup>

The historian Itzhak Bezael, as well, bound the Sephardi and Oriental Jews [*mizrahim*] together,<sup>33</sup> when he determined that the use of the term ‘Sephardim’ for all non-Ashkenazim derived from the fact that “in the Ottoman period, and more particularly from the seventeenth century on, the Sephardi *Yishuv* existed as a single entity culturally, socially, religiously, and organizationally and included all the Jews in the country, except for the Ashkenazi community. Thus, the term Sephardim was taken to be a byname for all non-Ashkenazim, especially in the Land of Israel.”<sup>34</sup> Yet, Bezael notes that “the Sephardim are not a uniform ethnic group in their origin and geographic distribution, though they do have a number of common characteristics to one extent or another, such as religious renderings, pronunciation of the Hebrew language, the Hebrew graphic system, a Jewish language that is not Yiddish, and part of their ways of life and customs.”<sup>35</sup> In my opinion, maximum importance must be attributed to the end of this statement: “a Jewish language that is not Yiddish” and that the language the community members use – is what determines their identity and the ethnic ascription. While religious renderings, pronunciation of Hebrew, and the type of Hebrew orthography are similar and common to the non-Ashkenazi communities, the Jewish language spoken by each of them is different and unique to them. Hence, the Sephardim are the speakers of Jewish Spanish.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, 6,000 Jews lived in Jerusalem. By the beginning of the 1880s their number had grown to some 26,000, as a result of immigration from abroad.<sup>36</sup> In the first half of the nineteenth century, *Spanyolit* was still the dominant language that reigned supreme among Jews in Jerusalem. Until the 1860s, the Jewish population of Jerusalem was small and

32 E. Eliyahu, “‘A Silenced Voice from the East,’ a review of Ktzia Alon’s *Oriental Israeli Poetics*,” *Ha’aretz*, 26 Oct. 2011 [Hebrew].

33 Itzhak Bezael, *You Were Born Zionists: The Sephardim in The Land of Israel in Zionism and the Hebrew Revival in the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi and Ben Zvi Institute, 2007) [Hebrew].

34 *Ibid.*, 8.

35 *Ibid.*, 8–9.

36 Israel Bartal, *Exile in the Land: Pre-Zionist Settlement of the Land of Israel. An Anthology of Articles and Essays* (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriya Ha-Tziyonit, 1994), 50–51 [Hebrew]; R. Kark and J.B. Glass, *Seven Generations in Jerusalem: The Valero Family 1800–1998* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen Publishing, 2005, 13–21 [Hebrew], revised English edition, 2007); I. Bezael, *You Were Born Zionists*, 13–20, 36–38.

unstable.<sup>37</sup> In the years 1808–1813, about 511 people immigrated from Lithuania to the Land of Israel, disciples of the Vilna Gaon – Hagr”a: Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Shlomo Zalman of Vilna (1720–1797) – and their families. A few of them tried to gain a foothold in Jerusalem but encountered difficulties owing to the heavy debts hanging over the Ashkenazi community after of the purchase of the land for the building of the Ḥurva Synagogue at the time of Rabbi Yehudah He-Ḥasid (1700) that forced its members to leave Jerusalem.

For a number of decades (1816–1864), the Vilna Gaon’s disciples – who constituted the foundation of the old ultra-Orthodox *Yishuv* of Jerusalem, when the first Zionist *olim* arrived – waged struggles for control of the courtyard of the Ḥurva and the erecting of the synagogue, housing, and *miqva’ot* (ritual baths) in the compound. Toward the end of the first half of the nineteenth century (1836), the Ashkenazim did succeed in establishing a separate community for themselves and received a *ferman* to build the Ḥurva. During the second half of that century, Maghrebi Jews immigrated from the cities of the Maghreb (1854), Ashkenazi Jews from European countries, and other Jews from the Caucasus and Yemen,<sup>38</sup> and *Spanyolit* continuously declined from the

37 See Uziel Schmelz, “Special Demographic Delineations of the Jews of Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century”, in Menachem Friedman, Ben Zion Yehoshua, and Yosef Tobi (eds), *Chapters in the History of the Jewish Community in Jerusalem*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1976), 52–71 [Hebrew].

38 See Schmelz, “Special Demographic”, 53–54; Eliyahu [Elie] Eliachar, *Living with Jews* (Jerusalem: Y. Marcus, 1980), 275–81 [Hebrew]; Natan Efrati, *The Sephardi Community in Jerusalem 1804–1917* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1999), 9–67 [Hebrew]; Avraham Ḥaim, *Particularity and Integration: The Sephardi Leadership in Jerusalem under British Rule 5678–5708 (1917–1948)* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2000), 10–148 [Hebrew]. In a public lecture given by Itzhak Bezael at a scholarly conference marking 40 years to the death of Itzhak Ben-Zvi, on 1 May 2003, entitled ‘From Yishuv to Communities – The Change in the Community Composition (1839–1914)’, he determined, based on two censuses – the Montefiore Census (1839) and the second conducted by the Palestine Office in 1916 – that in 1839 there were some 5,000 Jews in the country. Seventy percent of them were Sephardim. Of the Ladino speakers, 53 percent were from Turkey, 17 percent from Greece, and 24 percent from North Africa. In 1916, there were 56,000 Jews in the country of which 19.6 percent were Ladino-speaking Sephardim. In Jerusalem 20 percent of the population were Ladino-speaking Sephardim. Only the Sephardim constituted a community recognized by the authorities. These numbers also appear in Bezael’s book *You Were Born Zionists*, 40. In 1860, the Maghrebi Jews split off and established for themselves a semi-autonomous community committee, a rabbinical court, and their own rabbis. See Michal Ben-Ya’akov, “Immigration from North Africa to the Land of Israel in the Nineteenth Century: Theory and Practice”, in Zeev Harvey et al., *Zion and Zionism Among Sephardi and Oriental Jews. Proceedings of Misgav Yerushalayim Fifth International Congress, 1997*

language of the majority to a minority language and this situation continued in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we may say that it is doubtful whether one may find among today's natives of Jerusalem anyone whose mother tongue is *Spanyolit*. There are those for whom *Spanyolit* is a second, third, or fourth language, alongside Hebrew and other languages. Over the course of the twentieth century, the Sephardim who lived in Jerusalem abandoned the Jewish Spanish heritage language of their forefathers and adopted the dominant language, Hebrew, the official and national language of the *Yishuv* leadership in pre-state time and the cultural language of the Jews in the Land of Israel.<sup>39</sup> In the process of abandoning a heritage language, it first turns into a language spoken only within the confines of the home and the family circle. From the moment the children no longer learn it<sup>40</sup> but rather study the dominant language, the former vacates its position in favor of the latter and then its chances of dying out are great, unless an external initiative is undertaken to maintain it. Such an endeavor was implemented by the Israel Knesset through a law passed in 1996 under which the National Authority for fostering Ladino heritage was founded in 1997,<sup>41</sup> alongside a National Authority for Yiddish Culture. Beginning in the 1990s, great interest in the history and culture of Sephardim was aroused and grew among the Israeli public as a result

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(Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim – The Center for Research and Study of Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, 2002), 289–317 [Hebrew]. In 1882, there arrived in Jerusalem the first of the Bukharan community. They obeyed the Sephardi leadership and recruited from among it rabbis and leaders for their community that had remained behind in Bukhara. That same year saw the immigration of Yemenite Jews who played an important role in the conquest of labor in the country. In 1913, the Georgian Jews (from Georgia in the Caucasus) separated from the Sephardim.

39 See Joshua Fishman (ed.), *Readings in the Sociology of Language* (The Hague–Paris: Mouton, 1970), especially idem, Introduction: The Sociology of Language, 5–14; and also, idem, *The Sociology of Language: An Interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers, 1972). Of note is that the status of the languages in the Land of Israel was determined in par. 82 of the Palestine Order in Council of 1922. Three official languages were set: English, Arabic, and Hebrew, with legal preference for English. This preference was abolished in Law and Administration Ordinance, 1948, par. 15–b.

40 Among statements written about the anthology of poems for children in Ladino by the poet Avner Peretz, *Un Rekolio de poemas para ninyos: Una Torre en Yerushalayim* (2011), the question is posed: “Why should a collection of children’s poems be printed in a generation in which children no longer learn Ladino as a mother tongue? The answer is that poetry for children is a literary genre like all the others ...” see *Aki Yerushalayim: Revista Kulturala Djudeo-Espanyola*, 89 (2011): 68.

41 National Authority for Ladino Culture Law (1996).

of a series of events held in commemoration of 500 years to the expulsion from Spain (1492–1992). Publications, academic and non-academic conferences, films series broadcast on state television in Israel as well as various interest groups for the study and fostering of Jewish Spanish and its culture, which were set up in different places in Israel, with the encouragement and support of the National Authority for Ladino. Another area providing important help in the maintenance of Jewish Spanish, commonly known today as Ladino, is the Internet. A number of Ladino websites are active and become a “digital homeland” – in the terms of the Ladino scholar Michal Held – for those who know the language and write in it, but no longer speak it in their daily life.<sup>42</sup> The relinquishing by the Jerusalem Sephardim of their language, *Spanyolit*, as their mother tongue and the adoption of Hebrew instead is both a cause and an effect of this community’s exiting stage in the public life of Jerusalem: since their identifying sign had been lost – the Sephardim lost their cultural and historical distinctiveness. That being the case, the Sephardim ceased to exist as an ethnic group in Jerusalem. In contrast to Jewish Spanish, Yiddish has maintained its status as a mother tongue and as a spoken language in daily life, mainly among the Ḥaredi Ashkenazim in Jerusalem. In addition, Yiddish served as a lingua franca<sup>43</sup> among the new immigrants themselves – most of whom until the establishment of the State of Israel came from Europe – before they learned Hebrew, and it also served as a bridge between them and the veteran Ashkenazim living in the country. Beyond this, towards the end of the nineteenth century and over the course of the twentieth, written in Yiddish was a rich, eminent literature that contributed to the development and maintenance of the language. It is sufficient to mention Sholem [Shalom] Aleichem (1859–1916), a native of Ukraine and Isaac Bashevis Singer (1902–1991), a native of Poland and Nobel Prize laureate (1978). Elias Canetti (1905–1994), who was born in Ruse,

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42 See, for example, the Tapuz site in Israel and the Ladinokomunita site centered in America. Thanks to the activity of these and similar sites, in which many writers take part, Jewish Spanish is turning into a “digital homeland” as Michal Held writes. See Michal Held, “‘The People Who Almost Forgot’: Jewish Spanish Web-Based Interactions as a Digital Homeland”, *El Prezente: Studies in Sephardic Culture*, 4 (Dec. 2010): 83–101. See also Moshe Shaul, “El Ladino en el mundo dijital”, *Aki Yerushalayim. Revista Kulturala Judeo-Espanyola*, Cfr. n. 40 and 53. 90 (October, 2011): 47–49.

43 The etymology of this expression stems from the period of the Crusades, when Latin was the language of the Crusaders’ rites and worship, but the vernacular, common to almost everyone, was Provençal, in which the inhabitants of the region from Marseilles to Genova were fluent, and it was called ‘lingua franca’, that is, the French language. See William J. Samarin, “Linguas Francas of the World”, in Joshua Fishman (ed.), *Readings*, 66o.

Bulgaria,<sup>44</sup> to a Sephardi family, also garnered the Nobel Prize in Literature (1981). He chose to write his books in German, in which he had been educated from the time his family moved to Vienna, the capital of Austria. At that time – at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century – Ladino publications were mainly theater plays and short stories, side by side with adaptations of novels originally written in European languages.<sup>45</sup>

In the neighborhoods of Jewish Jerusalem in the first half of the twentieth century, there was a mixture of various Jewish languages. Each one of them, however, attested to the identity of its speakers. Yosi Banai, Israeli actor, playwright, and poet, whose parents immigrated from Iran to Jerusalem, described in his (recorded book) *Djundjún*, his widowed, illiterate mother, who astounded him by reciting parables and expressions replete with humor and common sense: “And the Turk was then in the land and Hebrew/filled mouths like gravel/so [you] speak crumbs of random languages/that you collect in lanes of stone/a bit of *Spanyolit* with the taste of a *romance*/a handful of local Arabic/with the sharp smells of the marketplace/leftovers of broken, crushed Hebrew/and a great deal of Persian/spice with ancient wisdom of folktales/and with painful sighs.” Yosi Banai told how the children would go to *Djundjún* so as to “drink from the fount of her enchanting stories.”<sup>46</sup> We are speaking of Jerusalem of the 1930s and 1940s. *Djundjún* spoke a jumble of the various Jewish languages that was common in the Jerusalem neighborhoods. *Djundjún*'s sons – the Banai brothers – came to know this mixture of languages and made use of it in their art as actors and art producers, but they did not adopt it as their daily language. They already spoke proper Hebrew and had no recourse to their mother's “broken, crushed Hebrew.” Moreover, they became icons of Israeli culture. The jumble of languages that was common in the Jerusalem neighborhoods was familiar to and spoken by members of all the different Jewish communities in the city and served as a type of lingua franca among them.

Yehudah Atzaba, a Jerusalem native belonging to a family stemming from Yemen, wrote: “All of us spoke Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino, and Arabic. When *bole-gule* [or *arabanji* – wagoner] wanted to praise his mules, he would say: ‘*Wala, yesh li tzvai feredlakh bitla'au zi tzvai faygelakh*’ [I have two mules that

44 On the Jews of Ruse, Bulgaria, see Joseph Cobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria, Between East and West* (Kibbutz Dalia: Ma'arechet, 2002) [Hebrew].

45 Alisa Meyuḥas Ginio, “A Jerusalemite Sephardic Lady's Reading List”, in H. Pomeroy, Ch. Pountain and E. Romero (eds), *Proceedings of the Fourteenth British Conference on Jewish Spanish Studies* (London: University of London, 2008), 145–52. See also Chapter 4 below.

46 Yosi Banai, *Djundjún*: CD on which the author reads his book (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2005) [Hebrew].

take the incline like two birds].”<sup>47</sup> This jumble of tongues, however, served its speakers mainly in the markets, as a daily language, that joined and linked the different Jewish communities. At home, in the family circle, in conversations with the men and mainly the women of the older generation, who usually did not speak Hebrew, the speakers had no need for this mixture of languages, but spoke the language that was common among every family: the Ḥaredi Ashkenazim spoke Yiddish; the Sephardim spoke Jewish Spanish; the Bukharans used Jewish Persian, and so on. Since all the Ashkenazim knew Yiddish and its culture as an identifying sign, as the heritage from their family home, even when they despised it and preferred to speak Hebrew for Zionist reasons, they tended to classify as ‘Other’ anyone who did not grow up in this culture and to accept the social definition, like the one used by David Tidhar, of Sephardim as “not necessarily those who stem from Spain, but almost everyone whose language is not Ashkenazic-Yiddish.”<sup>48</sup>

Additional reasons for this social definition, which existed even in the pre-state days, were political covenants between Sephardim and Mizraḥim – Oriental Jews – made owing to the consideration of increasing the number of votes for institutions of the government in the *Yishuv*,<sup>49</sup> and this continued to be so even after the establishment of the State of Israel, when the entire body of immigrants from oriental countries and North Africa were labeled by the *Yishuv* institutions – which turned into the leadership of the State of Israel and whose people absorbed the new immigrants – as “Sephardim”, for they did not speak Yiddish and were not familiar with its culture. On 22 April 1949, the journalist Arieh Gelblum wrote, in the daily *Ha'aretz*, an article entitled, “For a Month I Was a New Immigrant” in which he divided the immigration into the country, at that time, into “three main blocs: Spanish-Balkan, Ashkenazi-European, and Arab-African.” On the surface, it would seem that this is a geographic distribution according to countries of origin; Gelblum argued, however, that this was not only a geographic division but that “I should dare to say that the first bloc, the Spanish-Balkan, is the elite; the second bloc, the Ashkenazi-European, is the inferior one; and the third bloc, the Arab-African one, is even dangerous!”

47 Yehudah Atzaba, *Two Hundred Jerusalem Stories* (Jerusalem: Tzivonim, 2007), 28 [Hebrew].

48 See above n. 28.

49 Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 275–81; Efrati, *Sephardi Community*, 9–67; Ḥaim, *Particularity and Integration*, 10–14. Bezalel determines that once the Ottoman citizens in the Ottoman Empire received the right to vote, the institutions of the Zionist *Yishuv* began to woo the Sephardim since most of them were Ottoman subjects. Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 9. Cf. ch. 6 n. 12 below.

At the time, the article stirred a social hornet's nest and set alight harsh protests against the writer and his stances regarding the North African immigrants. Important for our issue is his evaluation of what he called "the Spanish-Balkan bloc". "The Yugoslavs and the Bulgarians were characterized by Gelblum as generous, warm, and helpful to all".<sup>50</sup> Yet not all the immigrants from Yugoslavia – and this applies mainly to those from Croatia – were Sephardim who spoke Jewish Spanish; however those born in Serbia and Macedonia as well as those from Bulgaria and Turkey, some from Romania, and the few remnants among the Holocaust survivors from Greece – were Sephardi Jews and knew how to speak, or at least were familiar with, Jewish Spanish, and thus, meet the criterion I propose for Sephardi Jews. One must remember, nonetheless, that the number of these immigrants was relatively small in comparison to their brethren from Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and those from North Africa, on the other. In light of the migration of the Jews towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century from the Balkans to Western Europe, overseas, and to The Land of Israel, then from the outset the number of Jews who had lived in the Balkans on the eve of the World War II was no higher than some 200,000, and the percentage annihilated in the Holocaust was especially high: 96% and sometimes more in Greece and Yugoslavia. After the establishment of the State of Israel some 160,000 Sephardim reached it: about 50,000 from Bulgaria; about 10,000 Sephardim from among all who came from Romania; some 100,000 Sephardim from Turkey, whom the Holocaust had skipped thanks to the political standing of the countries in which they resided, and with them a few thousand Holocaust survivors from Greece and Yugoslavia. Owing to the dearth of numbers as well as their swift, successful absorption into Israeli society, the voice of the Balkan Jews was not noticeable and their identity was not stressed in Israeli society, in contrast to their brethren from Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and those coming from the Arab countries in Asia and Africa, on the other. Those from the oriental countries and North Africa quickly took upon themselves the definition ascribed to them by those who absorbed them in Israel, who were overwhelmingly Ashkenazi, namely, that whoever is not an Ashkenazi familiar with, even if not speaking, the Yiddish language and identifying with its culture – all the rest are Sephardim.

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50 This is quoted from a feature by Lital Levin: "The Agency Admits Discrimination against North African Immigrants", *Ha'aretz*, Sunday, 28 August 2011 [Hebrew].

In his autobiography, *Le lièvre de Patagonie: memoires*,<sup>51</sup> the French journalist and filmmaker from an Ashkenazi background, Claude Lanzmann, whose work includes, among others, the film *Shoah*, refers to a visit he made to Israel in 1952. In the book, Lanzmann explains, that it was a given that “the ‘blacks’ were Sephardi Jews who had immigrated to the country only a short time before in the new waves of mass immigration that Israel tried to attract in any way possible, without scrimping on lies and false promises about living conditions....” Lanzmann notes the patronizing attitude of the “Jewish Agency clerk, an Ashkenazi fellow in his thirties, who dealt with all aspects of absorption” to “those who were subject to his responsibility.”<sup>52</sup> I find an echo to defining anyone who was not Ashkenazi as Sephardi in what was written six decades later by the Ladino scholar Rachel Saba-Wolfe in the journal *Aki Yerushalayim*, published in Israel, in Ladino, in an article entitled “Myth versus Reality in Today’s Sephardi Culture”: “Do you know that our nation was divided at the giving of the Torah at Sinai into two parts? One is the Ashkenazim and the other, the Sephardim. Everyone, indeed all those who were not part of the first group belong to the second: Persians, Iraqis, Yemenite, Bukharan, Georgians, Syrians, Tunisians, Moroccans, all of them are Sephardim. Despite the fact that they do not speak *Spanyolit*, and never came near Spain. Even the famous poet Shalom Shabazi of Yemen was a Sephardi! Why, you might ask, didn’t the Jewish people have a different history in other places of the world? In the thousands of years they lived in Persia and in Iraq, in Egypt and in the Orient, there came into being different Jewish languages, prayers, and important traditions. Where did this history go? Did all of it disappear in the sixty years of the State of Israel?”<sup>53</sup> Currently operating in Jerusalem is the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sephardim Va-Adot*

51 Claude Lanzmann, *Le lièvre de Patagonie: memoires* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2009), chap. 11, 224–27.

52 Ibid.

53 Rachel Saba Wolfe, “Mito kontra realidad en la kultura sefardi de oy”, *Aki Yerushalayim. Revista Kulturala Djudeo-Espanyola*, 89 (2011): 47–8: “Savesh tambien ke muestra nasion se despartio en el *Ma’amad HarSinay* entre dos grupos? Uno es de eshkenazis, i el otro es de sefardis. Todos, ama todos los ke no entraron al primer grupo, apartienen al sigundo: Persianos, irakianos, yemenitas, buharalis, gruzines, sirianos, tunizianos i marokanos, todos son sefardis. Malgrado ke no avlan espanyol i ni ke pasaron al lado de la Espanya. *Afilu* el famozo poeta Shalom Shabazi de Yemen era sefardi! Porke, vozotros demandash, es ke *Am Israel* no tuvo otra istoria en otros lugares del mundo? En los miles de anyos ke bivieron en Persia i Irak, en Ayfto i en el Oriente, se foramron varias linguas djudias, oraciones i tradisiones importantes. Ande se fue esta istoria? Se pedrio totalmente en sesenta anyos en Israel?” The writer’s family originated in Bulgaria and Turkey. Her relatives immigrated to the Land of Israel in 1932.

*Ha-Mizrah* (Committee of the Sephardi Community and the Oriental Communities) and the defining of all the non-Ashkenazim as Sephardim continues to exist and remains part of the political discourse of the State of Israel to this day. Moreover, the non-Ashkenazim tended and continue tending to agree with the cultural superiority that the Ashkenazim attributed to themselves.

### Who is a Sephardi?

We must turn our attention to the issue: Who is a Sephardi? As I see it, Sephardim, are those who speak, or at least their forefathers spoke, until the mid-twentieth century, the Jewish Spanish language (Jewish Spanish; Judeo-español; Judeo-espanyol; Judezmo; Djudio; Djidio).<sup>54</sup> I use the terms “Jewish Spanish” for the language and ‘Sephardim’ for its speakers, since in Hebrew the term *sefaradim* is used for both Sephardi Jews and for españoles – inhabitants of the Kingdom of Spain.<sup>55</sup> Even the language of the latter – español – is called in Hebrew *sefaradit*.<sup>56</sup>

54 Judezmo, that is, Jewishness – similar to the name of the language Yiddish – is the name its speakers call it. See David M. Bunis, *Judezmo: Introduction to the Language of the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999), 17–19 [Hebrew].

55 See Y.T. Assis, “‘Sefarad’: A Definition in the Context of a Cultural Encounter”, in C. Carrete Parrondo, M. Dascal, F. Márquez Villanueva, A. Sáenz Badillos (eds) *Encuentros y Desencontros. Spanish-Jewish Cultural Interaction Throughout History* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing Projects, 2000), 29–37. The origin of the name ‘Sefarad’-‘Sepharad’ is in Obadiah 1: 20: “And the host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites even unto Zar’epath; and the captivity of Jerusalem which is in *Sepharad* shall possess the cities of the south”. The usual name in Talmudic literature was: Aspamia. See Aharon Oppenheimer, “From Kurtava to Aspamia”, in A. Mirsky, A. Grossman, Y. Kaplan (eds), *Exile and Diaspora* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988), 57–63 [Hebrew]; A. Meyuhas Ginio, *Together Yet Apart: Studies on Issues Between Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain* (Tel Aviv: Mifalim Universitayim, 2000), 54–56 [Hebrew].

56 On this see the report by the scholar Natan Efrati, “With Whom Do We Have a Historical Reckoning – with Spain or with the Sephardi Community”, in the Retrieved from Oblivion section, as published in *Ha’aretz* on 7 April 2007 [Hebrew]. Efrati cites in his article the appeal by Mr. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963), the second president of the State of Israel, in a letter to Prof. N.H. Tur-Sinai, president of the Academy of the Hebrew Language on 6 February 1961. In his letter, Ben-Zvi attests to the “great confusion prevailing between *sefaradit* in the sense of Hispanic and *sefaradit* in the sense of Ladino”, and he proposes “that the Academy take a decision, that the term *sefaradi* be particularly used for Jews, if they speak Hispanic or Ladino or another language ... and as for the Hispanic Christians

Language as a criterion for ethnic identity is accepted in historical and sociological research. A key chapter in the episode of the national revival and the establishment of the nation state in the nineteenth century is the revival of the use of a national language.<sup>57</sup> The Zionist movement and the revival of Hebrew are one example of many of this rule.

I like the definition published by the journalist Uri Dromi in the daily *Ha'aretz* on 24 May 2011 in memory of “An Academic and Diplomat: Dr. Nisim Yosha 1933–2011.” Dromi describes Nisim Yosha as someone who was “born in Monastir [Bitola; Bitolj] in Macedonia (then Yugoslavia) and grew up in Jerusalem, in which at the Passover *Seder* they would read the Haggadah in Hebrew and Ladino.” This description evokes the social experience that was common among Sephardim, when the conductors of the Pasover *Seder* used to translate the words of the Haggadah from Hebrew and Aramaic into Jewish Spanish, so that their mothers would also be able to follow the ceremony.<sup>58</sup> In addition, Uri Dromi’s description refers to Ladino as defining social identity. Of course, social identity is not a permanent element but a dynamic factor that varies with the times,<sup>59</sup> yet language exists and remains as an identifying sign of the social group.

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and speakers of Castilian – we will not use the term “*sefaradi*”. In his reply, Prof. Tur-Sinai agreed with President Ben-Zvi’s approach, but expressed his fear that “the prevailing usage is entrenched to the point that there is no real chance to bring about a change among the people”. Natan Efrati noted in his report that this exchange of correspondence is located in the archives of the Academy Hebrew Language and in the Israel State Archives N-17\57.

57 Sh. N. Eisenstadt, “Some Observations on Multiple Modernities”, in D. Sachsenmaier and J. Riedel with S.N. Eisenstadt (eds), *Reflections on Multiple Modernities, European, Chinese and Other Interpretations* (Leiden, Brill, 2002), 25–41. See also Roman Jakobson, “The Beginning of National Self-Determination in Europe”, in Fishman, *Readings*, 585; Karl W. Deutsch, “The Trend of European Nationalism – The Language Aspect”, in Fishman, *Reading*, 598. Deutsch provides data on the variety of nations and their languages in Europe. He notes the growth in the number of spoken languages in Europe from 16 around 1800 to 30 around 1900 and to 53 in 1937. This growth is identical to the increase in the number of sovereign states in Europe from 15 in 1871 to 21 in 1914 and to 29 in 1937. In course of his discussion of this issue, the author pays special attention to the Hebrew language of the Jews in Palestine and to the status of this language among Zionist Jews; *ibid.*, 601–4.

58 Cf. also below Chapter 4, n. 155 and Epilogue, n. 5.

59 See, for example, Stuart Hall and Paul de Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1998); *idem*, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity, Community, Culture Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 223–27.

In an interview the journalist Sharon Shporer conducted with Prof. Momi Dahan<sup>60</sup> on the topic of a study he conducted recently and in which he maps the ethnic composition of each of the deciles in Israel, “those very deciles between which the economic gap is widening set into motion the social protest,”<sup>61</sup> an interesting answer is raised on the issue of who is a Sephardi. To a question by the interviewer as to who is a Sephardi and who an Ashkenazi, the conductor of the research replied that “it is important to understand that there is no one single datum that can point out the percentage of Ashkenazim in the population, or the share of Sephardim. It depends on the definition. In my study [that of M. Dahan] – for all aspects of income, the determinant for who is Ashkenazi or who is Sephardi is according to who was born in the relevant countries, or whose father was born there”. “Ashkenazim are natives of Europe, America, or Australia, or Israeli-born whose fathers were born in those countries”. “Sephardim are those who were born in Asia or Africa, or native-born Israelis whose fathers were born in those countries.”<sup>62</sup> Momi Dahan believes that in recent years we have been witness to “the creation of an upper middle class of Sephardim – and this explains to me [to M. Dahan] various phenomena such as the breakthrough of oriental music. Why has oriental music flourished precisely of late? Because something happened here economically that enabled this.”<sup>63</sup> Even if we take into account Momi Dahan’s reservation, that is, the definition he proposes considers “all aspects of income,” there is still a division between Sephardim who were born in Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia, or Serbia – countries all agree are geographically located in Europe, though for hundreds of years they were subject to the rule of the Ottoman Empire, whose core is in Asia – and their brethren, the Sephardim, like them speakers of Jewish Spanish, who were born in Turkey or the Middle East. Consequently, as far

60 Described by the interviewer as “a senior, esteemed economist, who was formerly the economic adviser or the director of the Treasury Ministry and chief economist of the Bank of Israel and is now (2012) director of the Hebrew University’s School of Public Policy and a research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute.” The interview, entitled: “The Color of Money” appeared in the *‘Ha-Shavu’a’* [The Week] section of *Ha’aretz*, Friday, 20 January 2011 [Hebrew].

61 Ibid.

62 A similar approach was applied by Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics in the studies it conducted, for example, on the ethnic distribution of students at institutions of higher learning in Israel. See *ibid.* Yet, one must note that the criterion of father’s birth country no longer applies to native Israelis in the last decades of the twentieth century, since their fathers were already born in Israel; it was their grandfathers who immigrated in the waves of mass immigration immediately after the establishment of the state.

63 Ibid.

as things relate to social identity and awareness of cultural cooperation, it is preferable, I feel, for the power of the Jewish Spanish language as a unifying, cohesive factor for the entire body of Sephardim in their Mediterranean dispersal to act as a factor defining their the identity as Sephardim.

### The Language of the Sephardim

Now we must direct our attention to the Jewish Spanish language or as it is actually commonly called: Ladino.

The historical foundation of the Jewish Spanish language is the Romance language,<sup>64</sup> spoken in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, in a number of dialects: Castilian, Aragonese, Catalan, and so on. Since prior to the Expulsion, most of the Jews lived in the Kingdom of Castile, the Castilian dialect was the most common among them. Alongside Jewish Spanish there existed the Ladino (from Latin) language, the language of the translation and transcription of the Hebrew sources such as the Passover Haggadah. Since this was a calque-language, it sometimes adopted not only Hebrew words and expressions but also Hebrew syntactic patterns. Jewish languages were written in Hebrew letters (*aljamía*; *aljamiado*), and thereby, as well as sometimes also by accent and pronunciation, were distinct from the languages of Christian residents of the country.<sup>65</sup> Hebrew – the holy language – served the Jews for purposes of prayer, rites, thought, and study.

Beginning from the eighteenth century, first books and then newspapers were printed in Ladino in Rashi script. This is linked to the vast distribution, among the Sephardi Mediterranean dispersal, of the *Me'am Lo'ez* – a commentary in Ladino on a number of biblical books (1730-1899). Being a commentary – this work was published in Rashi script, since these letters were used to print the commentary of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥaki; 1040–1105), who lived in Troyes – and other biblical and talmudic exegeses. In Rashi's commentary on the Torah, in the Hebrew Bible dated as the earliest printed edition, published in 1475 in Reggio di Calabria, Italy, the printer used a special design for the

64 In Hebrew the Romance language is termed *la'az*. See L. Minervini, "Formación de la lengua sefardí", in E. Romero, Jacob M. Hassán, R. Izquierdo Benito (coord.), *Sefardíes: literatura y lengua de una nación dispersa* (Cuenca, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008), 25–49.

65 L. Minervini, "El desarrollo histórico del judeoespañol", *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana*, 8 (2006): 13–34; P. Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez (eds), "Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo", in *Los sefardíes*, 13–19.

letters, which was common among Sephardim in the Middle Ages, so as to differentiate between the biblical text and Rashi's exegesis, which was printed alongside the former. The cursive writing of these Ladino letters is known by the name of *ḥatzi qulmus* or *Soletreo* (*Solitreo*). At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, under the influence of modernization processes in the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of nation states in the Balkans, Sephardi Jews began to write Ladino in Latin letters and sometime in Cyrillic. The Spanish scholar Iacob Hassán proposed writing Ladino in Latin letters accompanied by diacritics that are intended to reflect the connection between that language and Romance languages in general and with Spanish (español) in particular. In contrast, the editors of the periodical *Aki Yerushalayim*, most of whom are Sephardim of Turkish background,<sup>66</sup> employ phonetic orthography, which does not consider the Spanish rules of spelling,<sup>67</sup> yet does enable the reading and understanding of the text by those who do not know Spanish or another Romance language. The flourishing of internet sites in Ladino promotes the latter system of orthography, since the need for diacritics, which are required by the system of Iacob Hassán and his disciples, makes writing awkward and complicated on websites and in email.

At the time of the expulsion in 1492, the exiles took their language with them. During their settlement process, this language absorbed words and expressions from the languages of the countries and the peoples among which the former residents of the Iberian Peninsula established their communities in the eastern Sephardi diaspora of the Mediterranean Basin. This diaspora was distinguished from the western dispersal of those from the Iberian Peninsula who grabbed a foothold in the Lowlands, in northern Europe, in England, and in the New World. The Jews of the western dispersal – who were known as Spanish-Portuguese communities – spoke Portuguese or Baroque Spanish. Of note is that in the same year, 1492 – the year of the expulsion from Spain and the accepted historical date for the discovery of America – the Spanish humanist Antonio Nebrija (1441–1522) published his book on Spanish grammar,

66 *Aki Yerushalayim. Revista Kulturala Djudeo-Espanyola*. This periodical has been published in Jerusalem since 1979. The orthography its editors adopted is similar to the system set by the Kemalist Revolution (under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 1881–1938) in Turkey, after the declaration of the republic in 1923, when he replaced the Arabic letters by Latin ones for writing Turkish. See also Gérard Galtier, "Pour une orthographe méditerranéenne du judéo-espagnol", in Rena Molho (dir.), *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on the Jewish Spanish Language (Social and Cultural Life in Salonika through Jewish Spanish Texts, October 17 and 18, 2004* (Salonika: Fondation Etz Aḥaim, 2008), 217–35.

67 Thus *ke* and not *que*; *aky* and not *aquí*; *espanyol* and not *español*, and so on.

*Gramática de la lengua castellana*.<sup>68</sup> By that time Jews were no longer living on Iberian soil, and they, therefore, had no part at all in the future development of the Spanish language there and in the New World. The former residents of the Iberian Peninsula who took root in the Lowlands were the descendants of those who at the time of the expulsion from Castile found a refuge in Portugal, where they were forced to convert to Christianity in 1497, but many of them continued to maintain their Jewishness in secret. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many of the latter managed to leave Portugal and to settle in the Lowlands, which, during the reign of Felipe (Philip) II (1527–1598) was under the rule of the Spanish crown. Those coming from Portugal who settled in the Lowlands are the ones who influenced the image of the noble Sephardi Jew as it became set in the Romantic literature of nineteenth-century Germany, such as *The Rabbi of Bachrach* by Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), or the series of books *Zikhronot Le-Veit David* [Memoirs of a Davidic Family].<sup>69</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a small part of the émigrés from the Iberian Peninsula also reached the Ottoman Empire, where they could return to Judaism and join the Sephardi communities that had existed in the countries of the empire since the expulsion in 1492. The historian Francesca Trivellato determines, when referring to 1553, that the *ponentinos* [*ponentine*] were the ones who reached Italy directly from the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In contrast, the *levantinos* [*levantine*] are the ones who were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula at the time of the 1492 expulsion, settled first in the Ottoman Empire and only later moved to Europe owing to their commerce.<sup>70</sup>

The criterion of use of Jewish Spanish as a factor defining Sephardim in the eastern dispersal does not apply to those who came from the Iberian Peninsula

68 This was the first grammar book of a vernacular in Europe. In 1517 Nebrija published his work *Reglas de la ortografía castellana*.

69 The novella *Spain and Jerusalem* by Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889) was translated into Ladino by David Fresco in Constantinople in 1887. Abraham Moshe Tadjer translated the novella *Zikhronot Le-Veit David* from Hebrew to Ladino, *Los memuares de la familia de David*, a novella that was published in Sofia in 1899. See A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “La imagen de los Sefaradim en la literatura judía”, *El Olivo*, 22/47 (1998): 39–55.

70 See Francesca Trivellato, *The Family of Strangers. The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno and Cross Cultural Trade in The Early Modern Period* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), xi. *Ponens* refers to the west, where the sun sets; *Levans* is the east, where the sun rises. On the *ponentinos* who settled in Venice, see M. Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes, the Jewish Spanish Diaspora from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Tel Aviv: The Chair for the Study of the Culture and History of the Jews of Salonika and Greece, Tel Aviv University, 1993), 51–52 [Hebrew].

to their western dispersal. One must remember, however, that there was strong reciprocity between the Sephardi centers that arose among the eastern dispersal in the Mediterranean Basin and the centers of the Spanish-Portuguese Jews who lived in the western dispersal. Merchants and Spanish travelers attested, even during the course of the sixteenth century, to the continued existence of Spanish being spoken by the Iberian exiles. The Portuguese traveler Fr. Pantaleão de Aveiro told of an encounter he experienced with two Jewish women near the Siloah Pool in Jerusalem. One of them related that she had been born in Rosetta (Rashīd) in Egypt and that her forefathers had come from Toledo. The Portuguese monk conversed with the young woman in Spanish, which both of them knew well. The young lady related to him that her parents had told her about the good life they had enjoyed in Spain, even though they did not express regret that they had gone into exile. De Aveiro reported about meetings with Jews of Spanish origin, speakers of Spanish, in Safed and Tiberias as well.<sup>71</sup> The historian Gonzalo de Illescas wrote in his work *Historia Pontifical* (1565) that the exiled Jews “in the cities of Salonika, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Cairo and in other commercial cities and in Venice – they do not buy or contract business in any language but Spanish.”<sup>72</sup>

Included in an anthology containing memoirs and autobiographies is the work by Domingo de Toral y Valdés, who was born in 1598 and journeyed in the lands of the Orient: Persia, Babylonia, and Syria.<sup>73</sup> From “Babylonia which is Assyria”<sup>74</sup> – deserving of special note is the use the author of the autobiography made of the biblical geographic names – Domingo de Toral y Valdés set out riding to Aleppo (Ḥalab, Ḥaleb), “which is the chief city in Syria”,<sup>75</sup> in the company of a French traveler, who was – according to the author – a watchmaker

71 See António Baião (ed.), *Itinerario da Terra Sancta e suas Particularidades* (Coimbra, 1927), cited in Joel L. Kraemer, “Spanish Ladies from the Cairo Geniza”, in A. Meyuhas Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World After 1492* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 236–40.

72 This passage is quoted from Minervini, “Formación de la lengua”, 35. See also n.73 below.

73 *Relación de la vida del capitán Domingo de Toral y Valdés escrita por él mismo*, in: *Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles bajo la dirección de Excmo Sr. D. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo: Autobiografías y Memorias coleccionadas é ilustradas por Manuel Serrano y Sanz* (Madrid: Librería Editorial de Bailly i Bailliére é hijos, 1905), 485–506; Hereafter: *Relación*. See also María Antonia Bel Bravo, *Estudio Preliminar al libro de Ángel Pulido Fernández, Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*, Granada, Universidad de Granada, 1993, LXII, n. 57; I. González, *El Retorno de los judíos* (Madrid: Nerea, 1991).

74 “Babilonia que es Asiria”, *Relación de la vida del capitán Domingo de Toral y Valdés escrita por él mismo*, 503.

75 *Ibid.*, 504: “Alepo que es la cabeza de Siria.”

by trade and a Huguenot by religion. They were joined by a local guide. Upon arrival in Aleppo, the captain lodged in a Discalced Carmelites' monastery and there he was addressed by "many Jews and in clear Castilian" who offered him advice and warnings about merchandise for which customs must be paid. When he replied that he was not carrying any merchandise at all, he was suspected of intending to spy and to search out the land. After the Turks and their lackeys among the Jews threatened him with torture or even hanging, they brought him to the French consul, one of the three consuls in Aleppo: the English who protected subjects of the northern lands, the Venetian who gave his patronage to the Italians, and the French who took care of all other foreigners.<sup>76</sup> The agent [*agente* or *procurador*] of the French consul was a Jew. At the time of the author's arrest, a Jew approached him, telling him that he once lived in Madrid.<sup>77</sup> This Jew knew Spanish literature well: history and poetry, and he even had in his possession many books in that language.<sup>78</sup> The said Jew offered the captain help in exchange for money. Since the captain did not have enough capital, his Jewish acquaintance took it upon himself to speak with the Jew who was the French consul's agent and with the consul himself. It was concluded that the Turkish administrator had to be bribed. The author-captain had 30 *reales* in coins available and another 8 that he received in exchange for his horse. The Carmelites help the author with money but asked him to keep this secret. The Jew mentioned conducted the negotiations with the Turkish administrator, and finally, after fifteen days had gone by, the captain left Aleppo and headed for Alexandretta (today Iskendrum in the Hatay Province, Turkey). There he saw eight hundred homes of Jews who lived in a separate quarter. The captain wrote that "their common language, in which they spoke among themselves, was Castilian, which they had preserved since they had been expelled from Spain and had scattered to different parts of the world. Those who had reached these areas of Syria were their descendents. Their children go to Europe, Flanders, Spain, Italy, England, and the islands, in a way that there is none among them, even of a person of mediocre standing, who has not visited those countries, and they are so learned and expert in their issues as if they

76 *Relación*, 504–5. See also Trivellato, 118.

77 *Relación*, 505: "había vivido en Madrid en la parroquia de San Sebastián y nombraba muchas personas de puesto que había conocido."

78 *Ibid.*: "El judío que favoreció era tan sabio en la lengua castellana, que en abundancia de vocablos y en estilo y lenguaje podía enseñar á muchos muy presumidos repitiendo á cada paso muchos versos de los insignes poetas de España como Góngora [Luis Góngora y Argote; 1561–1627] y Villamediana [Juan de Tassis y Peralta, conde de Villamediana; 1582–1623] y otros. El tiempo que estuve en Alepo, que fue quince días, gastaba lo más en su conversación."

were natives of the city of Lisbon; many among them, when they reach old age, leave for Aleppo and its environs, where they have homes ....”<sup>79</sup>

From Alexandretta Captain Domingo de Toral y Valdés set sail for Cyprus, to Candia in Crete, and from there to Malta. The captain’s statements are clear: Among the Jews in Aleppo were some who not only knew the Castilian language, but were even familiar with the Spanish literature of the seventeenth-century Golden Age. All the same, it seems clear that such Jews who had commercial ties with western Europe and were similar in language and ways of life to the Levantines, members of the Sephardi dispersal in western Europe – much more than to Sephardi Jews belonging to the eastern Sephardi dispersal that had come into being after the Expulsion from Spain – were few in number. The former were termed by the latter as Frankos [Francos], that is, Europeans.<sup>80</sup>

Proof of this use of the name Frankos can be found in the statements of an eighteenth-century Aleppan man, Rabbi Yehudah Katzin (1708–1784).<sup>81</sup> He made them in the context of “a dispute for the sake of Heaven,” which broke out between him and the Rash”al, Rabbi Shlomo Laniado “on the word of Beit Ya’akov Me’am Lo’ez senyores frankos,” who dwell and rank first in the Ottoman Empire” and it concerned the degree the “senyores frankos” – Spanish and Portuguese Jews who reached Aleppo from Europe and especially from Italy – were subordinate to the community regulations. Rabbi Yehudah Katzin related that, “and it came to be, about ten years [ago], one came to dwell and he took for a wife the daughter of one of the important, great esteemed families of Frankos, and when he was in the synagogue he heard that we had agreed that the women should not go about walking through the streets of the quarter, in

79 Ibid. “La lengua común suya y casera y entre ellos es castellano, la una conservan desde que fueron echados de España y se derramaron por diversas partes del mundo, y de los que llegaron a aquella parte de Syria son éstos sus sucesores; sus hijos envían á Europa, á Flandes y España y Italia y Inglaterra y las islas, y así no se hablará con ninguno que sea de moderada consideración que no haya estado en estas partes muchos años, y están tan ladinos y entendidos en ellas como los naturales de Lisboa; habían muchos, y en siendo de mayor edad se retiran á Alepo y á otras partes donde tienen sus casas.”

80 In the seventeenth century European merchant colonies were found in Istanbul, Salonika, Izmir, Aleppo, Alexandria, and Tunis. Among them were Jewish merchants – many of whom came from Livorno [Leghorn] – who lived and operated under the aegis of European states. Belonging to this group were *anusim* and former *anusim*. See Y. Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck Press, 2008, 58; M. Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes*, 79–90, 51–53.

81 Rabbi Yehudah Katzin, *Maḥane Yehudah* (Livorno, 1802), 1. Modern edition: Rabbi Yehudah Katzin, *Maḥane Yehudah* (Jerusalem: World Sephardic Library, 1989).

the parks and orchards; and in time, his wife went out with her mother and her father's family for a walk ...." That woman claimed that the Frankos were not included in the regulations of the Aleppo community.<sup>82</sup>

Settling in Salonika (Thessaoniki, Selanik, Salonica) were Jewish merchants from Italy, who from the outset had special privileges concerning tax payments until the community leaders, in 1744, succeeded in amending the 1732 agreement about this.<sup>83</sup> Of note is that the Frankos were not considered Ottoman Jews, but rather they enjoyed the rights of Europeans and the protection of the consular representatives of the European powers.<sup>84</sup>

Jewish Spanish, in which the members of the eastern Sephardi dispersal in the Mediterranean Basin were fluent and which developed independently from the languages of the inhabitant of the Iberian Peninsula, has two main dialects: the Balkan-Turkish dialect that was spoken in the Balkans and Anatolia, and the North African dialect known as *Ḥaketiya* or *Jaketiya*. The Balkan-Turkish dialect, spoken in Turkey and Rhodes, maintained its Castilian origin, while the dialect common in Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia preserved its Portuguese and northern Spanish linguistic foundations. In all cases the dialects referred to absorbed the influence of Greek, Turkish, Arabic, and Slavic elements, according to their geographic location. The influence of Hebrew is noticeable at each site. In the end we recognize two coinés: that of Salonika and

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82 Among the rabbis who support the position of Rabbi Shlomo Laniado, who obligated the Frankos to obey the regulations and rules of the Aram Tzova (Aleppo) community, was also the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Mordekhai Meyuḥas of Jerusalem. See below ch. 3 n. 208.

83 Isaac S. Emmanuel, "History of the Jews of Salonika", chapter 8: "The Covo Family – Its Rabbis and Distinguished Citizens, in David A. Recanati (ed.), *Zikhron Saloniki: grandeza i destruyicion de Yerushalayim del Balkan*, vol. 1, 68 (Tel Aviv: Commitato por la edition del livro sobre la Communita de la Salonique, 1972): "The First" [Hebrew]. To this day, a quarter in Salonika is called Quartier Franco (the Franko Quarter), in which there dwelled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Venetian merchants as well as merchants from other cities in Italy and France, which were called by the inhabitants of the city by the term Frankos. "In this quarter, which was at the northern edge of the city, near the wall and near the seashore, lived also Jews who had immigrated from Italy owing to various expulsions", around the Kaena, Neve Zedek, Ishmael synagogues. A school was established there, the Talmud Torah Ha-Katan." See M. Molho, "The Communities (Synagogues) in Salonika", in: *Salonika, Ir Va-Em Be-Yisrael* [Salonika – A Jewish Metropolis] (Jerusalem – Tel Aviv: Ha-Makhon Le-Ḥeker Yahadut Saloniki, 1967), 176 [Hebrew]. On related references, see also M. Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes*, 88–113. I thank my friend and colleague, Mr. Ya'akov Ben-Mayor, of Salonika, who showed me the site of the "Mahalla [Maḥala] Franka" – the Franko neighborhood in Salonika.

84 Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, 57–8.

that of Istanbul.<sup>85</sup> These were distributed through commerce, the wanderings of rabbis and *dayyanim* [religious judges] from one community to the next, and mutual aid practiced among communities. Despite the linguistic differences, the merging of the language was maintained, and it was intelligible to its different speakers.<sup>86</sup>

Hereafter I shall use the terms: Jewish Spanish for the spoken language of the Sephardim and Ladino for their written language.

It should be noted that in Israel today the commonly used term for the Jewish Spanish language is: “Ladino”. Thus the name of the national authority, established in 1997 according to a Knesset law of 1996, is the “The National Authority for Ladino Culture.”

Coming out against this presentation of Ladino was Ḥaïm-Vidal Sephiha of the Sorbonne in Paris where, from 1967, he dealt with research and academic teaching of the Jewish Spanish language at that university. When in 1984 a chair was established for Jewish Spanish Studies at Inalco–Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, Sephiha held it. The course of Ḥaïm-Vidal Sephiha’s life represents the fate of many Sephardi Jews, descendants of the exiles from Spain of 1492, who settled on Ottoman Empire lands and established the eastern Sephardi dispersal in the Mediterranean Basin and who in the 1920s – in light of the far-reaching transformations that took place in the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, the modernization process alongside the crumbling and political collapse of the Ottoman entity – chose to immigrate to western Europe and to the American continent. Sephiha’s family immigrated to Belgium and settled in Brussels, where in 1923 the son Ḥaïm was born. In 1943 the family members were deported to the death camps in Poland. The mother and the son Ḥaïm survived. Upon his return, after the liberation, Ḥaïm-Vidal took a firm decision to abandon his dream of being an agronomist and to dedicate his life to the study of Spanish philology, specializing in Jewish Spanish, with the aim of perpetuating the memory of the Sephardim, speakers of Jewish Spanish, whom he had seen exterminated and annihilated in the Holocaust. In an interview with him that appeared in the monthly *El Amaneser* [The Dawn], published in Istanbul, in Ladino, Ḥaïm-Vidal Sephiha presented his position on the issue of

85 A. Quintana Rodríguez, *Geografía Lingüística del Judeoespañol*, Sephardica (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 298: “Fue principalmente en las comunidades de Salonika y de Estambul donde el español de los sefardíes adquirió nueva personalidad a través del proceso de coineización en el período inicial siglo XVI–XVII.” See also 302: “No una coine sino dos coineis: Salonika y Estambul.”

86 Ibid., 309.

the Jewish Spanish language.<sup>87</sup> In the course of that interview, Ḥaim-Vidal Sephiha categorically declared that “Ladino is not a spoken language.”<sup>88</sup> Special note should be made of Sephiha’s statement determining that “Jewish Spanish turned into the identifying sign [‘el indentifikador’] of the Sephardim mainly on Ottoman Empire soil.”<sup>89</sup>

Shmuel Trigano, a contemporary French scholar who deals in sociology of religion and political sociology, recently has been devoting much time to dealing with the examination of the Jews’ status in contemporary French society in light of the new Jewish identity that crystallized as a result of the Holocaust. He came out against Séphiha’s approach on the issue of who is a Sephardi. In 2006, *Le monde sépharade*,<sup>90</sup> which he edited, appeared in three volumes, a thick-tomed work containing 70 articles: a huge enterprise whose chronological scope begins with the Bible and ends with the State of Israel at the start of the twenty-first century and whose geographic boundaries encompass four continents, though its center is the Mediterranean Basin. The work gathers in one overarching work scholars from different fields, and per force, includes varied research methods from the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts. The tremendous, ambitious panorama is offered in three volumes of collected articles – “History,” “Civilization,” and “At the Crossroads of History” – the great value of this assemblage of articles is in the plethora of information presented

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87 In an interview appearing in the monthly *El Amaneser*, published in Istanbul, in Ladino. In the issue of 10 January 2007, Ḥaim-Vidal Sephiha stated: “Los Djudios ekspulsados de La Espanya en 1492 se dispersaron por todos los entornos de la Mar Mediterranea i se yevaron las variedades ...de la lingua espanyola (leones, aragones, i sobre todo el kaste-yano de akeya epoka) i asta unos kuantos biervos katalanes, kondjunto del kual nasio, verso 1620, lo ke se yamo el djudeo-espanyol ke vino a ser el identifikador de estos Djudios i partikularmente en el Imperio Otomano. Los Turkos muzulmanos ke solo konosiyen el espanyol por estos djudios, la yamavan yahudice ke kere dizir djudio. I se konta ke viendo el primer vapor espanyol yegar a Estambul, los Turkos muzulmanos gritaron “Un vapor djudio! Un vapor djudio!”. Si! Estos Djudios echados de Sefarad (Espanya) eran Sefaradim (espanyoles) i guardaron lingua, uzos, kostumbres, romansas, refranes, kozina (pan d’Espanya) i kultura de su yorado payis, mantenienolas kon fuerza en sus korasones i en sus tripas, i kantando: “A la una yo nasi/A las dos m’engrandesi” etc. o: Arvoles yoran por luvias/Montanyas por aires.../Torno i digo ke va ser de mi/En tierras ajenas yo me vo morir” etc.... La mizma romansa kantavan los Rodeslis en los kampos kon estas terrivles palavras: “en tierras de Polonya no kero morir.” The quotation is given in the accepted orthography of this monthly. See also Quintana Rodríguez, *Geografía Lingüística*.

88 Ibid., “El Ladino no se avla.” *El Amaneser*; See n. 87 above.

89 Ibid.

90 Shmuel Trigano (ed.), *Le monde sépharade* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006. I: Histoire, 1004 pages; II: Civilisation, 812 pages; III: Au carrefour de l’histoire, 150 pages).

to the reader and in the fact that this information crosses the “Rubicon” of 1492. In contrast to what is accepted in Jewish historiography, as produced by Zvi (Heinrich) Graetz (1817-1891) and his disciples, the discussions concerning the Jews of Spain and the Orient do not stop with the Expulsion from Spain but continue to present the history of the Sephardim to this very day.

In his introduction to the first volume, the Sephardim (Sépharades) are presented as one of the two branches of the Jewish people: Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Trigano states that while the history of the Ashkenazi branch is well known, the history of the Sephardi branch has not been treated sufficiently, and therefore, is not known by the general public and requires conceptualization and a framework for theoretical discussion. Trigano’s definition of the Sephardi branch in Jewish history is extremely broad. In his opinion, Sephardim are all those who are not Ashkenazim. In line with the conceptualization of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who showed how an individual’s behavior is derived from his place in the society from which he receives his opinions, values, and concepts, Trigano chose to define the society that he is treating according to the legal system (le droit) that organizes its life. Note must be taken that not only were living conditions in Poland, for example, totally different from those prevailing in the North African *mellah* (Jewish quarter) in any given period, but the law and justice by which the Sephardi Jews conducted their lives were determined, from the sixteenth century on, by the rules of the *Shulḥan Arukh* by Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575), while the Ashkenazim followed the *Shulḥan Arukh* as amended by the Ram”a, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1525–1575). Yet, one must note that the definition of Sephardim as those who are not Ashkenazim is congruent with what David Tidhar wrote in his time, which reflects what was common in The Land of Israel when they were written and, even more with what is accepted in political discourse in Israel today, namely, Sephardim are those who are not Ashkenazim. Trigano’s definitions draw their strength from the panorama of social sciences, which since it includes a view of the present, is broader than the historical panorama, which limits itself to looking into facts of the past.

Trigano’s definition of Sephardim as non-Ashkenazim ignores the criterion accepted in the historical study of spoken language used among a certain social collective as the main definer of its identity Trigano does, of course, relate to language when he divides the Sephardim into speakers of Ladino (ladinophones) and speakers of Jewish-Arabic (arabophones). In a number of articles in the book appears the criterion of spoken language – this is so in the article by Yosef Shitrit,<sup>91</sup> which explicitly relates to the criterion of spoken and written

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91 Ibid., vol. 1, 745–809.

language of Sephardim as the definer of identity – but in general, Shmuel Trigano does not grant this criterion a decisive status in designating the identity of Sephardim. As he sees it, this is no more than the projection of political categories and current ideologies. Trigano reminds his readers that the Spanish speaking Jews had, in their distant past, been Arabic speakers and returned to being so after the Expulsion from Spain. Of note, in this context, is that the Sephardim in Jerusalem – who are the subject of our discussion in the present work – continued to speak Jewish Spanish as their mother tongue and not the local language – Arabic. Sephardi Jewish mothers in Jerusalem put their infants to sleep with Jewish Spanish lullabies, and this was the language in which they conversed with their female friends in the early evening in the neighborhood well – this was the great *'mishlish'* gathering, as Ya'akov Yehoshua called it in his books.<sup>92</sup> This was the language spoken among themselves by the Sephardi men, the frequenters of the neighborhood synagogues, and in which they spoke to their wives. Yet, mainly the Sephardi men knew Arabic to which they had recourse in their dealings with their Arab neighbors.

Shmuel Trigano pays attention to the decisive role attributed to the *Haskalah* and the emancipation of the Jews in Europe in creating the myth of the Jewish Golden Age in Spain prior to the expulsion, as a leading, guiding model for the integration of Jews into German society in the nineteenth century. In contrast, Trigano stresses that the Zionist ethos chose to ignore the world of the Sephardim after the Expulsion and did not allot, in its historical discourse, a worthy place to the immigration of North African and Yemenite Jews to The Land of Israel in the nineteenth century, even before the *Bilu'im* set foot on the shores of Jaffa. Relying upon the activity of Rabbi Yehudah Hai Alkalay (1798–1878), a native of Sarajevo, Bosnia – whom Trigano compares to Theodor Herzl – he expressed his opinion that modern Zionism is an idea whose foundation comes from among the ranks of the Sephardim. Rabbi Alkalay served from 1825 as the rabbi of the Sephardi community in Zemun (Zemlin), nowadays a suburb of Belgrade; then belonging to the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire and situated on its border with Serbia. In his time, Rabbi Alkalay was impressed by the national struggle of the Balkan nations, and his books *Darkhei No'am* [The Pleasant Paths] and *Shelom Yerushalayim* [The Peace of Jerusalem] (originally written in Ladino<sup>93</sup>) call for the national revival of the Jews. In 1843, he

92 Ya'akov Yehoshua, *The Story of the Sephardi Home in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1976), 152 [Hebrew].

93 Recently, the Tirocinio publishing company in Barcelona, which specializes in Ladino literature, published a modern edition of these works. See Pilar Romeu Ferré, *Yehudah Alkalay y su obra. La Paz de Jerusalén (Ofen, 1840) en los orígenes del sionismo y en lengua*

published *Minḥat Yehudah* [The Offering of Judah] in which he sought to direct the response of the Jewish public to the Damascus blood libel (1840) so as to “stimulate our heart about the destitution of Jerusalem.” Trigano was criticizing Zionist historiography for, as he put it, ignoring this development.<sup>94</sup> It is noteworthy that Trigano concludes his article on this issue with a quotation from the book by Eliyahu Eliachar, *Living with Palestinians*,<sup>95</sup> which deals with the loss of status of the Sephardi leadership in The Land of Israel in favor of the Jewish leadership originating in Eastern Europe. This is no wonder: Trigano’s opinions match the positions of Eliyahu Eliachar (1898–1983), one of the political leaders of the Sephardi community in Israel and of the World Sephardi Federation, who vehemently resented the discrimination against Sephardim and Oriental Jews in Zionist society.<sup>96</sup> Shmuel Trigano sees in modernity an idea that originated among Sephardi Jews: He describes the Maimonidean controversy as the model the battle of enlightenment with the darkness of religion; the Expulsion from Spain was the destruction of a powerful civilization but also opened the way for the creation of other civilizations in different geographic areas. He notes especially the *Shulḥan Arukh* of Rabbi Yosef Karo as an instrument for universalization of Jewish law and justice.

Shmuel Trigano emphasizes that the colonial period was the turning point in the lives of the Sephardim since they were now freed of the status of *dhimmi* (*zimmi*), protected people who lived in limiting, humiliating conditions under Islamic rule, even though they were eligible for protection through the Muslim sovereign. Holding steadfast to this definition of Sephardim as those who are not Ashkenazim, Trigano chose to allot space in the compendium he edited to what he calls the peripheries – the Jews of Yemen, Iran, and Central Asia. In an article he wrote, Trigano goes to excesses in his testimony on “Sephardi Asia”: the Indian subcontinent and China. He mentions the Cochin Jews, *Benei Israel*, and the Baghdadi dispersal. He determines that “Asia, on the Indian subcontinent as well as China, too, knew long, ancient Sephardi history (*histoire sépharade*),”<sup>97</sup> I find it highly doubtful whether it is possible to attribute to this history the adjective: ‘Sephardi’. In the end, Shmuel Trigano does not adopt a

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*sefardí. Introducción, edición y notas de Pilar Romeu Ferré* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, Fuente Clara 19, 2011).

94 Trigano, *Le monde sépharade*, vol. 1, 861–78.

95 Eliyahu Eliachar, *Living with Palestinians* (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, 1975; 2nd expanded ed., Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, 1997), 23–24 [Hebrew].

96 See also Eliachar, *Living with Palestinians*. On Eliyahu [Elie] Eliachar, see A. Meyuhās Ginio, “Portrait of a Public Figure: Eliyahu Eliachar”, in Z. Harvey et al. (eds.), *Zion and Zionism*, 5–11 [Hebrew]. See also below, ch. 6 nn. 6–11.

97 See Trigano, *Le monde Sépharade*, vol. 1, 574.

historical approach; quite the contrary, in this case, his approach is patently ahistorical. When Trigano discusses Sephardi Judaism, he defines it as traditional<sup>98</sup> and stresses the characteristic lines of Sephardi religiosity, while pointing at its moderateness following the tradition of Beit Hillel. The author quotes Rabbi Ḥaim Yosef David Azulai (the Ḥid"ā; 1724–1806), who posed the loving kindness of the Sephardim versus the valor of the Ashkenazim.<sup>99</sup> It is interesting to compare this attitude with those of Ḥaim Hazaz and David Tidhar in their days: both noted the moderateness of the Sephardim they knew in Palestine under the British Mandate. Trigano examines the religious ethos in light of *moderna*, from the reforms (*Tanzimat*) of the Ottoman Empire in 1839–1856 until the establishment of the State of Israel and the founding of the Sha"ś movement, which has been active in Israeli society since the 1980s. He depicts and describes an atmosphere of tolerance and moderation and of the rejection of strictness and rigidity among Sephardim of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. This tradition, however, disappeared among the Sephardi rabbis in Israel, while the Ashkenazi rabbis' tradition of *pilpul* [longwidened debate] took the upper hand also among the former, most of whom stemmed from North Africa. These Sephardi rabbis accept the approaches of the Lithuanian rabbis and try to send their children to be taught in the Lithuanian educational institutions, despite the discrimination the latter practice against the former and the limitations on the number of Sephardi boys and girls in classes in their institutions.

In his summary to the anthology, Shmuel Trigano discusses the historical authenticity of the Sephardi world. He determines that this history underwent a demographic reversal in the second half of the twentieth century: tremendous population migration. He hones in on the Sephardim's identity problems, on their attitude to *moderna*, and their marginal status in Israel, which he feels is not disconnected from memories of the 1948 War of Independence versus the Arab world. Trigano assumes that the myth of Arab-Jewish symbiosis negated from the Sephardim their identity and their memory in that it developed ideology instead of history. The trauma of the Holocaust overshadows the drama of the Sephardi world: the Balkan Jews who were annihilated and the uprooting, within twenty years, of their brethren from most of the Islamic countries. The continuation of the civilization that was described in this anthology is questionable in light of the new era opened before us, and Trigano asks: Will the work be a memorial stele or new milestone?

98 Ibid., vol. 2, 91.

99 Ibid., 92. On the Ḥid"ā, see also M. Benayahu, *Rabbi Ḥaim Yosef David Azulai* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi and Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1959) [Hebrew].

Shmuel Trigano gives expression to the current feelings of Sephardim and Oriental Jews, especially in Israel and in the world in general. His Sephardi world encompasses all the Jews who are not Ashkenazim. This position coincides with the political discourse current in the Israel of today. It is enough to be reminded of the graffiti “Sephardim, wake up!” in the streets of the cities and towns in Israel, or of the name and election propaganda of the Sha’s movement. Apparently, a social movement or a political party is entitled to choose any name it wants for itself, and this choice obliges those dealing in the contemporary political sociology and political science of Israel at this moment. In contrast, the historian, whose studies are based on facts and on processes that took place in the past, cannot allow himself to accept current events and their reference to the past, without critiquing the historical facts.

A middle position between the Sephiha’s approach, on the one hand, and Trigano’s, on the other, is taken by the scholar Eva Touboul Tardieu.<sup>100</sup> Touboul Tardieu’s work is devoted to Spain’s attitude in the twentieth century to the Sephardim, and to that end, she has an introductory discussion on the issue of who is a Sephardi. Touboul Tardieu offers recourse to dictionary definitions and points out that in countries north of the Pyrenees, namely, France, a Sephardi is someone who originates from a Mediterranean country;<sup>101</sup> while south of the Pyrenees, namely, Spain, only one who stems from Spain is considered a Sephardi.<sup>102</sup> Despite the definition of the Petit Robert dictionary, which emphasizes the Mediterranean origin of a Sephardi, the definition in the Royal Spanish Academy’s dictionary (1992) determines that a Sephardi is one who originates from Spain, “and also one who does not meet this criterion, [but] takes upon himself the unique religious laws and customs of Sephardi Jews.” This definition, ostensibly, matches Trigano’s position as mentioned above; but, at the same time, Eva Touboul Tardieu accepts the approach of Ḥaïm-Vidal Sephiha that determines that “in the new Diaspora [of 1492] language plays an identifying role: The Spanish mixed with Hebrew words that was spoken in the Iberian Peninsula continues to be spoken among families and communities originating in Spain ...”<sup>103</sup> Considering the topic of Touboul Tardieu’s

100 Eva Touboul Tardieu, *Séphardisme et hispanité, L’Espagne à la recherche de son passé (1920–1936)* (Paris: PUP – Presses de l’Université Paris Sorbonne, 2009).

101 Petit Robert: “Sépharade – Juif issu d’une communauté originaire des pays méditerranéens”, as quoted in Touboul Tardieu, *Séphardisme et hispanité*, Introduction.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid., II. “Dans ce nouvel exil, la langue joue un rôle identitaire: l’espagnol mêlé de mots d’hebreu qui était parlé dans la Péninsule continue de l’être dans les familles et les communautés originaires d’Espagne, les confortant dans le souvenir du “paradis perdu.” In this context, Touboul Tardieu quotes H.V. Sephiha, *L’Agonie des judéo-espagnols* (Paris:

research, namely, the array of relations between Sephardism and Hispanicism, as created in light of the 1898 crisis, this scholar must put stress on the continued existence of the Jewish Spanish language among its speakers, the descendants of the exiles from Spain in 1492, since the language is the exclusive factor linking Sephardim to the Kingdom of Spain. This factor does not apply, nor can it, in the case of Oriental Jews speaking Jewish languages such as Jewish Arabic, Jewish Persian, or even Jewish Greek, though they, too, accept upon themselves and follow the rules of Rabbi Yosef Karo's *Shulḥan Arukh* and pray according to the Sephardi rite. Touboul Tardieu pays close attention to those who sought to bring relief to their homeland – Spain – that was hurt and humiliated in the 1898 crisis and to enable it to lift up its head, individuals such as Ángel Pulido, Emilio Castelar, and Ernesto Giménez Caballero.<sup>104</sup> The first chapter of Touboul Tardieu's study is entitled: "The Language: The Foundation of Sephardism,"<sup>105</sup> and inter alia, she extensively quotes Agustín de Foxá, appointed in 1903 to serve as the Spanish ambassador to Sofia, Bulgaria.<sup>106</sup> De Foxá determined that a Jewish Spanish family – as he knew it in Sofia – was none other than a Spanish (española) family that moved to Bulgaria. He described the relations of dignity and respect within the family; all the same, the father was the absolute ruler in the home and dominated his wife and children. The home was a large country house "which they [the Sephardim] call by the name of cortijo [Ladino: kortijo] and in the garden they grow different kinds of fruit and vegetables."<sup>107</sup> The Bulgarians were engaged in a bloody struggle against the Ottoman Empire before they attained their independence. Like all the nation states that came into being in the nineteenth century, Bulgaria, too, required the use of the national language as a condition for receiving equal rights in the kingdom.

Similar processes – that took place in the kingdoms of Serbia, Romania, and Greece over the course of the nineteenth century as well as in the Turkish Republic, which arose (1923) on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire – constrained

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Éditions Entente. Coll. Minorités, 1977), 16–22; Idem, *Le Judéo-espagnol* (Paris: Éditions Entente, 1986).

104 On him, see Michal Friedman, "Reconquering 'Sepharad': Hispanism and Proto-Fascism in Giménez Caballero's Sephardist Crusade", *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 12/1 (2011): 35–60.

105 Touboul Tardieu, 97–111: "la langue, fondement du séphardisme..."

106 According to the decisions of the Berlin Congress (1878), Bulgaria was an autonomous principality, under Ottoman sovereignty. Only in 1908, Bulgaria became an independent sovereign kingdom.

107 Touboul Tardieu, 158: A. De Foxá, *Los Sefaraditas de los Balkanes. Informe al Excelentísimo Ministro de Estado* (Madrid: AMAE, sección de Europa, 1932), 698/1.

the Jewish Spanish language<sup>108</sup> and turned it into a language limited to the home: the kitchen and the children's room; this diminishes the value of the enthusiastic description presented by de Foxá at the time. Moreover, we must keep in mind that in the mid-twentieth century, the Sephardim and the Jewish Spanish language that they spoke suffered a mortal blow – the Holocaust annihilated the overwhelming majority of Balkan Jews and following it came the migration movement of the few survivors to the State of Israel and elsewhere. The situation, as limned by de Foxá's description, was destined to continue for no more than one decade. Other political factors applied to the Sephardi community of Jerusalem – the subject of our discussion. Above all, those factors were the Zionist movement and the Hebrew language touted as its banner. The Zionist slogan during the first half of the twentieth century was: "Hebrew [Jew] – speak Hebrew [language]!" Consequently, the Sephardi community of Jerusalem relinquished its identifying characteristic – the Jewish Spanish language. We shall discuss the results of this waiver as time passed.

### Conclusion

Personally, I am thoroughly convinced that Sephardim are only those who, or at least their parents, spoke Jewish Spanish and read Ladino from the Expulsion from Spain to the mid-twentieth century. This language was and remains their identifying characteristic, the basis of their culture, their social existence, and their self-recognition. The sociological definition of an ethnic group is a group that considers itself related to a common origin that may be a geographical region, a common history, tradition, religion, language, and practices that make a given group distinctive from other groups. According to this definition, ethnic identity is an awareness of belonging to a certain ethnic unit. What is common to the members of the Sephardi group is their memory of the Golden Age in Spain; the Expulsion; and the use of the Jewish Spanish or Ladino language.<sup>109</sup>

108 In the first chapter of her work, 242, Toubol Tardieu cites the slogan, "Sépharades, mais Turcs, Grecs, Roumains avant tout!"

109 See, for example, the book by Marcel Cohen, which is based on a letter written to his friend, the Spanish artist Antonio Saura. Marcel Cohen wrote in the Jewish Spanish language – djidio as he called it – spoken by his parents, natives of Kushta (Istanbul), who moved to France. Marcel Cohen, *In Search of a Lost Ladino: Letter to Antonio Saura*, translated from the French by Raphael Rubinstein, including the original Ladino text and drawings by Antonio Saura (Jerusalem: Ibis Editions, 2006).

## From Expulsion to Revival

Any place reached by the king's commandment and his decree, a great mourning for the Jews. And there was great fear ... unlike any since the day of the exile of Judah from his land on foreign soil ... and each one said to the other: Let us be strong for our people and the Torah of our Lord, from all blasphemer and libeler... We will not renege on our covenant ... We shall go in the name of the Lord our God. And they went powerless, three hundred thousand marchers of the people to which I belong, from youth to elderly, infants and women on the same day from all lands of the king. Wherever the wind was blowing, they would go.

RABBI YITZḤAK [ISAAC] ABRAVANEL, *Commentary on the Prophets by Rabbi Isaac Abravanel* edited by Yehudah Shaviv, vol. 3, Kings (Jerusalem: Horev, 5771-2010), Introduction to the Book of Kings, 3 [Hebrew].



### The Expulsion from Spain

On 31 March 1492, the Catholic Kings<sup>1</sup> Fernando [Ferdinand] (1452–1516) and Isabel [Isabella] (1451–1504) signed, in Granada – whose gates they had entered at the end of a campaign against the last Muslim emirates on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula – the expulsion order applying to all Jews in their countries. This order was promulgated publicly only on 29 April 1492 and struck the Jews in total surprise, out of the blue.<sup>2</sup> The Jews were allowed a three-month

1 This title of 'Los Reyes Católicos' was bestowed upon Fernando [Ferdinand] king of Aragón and his wife Isabel [Isabella] queen of Castilla (Castile) by Pope Alexander VI Borgia (Borja) in 1496 for their achievements in the war against the heretics.

2 On the expulsion from Spain, see A. Mirsky, A. Grossman, Y. Kaplan (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of the Jewish Communities of the East, Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1991) [Hebrew]; H. Beinart (ed.), *The Sephardi Legacy* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1992) [Hebrew]; E. Kedourie, *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience 1492 and After* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); R. Porter and S. Harel-Hushan, *Odyssey of the Exiles: The Sephardi*

extension, until the end of July 1492, during which they could convert to Christianity and continue living on the lands of the Catholic Kings. Whoever did not convert and held steadfast to his Jewishness was obliged to leave the country. Jewish tradition has noted that 31 July 1492 was *Tisha Be'Av* [Ninth of Av] – the date of the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar (586 BCE) and the date of the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus (70 CE). Actually, the last day of the Jews living on Spanish soil – was the seventh of Av; but Jewish national memory and tradition saw fit to make the expulsion and destruction of Spanish Jewry in 1492 comparable to the trauma of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

When the expulsion order came into force, it put an end to 1,500 years of Jewish presence on the Iberian Peninsula. This was not the first expulsion of the Jews in Europe in the Middle Ages: quite the contrary, this was one of the last, since the Jews had been ousted from England in 1291; from France in 1305 and 1394; and from various cities and principalities in Germany and Italy over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yet, the expulsion from Spain differed from the previous ones: the Jews considered Spain a homeland.

The general expulsion was the culmination of a harsh policy against the Jews imposed by the Catholic Kings from the 1480s: this is the opinion of the historian Haim Beinart who considered the expulsion order the result of deliberate planning.<sup>3</sup> The historian Maurice Kriegel maintains that the decision by the Catholic Kings to expel the Jews derived from their aspiration to put a halt to the inroads of the heresy through clandestine adherence to Judaism (*judaizar*) throughout their kingdom.<sup>4</sup> The expulsion was the final means adopted by the rulers of the land so as to sever the network of familial and social relations, which had patently been maintained between Jews and apostate Jews who had

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*Jews 1492–1992* (Tel Aviv: Beit Ha-Tefutzoth, Naḥum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1992); J. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1992); H.M. Sachar, *Farewell España: The World of the Sephardim Remembered* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Y.T. Assis and Y. Kaplan, *Jews and Conversos at the Time of the Expulsion* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1999) [Hebrew and English sections]; A. Meyuḥas Ginio, *Jews, Anusim, and "New Christians" in Spain* (Tel Aviv: Library of the "Broadcast University," Ministry of Defense, 1999), 108–16 [Hebrew]; Jonathan S. Ray, *After Expulsion: 1492 and the Making of Sephardic Jewry* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

- 3 H. Beinart, "The Expulsion from Spain, a Preplanned Move", in Y.T. Assis and J. Kaplan (eds), *Jews and Conversos at the Time of the Expulsion* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1999, 99–122 [Hebrew].
- 4 M. Kriegel, "La prise d'une decision: l'expulsion des juifs d'Espagne en 1492", *Revue Historique* 260 (1978): 49–90.

converted to Christianity, known by the term *conversos* (judeoconversos) or New Christians (*cristianos nuevos*). The position of the Spanish Inquisition, which was founded 1478 and was a powerful tool in the hands of the Catholic Kings for attaining cultural, social, and political unity, tipped the scales in the royal considerations for issuing the expulsion order.

We do not know when the Jews arrived in Spain; undoubtedly, Jews had lived there since the destruction of the Second Temple, if not earlier,<sup>5</sup> and considered it a homeland in every sense. They saw the city of Toledo as the “Jerusalem that was in Spain.” During the span of 1,500 years, the Jews experienced periods of economic and cultural flourishing as well as times of persecution and cultural lows. This depicts the last one hundreds years of Jewish existence on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula: 1391–1492. In this period, in light of the persecution and edicts against the Jews, there began a gradual emigration process of Jews to beyond the borders of the Iberian Peninsula, along with a process of conversion from Judaism to Christianity among the Jews.<sup>6</sup> This development reached its climax at the time of the 1492 expulsion, when the Jews of Spain had to choose between loyalty to their Jewish faith and their desire to continue to live on the soil of the Spanish homeland. Jews who wished to stay in Spain converted to Christianity.

Reliable demographic data on the Jewish population that lived in Spain at the time of the expulsion are not available. We do not even know how many Jews chose to convert and to go on living in Spain and how many opted to go into exile. Historians consider that up to one-half of the Spanish Jews converted to Christianity. There is an ongoing debate between Jewish and Spanish historians on the estimated number of Jews who left the Iberian Peninsula in the expulsion. The Spanish historian Luis Suárez Fernández wrote about the

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5 H. Beinart, “¿Cuándo llegaron los judíos a España? Los comienzos del judaísmo español”, *Estudios*: 1–32.

6 The Catalan historian Jaime Vicens Vives estimated the number of Jews who converted to Christianity in 1391–1415 as some one hundred thousand. See J. Vicens Vives, *Approaches to the History of Spain* (Berkeley and L.A.: 1970), 76–86, an English translation of his book *Aproximación a la historia de España* (1960) [2a ed.]; Y. Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), vol. 2: 246, 438, 510; J. Valdeón, M. Sarlach and J. Zabalo, *Feudalismo y consolidación de los pueblos hispánicos*, *Historia de España*, 4 (Barcelona: Labor, 1982 (3a ed.), 135–36; J. Monsalvo Antón, *Teoría y evolución de un conflicto social: El antisemitismo en la corona de Castilla en la Baja Edad Media* (Madrid: Editorial Siglo XXI, 1985), 280–96. These researches deal with the crisis of the fourteenth century, the edicts of 1391, and the episode of the rebellion against the monarchy, which broke out in Toledo in 1449, and its influence on the fate of the Jews and the “New Christians” (those Jews who had converted to Christianity).

approximately one hundred thousand Jews who lived in the Kingdom of Castile. Another Spanish historian, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, who relied upon fiscal sources on tax payments to the monarchy, calculated the number there to be seventy-five thousand people.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, the Israeli-Jewish historian Yitzhak Baer estimated that the number of exiles from all of Spain came to some two hundred thousand, of whom some one hundred and twenty thousand left by land to neighboring Portugal and some eighty thousand set out by sea through the Almería port for the shores of North Africa and from the ports of Valencia and Barcelona for Italy and the Balkans.<sup>8</sup> The Spanish chronicler and priest Andrés Bernáldez, cura de Los Palacios, told his readers how the Jews sold a vineyard for a donkey or mule and set out on their way, men, women and children, with the caravan being led by rabbis, reciting Psalms.<sup>9</sup> He also expressed negative opinions about the Jews and justified their expulsion by their having eaten the best produce of the land, which they had neither sown nor reaped by their own hands, so the question is from where did they obtain their property and money?<sup>10</sup> This

7 José Ángel García de Cortázar estimates the entire population of Castile toward the end of the fifteenth century (c. 1480), on the basis of sixteenth-century data, as four and a half million. At least one million lived in Aragon, of which 260,000 were in Catalonia, 250,000 in Aragon itself, another 250,000 in Valencia, and 55,000 in the Kingdom of Majorca. See J.Á. García de Cortázar, *La época medieval* (Madrid: Alianza, 1978), 306. Luis Suárez Fernández put the number of Jews in Castile at 100,000 at the most. See Luis Suárez Fernández, *Los Trastámara y los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: Gredos, 1985), 322–23. The estimate made by Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada is even lower and comes to 70,000. See M.Á. Ladero Quesada, “Las juderías de Castilla según algunos servicios fiscals del siglo xv”, *Sefarad* 31 (1979): 249–64. Ladero Quesada summarized his research on this matter in his work “El número de judíos en la España de 1492: los que se fueron”, in *Judíos, sefarditas, conversos, la expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias* (Valladolid: Ámbito Ediciones, 1995), 170–80. The estimates by Henry Kamen for the Expulsion period are closer to those of Ladero Quesada; see H. Kamen, “The Mediterranean and the Expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492”, *Past and Present* 119 (1989): 30–55; idem, “The Expulsion: Purpose and Consequence”, in E. Kedourie, *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardic Experience 1492 and After* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 74–91.

8 See Y. Baer, *History* 2, 438. See also A. Meyuhas Ginio, *Together Yet Apart*, 109–32 [Hebrew].

9 Andrés Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE-Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 70, 562. (reed: M. Gómez Moreno and Juan de Mata Carriazo, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1962). The priest Andrés Bernáldez (1450–1513), who originated in Andaluz, expressed negative opinions about the Jews and yet could not hide his admiration for them for their clinging to the tradition of their fathers. See also Baer, *History* 2, 439; 511 n. 14.

10 Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado*, 643.

approach, to which the mendicant friars gave vent in their preaching<sup>11</sup> during the final century of Jewish life on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula, penetrated so deeply into the consciousness of the members of those generations that the Jew Shlomo Ibn Verga, an exile from Spain who wrote *Shevet Yehudah*, noted the accusation that the Jews eat from the fat of the land without working to raise it as the reason for their expulsion from Sepharad.<sup>12</sup>

The exit of the Jews was arranged by a royal order. The property they left behind: synagogues, ritual baths, study houses, cemeteries, and private houses became a legacy and was divided between the monarchy, the Church, and the municipal authorities. Jews were forbidden from taking with them precious objects such as silver and gold jewelry or gems. They did, however, take their Torah scrolls with them; the cultural tradition of philosophical thought, of renderings on Jewish law, of poetry and literature, of liturgical music, which on many an occasion was sung and played with the melody of Iberian tunes and secular songs; *romansas* (romances) and *cantigas*, which persisted in being passed from generation to generation as sung by the women of the Sephardi family; the ways of life within the family nucleus at home alongside the tradition of organization and regulations of their communities and of their public leadership outside of it;<sup>13</sup> their clothing; the dishes and kinds of food they were

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- 11 The friar and errant preacher from Castile, Alonso de Espina, author of *Fortalitium fidei*, indicated taking interest as one of the seventeen acts of cruelty of which he accused the Jews and which were carried out, as it were, against the Christians. See *Fortalitium fidei* 176, a–b. On the *Fortalitium fidei*, see A. Meyuhas Ginio, *De bello iudaeorum. Fray Alonso de Espina y su 'Fortalitium fidei'*, *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae*, VIII (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1998); idem, *La forteresse de la foi* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998).
- 12 Solomon Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, eds. Y. Baer and A. Shoḥat (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1947) 8, 11: 47 [Hebrew].
- 13 The organization of the Jewish community in Castile was ultimately determined in the *Taqqanot* (enactments) of Valladolid made in 1432, at the initiative of the court rabbi, Rabbi Abraham Benveniste. A critical version of these enactments has been published by Yolanda Moreno Koch, *De iure hispano-hebraico. Las Taqqanot de Valladolid de 1432. Un estatuto comunal renovador*. *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae*, V (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1987). These regulations were intended to restore and renew the organization of the Jewish communities in Castile, which had been seriously damaged in the first half of the fifteenth century after the edicts of 1391; the ferocious preaching of the Dominican friar S. Vicente Ferrer; the Tortosa Dispute (1413–14) and the waves of conversion of Jews to Christianity that followed in its wake. The enactments contain five sections. The first is devoted to Torah study; the second deals with the appointment of community leaders; the third addressed the rules of criminal law; the fourth arranged payment of taxes; and the fifth section set standard for modest living in

familiar with; their skills in the arts of printing, textiles, glassmaking, and weaponry production; and above all their vernacular, Jewish Spanish, based on the Romance language, that the inhabitants of the country spoke in various dialects – the Jews used mainly the dialect of Castile, where most of them had lived prior to the expulsion.<sup>14</sup> Alongside the spoken Jewish Spanish, there existed the written language of the Iberian Jews – Ladino – which was written in Hebrew letters (*aljamiado*) and was used in translations of Hebrew sources such as the Passover Haggadah.

How did the Jews react to the edict? Two important leaders of Spanish Jewry were Rabbi Avraham Seneor, who was the “court rabbi” (*Rav de la Corte*, that is, rabbi by virtue of an appointment by royal command) and Don Yitzhak [Isaac] Ben Yehudah Abravanel (Abarbanel; 1437–1508), a native of Portugal, who was a statesman, philosopher, and biblical exegete and at the time served as treasurer at the court of Afonso V, king of Portugal. In 1483 he was forced to escape to Spain and entered the service of the Catholic Kings as a collector of royal revenues. The contrasting reactions of these two leaders faithfully represent the responses of the Iberian Jewish public. Rabbi Avraham Seneor converted to Christianity with his son-in-law, Rabbi Meir Melamed. They took the following Christian names for themselves: Rabbi Avraham became Fernán Pérez Coronel and Rabbi Meir became Fernán Núñez Coronel. Conversely, Don Yitzhak Abravanel went into exile. He situated himself first in Naples and in 1503 moved to Venice, where he died. His son Yehudah, a poet and philosopher known by the name León Ebreo, a distinguished representative of Renaissance society, wrote a dialogue about love that was translated into many languages. Sephardi tradition relates that when Yitzhak Abravanel embarked on the ship to sail away from Spain, he declared an excommunication [*herem*] on any Jew who would once again set foot on Spanish soil. The Israeli historian Haim Beinart believed that there is no historical proof for the existence of such a ban, but the historical tradition itself influenced generations of Sephardi Jews to steer clear of Spanish soil. In my family we have a tradition that my grandfather, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas [Meyouḥas, Meyoḥas] (1862–1941), who was a *shadar* [emissary of the rabbis] on behalf of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah*

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daily life. These *Taqqanot*, were a guiding model for regulations that the Spanish exiles enacted in the community that they established in Fez in North Africa and in Salonika in the Ottoman Empire.

14 On the Romance language spoken by the Jews of Castile, see C. Carrete Parrondo, “Judíos, moros y cristianos. La Castilla interconfesional de los Arias Dávila segovianos”, *Arias Dávila: Obispo y mecenas*, Biblioteca salmantinensis. Estudios, 197 (Salamanca: Kadmos, 1998), 157–58. Cf. also above Introduction, nn. 64, 65.

*Ha-Sepharadit* [Sephardic Community Committee] in Jerusalem and went to collect funds among the Jewish communities of North Africa, decided not to disembark from the ship on which he sailed, from the port of Marseilles to Orán,<sup>15</sup> when it anchored in a Spanish port. This was in the 1920s. In any event, we cannot ignore the terror imposed on the Jews by the Spanish Inquisition, founded in 1478 and officially abolished only in 1834. To be sure, the Inquisition was established to operate against Christians who were suspected of heresy toward their religion. As a rule, it examined mainly the behavior and ways of life of the “New Christians” – persons who had recently converted to Christianity – and did not deal with professing Jews who had not converted to Christianity. Yet, the Inquisition’s reputation terrorized everyone within its reach.

There were Jews who left Spain in the summer of 1492, but decided for various reasons – some owing to homesickness, others because of acclimation difficulties in new countries, and still others who wanted to return and keep property they had left in Spain – to go back to it. They could do so until 1499, on the condition that at the first border station, when they would again tread on Spanish soil – they would convert to Christianity. The Israeli historian Ḥaim Beinart and the Spanish historian Carlos Carrete Parrondo presented – each in his own research – instances of Jews who did indeed return to Spain and converted to Christianity as soon as they reached the kingdom’s borders.<sup>16</sup> Those who went back to Spain and converted to Christianity could demand and receive the return of their property.

The path of the exiles was difficult, full of tribulations, and replete with disasters and catastrophes. Some died along the way of exhaustion, disease, and starvation. Some were robbed by the captains of the ships on which they sailed, or were sold by them as slaves. Others were abandoned by those same captains on a desert island and died there of starvation and thirst. The travails of the exiles were told and written down by a number of survivors: Avraham Ben Shlomo Arduziel and Yehudah Ben Ya‘akov Ḥayatt,<sup>17</sup> who found a haven in the

15 See chapter 3 n. 272 below.

16 See H. Beinart, “The Jewish Community in Maqueda in the Time of the Expulsion”, *Zion* 56/3 (1991): 238–53; C. Carrete Parrondo, *El Judaísmo español y la Inquisición* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 90–95. See also A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Self-Perception and Images of the Judeoconvertos in Fifteenth-Century Spain and Portugal”, *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 22 (1993): 127–52; esp. 129–30.

17 On the kabbalist Rabbi Yehudah Ḥayatt, see M. Oron, “Autobiographical Elements in the Writings of Kabbalists from the Generation of the Expulsion”, in A. Meyuḥas Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 102–11.

Sultanate of Fez, Morocco, as well as Shlomo Ibn Verga – a native of Spain who went into exile in 1492 to Portugal, where he was forced to convert in 1497, who witnessed the Lisbon riots of 1506, after which he left Portugal and settled in Italy – who described in his work *Shevet Yehudah* the disasters and terrors that befell the exiles.<sup>18</sup> This work was printed in Adrianople (Edirne) in 1550, by the author's son, Yosef. In 1553 Samuel Usque, a Jew belonging to the Portuguese conversos, reached Italy, where he published his work *Consolaçam ás tribulações de Israel* [Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel]. The aim of this work was to convince Jews who had converted to Christianity but had secretly continued to keep the religion and tradition of their forefathers – to return to their ancestors' Jewish religion. Usque's book influenced another author: Rabbi Yosef Hacoen, physician, historian, writer, and linguist, who was born in Avignon in 1495 and died in Italy in 1578. He wrote *Emek Ha-Bakha*, [Vale of Tears] which was published in 1558. The latter works preserved in the collective memory of those who originated from Spain, both the memory of the happy times of the Golden Age on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula as well as the persecution, terrors of the expulsion, and forced conversion. For many generations, Spain was to be in the eyes of the Jews the birthplace of the Inquisition. Yet, alongside the memory of maltreatment and expulsion, the Kingdom of Spain was the object of yearnings for the Sephardim for a very long time. The scholar Elena Romero quotes Ladino-language poets, who at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth called Spain "dear mother" and "a nest of consolation."<sup>19</sup>

### To Where did the Exiled Turn to Go?

On the whole, it is important to keep in mind that the expulsion from Spain, despite all the travails, suffering, tragedies, the uprooting and exile that rained upon exiles, marked not only destruction but also – the day after – revival and rejuvenation. Those exiles who reached a safe haven managed to establish new families in place of those they had lost in the perils of the expulsion; built new communities or joined existing ones; even the literary and philosophical

18 Solomon Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*. See n. 12 above.

19 "A ti España bienquerida/ nosotros madre te llamamos/ y mientras toda nuestra vida/ tu dulce lengua no dejamos." (Abraham Cappón, 1922). See E. Romero, "The theme of Spain in the Sephardic Haskalah's Literature", in M. Lazar and S. Haliczzer (eds.), *The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492* (Lancaster, CA: Labyrinthos, 1997), 311–27. See also A. Meyuhas Ginio, "La imagen de los *sefardim* en la literatura judía", *El Olivo*, 47 (1998): 39–55.

literature that had been silenced in the hardships in the last century of their Jewish existence on the Iberian Peninsula flourished once again:<sup>20</sup> It is sufficient to mention Rabbi Yosef Karo, who was born in Toledo around 1488 and died in Safed in 1575, author of the *Shulḥan Arukh*, the comprehensive legal code of Jewish Law.<sup>21</sup> Rabbi Israel Najara (c. 1555–c. 1625), scholar and kabbalist, composed his *piyyutim* in Hebrew while roaming in the mountains of Safed. As early as 1494, the Jews founded a Hebrew printing house in Kushta or Kushtandina [Kostandina; from: Constantinople] – the Hebrew name of the Turkish city Istanbul, also current in Ladino and Arabic; commonly pronounced: Kushta among the Jerusalemite Sephardim. Following the establishment of the said Hebrew printing house in Kushta, Hebrew printing houses were set up in Salonika (Thessaloniki, Selânik), Edirne (Adrianople), Safed, and other cities within the confines of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the Hebrew printing houses found at that time in Italy, the Hebrew printing enterprises in the Ottoman Empire were the source for printing Jewish religious literature in Hebrew. In 1512 *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* appeared in Kushta and after it also published were *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* (1514) and *Midrash Tanḥuma* (1520). Yet, it must be mentioned that during the sixteenth century a decline occurred in knowledge of Hebrew among Sephardim, and they had evermore recourse to Ladino literature.<sup>23</sup> The translation of the Bible into Ladino appeared in Salonika in 1547. The homiletic work by Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, *Regimiento de la Vida*, appeared in print in Salonika in 1564. *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot* by eleventh-century<sup>24</sup> Baḥya Ibn Paquda was translated into

20 J. Hacker, “Pride and Depression – Polarity of the Spiritual and Social Experience of the Iberian Exiles in the Ottoman Empire”, in R. Bonfil, M. Ben-Sasson, and J. Hacker (eds), *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the memory of Ḥaim Hillel Ben-Sasson* (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel and Zalman Shazar Center, 1989): 541–86 [Hebrew]; M. Idel, “Influence of the Expulsion on Jewish Creative Works”, *Zmanim*, 41 (1992): 11 [Hebrew]; idem, “Spanish Kabbalah after the Expulsion”, in H. Beinart (ed.), *The Sephardi Legacy* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1992): 207–23 [Hebrew].

21 Printed in Venice in 1594.

22 Hereafter I shall refer to the capital of the Ottoman Empire by its Hebrew and Ladino name: Kushta. In Salonika a Hebrew publishing house was established in 1513, in Edirne in 1554, in Safed in 1557, in Damascus in 1605, and in Izmir in 1658. See Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, *The Istanbul Court Record in Matters of Ritual and Ethics 1710–1903* (Lod: Orot Yahadut Ha-Maghreb, Institute of Research and Publication of Sephardic Rabbinic Writings, 1999), 15 [Hebrew].

23 A. Rodrigue, “The Ottoman Diaspora: The Rise and Fall of Ladino Literary Culture”, in D. Biale (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 867.

24 This work was written in Jewish Arabic and translated into Hebrew by Yehudah Ibn Tibbon as: *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot*.

Ladino by Tzadik Ben Yosef Formon.<sup>25</sup> Selections from the *Shulḥan Arukh* were translated into Ladino and published in Salonika in 1568.<sup>26</sup>

Below I offer a survey of the various destinations to which the exiles headed, by geographic distribution from the western border to the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Basin; this was the path of the exiles. For each one of the communities in which the exiles from Spain and Portugal settled, I shall follow their history in chronological order. One must remember, however, that there was internal migration and that reciprocal influences operated on the different locations.

### *Portugal*

The first destination toward which the exiles turned were those kingdoms on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula to which they could go on foot, without having to sail on the sea and confronting all the dangers fraught in that. Most of the Jews residing in Spain lived on the lands of the Kingdom of Castile. Many of them headed for the neighboring Kingdom of Portugal on the western part of the peninsula. Others, many fewer, mainly inhabitants of the Kingdom of Aragon, turned toward the northern Kingdom of Navarre. Until 1495, Jews were allowed to enter the Kingdom of Portugal in exchange for payment of a poll tax. In 1496, the king, João II, decided, as a result of a pact with the Catholic Kings and a diplomatic marriage with one of their daughters, a Spanish infanta, to expel the Jews from his kingdom. Before this expulsion edict could be effected, the king died, and his successor, Manuel I, called all the Jews of the kingdom to come to Lisbon, the capital, where they had the choice of either converting to Christianity or having their children forcibly taken from them and having them raised as Christians. Those unwilling to be separated from their children were forced to convert and were prohibited, by royal order, to go beyond the borders of the kingdom. This took place in 1497. The population of Portugal at that time was about one million. If we accept Yitzḥak Baer's estimate, that some 120,000 Jews reached Portugal in consequence of the royal Edict of Expulsion of 1492, we find that every tenth Portuguese was of Jewish origin. Undoubtedly the Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity in 1497 are the central core of the conversos (judeo-conversos) or the "New Chris-

25 Tzadik Ben Yosef Formon, *Obligacion de los Korasones*.

26 Under the title: *Meza del Alma*. The author was Rabbi Meir Ben Samuel Ben Ban Benesht [Benveniste] of Salonika. Previously, in 1550 or 1565, he had composed a prayer book for women in Ladino: *Sidur para mujeres en Ladino*. See O. Schwarzwald, *Sidur para mujeres de todo el anyo* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2012), 3. See also below ch. 2, n. 74.

tians” (cristianos nuevos; Portuguese: cristãos novos) of the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Of course, there had been a Jewish community in Portugal before 1492, but most of the Jews at the time of the forced conversion in 1497, were exiles who had come from neighboring Castile as a result of the expulsion edict. These people, who in 1492 chose exile instead of converting as offered to them in Spain, had not been willing to forgo their Jewish religion and had tried to observe the Jewish commandments in secret, as well as they could. In Jewish tradition they are called *anusim*. In 1506, as a result of a blood libel, riots took place in the capital, Lisbon, against the “New Christians” – whom the local, “Old Christians” considered Jews in every aspect. King Manuel I, then absent from his capital, hastened to return to it. He punished the leaders of these riots, and for a certain time, allowed the “New Christians” to leave the kingdom. This was the second wave of Jewish émigrés from the Iberian Peninsula, the first being those expelled in 1492. A few of those migrating from Portugal went east to Italy and even reached Izmir (Esmirna), Salonika, and Aleppo, where they were known by the term Frankos, meaning, Europeans.<sup>28</sup> Many among the “New Christians” who continued to live on Portuguese soil continued to observe their Jewish religion clandestinely, and against them, in 1536, the Portuguese Inquisition was established, which acted aggressively and resolutely on four continents – Europe, Africa, America, and Asia – and operated four main tribunals: in Lisbon, Évora, Coimbra in Portugal and in Goa, India. The “New Christians” fear of the Inquisition led to another wave of emigration, the third, of migrants of Jewish origin from Portugal.<sup>29</sup> During 1580–1640, when Spain and Portugal were united under the rule of Philip II, a new escape route for Portuguese “New Christians” was opened with passage through Spain – whose Inquisition at this time was less terrifying than that of the Portuguese – to the Low Countries, over which Philip II also reigned. This was the beginning of the western dispersal, which we mentioned earlier. From there the descendants of the “New Christians” of Portuguese Jews left for the New World and settled in

27 The “New Christians” were known in Portugal by the epithet: *marranos*. See Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez (eds), *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo*, 12.

28 Until the eighteenth century, among the Jews of Aleppo – Aram Tzova in Hebrew sources – were some who still spoke Jewish Spanish and until the last generation there had been maintained words and expressions from this language that had made their way into the spoken language of the Jews of Aleppo – Jewish Arabic.

29 A. Meyuhás Ginio, “Olas migratorias de judíos y conversos desde la Península Ibérica hacia el Imperio Otomano en los siglos XV y XVI”, *El Olivo*, 71 (2010): 79–92.

colonies established there. Part of them tried and even succeeded in returning to Judaism.<sup>30</sup>

In 1640 Portugal rebelled against the Spanish Crown and again gained its independence. From then on, only a few of the descendants of the Jews of Portugal revealed their Jewish identity and escaped from the kingdom. The Portuguese Inquisition operated officially until 1829 and terrified the “New Christians”. Despite this, isolated communities of Christians of Jewish origin remained in the mountains of northwest Portugal, such as that of Belmonte, which were met by the Polish-born, Jewish mining engineer Samuel Schwarz in the 1920s in the Serra do Estrela mountain range, an area of mines in northwest Portugal.<sup>31</sup> Of particular note is the activity of a Portuguese army officer, Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto (1887–1961), who was himself a descendant of “New Christians”. Barros Basto converted to Judaism in Tangier (Tánger) and took the name of Ben Rosh. He located “New Christians” of Jewish origin in northern Portugal and returned them to Judaism.<sup>32</sup>

### *Navarre*

A few thousand Jews from the neighboring Kingdom of Aragon reached the Kingdom of Navarre, which lies in the north of the Iberian Peninsula at the foot of the Pyrénées. They were allowed to stay in this mountain kingdom until 1498, when – in this case, too – as a result of a pact with the Catholic Kings and royal marriages, an Edict of Expulsion from the kingdom was promulgated against them.<sup>33</sup> Among the exiles who arrived in Navarre from Aragon were members of the Ginio (Chinillo; Tchenyo) family,<sup>34</sup> who prior to the expulsion

30 Thus, for example, in 1654, when the Portuguese recaptured Recife in Brazil from the Dutch, who had ruled there since 1630, twenty-three Jews fled and landed in the port of New York. Under the rule of the Dutch, the “New Christians” had been able to return to their Judaism, but when the Portuguese returned, they were forced to flee for their lives.

31 On Jews and crypto-Jews in Portugal, see Y.T. Assis and M. Orfali (eds), *Portuguese Jewry at the Stake: Studies on Jews and Crypto-Jews* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Dinur Center for Jewish History, 2009) [Hebrew]; and also *Pe'amim*, 69 (1997), which was an issue devoted to “the Jews of Portugal and the Portuguese-Sephardi dispersal.”

32 On him, see E. Cunha Azevedo Mea and I. Steinhardt, *Ben-Rosh. Uma Biografia do Capitão Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, Apóstolo dos Marranos* (Porto: Afrontamento Porto Edições, 1997).

33 See B. Gampel, *The Last Jews on Iberian Soil, Navarese Jewry 1479–1498* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

34 *Ibid.*, 189. See also A. Meyuhas Ginio, “La familia Ginio (Chinillo, Chiniello, Ginilo, Tchenio, Tchenyo). De Aragón a Salónica y Jerusalén”, *MEAH – Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, 41/ 2 (1992): 137–49; idem, “The Ginios of Salonika and Wine Production in Jerusalem,” in E. Horowitz and M. Orfali (eds), *The Mediterranean and the Jews*

had lived in the cities of Saragossa (Zaragoza), Calatayud, and Híjar in Aragon. In time the Ginio family wandered to Salonika and gained a foothold there. The overwhelming majority of the Ginio family continued to live in Salonika until World War II and then perished in the Holocaust.

*North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya*

Under the rule of Islam, the Jews, just like the Christians, lived as *dhimmi*, protected people, under the safeguard of the Muslim sovereign. Being People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*), they were permitted to live according to the commandments of their religion but had to maintain the Conditions of Umar, attributed to the caliph Umar I of the seventh century, but apparently legislated later, by Umar II in the eighth century. These conditions included permission to carry out religious rites but to pray quietly; holding funerals modestly; the prohibition against building new synagogues but permission to refurbish existing ones; the requirement to wear clothing in certain colors; prohibition against acquiring land, to have servants from other religions, to raise the houses of Jews higher than those of Muslims, to ride on a horse, to bear arms, or to seduce Muslims to drink wine. The Jews paid special taxes, especially the poll tax (*jizya*). Since they were under the protection of the Muslim ruler, their fate changed according to the arbitrariness of these rulers throughout time: some treated the Jews kindly and others persecuted them.

The connections between North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula were very old, existing from the rise of history. In the early Middle Ages, Jews immigrated from Spain to North Africa owing to persecution by the Visigoth (Wisigoths, Visigodos) kings (in the sixth to eighth centuries). Jews emigrated from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, under various circumstances. Thus Rabbi Yitzhak Alfasi of the eleventh century, a native of Algeria, who lived in Fez, Morocco, until 1098 and then moved to Muslim Spain and established a yeshiva in Lucena, one of the first on the Iberian Peninsula. Over the course of the Middle Ages, Jews escaped the Iberian Peninsula for North Africa: this was the case for Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon (Rambam; Maimonides; 1135–1204), who

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(Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), 157–75, esp. 163–64; idem, “The Sephardi Community in Nineteenth Century Jerusalem: The Case of the Ginios (Chinillos)”, *Nova Renascença*, 18 (1998): 335–51. On the family members in Jerusalem during the British Mandate, see Y. Ben-Arieh, *The New Jewish City of Jerusalem during the British Mandate Period: Neighborhood. Houses. People*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Ytzhak Ben-Zvi, 2011), on CD-ROM: The name Ginio [Hebrew]. See also below chap. 4, nn. 94–96 and chap. 6, n. 139. The family name was written in Ladino and following it also in Hebrew: ג'ניו'א and it is pronounced Tchenio or Chinillo; since in Ladino the letters 'ג' are used for the sound *ch*. For example, ק'ניג'א (read as kuchillo) meaning knife.

fled from his Andalusian city of birth, Córdoba, for fear of the Almohads (Almohades),<sup>35</sup> to Morocco and Egypt.

From the close of the fifteenth century and over the two following ones, North Africa was divided between Spanish or Portuguese Christians and Muslims. The Portuguese captured Ceuta as early as 1415, and from then on, the kings of Portugal, on one side, and the kings of Castile, on the other, strove to strengthen their own hold on the North African shore. The arrival of the Ottoman Turks in the area, in the sixteenth century, and the focusing of most of the Iberian kingdoms' attention, at that time, on the New World, left the interreligious struggle in North Africa in second place on the political agenda of the region's countries, even though wars between the foes mentioned continued to be waged during these centuries. From the start of the nineteenth century, the Western powers began to show new interest in North Africa, most importantly to do away with the phenomenon of pirates whose bases were located on North African shores, threatening sailing on the seas.

The exiles who left the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 for North Africa, came mainly to Fez, Morocco, whose Muslim sultan welcomed them. In 1516 the first Hebrew printing house was transferred from Lisbon to Fez. The exiles established communities called *Megorashim* [expelled] in contrast to the *Toshavim* – the Jewish inhabitants of North Africa. Important rabbis among the *Megorashim* issued the Fez Regulations (1494), which were intended to regularize the life of the individual and the community, in the same style of regulations that had been customary in Castile (Valladolid, 1432).<sup>36</sup> There were disputes between the two groups – the *Megorashim* and the *Toshavim* – but ultimately the *Megorashim* merged with and became assimilated to the *Toshavim*, who formed the majority of the community. The period of the rule of Moulay Ismail in Morocco (1672–1727) was a flourishing one for the Jews there. Outstanding figures in the community of Moroccan Jews were Rabbi Moshe Berdugo (1640–1732) and Rabbi Haim Ben Atar (1698–1743). In general, the Jewish Spanish language, known in North Africa by the name *Jaketiya*, *Ḥaketiya*, was pushed aside, owing to the Jewish Arabic among the Moroccan Jews. *Jaketiya* remained a spoken language only in northern Morocco, in the urban centers of Tetuán, Tánger, and Larache. After 1860 – when the Kingdom of Spain captured Tetuán and ruled there for two years – *Jaketiya* became assimilated into Modern Spanish. At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the establishment of the protectorate over Morocco that divided it into three units that

35 On them, see Jaime Vicens Vives, *Approaches to the History of Spain*, 45–49.

36 See, for example, A. Meyuḥas Ginio, *Together Yet Apart*, 239 [Hebrew]. Also see n. 13 above.

were subordinate to different governments, a division among the Jews is also discernible: among the Jewish residents of the Spanish and international zone, who were mainly the descendants of the exiles from Iberian Peninsula, there was a great influence of the kingdom of Spain, with its language and literature. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Spanish scholars have dealt with study of the language and romances of the Tetuán Jews so as to learn from them about the romances sung in medieval Spain. A comparison between the romances sung by the Sephardi women in Tetuán and those sung by Sephardi women in Monastir (Bitolj), on the other side of the Mediterranean, either showed similarity, or were identical.<sup>37</sup> In a letter sent by the historian and scholar of Spanish culture Américo Castro (1885–1972) to the writer Juan Goytisolo, he tells of a visit he made to Tetuán in 1922, and he describes how he came to the miserable, poor dwelling of an impoverished, old Jewish woman, and how, despite the very real physical repulsion that he felt from her appearance and her wretched circumstances, he was moved to hear “her wonderful patterns of speech; the romances that flowed from that mouth like highly aromatic roses and honeysuckle, which made him forget his surroundings.”<sup>38</sup> In the 1950s, and especially after 1956, when Moroccan independence was declared, the massive immigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel, France, and Spain began.

Some Spanish exiles headed for Algeria. As early as 1391, following the riots known in Jewish sources as *gezerot 5151* (the edicts of 1391), Jews from Spain immigrated to Algeria: thus, Rabbi Yitzḥak Bar Sheshet Perfet (1326–1408), who settled in the city of Algiers (Alger). During the period of the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, the *Megorashim* became the majority of Jews in Algeria, and their greatest rabbis, such as Rabbi Shimon Ben Tzemaḥ Durán, led the community there. Only in time did the descendants of the *Megorashim* and those of the local Jews merge. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, in 1507–1511, the Spaniards penetrated into Algeria: Mers-el-Kébir was taken in 1507 and Orán was captured in 1509 by army forces under the command of Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, the archbishop of Toledo. The Spaniards ruled the area from 1509 to 1792, except for a short break between 1708 and 1732. Until

37 E. Seroussi, “Between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean: Sephardic Music after the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal”, in A. Meyuḥas Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, 198–206.

38 *El Epistolario (1968–1970). Cartas de Américo Castro a Juan Goytisolo* (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1997), xv–82, 105–106: “su estupenda habla; y los romances salían de aquella boca como rosas y madresevas que hacían olvidar lo circunstante.” The letter was written on 8 July 1970, toward the end of Américo Castro’s life.

it fell into the hands of the Muslims, Orán was considered, in many respects, as the second capital of the kingdom of Spain. Despite the Edict of Expulsion applying to the Jews on the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish conquerors permitted the Jews of Algeria to continue living as Jews. Jews were active as translators, customs officers, spies, and intercessors between the Christian rulers and their Muslim subjects and neighbors. Important families among the Orán Jews were the Cansinos and the Sasportas.<sup>39</sup> This coexistence of members of the three religions in Orán came to an end in 1669, when the regent, Mariana of Austria, issued an expulsion order against all the Jews of Orán, in the name of King Carlos II. Some sailed to Nice, where Emanuel II, the Duke of Savoy, saw fit to grant sanctuary to the richest among them. Many of the exiles settled in Livorno (Leghorn).<sup>40</sup>

In 1830 the French invaded Algeria, as a result of a dispute with its ruler, the Dey, who ostensibly governed the country in the name of the Ottoman sultans but was actually an independent ruler. In 1830–1847 a war of conquest was waged at the end of which began the settlement of Europeans – Spaniards, Italians, Maltese, and French – in Algeria. With the French conquest of Algeria, the Jews were granted equal rights in 1845. From then on the Algerian Jews were involved in a process of assimilation into French culture.

In 1870, according to the Crémieux decree (of Adolphe Crémieux, 1796–1880), French citizenship was awarded to all Algerian Jews. At that time, there were some 35,000 Jews in Algeria. In the 1950s, with the outbreak of the Algerian war of independence, most of the Jews immigrated to France.

Jews had lived in Tunisia as early as the Roman period. After the expulsion from Spain, exiles reached it, including Rabbi Abraham Ben Samuel Zakut, who in 1504 wrote about the Jewish community in the city of Tunes (Tunis). For most of the exiles, though, Tunisia was a way station. Few of the Spanish exiles came to Tunisia, so their influence was less noticeable than in Morocco and Algeria. Even so, the Tunisian community was under the influence of the Algerian rabbis who were of Sephardi origin, among them Rabbi Yitzhak Bar Sheshet and rabbis from the Duran family. The members of the ancient Jewish community of Djerba were in close contact with the Jews of Aragon, Catalonia,

39 See Jean Frédéric Schaub, *Les Juifs du roi d'Espagne. Orán 1509–1669* (Paris: Hachette Littératures. Histoires, 1999), 112–24. M. Orfali, “A Souvenir of the Cansino Pedigrees from Orán”, in *Asufot – Jewish Studies Annual of Yad Ha-Rav Nissim*, 2 (1988): 345–58 [Hebrew]; H. Beinart, “The Trial of Jacob Cansino and His Son Abraham at the Inquisition Tribunal of Murcia”, *Zion*, 55 (1990): 341–45 [Hebrew]; M. Orfali, “The Correspondence Regarding the Plan to Expel the Jews from Orán (1666–1669)”, *East and West*, 6 (1995): 33–73 [Hebrew].

40 Schaub, *Juifs du roi*, 125–87.

and Majorca. This was the result of the good relations between the rulers of Aragon and those of Tunisia in the fourteenth century, prior to the expulsion. The edicts of 1391 and the expulsion from Spain, however, also affected the life of the Tunisian Jews and put an end to this relationship. In 1535 the city of Tunes was captured by the Spaniards, and in 1574, it was taken from them by the Ottoman Turks. From the seventeenth century on, the Jews in the city of Tunes comprised half of all Tunisian Jews. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many of the Jews of Livorno, descendants of the Spanish exiles, settled in the city and founded a secondary community of their own in Tunes. This split between the two communities lasted until 1944. At the start of the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman rulers lost their power, the penetration of European forces – from England, France, and Italy – to Tunisia began. In 1881 the French invaded Tunisia, and its ruler, the Bey, was forced to sign an agreement making Tunisia a protectorate. In 1954, Tunisia won its independence from France. At that time, Jews strove for emigration, some to France and some to Israel.

Tunisia's eastern neighbor is Libya: Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica. Jews settled in Tripoli as early as the fourth century under the rule of the Roman Empire. We do not have much information about the fate of the Jews there. On the whole, the Spanish exiles in 1492 did not wander as far as the eastern shores of Africa. The Spanish captured Tripoli in 1510, but they did not apply the Edict of Expulsion to the Jews living there. After the country was taken by the Ottoman Turks in the mid-sixteenth century, the Jewish settlement in the country was reinforced. Settling at that time in Tripoli was Rabbi Shlomo Lavi, an exile from Spain, and he led the community there. The head of the community was a *qa'id* [leader]. In 1906, the scholar Naḥum Slouschz visited Libya and described Jewish life in the country.<sup>41</sup> In 1911–1912, the Italian kingdom captured Libya and held it up to World War II, when it was taken by English and Free French forces. In 1951 independence was declared in Libya. Many Jews immigrated to Israel in the 1950s, and its last Jews barely escaped after the Six-Day War, with the riots breaking out in Tripoli because of it (1967).

### *Italy*

In Italy, there was no unified political rule from the Middle Ages to the mid-nineteenth century: the country was divided and split among various political

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41 Meyuḥas Ginio, "The Mediterranean World Discussed by Naḥum Slouschz (1871–1960) in his work *The Book Of the Sea* (1948)", in Tamer Gök *et al.* (eds.), *Mersin in History Colloquium 3rd. Mersin, the Mediterranean World and the Twentieth Century: Intersecting Trajectories* (Mersin: Mersin University (2009), 1–10. See also below chap. 6, n. 80.

factions, some secular, others religious. The fate of the Italiani, Italian Jews, descendants of those who had settled on the soil of the Apennine Peninsula as early as the first century before the common era,<sup>42</sup> and of the exiles from Spain, who had begun to reach the Italian shores from 1492 on, depended upon the will of each ruler. Some of them granted their protection to the Jews, including the Spanish exiles, while others refrained from giving it to them and even expelled them from their lands. Toward the end of the Middle Ages, many Jews in Italy dealt with money lending at interest, medicine, and commerce, especially trading in gems. Most of the 1492 Spanish exiles reached Italy by sea and settled in Naples and Rome; a smaller number went to Ferrara and Venice (Venezia). The Edict of Expulsion also applied to Jews in Sardinia and, in 1493, to the Jews of Sicily, which was part of the holdings of King Ferdinand of Aragon. After the Spanish conquered the Kingdom of Naples (1502) expulsion was ordered for the Jews there (1510). The edict was cancelled and reinstated a number of times, until the Jews were finally banished from Naples in 1541. In 1527, money lending Jews were expelled from Florence and Venice, but a number of years later money lending Jews were invited to return to those cities: since the Jews played an important role in the economy of the land as financiers, the Italian cities once again invited them to return and to live in them. This happened in Ancona, Ferrara, and Venice, which permitted the Jews to settle within its borders but limited them to life in the ghetto.<sup>43</sup> The Renaissance in Italy was the golden age of enlightenment and art for the Italian Jews. The art of printing flourished in Italy and most of the Jewish books published in the sixteenth century were printed there. In the mid-sixteenth century, at the time of the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants, the Jews' situation deteriorated. The popes reinstated the ancient laws against them and those were strictly enforced by most of the rulers. Particularly salient is the determination of a special neighborhood for Jews – the ghetto, modeled after Venice – in most Italian cities.<sup>44</sup> In 1564, burnt at the stake in Ancona, which was a papal possession, were over twenty *anusim*, at the order of Pope Paul IV Caraffa (1476–

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42 Jews reached Rome and established a community in the city in the middle of the first century before the Common Era. This resulted from Rome's standing as the political center of the Mediterranean (*mare nostrum* as the Romans called it) and from The Land of Israel coming under the rule of Rome, with the conquests of Pompey (106–49 BCE) in the east.

43 The "New" ghetto was opened in Venice on 16 July 1517. *Ghetto* is a foundry for cannons in Venetian dialect.

44 The ghetto in Rome was in effect from 1555.

1559).<sup>45</sup> In 1597, the Jews were expelled from Genoa and the Duchy of Milan, which had been appended to the Kingdom of Spain in 1535. In 1593, when Ferdinando I, duke of Tuscany, built the major port of Livorno, he opened the gates of the city to refugees from religious persecution – Catholic-English, Jews, and others – and developed its commerce and industry. Leopold II, the last grand duke of Tuscany, expanded the borders of the city and awarded privileges to foreign merchants living there.<sup>46</sup> Until 1597, the Jews of Livorno were subordinate to the nearby Pisa community; they were then authorized to establish a separate community. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Livorno was the most important Sephardi community in Italy and one of the most important in all of Europe. No ghetto was established in Livorno, and the Jews did not bear any discriminatory identifying sign. There was lively cultural life in the city. It had one of the most important printing houses in the realm of Sephardi culture. Livorno supported the Sephardi community of Jerusalem and the subsidiary community that it itself established in Tunis.<sup>47</sup> In the eighteenth century – the time of the Emancipation – and especially after the French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte in Italy, the Jews gained equal rights in it. During World War II, the Jews of northern and central Italy were severely persecuted by the Germans, after the latter gained control over large parts of the country in 1943.

The historical rival of Venice in the Adriatic Sea was the Republic of Ragusa (today: Dubrovnik). The Jews – including exiles from the Iberian Peninsula – aided the authorities of the republic to realize the role it had taken upon itself to be the intercessor between the Christian countries and the Islamic ones. Among the Jews, some were involved in diplomacy and espionage and to that end they made use of Jewish Spanish, as well as the Hebrew language.<sup>48</sup> Venice,

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45 As we know, in the sixteenth century ponentine, ponentinos – Jews who had converted to Christianity – reached Italy from the Iberian Peninsula. See Francesca Trivellato, *The Family of Strangers. The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno and Cross Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xi. See also M. Orfali, *Immanuel Aboab's Nomologia o Discursos Legales: The Struggle over the Authority of the Law*, translated into Hebrew with an introduction and notes (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East; Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), part 2., 259–61.

46 Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes*, 53. The rights mentioned were known as: Livormina.

47 See, for example, the anthology *Collana di studi ebraici*, 4: *Il Giudeo-spagnolo (Ladino) cultura e tradizione sefardita tra presente, passato e futuro* (Livorno: Salomone Belforte, 2005).

48 On one of them, Daniel Rodriga, a New Christian who settled in Venice and acted as an emissary of that republic with the aim of diverting commerce on the Adriatic from Ragusa

Ancona, and Ragusa were the entryways for Sephardim who passed through Italy on their way to the Ottoman Empire lands.

### *The Ottoman Empire*

Jews were living in Asia Minor from the Second Temple period on. Under the rule of the Byzantine Empire they were known as Romaniotes<sup>49</sup> or gregos and their spoken language was Jewish Greek. In Mediterranean lands lived *musta'aribun*, Jews who spoke Jewish Arabic. In the Byzantine Empire there were also Ashkenazi and Karaite communities. After the fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks, Jewish life was conducted within the confines of the Islamic Ottoman Empire as *dhimmi* (*zimmi*): they paid the poll tax, *jizya* (Turkish: *cizye*) as well as taxes to the local authorities. The Ottoman Empire was a Muslim state, but the population was heterogeneous, containing members of different religions and nations.<sup>50</sup> On the whole the Jewish population in the Ottoman Empire was an urban one.

The Jews lived in the cities located on the commercial routes and were centers of government, crafts, and commerce. In the largest of them – Istanbul and Salonika – after the expulsion from Spain lived between twenty and thirty thousand Jews, which was half of all the Jews in the Empire. In smaller cities, such as Edirne, Aleppo, Damascus, Safed, Jerusalem, Cairo, as well as Skopje, Monastir, and Belgrade, there were five hundred to one thousand Jews in each.<sup>51</sup> Living in the Ottoman city were the *askeri*, members of the ruling class: military officers, officials, and religious leaders, and the *rayah* – the subjects – the productive classes: farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. The *rayah* were labeled according to their religion and ethnic identity. The *askeri* spoke Turkish; the

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to Spalato (today: Split), see, for example, Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes*, 51–53.

49 The Byzantine Empire saw itself as and was considered to be a second Rome.

50 On the situation of research into the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire and on the sources for this work, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultan*, Introduction, 10–18. Ben-Naeh categorizes the researchers in this field as traditional scholars; scholars who worked with the Ottoman archives; Israeli scholars who dealt with specific communities; French scholars, and so on. He notes that upon the occasion of five hundred years to the expulsion from Spain, many studies were written about it. Ben-Naeh focuses on the sources available to the researchers noted. See also Y. Ben-Naeh, “Dans L’Empire ottoman”, in S. Trigano (ed.), *Le monde sépharade* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 1: Histoire, 369–413. See also Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: University Press, 2011), 9–12, 61–63. Campos stresses that in the Muslim Ottoman Empire there was a non-Muslim majority. *Ibid.*, 9.

51 *Ibid.*, 380.

*rayah* spoke their own languages: Greek, Armenian, or Jewish Spanish. The Ottoman ruler was required to maintain security through law and order in his cities and to provide the inhabitants with water and food. The Ottoman Empire city was divided into commercial sections and residential quarters by religion. The city center consisted of a commercial quarter, a mosque, a fortress, and the administrative building. Operating in the city were institutions of law and justice: the Kadi (Quadi; Qadi); the *shari'a* court; and religious institutions: a mosque and a *madrasa* (school). The person in charge of the markets was the *muhtesib*; the main factor in the administration of matters of the urban market, the *carsi* or *bazaar*, were the urban guilds – *taifa*, among which were also mixed guilds of Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The leader of a mixed guild was always a Muslim.<sup>52</sup> The foreign merchants lived in the *han*. The Ottoman city encompassed a number of residential neighborhoods – *mahalla* or *Khara* in Arabic – and each one had a prayer house and a *hamam*, a Turkish bath. There were also cities that had taverns – *meyhane* or *taverna* – run by Christians and Jews. The city's houses were built of mud bricks reinforced with wooden beams and were destined to destruction by fire, earthquakes, and plagues. Similar to a Muslim home, in the Jewish home (Turkish: *judikhana*; Jewish Spanish: *cortijo*, *kortijo*), there was also separation between the open space (*salmalik*) and private space (*harem*).

In 1492, the Ottoman Empire opened its doors wide to the Jews who were expelled from Spain. A Jewish tradition tells that Sultan Bayezid II (Bayezid-i Veli; Beyazit II; 1447–1512), who ruled over the Empire in 1481–1512, spoke mockingly with the members of his court that Fernando, King of Aragon, was indeed considered a wise king, but the mistake he made in ousting the Jews resulted in great profit for another king – he himself.<sup>53</sup> Even though this is only

52 A professional association was called *Esnaf* or *Hirfet*. The guild members were divided into three: artisans, laborers, and apprentices. The guild cared for the widows and orphans of its members. All the guilds were under the supervision of the *muhtesib* – the official in charge of the markets.

53 See the essay by Don Isidro de Hoyos y de la Torres, Marqués de Hoyos, which was published in the *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, vol. 45 (Madrid: 1904): Documentos oficiales 2, 208–60: Los judíos españoles en el imperio austriaco y en los Balkanes. The marqués, a member of the highest Spanish nobility, served as the ambassador of Spain to Vienna in 1895–1898. He died on 8 April 1900 and did not manage to present his remarks to the Academy; his widow, however, did turn the material over to the bulletin of this institution. On page 216 of his essay, the Marqués de Hoyos attributed to Sultan Solimán [sic] the following: “A este le llamarías rey político que empobrece sus Estados para enriquecer los míos.” Therefore, the Marqués de Hoyos went on to write that it is not strange that the Jews had, for a long time, considered Turkey as their preferred country.

a tradition, the Ottoman Turkish rulers, in general, were interested in taking in the exiles from Spain because of the skills, capabilities and knowledge they had brought with them in the fields of the weapons industry, textiles, printing, glassmaking, and medical practice. Members of the Hammon family – Rabbi Yosef Hammon, his son Moshe and his grandson Yosef – were all the personal physicians of a number of Ottoman sultans and gained considerable personal influence in the royal court.<sup>54</sup> In mid-sixteenth century (1558), the famous physician and medical researcher Amatus Lusitanus, who was of Portuguese Jewish origin, settled in Salonika after a great deal of wandering. Already noted was that the first Hebrew printing house – actually the first in the country – was established in Kushta, in 1494.<sup>55</sup> At the time, the sultan Bayezid II allowed the Jews to print Hebrew letters with printing presses, while by an order (*fat-*

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Ibid., 229: “No es extraño que los judíos hayan por mucho tiempo considerado la Turquía como su país de predilección.” See also above n. 45 on the “Nomologia” of Imanuel Aboab, 259. See also: Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Plumazos de un viajero* (Madrid: Establecimiento tipográfico de Enrique Teodoro, 1893), 238–39. See also: Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Histoire des Juifs sépharades. De Tolède à Salonique*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002), 75–91. See also Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 199. This historian claims that the sympathetic reception of the exiles by the Ottoman rulers was not erased from the collective memory of the former’s descendants – the Sephardi Jews. The latter remembered gratefully the fact that Sultan Bayezid II opened the gates of his realm to the exiles from Spain, and in time, at the turn of nineteenth century to the twentieth, rejected with disdain attempts by Spaniards to forge new links with them. The author relies upon the newspaper *Ha-Herut* of 19 August 1910. In an article entitled, “What’s the Link Between Erdoğan and the Palestinians?” published by Prof. Amikam Naḥmani of Bar-Ilan University in the daily *Ha’aretz* on 2 Feb. 2009, he quotes the following as stated by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the prime minister of Turkey: “I am a descendant of the Ottoman Empire that granted a haven to your forefathers who were expelled from Spain, when you suffered we stood by you.” Statements in this spirit were presented by the journalist Gideon Levy in an article he published in *Ha’aretz* on 12 Oct. 2012, entitled “The New Turkish Film”. The journalist, who participated in an international conference in Istanbul, listened to the speech given by the Turkish prime minister, Erdoğan. “Erdoğan,” wrote Levy, “took pride in his speech that the Ottoman Empire which had absorbed and saved Sephardim who had escaped to it from the terror of the Inquisition had not demanded that they convert to Islam and maintained their freedom of worship and religion for hundreds of years ...”

54 On the Hammon family, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, “Chelebi Ya’akov Elnekaveh’s Emigration from Istanbul to Jerusalem”, *Cathedra*, 144 (2012): 26, n. 13 [Hebrew].

55 After the expulsion from Spain, Hebrew printing houses were set up in Italy: in Venice, Mantua, Crémone, and finally Leghorn (Livorno). In the Ottoman Empire Hebrew presses were founded in Istanbul (1494), Salonika (1512), Safed (1577–1587), and Izmir (1658). See Ben-Naeh, “Dans L’Empire ottoman”, 406.

wa) forbade the printing of Arabic letters with presses owing to their holiness.<sup>56</sup> At the beginning of the Spanish exiles' settlement in the Ottoman Empire, the Jews lived in a cultural bubble, their contacts with the Ottoman sovereign limited to paying taxes on time. This situation changed in the seventeenth century, when one discerns considerable influence of the Ottoman language, literature, and music on the Jews in the Empire.<sup>57</sup> The Ottoman authorities, on their part, considered the Jews a loyal element, which even in the mid-nineteenth century refrained from striving to realize national values.

An expression of the admiration the Sephardim felt for the Ottoman rulers can be found in the work by Rabbi Moshe Almosnino (1518–1580) of Salonika, *Divre Ha-Yamim Le-Malkhe Othman* (Chronicles of the Ottoman Kings).<sup>58</sup> The author belonged to the second generation of Iberian exiles who settled in Salonika. Prior to the expulsion from Spain the family had lived in the cities of Jaca and Huesca in the kingdom of Aragon. Rabbi Moshe Almosnino had served as a Torah teacher [*Marbitz-Torah*] among congregations of the Catalan exile, Neve Shalom, and finally, Levi'at Hen. In 1566–1568, he was chosen to be one of three emissaries designated by the Jewish community (respublica) of Salonika – which, for this matter, could not rely upon the *kahaya* [*Kaheya*]<sup>59</sup> – to conduct negotiations with the authorities in the capital, Kushta [Istanbul], with the aim of trying to rescind a number of economic decrees levied upon the Salonika Jews: cancellation of the right granted them in 1545 to serve as suppliers for the king's clothing – woolen textiles for the uniforms of the

56 This order was cancelled in 1727.

57 See Ben-Naeh, "Dans L'Empire ottoman", 407–9.

58 On Moshe Almosnino and his works, see Meir Zvi Benaya, *Moshe Almosnino of Salonika: His Life and Work* (Tel Aviv: The Chair for the History and Culture of the Jews of Salonika and Greece, Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1996) [Hebrew]. For a modern, annotated edition of this work, see *Moisés Almosnino, Crónica de los Reyes Otomanos*. Edición crítica de Pilar Romeu Ferré (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 1998). On the admiration of Rabbi Moses Almosnino for the Ottoman rulers and their undertakings, see A. Meyuhas Ginio, "A Salonican Sefardi admires the virtues of his contemporary Ottoman Sultans and describes the grandeur of Costantina (Istanbul): Rabbi Moshe Almosnino's *Crónica de los Reyes Otomanos* (1566–1567)", *Society for Sephardic Studies*, electronic journal, 2, forthcoming.

59 The *kahaya* [*kaheya*] was elected by the members of the congregation with the approval of the Kadi [*qadi*], who noted the appointment in the registries of the *shari'a* court. His function was to represent the community before the authoritative bodies. In Salonika he was called *wakil*. See Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 203–5, and also idem, "Dans L'Empire ottoman", 390. Also sent to Kushta, together with Rabbi Almosnino, were Moshe Baruch and Jacob Nahmias.

royal army;<sup>60</sup> the duty to supply 7,800 head of cattle for the capital annually, and the duty to provide guarantors [*Şarāfes*] for the operation of the mining industry in Sidrocaspe.<sup>61</sup>

This delegation spent a year and a half in Kushta (summer 1566–spring 1568), and during this time, Rabbi Moshe Almosnino wrote the book *Divre Ha-Yamim Le-Malkhe Othman* – four essays preserved in one manuscript.<sup>62</sup> In the first, Almosnino told of the death of Sultan Suleiman I, “The Lawgiver,” known in the west as “The Magnificent” (1520–1566), during the siege of the city Siguetvar (Szigeth; Szigetvár) in Hungary; about the burial rites for the dead sultan held on 22 November 1566; and the crowning of his son Selim II on 5 December 1566. In this context, Almosnino presented his great excitement at the magnificent royal procession that accompanied the event.<sup>63</sup> On the whole, royal processions, celebrations in honor of battlefield victories, and different religious celebrations provided variety to, glorified, and adorned routine life in the Ottoman city.<sup>64</sup> In the second essay of Rabbi Moses Almosnino’s book, he

60 The Jews received priority in purchasing raw wool at a cheap price in the southern Balkans and had to turn over to the authorities, at a fixed price, textiles used to sew the uniforms for the janissaries. See Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 147–63.

61 Romeu Ferré, *Moisés Almosnino*, 35–36. On the mining site in the city of Sidrocaspe and on the operator of the mine (*Şarrāf*), see M. Rozen, “The Corvée of Operating the Mines in Siderakapisi and Its Effects on the Jewish Community in Thessaloniki in the 16th Century”, in M. Rozen, ed., *The Days of the Crescent – Chapters in the History of the Jews in the Ottoman Period* (Tel Aviv: The Chair for the History and Culture of the Jews of Salonika and Greece, Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1996, 13–37 [Hebrew].

62 Benaya, *Moshe Almosnino of Salonika*, 150–68; Romeu Ferré, *Moisés Almosnino*, 3–48.

63 *Ibid.*, 75–87.

64 It is worthwhile comparing Rabbi Almosnino’s description with that of the *Ḥid”a* – Rabbi *Ḥaim Yosef David Azulai* (1724–1806) – who reached Kushta on his way as an emissary to collect funds for the Jews of Hebron (1753–1758). During that time (1757), the ruling sultan, Osman I died and was succeeded by Mustafa III. The Hebron emissary left a detailed description of the royal procession, which was held upon the occasion of the change in rule, in his book *Ma’agal Tov*, in which told of his journeys, 44–45. See Yaron Tzur, *Jews among Muslims: Introduction to the History of the Jews in Islamic Countries in the Modern Period (1750–1914)*, vol. 1, Prolog: The Ottoman Capital (Tel Aviv: Open University Press, 2003) [Hebrew] and also: *Jewish Gevirim in the Ottoman Empire on the Threshold of the Modern Era* (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2003) [Hebrew]. On the *Ḥid”a*, see Meir Benayahu, *Rabbi Ḥaim Yosef David Azulai* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute and Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1959) [Hebrew]. Celebrations in honor of notable occasions were held for the masses at the initiative of the Ottoman authorities, as late as the beginning of the twentieth century: in the newspaper *Hashkafah*, in Sept. 1906, appeared the following announcement: “In honor of the day marking thirty years to the accession to the throne of our master, the great, mighty king, Ghazi Sultan Abdulhamid II Khan, his majesty, and from the joy of his

described the times of the reign of Suleiman I, “The Magnificent” or “The Lawgiver.” The third essay was devoted to a description of Kushta, and the fourth gave a report on the developments in the delegation’s intercession. Throughout all his essays, Rabbi Almosnino stresses his admiration for Sultan Suleiman I “the Magnificent” or “the Lawgiver,” whom he depicted as a generous, wise, careful, deliberate ruler. Almosnino enumerated one by one the conquests of the sultan, who demonstrated – despite his advanced age – courage in battle. When he died of illness, his advisers maintained secrecy and hid this from the fighting army, so that the former could inform his son and heir, Selim II (1566–1574) and call him to come from Anatolia to Belgrade, where the army was encamped.<sup>65</sup> Almosnino stressed the caution and efficiency of the vizier Mehmet Paşa (Mahmad Pačhá).<sup>66</sup> In the story of the episode of reign of Suleiman “the Magnificent” or “the Lawgiver,” Rabbi Moses Almosnino waxed enthusiastic about the splendor that he witnessed in glorious Kushta and described in detail the sultan’s projects for the benefit of his city and his subjects.<sup>67</sup> Even the cruelty the sultan exhibited when, in 1553, he strangled his firstborn son Mustafa to death, was excused by Almosnino as for the benefit of the kingdom since the sultan wanted peace to reign in his land.<sup>68</sup>

At the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, the borders of the Ottoman Empire encompassed Anatolia and the Balkans. Salonika was where many exiles from Spain settled down. By 1430, the city had been conquered by the Ottoman Turks, for a second time. An edict of expulsion (*sürgün*) had been applied to the remnants of its inhabitants, with the aim of settling Istanbul [Kushta], which was in ruins, immediately after the Ottoman conquest in 1453. Indeed Salonika was a preferred destination for the

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majesty having been cured, Abu Shakir, the owner of carts, donates ten carts at the end of the Sabbath to the Jews so that they may go and return from Katamonia to see the splendorous illumination the dwelling of Sa’adat the Pasha Rashid Bey.” The piece goes on to relate: “and at the end of the Sabbath great crowds streamed to the Khan of the Effendi Abu Shakir ....” The election of the *Ḥaham Başı*, too, was accompanied by a public parade. See below chap. 3, n. 87: the testimony of Mrs. Rachel Elḥasid née Elazar on the installation ceremony of the *Ḥaham Başı* in Jerusalem.

65 Romeu Ferré, *Moisés Almosnino*, 61–63.

66 *Ibid.*, 63.

67 *Ibid.*, 179–205.

68 “[P]or quieter y pacificar su reino y vivir sin sospecha y poder gobernar el reino y administrar la justicia y punir los malfechores y delinquentes sin recelo,” Romeu Ferré, *Moisés Almosnino*, 119–20. As we know, it was the duty of the Ottoman ruler to implement justice in his land. See also: Benaya, *Moshe Almosnino of Saloniki*, 48–58.

settlement of exiles from Spain.<sup>69</sup> Until the close of the nineteenth century Salonika was a city with a majority of Jews and in time it was known as “Jerusalem of the Balkans,” “a large and important city among the Jews”. “Jerusalem of the Balkans” was a place of Jewish study and a first-rate cultural center of Sephardic Jewry until this glorious community was annihilated in the Holocaust (1943).

In 1555, a Bohemian traveler, Hans Dernschwam, described Salonika as follows: “Not far from Adrianople, on the shores of the Aegean, lies a city named Salonika. Everyone knows that living there are more Jews than in Kushta. Some say: 20,000. Many of them deal in textiles and their products are sold throughout Turkey.”<sup>70</sup>

Exiles from Spain also established themselves in Istanbul (Kushta), Edirne, and Bursa. In the seventeenth century an important community also developed in Izmir, which replaced Rhodes as the main port on the Aegean Sea. In the Balkan regions, from the close of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth, owing to a decline in the economic situation of Salonika, a movement of the Jewish population took place from the coastal regions, in which the Spanish exiles had first settled, to internal areas. The Jews turned north and west of Salonika and settled in Monastir (Manastir, Bitola, Bitolj), Skopje, and Sarajevo. In northern Greece the Sephardi, Jewish Spanish-speaking Jews, comprised the majority of the Jewish population. The Romaniotes, who spoke Jewish Greek, were concentrated in Ioanina (Yanina), Arta, and Athens.

In the seventeenth century, we see a movement of the Jewish population from within Antolia westward: in Konya and Ankara (Angora) only a few Jews remained.

In all centers of Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardim attained senior status owing to their being more educated, proficient in professions needed by the Ottoman Empire, and better organized than the Romaniote or *musta‘aribun* Jews. As a result of this social and economic superiority, the Romaniote Jews, speakers of Jewish Greek, and the *musta‘aribun*,

69 See J. Hacker, “The ‘Sürgün’ system and Its Influence on Jewish society in the Ottoman Empire during the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries”, *Zion*, 55 (1990): 27–82 [Hebrew]. See also Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 8, as well as Heath W. Lowry, “When Did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonika? The Testimony of the Ottoman Tax-Registers 1478–1613”, in Avigdor Levy, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1994), 203–13.

70 H. Dernschwam, *Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel ... (1553–1555)*, Erläutert von F. Babinger (München and Leipzig: 1923). Quoted in Zvi Ankori, *Jews and Greek Christians* (Tel Aviv: The Chair for the History of the Jews in Salonika and Greece, 1981), 174 [Hebrew].

speakers of Jewish Arabic, often adopted Jewish Spanish<sup>71</sup> and in their synagogues they prayed according to the Sephardi rite.<sup>72</sup>

The Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire functioned according to two different models: the Salonikan and the Istanbul. In Salonika there were many *kehalim* (*kahal* – congregation; *Cal* in Ladino; *jamā'a* in Ottoman administrative terms) initially organized according to land of origin. In the second stage they were organized by place of residence in the city as well as at the initiative or in honor of a certain person.<sup>73</sup> Each Cal was totally autonomous in administering its members' public and private issues.<sup>74</sup> The Cal was responsible for paying taxes to the Ottoman authorities, for conducting the matters of its religious and legal institutions, for community welfare and charity services, for education, and for control and supervision of the moral behavior of its members.<sup>75</sup> Community life focused around the synagogue under the leadership of the *Hakham* (rabbi) of the Cal or the Torah teacher. As a rule, women were excluded from community activity: they came to the synagogue for prayer services and the reading of the Torah on Sabbaths and holidays. The women's section was in a side room or even in a nearby structure. The congregations acted through joint '*Haskamot*' of their rabbis.<sup>76</sup> The *Va'ad Metakne Ha-Haskamot* (the committee for amending *Haskamot*) functioned as an umbrella institution for Salonikan Jewry. In Istanbul, the congregations were forcibly subjugated to the central authority of a *Beit Din* (Jewish religious court) and a recognized authority: the *Ma'amad* of the community elders, the appointees, or community dignitaries, who were appointed by the oligarchy of the rich families. From among themselves, the *Ma'amad* chose the community elders (*mutkalmun*), the treasurers, the community leader, and the *kahaya*. The communities were officially recognized by the Ottoman authorities, and they

71 On the independent linguistic development of Jewish Spanish from the sixteenth century on, outside the norms of Iberian Spanish, see Aldina Quintana, "El judeoespañol, una lengua pluricéntrica al margen del español", in Paloma Díaz-Mas y María Sánchez Pérez (eds) *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo*, 33–54.

72 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 380–81.

73 Ibid., 127–67, 341–50.

74 See *ibid.*; Also see A. Namdar, "The Rule of the Majority and the Rights of the Minority in the Balkan Jewish Communities in the Sixteenth Century", *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights*, 10 (1980): 295–322; esp. 303.

75 Ankori, *Jews and Greek Christians*, 181–83.

76 J.M. Pérez Prendes, "Sobre la pervivencia", in *Actas del Simposio de Estudios Sefardíes*, 1-6 de junio de 1964, Edición a cargo de Jacob M. Hassán con la colaboración de María Teresa Rubiato y Elena Romero, CSIC, 1964 (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1970), 119. At the time, Bernadete coined the term '*Haskamototarqía*' or '*Haskamotcracia*', *ibid.*

worked for the timely payment of taxes and the maintenance of connections with the authorities; the ongoing functioning of the community institutions: synagogue; *Beit Din*; *Talmud Torah* (*meldar*), where the children learned – and we must emphasize, only the boys – reading and writing and to translate texts from Hebrew into Ladino; yeshivot geared to advanced studies; charity institutions for the ill, orphans, and the burial society; and to support the community officials: rabbi teaching Jewish learning, cantor, scribe, and *shoḥet* (ritual slaughterer).

The community income came from collecting direct and indirect taxes. Once in three years, on the Passover or Sukkot holidays, the community leaders assessed the property of each individual. The results of the “assessments” that were copied into the community registries served as the basis for the division of the direct tax. The community heads were the wealthy among it, and they were responsible and guarantors physically and financially for the tax payments.<sup>77</sup> The quotas levied for tax payments on members of the community gave rise to disputes among them. On basic commodities – meat, wine, and cheese – an indirect tax was levied, *gabala*. The *Beit Din* operated by virtue of the autonomous judicial power of the Jewish *Cal* and, in accordance with Jewish law, consisted of three men with halakhic knowledge. Also working alongside the *Beit Din* was a scribe. There were, however, instances in which the Jews turned to the *shari’a* court or to one of the European consular representatives who lived in the large commercial cities.<sup>78</sup> While in the sixteenth century strong, autonomous communities existed, during the course of the seventeenth century, the strength of the community waned and it turned into a framework uniting the residents of the neighborhood. Noticeable at that time was a highly significant shift from a *Cal* framework to a centralized, urban, supra-community framework. Slowly, a new entity broke through: Ottoman Jewry;<sup>79</sup> a general rabbinate also appeared, which in the eighteenth century turned into the determinant institution in the life of the communities. Within the confines of the Ottoman Empire, there did not exist, until the nineteenth century, a central, overarching body with authority recognized internally as well as externally that would unite the many communities.

In theory, each *Cal* was independent in its leadership and the organization of its life, but in actuality there did exist among the communities hierarchical relations, in which the small and medium-sized communities subordinated

77 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 147–61. On the community of Kushta in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see also Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, *Istanbul Court Record*, 13–60.

78 *Ibid.*, 187.

79 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 441.

themselves to the authority of the rabbis and leaders of the large communities. In the nineteenth century, the Jews were also designated as a *millet*, that is, a religion group. Enjoying this status in earlier centuries were only the Greeks and the Armenians, owing to the existence of a religious hierarchy in their churches.<sup>80</sup> In 1835 a *Haham Başı* – chief rabbi – was appointed for the Jews of the Empire.<sup>81</sup> To sum up: toward the close of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century, the Jews of the Ottoman Empire distanced themselves from the heritage, customs, and ways of life that they had brought with them from the Iberian Peninsula and developed a link to the culture and way of life of Ottoman society. The wealthy of the community tried to emulate the Ottoman elite, while its poor were influenced by the way of life of the Muslim and Christian masses in the cities in which they lived in neighborhoods cheek by jowl. This was how a unique Sephardi identity was created in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>82</sup> Private life in the Jewish communities was conducted to a great extent, from the eighteenth century on, according to the guidelines set by Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí in his great work, *Me'am Lo'ez*,<sup>83</sup> first printed in Kushta in 1730. The family was usually monogamous and patriarchal. There were three classes within the community: wealthy, who lived in close relations with the sultan's court; middle, comprising merchants and artisans; and the poor, the majority, who eked out a miserable living.<sup>84</sup> The relations among the classes were rigid and social mobility was not common. Marriages were arranged between those

80 The historian Benjamin Braude examines in his article "Foundation Myth of the Millet System", in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 70–88, the relations between the Ottoman authorities and non-Muslims, Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, in their kingdom beginning from the fifteenth century.

81 Until that time the Jews had paid a rabbi tax (*Rav akçesi*) for the privilege of appointing a rabbi. *Akça* – or *asper* – "white, whites – *levanim*" in Hebrew sources, served as a term for calculations, not as a means of payment.

82 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 439–42.

83 On the work *Me'am Lo'ez*, see ch. 2 below.

84 This is the position of Yaron Ben-Naeh. See *Jews in the Realm*, chapter 4, 164–217. Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez speak about the rabbis and the *gevirim*; the middle strata who were the bourgeoisie; and of many poor. Penina Morag Talmon, who studied the Sephardi *Yishuv* in Jerusalem, elaborated on the first social level of rabbis and Torah scholars who were eligible to receive support from the *halukah*; they were joined by merchants of good economic standing as well as members of the free professions; a middle level of petty merchants and a third class of people with the lowly status of poor and needy who receive a measure from the money of the *lista* [list]. Cf. above Introduction n.11. See also Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), ch. 6, 103–120.

of equal status and great tension prevailed between the rich and the poor. From the end of the seventeenth century, and mainly during the eighteenth, Jews were excluded from participating in banking and international trade. These fields passed, on the whole, into the hands of the Christians, the Greeks and the Armenians, with the support of the European powers. The Jews gained their livelihood from crafts, petty trade, and provision of various services such as physicians, translators, musicians, customs brokers, and suppliers of precious gems and textiles to the women of the harem.

In 1516–1517, the Ottoman Turks captured Syria, Palestine – the Land of Israel, and Egypt. In the wake of the Ottoman armies, there began immigration of Jews from Anatolia and the Balkans to The Land of Israel, to the four holy cities: Tiberias, Safed, Jerusalem, and Hebron, particularly to Safed and Jerusalem. In the nineteenth century, we can enumerate three patterns of communities in The Land of Israel: veteran communities in the four holy cities in the inner sections of the country, new communities that arose in the seaside cities, such as Jaffa and Haifa, and small communities situated in various cities and towns, such as Gaza, Ramleh, Nablus, Acre, Shefaram, and Peki'in.<sup>85</sup>

#### Leaders of the Sephardi Communities in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century

Important leaders of the Sephardi communities in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century were Rabbi Shmuel de Medina (RaShDaM; 1506–1589) and Rabbi Moshe Almosnino (1516–1580) – both in Salonika,<sup>86</sup> Rabbi David Ben Zimra (the RaDbaz; 1480–1574), who was active in Safed and Jerusalem before he left to settle in Egypt, and Rabbi Yosef Ben Lev (the Maharival; 1516–1580) in Kushta. In Jerusalem was Rabbi Levi Ben Ḥabib (RaLb"ah), an important

85 Michal Ben-Ya'akov, "The Immigration of North African Jews to the The Land of Israel in the Nineteenth Century: Theory and Practice", in Zeev Harvey et al. (eds), *Zion and Zionism among Sephardi and Oriental Jews*, 289–317 [Hebrew]. Michal Ben-Ya'akov, "The Montefiore Census and the Study of Jews in the Middle East", *Pe'amim* 107 (2006): 107–17 [Hebrew]. See also Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 14–16. Campos stresses that the relations prevailing between the Sephardim and the Maghrebi Jews, on the one hand, and their Arab neighbors, on the other, were closer than those between the former and the Ashkenazi Jews. *Ibid.*, 18. She notes that in the nineteenth century there were two important cities in Palestine: Jerusalem and Jaffa; she also provides us with the statistics on the breakdown of inhabitants according to their religious affiliation: 41% Jews, 34% Muslims, and 25% Christians. See also Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 20–41.

86 On Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, see above nn. 58–68. See also A. Meyuḥas Gino, *Together Yet Apart*, Epilogue – The Sephardi Legacy: The case of the Rabbi Moshe Almosnino of Salonika (Sixteenth century), 235–48 [Hebrew].

leader of the community who opposed the attempts by Ya'akov Berav of Safed, who came there in 1524, to promote the standing of his city. Rabbi Berav established an advanced yeshivah in Safed and sought to reinstate semikha (rabbinic ordination), which had been cancelled in the fourth century. In the face of Ralḅ"ah's opposition, Rabbi Ya'akov Berav was forced to leave the city. His disciple was Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Rabbi Levi Ben Ḥabib was against the messianic expectations created by David Hareuveni – a Jewish adventurer of oriental origin (?–d.1538) – and Shlomo Molho (Molkho). Molho – who in his Christian past had been called Diego Pires (?1500–1532) – was a native of Portugal and the son of *anusim*. In his wanderings he arrived in Salonika, and under the inspiration of David Hareuveni, studied Kabbalah there and gave public sermons filled with messianic hopes. Shlomo Molho greatly influenced the community of *anusim* in Italy and was ultimately burned at the stake in Mantua (Mantova), Italy, accused of preaching in favor of Judaism and the return to it.

### Jerusalem

Throughout the Middle Ages Jews lived in Jerusalem, except for the period of Crusader conquest (1096), when the Jerusalem community was destroyed and the Jewish inhabitants were slaughtered by the Christian invaders. In 1267, Ramban (Rabbi Moshe Ben Naḥman of Gerona)<sup>87</sup> re-established the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

With the Ottoman conquest of Jerusalem in 1517, the *sanjak*<sup>88</sup> of Jerusalem became subordinate to the *eyalet* of Damascus and the rulers of Jerusalem had to rely for help and assistance on the vali of Damascus for collecting taxes. The tax collecting campaign was especially difficult, owing to the rise in power of the Bedouins, who used to invade the areas of Jerusalem, Ramleh and Gaza and threaten the Ottoman Empire rulers.<sup>89</sup> All the Jews of Jerusalem were considered one ethnic community (*taifa*), which was composed of a number of groups: those of Spanish and Portuguese origin; Maghrebi, coming from North Africa; Romaniotes, who had come from the territories of the former Byzantine Empire; Italiani, originating in Italy; *musta'aribun*, Jews connected to the

87 Ramban [Nahmanides; Najmánides] was forced to flee after debating with the apostate Pablo Cristiani (Pau Cristià) in a public religious disputation in Barcelona (1263), in the presence of the king of Aragon, Jaime I, El conquistador, his ministers, his noblemen, and church dignitaries in his kingdom – and winning. Also cf. below, Epilogue, n. 2.

88 Sancak, district in Turkish; liwa'a in Arabic.

89 See D. Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), chapter 1, 141–54. R. Lamdan, *A Separate People: Jewish Women in Palestine, Syria and Egypt in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

autochthonous settlement who had adopted the language and way of life of the Arabs; and a small number of Ashkenazi families. The members of all the Diaspora communities organized themselves in Jerusalem as part of the Holy Congregation of Sephardim, although the Ashkenazim and the *musta'aribun* continued to maintain their distinctiveness by having their own *dayyanim* [religious judges]. Prior to the Ottoman conquest, the *musta'aribun* were the community leaders, but from the first decade of this conquest, the Sephardim had become the leaders of the city's Jewish community.<sup>90</sup> In 1522, the traveler Rabbi Moshe Basoula met in Jerusalem "three hundred householders, not including widows who number more than 500 and support themselves in Jerusalem abundantly as they who pay no tax ... and the community gains an income from them, since upon their death it will take everything of theirs if they have no heir, and this income is used for public needs."<sup>91</sup> The number of inhabitants of Jerusalem varied from 15,000 in the mid-sixteenth century to some 10,000–11,000 in the seventeenth. At the end of the seventeenth century there were about 1,200 Jews in Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup> We have to bear in mind that even the historian Dror Ze'evi – who does not support the theory about the seventeenth century being one of decline for the Ottoman Empire – does apply this notion to Jerusalem. Ze'evi believes that at the end of that century, a change for the worse was felt resulting precisely from the attempts made by the central government to bring about various reforms, mainly in the taxation system.<sup>93</sup> In summation: while the Jews of Izmir and Salonika could enjoy their geographical proximity to Istanbul, the capital, the distant Jerusalem suffered from scuffles with the local aggressors.<sup>94</sup> At the end of the sixteenth century, the situation

90 M. Rozen, *The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and the Ministry of Defense-Publishing House, 1984 [Hebrew]; D. Ze'evi, *Ottoman Century*; A. Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973); A. Shoḥat, "The Jews in Jerusalem in the 18th Century", *Cathedra*, 13 (1980): 3–45; R. Lamdan, *A Separate People*, on matters concerning the Jerusalem community.

91 Rabbi Moses ben Mordecai [Mordekhai] Basoula (Pesaro, 1480–Safed, 1560), *Journey to The Land of Israel of Rabbi Moses Basoula* (Jerusalem: published by Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 1938; second ed. 1943), 61.

92 Rozen, *Jewish Community*, 12; Ze'evi, *Ottoman Century*, 23–33; A. Cohen, *The Jews of Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben Zvi, 1976), [Hebrew]; Abraham Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, notes that in 1553 there were some 1,800 Jews, who lived in three different quarters; at the end of the seventeenth century, however, the number of Sephardim declined, coming to only 1,200.

93 See Ze'evi, *Ottoman Century*, 9–33; 141–71.

94 Ben-Naeh, "Aliyah of a Grandee from Istanbul: Ya'akov Elnekave in Jerusalem", *Cathedra*, 144: 21–43 [Hebrew].

of the Jerusalem Jews worsened when they groaned under the burden of despotic rulers. In 1586, the Muslims robbed the synagogue founded by the Ramban and turned it into a workshop. After the closure of the Ramban synagogue, in the 1580s, the worshipers moved to a different location, known today as the Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakkai Synagogue.<sup>95</sup> In 1621, there arrived in Jerusalem an Ashkenazi *aliyah* [immigration to The Land of Israel] led by Rabbi Isaiah Ben Rabbi Abraham Halevi Horowitz, author of *Shnei Luḥot Ha-Berit* [*Shelah*]. Also coming to Jerusalem were members of the Portuguese “nación”, including people who had been sent away from Amsterdam, by the community leaders there, with the aim of removing the poor from their city.<sup>96</sup> In 1625–1626, during the rule of the pasha Muhammed Ibn Farukh,<sup>97</sup> the Jews’ situation worsened. They were required to pay the pasha different amounts of money, and when they failed – they were arrested or forced to flee the city.<sup>98</sup> Remaining in Jerusalem at the end of the seventeenth century, were only some 300 families. Yet, in the second half of that century, a turn for the better occurred in the lives of the Jews of Jerusalem with the *aliyah* of Rabbi Ya’akov Ḥagiz, a native of Fez, Morocco (1620). Rabbi Ḥagiz immigrated to Jerusalem via Italy and Salonika. When he was in Livorno, Italy, he succeeded in influencing the wealthy members of the community to assemble a sizable contribution to open a yeshivah gedolah [a yeshivah for advanced learning] in Jerusalem, which he would eventually head and which was named for him, Beit Ya’akov. This was in 1658.

In 1742, Rabbi Haim Ben-Attar emigrated from Morocco to Jerusalem and founded there a synagogue and *Beit Midrash* [study hall] in which the Ḥid”a studied.<sup>99</sup> The yeshivah was not only an important religious institution, in which rabbis and rabbinic authorities gathered, but also a first-rate economic institution, thanks to the contributions that arrived for the purpose of main-

95 Ibid., 24.

96 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 58, which quotes I. Bartal and Y. Kaplan about the poor: 175–79.

97 M. Benayahu, “Important Sources on the History of Jerusalem in the Time of Ibn Farukh”, *Asufot*, 7 (1993): 303–379 [Hebrew]. The book *Hurvot Yerushalayim* (Ruins of Jerusalem), printed in Venice in 1636, tells of the events that occurred in Jerusalem in the time of Muhammad Ibn Farukh. See Avraham Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1951), 88 [Hebrew] as well as M.D. Gaon, *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Edited by the author; Azriel Printing House, 1938), 1: 86 [Hebrew].

98 See Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 114–16 and the bibliography there. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuhas Family*, 47; U. Heyd, “The Jews in The Land of Israel at the End of the Seventeenth Century”, *Jerusalem*, 4 (1953): 173–184 [Hebrew]; Rozen, *Jewish Community*, 1985.

99 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuhas Family*, 51. Rabbi Ya’akov Ḥagiz was one of leaders of the opposition to Sabbetai Zevi. See Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 178.

taining it; the ḥakhamim who studied in the yeshivah enjoyed the subsidies it distributed.<sup>100</sup> The percentage of ḥakhamim in Jerusalem was high, and there were family links among them, which reinforced their hold on leadership positions within the community. Even so, the Jerusalem community needed aid from the Jews in the capital, Kushta. This came about as a result of the severe crisis that struck the Jerusalem community, at the time of the mutiny of Nakib al-Ashraf in Jerusalem and after the *aliyah* of Rabbi Yehudah HeḤasid and his disciples and the abortive attempt of the Ashkenazim to settle in the city and build a synagogue there, which led to their being steeped in debt and forced them to flee the city – and their creditors. In consequence came harsh persecution also of the Sephardi Jews in the city.<sup>101</sup>

Established in the Empire's capital in 1727 was *Va'ad Pekidei Kushta* (The Committee of Officials in Istanbul), with the aim of assisting the Jews of Jerusalem.<sup>102</sup> The committee did attain its goal, but to a great extent the Jerusalem

100 Y. Ben-Naeh, "The Yeshivot in Jerusalem and Spiritual Creativity", in Israel Bartal and Ḥaim Goren (eds.), *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 2008) [Hebrew]; G. Nahon, "Yeshivot hiérosolomites du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Les Juifs au regard de l'Histoire", in G. Dahan (ed.), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernard Blumenkranz* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 301–26. In his book *Tov Yerushalayim*, Rabbi Yitzḥak Farḥi (1782–1853) – on him see below n. 112 – referred to the status of the city's sages and the subsidies they received from the *Ḥalukah* money.

101 See A. Morgenstern, "To Bear the Yoke of My Tortured Brothers': Tuviyah Ha-Rofe and the Jews of Jerusalem 1715–1729", *Cathedra*, 142 (2012): 27–54 [Hebrew], especially 38–43, and the bibliographic references there to this subject.

102 On the *Va'ad Pekidei Kushta*, see Jacob Barnai, *The Jews in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: Under the Patronage of the Istanbul Committee of Officials for Palestine* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992); Mamluk and Ottoman Rule 1260–1804, *History of The Land of Israel*, v. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi and Keter Publishing House, 1981), 240–43 [Hebrew]. The activity of the *Va'ad Pekidei Kushta* was devoted to meticulous supervision over the money that flowed to Jerusalem and an examination of the activities of emissaries abroad and their bills; on the organization of the Jerusalem community and appointments of community employees. In this way, it became a kind of branch of the Kushta community. *Ibid.*, 172–73. M. Rozen, "Influential Jews in the Sultan's Court in Istanbul in Support of Jerusalem Jewry in the 17th Century", *Michael*, 8 (1981): 394–430 [Hebrew]; Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, *Istanbul Court Record*, 14. See also Morgenstern, "Tuviyah Ha-Rofe"; *idem*, *The Return to Jerusalem: The Renewal of the Jewish Settlements in Eretz Yisrael during the 19th century* (Jerusalem: Shalem Pub., 1967) 87–114 [Hebrew]; Ben-Naeh, "The Istanbul Community and Its Ties with the Jews in Eretz-Israel in the 17th Century", *Cathedra* 91 (1999): 64–105 [Hebrew]. Actually, the *Va'ad Pekidei Kushta* promised to support the Jews of Jerusalem on the condition that the latter give the former exclusive control over the money raised for the community, which in the eighteenth century was known in the Diaspora by the name "The Kolel". Regarding the

Jews lost their independence in conducting their own affairs. The power of this committee weakened in the second half of the eighteenth century in light of the economic decline of the entire Ottoman Empire and with it the Jewish community in Kushta. The community in The Land of Israel began to send out their own emissaries with pleas for help from the Diaspora Jews, foremost among them from the Livorno and Amsterdam communities. With the immigration of the *Ḥasidim* in 1777, requests for aid were also directed to ḥasidic centers in Eastern Europe.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas immigrated from Salonika to Jerusalem.<sup>103</sup> His descendants – the members of the Meyuḥas family, upon whom I shall elaborate in chapter 3: Immigrants in the Land of Their Birth – live in the city to this day. Some one hundred and fifty years later, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Rabbi Ya‘akov Ginio (1775–1875), rabbi and kabbalist from Salonika, immigrated to Jerusalem, where he served as a rabbi in Jerusalem and Hebron, while his sons, who remained in Salonika, supported him. His son, Shalom Ginio, was already working at a trade that provided a livelihood for its owners and his grandson, David Ginio (1850–1916) established a winery in Jerusalem in which he produced wines.<sup>104</sup> This was typical of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem, in which only the ḥakhamim received *ḥalukah* [charity funds] money; the other community members earned a living through their own efforts.<sup>105</sup> Of note, in this context, is that in Jerusalem the percentage of *talmidei ḥakhamim* was very high; they maintained among themselves a network of family relations and personal loyalty.<sup>106</sup> Rabbi Ya‘akov Ginio’s great-grandson, Ḥakham Shalom Bekhor Ginio (1868–1948), appears in the *Shari‘a* court registers as the person who translated, on 13 June 1895, the declaration given by “Mrs. Mazal To[v] daughter of Moshe Ben Yitzḥak Aseo, originally from the neighborhood Aya Nikola in Salonika and holder of Ottoman nationality and one of the women of the Jewish community and now living in the Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem and who was identified by the *mukhtarim* of the Jewish community in Jerusalem ... she gave her declaration in the enlightened *Shari‘a* court and in the translation of Bek-

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situation of the Jerusalem Sephardi Community in the nineteenth century, see Yali Hashash, “Loan Business: Accounting for the Finances of the Jerusalem Sephardic Community Between 1851–1880”, *Zion*, 78, 2013: 501–525.

103 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 45–56.

104 See A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “The Ginios of Salonika and Wine Production in Jerusalem”, 157–74. See also above n. 34.

105 Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 49–51.

106 See Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*, 393–400.

hor Ben Daud [David] Ben Shalom Ginio ..."<sup>107</sup> Ḥakham Shalom Bekhor Ginio had rabbinic ordination but preferred the working world and continued with wine production in the winery he had established with his father.<sup>108</sup> His status as the translator of the declaration by the Jewish woman, originally from Salonika, who immigrated and settled in Jerusalem, at the *Shari'a* court in Jerusalem, attests to the ongoing connections between the Jerusalem Ginio family members and their relatives in Salonika. These links remained firm until the eve of the World War II.

### Safed

Over the course of the sixteenth century, Safed was the most important Jewish center in The Land of Israel, and the number of its Jewish inhabitants in 1524 is estimated as some 15,000. In the field of thought and *halakhah* [Jewish law], Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575), a native of Spain who was exiled from it in 1492 and who lived at the end of his life in Safed, wrote his most important work, the *Shulḥan Arukh*, a comprehensive code summarizing all the laws of Judaism.<sup>109</sup> In 1524, Rabbi Ya'akov Berab (?–1599) arrived in Safed, where he founded a yeshivah gedolah. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522–1570), author of *Pardes Rimmonin* and a disciple of Rabbi Isaac Luria – *Ha-Ari Ha-Kadosh* (1534–1579) – turned Safed into a center of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah. The beginnings of Kabbalah are in twelfth-century Spain, and it deals with the essence of the Divinity and the reciprocal relationship between God and man. The

107 In the years 1313 AH (1895 CE). In the book by Amnon Cohen, together with Elisheva Ben-Shimon Pikal and Eyal Ginio, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court: Society, Economy and Commercial Organization in the XIXth Century; Documents from Ottoman Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003), 631–32 [Hebrew], we find that a Jewish woman – Mazaltov daughter of Moshe ben Yizḥak Aseo, “originally a resident of the Aya Nikola neighborhood in Salonika and one of the women of the Jewish community, an Ottoman subject, now living in the distinguished Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem” – gave power of attorney to her son to sell her house in Salonika. “[The declaration was made] in the translation of Bekhor Ben Da'ud Ben Shalom Ginio.” Note 2 states that “Originally ‘Shinio’ which is erroneous for ‘Chinio’ as the name was used in Salonika.” The reference is to Bekhor Shalom Ben David Ginio (1868–1948), who in his day studied in yeshivah and was an ordained rabbi, but chose to ply a trade and headed the family business: a winery and wine marketing in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. From what we learn from this document, we see that he knew Turkish to the extent that he could serve as a translator in the *Shari'a* court in Jerusalem. This seems to show that those dealing in trade and commerce were more involved with their surroundings than the rabbis who devoted their time to the study of the Torah in the Jerusalem yeshivot.

108 A. Ginio, *Wine Production in Jerusalem*, 171–73; includes bibliography.

109 This work was translated into Ladino in 1568 with the title *Meza del Alma*. See above n. 26.



FIGURE 2 *A portrait of Hakham Shalom Bekhor Ginio*  
THE GINIO FAMILY COLLECTION  
OF PICTURES.

striking development of Kabbalah in the sixteenth century attests to and symbolizes the penchant among the Sephardim – who in the past have been known for their involvement in philosophy – for mysticism. As the sixteenth century drew to its close, the number of Jews in Safed dwindled, and by 1599, only a few Jewish families remained. This resulted from the increased power of the *multazmim* – tax farmers who oppressed the inhabitants with the aim of increasing the share of the money that would remain in their own hands after turning over the tax, as required, to the authorities in Kushta, the capital – against the background of the decline in the status of the wool industry in the entire orient owing to competition from west European<sup>110</sup> countries as well as the aggressiveness of the neighboring Bedouin tribes (as happened, for example, in 1604). Many Jews left the city, with some settling in the nearby village of Peki'in. The Safed community never regained its former status. A plague that broke out in the city in 1814 and the riots its Jews suffered at the hands of the

110 M. Rozen, *The Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and The Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1984), 3–21 [Hebrew]; J.R. Hacker, “Ottoman Policy toward the Jews and Jewish Attitudes toward the Ottomans during the Fifteenth Century”, in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 117–26; S. Schwarzfuchs, “Quand commença le déclin de l’industrie textile des Juifs de Salonique?” in A. Toaff and S. Schwarzfuchs (eds), *The Mediterranean and the Jews: Banking, Finance and International Trade, XVI–XVIII centuries* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1989), 215–35; B. Braude, “The Rise and Fall of Salonican Woolens, 1500–1650”, in A. Meyuhās Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, 216–36. See also *Mamluk and Ottoman Rule*, 243–46.

*fellahim* who rebelled against Ibrahim Pasha<sup>111</sup> – an event that occurred during the Shavuot holiday in 1834<sup>112</sup> – and earthquakes that struck the city in 1839, added further to the decline of the Jewish community there. From the time the Jewish community in Safed deteriorated, the Jerusalem community became the most important one in the country.<sup>113</sup>

### Tiberias

Active in Tiberias in the sixteenth century were doña Hannah (Gracia) Mendes Nasi (1510–1569), a native of Lisbon and member of a family of *anusim*, and her son-in-law, Joseph Nasi (1524–1579), who in time would become known as the “Duke of Naxos,” who strove to renew the Jewish settlement in the city. For fear of the Portuguese Inquisition, doña Gracia and her husband, the banker don Francisco Mendes, had moved from Portugal to Antwerp. After the death of her husband and her brother-in-law, and owing to a dispute with her sister, who was also her sister-in-law, doña Gracia transferred her activity to Venice. Since she was denounced to the Inquisition that she was observing her Judaism in secret, she was forced to flee – under the aegis of the Ottoman sultan – to Istanbul. doña Gracia received a *ferman* from the sultan, which permitted her to settle in Tiberias. After her death, however, the efforts in Tiberias came to naught. Only years later was the Jewish settlement in Tiberias renewed, under the rule of Daher el-Omar, by Rabbi Haim Abulafia (c. 1660–1744), a native

111 Ibrahim Pasha was the son of Mehmet Ali, the ruler of Egypt, who ruled over The Land of Israel for nine years (1831–1840).

112 This is mentioned in the book *Imrei Binah* by Rabbi Yitzhak Farhi (1782 Safed–1853 Jerusalem), chapter 11 – the Ninth of Av: “I en anyo 5594 ovio males grandes en Eretz Isra’ ke en el mez de iyar entraron los falahim a yerush[alayim] asigun le lo avisi en el perek di Purim. Pero en *ir ha-kodesh* Tzefat, תיבנה ותכונן, entraron dia de *isru hag* di *shavuot* i izieron en isra [el] קשים משפטים i los vasiaron asta la kamiza i los desharon diznudos onbres i mujeres i famiya. *I ba’avonot ha-rabim* bolaron kuantos *nefashot* de isra’. I kuantas *nashim* aprearon i dispues ke le tomavan todo el bien, no eskapavan kon esto, sino ke venian otros *aravim* i les davan asotes fuertes a ke disheran ande tienen bien guardado ke lo kitten i siendo ansi se salieron todos de kaza por los canpos onbres i mujeres i kreaturas desnudos en karnes komo las *hayot* de el canpo sin verguensa, siendo no tiene ni un trapo por kuvijar sus karnes i estuvieron en este *tza’ar* di mal en mal veinte i quatro dias ke vino un pahsa i los torno a su lugar.” See: *Imrei Binah* (Livorno: Tzingoli Yitzhak, 1883). I thank Dr. Avner Peretz, director of the Institute of Ladino in Ma’aleh Adumim, for this reference. On Rabbi Yitzhak Ben Shlomo Farhi, see David Bunis, “Rabbi Yehudah Alkalay and his Linguistic Concerns”, in Z. Harvey *et al.* (eds), *Zion and Zionism among Sephardi and Oriental Jews*, 158 n. 8 [Hebrew].

113 Ben-Naeh, “Aliyah of a Grandee”, 23.

of Hebron who served as a rabbi in Safed and Izmir, and settled in Tiberias in 1740.<sup>114</sup>

### Hebron

Upon the Mamluk conquest (1260), the Jews returned to live in Hebron. This community knew good and bad times over the generations. In about 1540, Rabbi Malkiel Ashkenazi, “the father of the Hebron settlement”, immigrated to the town, where he became its first rabbi.<sup>115</sup> He bought the courtyard, whose three- and four-story buildings together formed a fortress wall and were the homes in which the Jews of Hebron lived. The Sephardi Jews from among the exiles from Spain had settled in the city and in time requested to pray according to their Sephardi rite. For this end, The city’s rabbi, Rabbi. Yitzḥak Garish, turned to Rabbi Levi Ben Ḥabib (c. 1483–1545).<sup>116</sup> Rabbi Gedalya of Siemiatyce wrote in his work *Sha’alu Shelom Yerushalayim* (Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem; 1699–1705) that “living in Hebron are Sephardi Jews. About forty householders and they all dwell in one courtyard and the synagogue and the beit ha-midrash are also in this courtyard.”<sup>117</sup> In 1786 Rabbi Yosef Ya’akov Meyuḥas (1737–1814), who lived in Hebron, set out on a mission to Morocco.<sup>118</sup>

In 1834, during the rule of Ibrahim Pasha in Syria including The Land of Israel, a rebellion by the *falaḥim* of Jerusalem broke out against him. The rebels blocked the way from Jerusalem to Jaffa so as to prevent information from reaching Ibrahim Pasha, and they besieged the city. The day the siege began, a serious earthquake struck Jerusalem. At the end of a week, the rebel forces surged into the city, looting and ransacking it.<sup>119</sup> Ibrahim Pasha finally crushed the revolt and regained control over the city. The Jewish community in Jerusalem was saved owing to the fact that the rebels fled from it.<sup>120</sup> The fate of

114 See *Mamluk and Ottoman Rule*, 246.

115 *Ibid.*, 243–44.

116 Oded Avisar (ed.), *The Book of Hebron: The City of the Patriarchs throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing house, 1970), 42–82 [Hebrew]. See also *Teshuvot Ralbaḥ*, part 1, par. 79. Quoted there.

117 *Ibid.*, 245.

118 See Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 160.

119 *Imre Bina*, ch. 7 – Ḥanukkah and Purim: “I *ba’vonot ha’rabim* siendo ke se dio lisensia a el *mashḥit* entraron tambien en kazas di djidios...”

120 *Ibid.*: I dia de shabat amedio dia entro el *mishne yarum hodo* a Yerusalem, תיבנה ותכונן חס ושלוים, וישקוט הארץ, i abastese la bika para dar hodaot a el *shem yitbarekh* ke si, metian pizma los *falahim* i se kedavan en la sivdad i peleavan kon el *mishne* tomava el *mishne* la sivdad kon espada era mal grande asigun fue בעוונות en Hevron, תיבנה ותכונן, Ke ayi entro kon espada i izieron ayi el asker mal grande...”

the Hebron Jews was different: The soldiers of Ibrahim Pasha who conquered the city from the rebels, robbed, murdered, and raped for three days.<sup>121</sup>

A number of my family members – the Meyuḥas family – lived in Hebron from the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>122</sup> In 1790, in Hebron, one of them signed an approbation for the book *Shemen Ha-Mor* by Rabbi Mordekhai Rubio, together with the greatest Hebron rabbis.<sup>123</sup> Another member of the Meyuḥas family, Rabbenu Ben Refael Meyuḥas, who lived in Hebron in the early twentieth century, established public transportation there in wagons that operated between Hebron and Jerusalem. In 1928, Rabbenu Meyuḥas and his family left Hebron and returned to Jerusalem.<sup>124</sup> Rabbenu Meyuḥas was one of the founders of the “Hamekasher” transportation cooperative in Jerusalem.

At the end of his life, Rabbi Ya‘akov Ginio, who immigrated to Jerusalem from Salonika at the start of the nineteenth century, settled in Hebron, where he died at the age of one hundred (1875).<sup>125</sup>

### *The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries*

After the harsh defeat suffered by the Ottoman Turks at the hands of the Spaniards in the Battle of Lepanto (1571), the Turks became closer to Spain’s

121 *Imre Binah*, ch. 11: Tisha be’Av: Dispues di esto en el mez di Av en el mizmo anyo [Av 1834] akontesiyo en la sivdad santa de los *Avot Ha-’olam* Hebron, ותכונה תיבנה entraron el fonsado de el mayoral grande Ibrahim Pasha de Mizraim, kon מלחמה grande kon los tugarim de Hevron siendo le izieron munga traision i dio *reshut* a todo su fonsado ke vaziaran la sivdad tres dias שלמים i ke izieran komo voluntad de sus almas. I *ba’avonot ha-rabim* entraron kon fuerte ira i sanya i fueron a el kortijo de los djidios i enpesaron a azer fuerte השחתה de vaziar kon muncha krueldad...I aun ke lo ke todo esto mal fue 20 oras, fue mas mas fuerte de el mal de Tzefat ותכונה תיבנה I estuvieron los moradores de Hebron תיבנה תיבנה ירושלים תיבנה ותיכונן, I mandaron de ירושלים תיבנה ותיכונן, I diznudos i sin *talit* i *tefilin* sinko dias asta ke le mandaron de ירושלים תיבנה ותיכונן, I vimos de males lo ke no vieron nuestros padres.” The author of *Imre Bina* informs us of both the mutual aid among the Jewish communities in the country and of the worsening of relations between Jews and Arabs (‘tugarim’).

122 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 289–93.

123 *Ibid.*

124 *Ibid.*

125 Eulogies on him were printed in the book *Shem Mi-Shimon Derosh D.* See Ya‘akov Gelis, *Encyclopedia of the History of The Land of Israel*, vol. 2, 113 [Hebrew], the entry: Ya‘akov Ginio. See also Ehud Ginio, “The Ginio Family and the Wine Industry in Jerusalem” (term paper written as part of a workshop for term paper writing, under the guidance of Mrs. Tirza Levzion, Ha-Gimnasia Ha-Ivrit of Reḥavia, Jerusalem), 1980, 36–41. The academic mentor was Mr. Shlomo Alboḥer of the Department of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A copy of this paper is kept at the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library, Jerusalem.

enemies: France, England, and Holland; and these countries received *imti-yazat*, known in the West as capitulations, from the sultan, which enabled protection by representatives of the European powers over their subjects and citizens.<sup>126</sup> During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire fought in a series of wars against Russia, Poland, and Austria. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Turks, after having suffered a defeat at the gates of Vienna (1683), had to make way for the Austrians in Hungary. In the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), at the end of twenty-five years of war, Austria received all of Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, and Slovenia. Venice was given Morea and Dalmatia, while Poland obtained Podolia. One must keep in mind that Sephardim were living in Poland as well: At the invitation of the Graf of Zamość, who established that town in 1580, Sephardim came to the new city as did Armenians, and settled there. The Sephardi synagogue in Zamość was built in 1588. From the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire was losing lands to its adversaries: Austria-Hungary and Russia. In 1702, Russia gained Azov. In the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718), the Ottoman Turks also lost Banat, northern Serbia, and part of Wallachia. In the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) northern Serbia returned to the possession of the Turks. In the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), Russia received rights in the Crimea and the Black Sea as well as the status of the protector of the Orthodox-Christian Church. To sum up: the victories over the Ottoman Turks in the northern Balkans, beginning at the close of the seventeenth century and especially during the course of the eighteenth, were definite portents for the national liberation movements in the southern Balkans in the nineteenth century.

The weakening of the central Ottoman government's power, over the course of the seventeenth century, led to the rise of local forces and this worsened the Jews' situation. After flourishing for a hundred years, a decline of the Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire began. The eruption and failure of the Sabbatean movement – a messianic movement led by the false messiah Sabbetai [Shabbetai; Sabbatai] Zevi [Sevi], who was born in Izmir in 1626 and died as a Muslim in 1676 – created a deep rift in public and private life in the Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire, and its repercussion reverberated as far away as the western dispersal of the Sephardim. All this came in the shadow of the Bohdan Chmielinicki (Khmelnitsky) massacres (1648–1649) during the

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<sup>126</sup> France first received these privileges in 1536 and then later in 1569; England in 1580; and Holland in 1612. See M. Rozen, *In the Mediterranean Routes*, 54 and also the bibliographical references there. The state of war that prevailed for a long time between the Kingdom of Spain and the Ottoman Empire came to an end in 1782, when a peace treaty was signed between King Carlos II of Spain and the Ottoman sultan, Abdulhamid I.

wars in Ukraine and Poland. Sabbetai Zevi and his messianic movement stimulated great excitement among the Jews, to the point that the Ottoman authorities needed to become involved and they arrested the movement's founder, Sabbetai Zevi. Ultimately, he was given a choice, when brought before the Imperial Divan (*divan-i hümayun*), in the presence of the sultan, in Edirne in September 1666, of either being executed or converting to Islam; he chose to be a Muslim and many of his followers did the same. Their descendents are the Dönme sect until today. This group of voluntary converts behaved like Muslims in public, but in secret held fast to a mixture of traditional Judaism and heresy against Judaism. The group's members practiced endogamy, and they were quickly identified as a separate group both by the Jews as well as the Turks.<sup>127</sup>

In the economic sphere as well, from the closing years of the eighteenth century, the standing of the Jews of the Empire was harmed owing to the rise in economic power of the Christians in it, who – with the support of the European powers – began to take over the Ottoman Empire's trade with Europe.

In the nineteenth century, we find the first budding of national awakening in the Balkans, of rebellions and unceasing attempts, with the encouragement of the neighboring empires, the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian, the historical enemies of the Ottoman Empire, to liberate themselves from the yoke of the Ottoman conqueror.

In 1782 a rebellion broke out in the mountainous kingdom of Montenegro, which became independent in 1799. In 1804 a Serbian revolution against the Ottomans erupted and consequently Serbia was granted autonomy in 1829. In 1821 a Greek revolution broke out against the Ottoman Turks. Some five

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<sup>127</sup> In his studies on Sabbetai Zevi, Gershom Scholem presented him as a mentally unstable person suffering from manic depression. See G. Scholem, *Sabbetai Zevi and the Sabbatean Movement* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1957) [Hebrew] and also Idem., *Studies and Texts Concerning the History of Sabbatianism and Its Metamorphoses* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1974) [Hebrew]. A completely different approach is offered by the Kabbalah scholar Avraham Elqayam: he believes that one must examine *Ha-Zamir Me-Izmir* and his deeds in light of the influence of the Sufi movement as conducted by Jalal ad-Din Rūmī (Djalal a-Din a-Rumi) and his disciples. See A. Elqayam, "The Horizon of reason: the divine madness of Sabbetai Sevi" in: *Kabbalah*, 9 (2003): 7-61. See also Marc Baer, *The Donme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries and Secular Turks* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010). On 1 March 2013, the Turkey-born Mrs. Zelda Ovadia, co-editor of the journal *Aki Yerushalayim*, wrote that she remembers from her childhood in Turkey: "Donmes se yamavan 'sazanikos' como el pishcado sazen (carpe) ke bive en aguas dulces. El sazan puede 'nadar' kontra el koriente; nada en diversas direksiones; i es ansi ke asemejan los Donmes a este pishcado porke no savian a ke ley aparteninan egzaktamente i tenian dudas entre el djudaismo i el Islam." *Ladinokomunita@yahoo groups.com*. [accessed 01 March 2013].

thousand Jews were slaughtered in the Peloponnese by Greek rebels, who considered the Jews allies of the Ottoman Turks. Many of the survivors fled to Corfu. In the new Greek state, established in 1827, the Greeks continued to bear a grudge against the Jews for their past loyalty to Ottoman rule. In 1840 and in 1891 the Jews were accused of blood libels by Greek-Christians in Corfu and Rhodes. As a result of these persecutions and similar ones, emigration by Jews of independent Greece northward to Salonika, which remained Ottoman until 1912, continued. In the nineteenth century, a Bulgarian national movement operated from two centers: one in Bucharest and the other in Odessa. The first inkling of the Bulgarian national revival was the writing of the history of the Bulgarian people by the monk Paisi in 1762. In 1840 the Bible was translated in Bulgarian. Thus we perceive the importance of language as a driving force and symbol of national renaissance.<sup>128</sup> In 1875 a bloody rebellion of the Bulgarians broke out against the Turks. The Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878) caused great suffering to the inhabitants of Bulgaria, including the Sephardi communities there.<sup>129</sup>

In 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano was signed by which Great Bulgaria was established, but the Treaty of Berlin, also from 1878, reduced the borders of this kingdom, which actually attained complete independence in 1908. Romania gained independence in 1878, after the political unification of the Danubian principalities: Wallachia and Moldova. All Balkan states had Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardi communities. The struggle of the Balkan peoples for independence and liberation from the yoke of Ottoman Turkey all influenced the Jews there. Rabbi Yehudah Ḥai Alkalay (1798–1878), a native of Sarajevo who served as the rabbi of the Zemon (German: Zemlin) community on the Serbian border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, published, in Ladino, his works *Shelom Yerushalyim* (Peace of Jerusalem; 1840) and *Minḥat Yehudah* (The Offering of Judah; 1843), in which he called for the settlement of The Land of Israel. To that end, he even tried to create a network of connections with the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which had been founded in 1860 and operating since

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Roman Jakobson, “The Beginning of National Self-Determination in Europe”, in J. Fishman, *Readings in the Sociology of Language* (Mouton: The Hague–Paris, 1970), 585; Karl W. Deutsch, “The Trend of European Nationalism – The Language Aspect”, in Fishman, *Readings*, 598.

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, Maryse Choukroun, *Mon Grand-Pere Albert Confino ou 70 ans au Service de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle* (Paris: Edited by the author., s. d.), 57–69; Avner Peretz, “Koplas del Felek sobre la suerte de los diudios de Karnabat”, *Aki Yerushalayim*, 20/60 (1999): 47.

then. In 1871, Rabbi Alkalay immigrated to Jerusalem, settled there permanently, and died in the city in 1878.<sup>130</sup>

The new nation states that arose in the Balkans were suspicious of the Jews because of the historical support of the latter for the Ottoman Empire. The new kingdoms were zealous of the national tradition of each state, and particularly of the national language. In all of them the Jews were obliged to learn the national language. If they did not do so, they were not eligible to receive civil rights and legal status equal to that of the other subjects of the state. The new national languages – Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, and Romanian – began to replace Jewish Spanish as the Jews' daily language. Jewish Spanish was relegated to the home and to be the language of those who did not receive a proper education. This was a portent of the future and the same process would take place in Anatolia itself with the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish republic (1923).

At the time when the Jewish communities in the Balkan countries began to grapple with the new national states, the Jewish community in Western Anatolia continued its life as in days gone by. Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign to Egypt and Palestine in 1799–1804 did not, to be sure, result in a change in the political situation there, but it was the first sign of the active involvement of European powers in the issues of the Ottoman Empire. Owing to the Ottoman authorities' fear of the intervention of the European powers in the matters of the Empire and their need to try to withstand them, the Ottoman Empire began, from the end of eighteenth century, to change its visage. Thus, the reform movement (*Tanzimat*) was born, which changed the personal status of the entire body of inhabitants of the Empire, including the religious minorities. In 1856, a *ferman* abolished the poll tax and instituted a single tax – *Badal Askari* – which substituted for army recruitment. In the mid-nineteenth century the legal and civil status of the Jews was made equal to that of the general popula-

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130 On him, see Yoel Bin-Nun, "The Revolution in the Concept of *Teshuvah* in the Halakhic and Historical Thought of Rabbi Yehudah Alkalay" in Ze'ev Harvey, *Zion and Zionism*, 141–53 [Hebrew]; David Bunis, "Rabbi Yehudah Alkalay", *ibid.*, 155–212 [Hebrew]; Ya'akov Katz, "Rabbi Judah Alkalay: Forerunner of Zionism", *ibid.*, 213–216 [Hebrew]. In issue 90 of the monthly *El Amaneser* [The Dawn], published in Istanbul, from 1 August 2012, is an article on Rabbi Yehudah Hai Alkalay entitled: "Yehudah Alkalay. El Haham Sefardi. Precursor del Sionismo Moderno". On Sephardi communities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, see Michael Studemund-Halevy, Christian Lieble, Ivana Vucina Simovic (eds.), *Sefarad an der Donau, Lengua y literatura de los sefardíes en tierras de los Habsburgos* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2013).

tion and amendments were made to the property laws and trade in it.<sup>131</sup> In December 1876, a constitution for the Ottoman Empire was published but a year later it was put on hold by Sultan Abdul Hamid.<sup>132</sup>

As early as 1836, Sultan Mahmoud II had appointed Rabbi Avraham Halevi as *Hakham Başı* – the first chief rabbi for all the Jews of the Ottoman Empire. A special law determined that his status would be equal to that of the Greek patriarch and the Armenian patriarch. The broad authorities of the *Hakham Başı* included, inter alia, responsibility for collecting the poll tax and appointing special courts for the Jews. Until 1863, five rabbis had filled this position. Three had been removed through pressure by the Jewish public, which accepted neither their authority nor their leadership. In 1842, the Ottomans decided to also appoint a *Hakham Başı* in Jerusalem who would serve as the chief rabbi for the Jews there, when the area had returned to their control after nine years of Egyptian rule in the city: Mehmet Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha. The Ottoman authorities appointed Rabbi Haim Gaguin, the great-grandson of the well-known Kabbalist, Rabbi Shalom Sharabi. Next to the rabbi's house in the Old City, the Turks stationed a beadle (*kawas*) with a squad of soldiers, who were the concrete example of the rabbi's authority. Not all the Jews of Jerusalem, however, were ready to recognize the leadership of the *Hakham Başı*: among the Ashkenazim were some who refused to accept the guidance of Rabbi Gaguin and the authority of his *Beit Din*.<sup>133</sup> In 1832, Yehosef Schwartz, the author of *Tevu'ot Ha-Aretz*,<sup>134</sup> arrived in Jerusalem. In 1824, Sir Moses Monte-

131 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 12. See also: J. Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans. Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

132 The Russo-Turkish War, which broke out in 1878, was presented as the reason for this measure. See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 22–23.

133 In the year 1854, Rabbi David Ben Shimon known as *Tzuf Devash* [honey in Hebrew] (1826–1879) made *aliyah* from Morocco to Jerusalem and became the leader of the Maghrebi – North African – Jews of Jerusalem. He organized their community and helped it to separate from the Sephardi community of Jerusalem. See Michal Ben-Ya'akov, "Triple outcasting: a widow, newcomer and maghrebi in the margins of Jewish society in The Land of Israel in the nineteenth century", in P. Morag Talmon and Y. Atzmon (eds) *Immigrant Women in Israel* (Jerusalem: the Bialik Institute, 2013), 23–42; especially 31 [Hebrew]. See also P. Morag Talmon, "Democratic Belief and Democratic Activity of the Sephardic Elite during the Yishuv Period", in A. Gal, G. Bacon, M. Lissak, and P. Morag Talmon (eds), *In the Democratic Way: On the Historical Sources of the Israeli Democracy* (Kiryat Sdeh Boker: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2012), 303–23 [Hebrew]. On the procedure of the election of the *Hakham Başı* who had judicial and civil authority, see *ibid*, 304.

134 Yehosef Schwartz, *Tevu'ot Ha-Aretz* (Jerusalem, 1845). According to him, "the number of inhabitants in Jerusalem from our people, the Sephardim, was approximately four

fiore (1784–1885), a native of Livorno who eventually moved to England, where he did very well and was knighted in 1837, paid his first visit to The Land of Israel.<sup>135</sup> In light of what he saw, Moses Montefiore made a firm decision to improve the situation of the Jews there. He tried to equip the Jews of The Land of Israel with productive professions. To that end, he established a weaving mill and provided a roller for Nisan Bak's printing house. He trained Jews for agricultural work in an orchard that he bought near Jaffa. In 1860, he established the first neighborhood outside the walls of Jerusalem: *Mishkenot Sha'ananim*. Montefiore was active on behalf of persecuted Jews throughout their dispersal.

In response to the Damascus blood libel (1840) and in light of the uncovering of the weakness and backwardness of oriental Jewry, the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) was established in Paris in 1860 with the purpose of promoting the Jews of the Orient. The way to advance them was through acquisition of the French language as means for entering and becoming part of Western culture, that is, European, and learning productive professions. The Alliance carried out diverse educational activity and established academic and trade schools from Iran to Morocco, and even became intervened, on various occasion, at the higher political echelons on behalf of the Jews of the Balkans, Morocco, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>136</sup> The AIU's educational activity changed the image of Sephardi Jewry and gained it entry into the economic and cultural world of Europe. This came at a price: French became the language of culture of the Sephardim, while Jewish Spanish or Ladino was relegated to the confines of the home and became the language of those who did not receive formal education.

The twentieth century found the Sephardi communities in the Ottoman Empire in a stage of flux and transformation; in a state of passage from the Ottoman world of yesterday to the European present: all this in the face of the crumbling and collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1908 as a result of a military

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thousand people, the Ashkenazim from the countries of France and Holland, Hungary, Galicia, Poland, and Russia, about one thousand. The number of Ishmaelim about 15 thousand, and the Greeks and Armenians about 6 thousand; the total comes to 30 thousand people." See M.D. Gaon, *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Edited by the author, 1928-1938), 1: 118 [Hebrew]. Reprint edition: Jerusalem: *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim in Jerusalem*, 1982).

135 Moses Montefiore made seven trips to the The Land of Israel, in 1824, 1839, 1849, 1855, 1857, 1866, and 1875. On some of them he was accompanied by his wife, Judith, who died in 1862.

136 In 1878 the Alliance used its influence for the sake of Balkan Jewry, in 1913 for Romanian Jewry, and in 1880 for Moroccan Jewry and for victims of the pogroms in Russia. On the AIU, see below ch. 3 nn. 39–45.



FIGURE 3 *The Montefiore Windmill at Yemin Moshe*  
YAD BEN ZVI PHOTO ARCHIVES. THE  
KANTOROWITZ COLLECTION. PHOTO ARCHIVES  
OF YAD YITZHAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER  
SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.

revolution led by those who became known as the “Young Turks.”<sup>137</sup> The sultan gave in to the rebels, restored the 1876 Constitution, and declared elections for Parliament. That same year, 1908, the Bulgarian kingdom attained full independence. Bosnia was annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Kingdom of Greece annexed Crete.

In 1911 the Kingdom of Italy invaded Libya – Tripolitania and Cyrenaica – and the Ottoman state suffered a defeat in its attempt to halt the conquest. Italy also conquered the Dodecanese Islands, including Rhodes, which was home to an important Sephardi community, and held them until the end of World War II. In 1912–1913 two wars were waged in the Balkans. In all three of the wars mentioned, the Jews of the Ottoman Empire were required to serve in the army and to fight like the other subjects of the sultan. As far as things affected the Sephardim, the Turks abandonment of Salonika in 1912 and ceding it, without a fight, to the Greeks, ultimately sealed the fate of the Jews of this glorious community to be annihilated in 1943. In contrast, since in the Second Balkan War (1913), the Turks succeeded in restoring their control over Edirne, during the course of World War II, the Jews were saved from the fate of their brethren across the border.

<sup>137</sup> See the case of Palestine: Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine. The Period of Young Turk Rule* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011). On the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), the body that led the 1908 revolution, which turned the Ottoman Empire from an absolutist state into a parliamentary monarchy of a liberal nature, See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 2–4.

The Young Turks strengthened their ties with Germany and when World War I broke out, the Ottoman Empire supported it and Austria-Hungary. After the surrender of the Turks, the Allies – Britain, France, and Italy – tried to divide the lands of the defeated Empire, and Greece invaded Anatolia. Under the leadership Mustafa Kemal, in time known as Atatürk – the father of the Turks – Turkey managed to recover and to fight back and expel the invaders, to exile most of the Greek population that had been living for many generations in Anatolia and Pontus, and to obtain in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) much better conditions than the Allies wished to give them in the Treaty of Sèvres (1919), which was never ratified. In 1922, the National Assembly of Turkey abolished the sultanate, even though it kept the caliphate as a religious-spiritual institution.

### *The Turkish Republic*

On 29 October 1923 Turkey was declared a republic with the capital – Ankara. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk strove to turn Turkey into a modern European state, and to that end, he sought to institute revolutionary modifications in all spheres of life. Secularization was at the heart of these amendments. In 1928 laws were promulgated that encouraged education and the prevention of illiteracy and ignorance and demanded that all schools be obliged to teach in Turkish. Indeed, from then on the Turkish Jews studied Turkish and learned to speak it well, without the foreign accent the earlier generations had when they spoke the language. This was a weighty factor that resulted in the decline of Jewish Spanish. Today, the younger generation of Turkish Jews is attempting to once again nurture the tradition of Jewish Spanish, for which they use the term Ladino. To that end, in Istanbul the Sephardic Center is active and a monthly *El Amaneser* [The Dawn] is published as a supplement to the monthly *Shalom* [Turkish: *Şalom. Haftalık Siyasi ve Kültürel Gazete*]. In World War II, Turkey remained neutral and as a result the Sephardim, citizens of the republic, were saved from the fate of the Balkans Jews whose overwhelming majority was exterminated in the Holocaust. Yet, the Turkish republic levied on the minorities – Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and Dönme – a heavy tax, *Varlık Vergisi*, which was akin to the confiscation of most of their property, and sent men belonging to minorities to forced labor on its outermost borders.<sup>138</sup> With the outbreak of World War II, the kingdoms of Bulgaria and Romania became allies of Nazi Germany. To be sure, Bulgaria did issue decrees against the Jews, subjects of

<sup>138</sup> Rifat Bali, *The Varlık Vergisi Affair: A Study of Its Legacy – Selected Documents* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2005). Recently a new study was published in Turkey on this topic: Rifat Bali, *Varlık Vergisi: Hatıralar Tanıklıklar* (Istanbul: Libra, 1212). See also below chap. 6, n. 50.

historic Bulgaria, but it prevented their expulsion by the Germans to extermination camps. The Bulgarians did turn over to their German allies Jews from areas that they had come under their control at the start of the war: Western Thrace, Eastern Macedonia, and the southern part of Dobruja – the city of Silistra. Also the Kingdom of Romania barred the expulsion of the Jews of historical Romania (the Regat), but did not defend the Jews of Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, which it had annexed to itself during the war. The Kingdom of Greece was conquered and divided among Germany, Bulgaria, and Italy. In the Italian region, the Jews were given certain protection by the authorities. This was not so in the regions occupied by the Germans and the Bulgarians. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which had been conquered by the Germans, most of the Jews were annihilated, except for a few who survived in the Italian-occupied area of Dalmatia. In 1942, in light of information about the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis in occupied Europe, the historian and scholar Américo Castro, from his place of exile in the New World, gave sorrowful expression to his feelings about the bitter fate visited upon the descendants of the Expulsion from Spain in 1492, who again were forced to take up the wanderer's staff. For most of the Sephardim, inhabitants of the Balkan kingdoms, this was a path from which there was no return.

In the 1950s, after the establishment of the State of Israel, remnants of the few Balkan Jews who had survived the Holocaust reached it. Many of the Jews of Turkey immigrated to Israel.<sup>139</sup> There, too, the immigrants invested great effort to acquire the language of the country – Hebrew – and to integrate into modern Israeli society. Jewish Spanish was forced to make way for Hebrew. Today, members of the second and third generations of Turkish Jews – who are the majority of the Jewish Spanish speakers in Israel – as well as the offspring of Balkan Jewry and Sephardim natives of Israel are beginning to once again foster the language of their forefathers with the encouragement and leadership of the National Authority for Ladino Culture.

### Conclusion

It is my personal conviction and I firmly believe that the Sephardim in Israel today are the descendants of the Balkan Jewry: the few survivors from Greece; Sephardim of Jewish-Bulgarian origin; Sephardim of Jewish-Romanian origin; along with Sephardim of Jewish-Turkish origin; and the offspring of the

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139 Emmanuelle Simon, *Sépharades de Turquie en Israël. Elements d'Histoire et de culture des Judeo-Espagnols* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999).

Sephardi community in The Land of Israel, stemming particularly from Jerusalem. All of them were brought up – at least until mid-twentieth century – in Jewish Spanish speaking and Ladino reading families. The language is the common denominator uniting the contemporary Sephardim.

On 30 March 1992, on the eve of the five hundredth anniversary to the signing of the Edict of Expulsion of the Jews from the lands of the Catholic Kings on the Iberian Peninsula, Spanish television broadcast the ceremony held in the main synagogue and Jewish community center in Madrid. The royal heads of Spain, Don Juan Carlos I, and his wife, Doña Sofía, came to the synagogue and met with Mr. Haim Herzog, the president of Israel, and his wife for a memorial ceremony and prayer service. In his remarks, the king stressed that Sephardim are authorized to consider Spain their home: “Spain is no longer yearnings but a home, in which one should not say that the Jews feel as if at home, for Spanish Jews are in their own home, in the home of all Spaniards, whatever their creed or religion.”<sup>140</sup> Thus a historical circle was brought to a close.

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<sup>140</sup> These statements are quoted according to the version given by the Madrid mayor, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón Jiménez, in a speech he gave at a ceremony awarding the Shmuel Toledano Prize, held in Jerusalem on 1 November 2009.

## The *Me'am Lo'ez*: The Masterpiece of Ladino Literature (Eighteenth–Nineteenth Centuries)

*Be-tzet yisra'el mi-mitzrayim/Beit Ya'akov me-'am lo'ez*

When Israel went forth from Egypt/The house of Jacob from a people of strange speech.

PSALMS 114: 1

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טודאס לאס אב'לאס די איסטי ליב'רו סון טריזלאד'אד'אס די גמרא אי מדרש קי  
לו איי אל'י אין לשון הקדש לו טריזלאד'י אקי אין פ'ראנקו' \*

RABBI YA'AKOV KHULÍ, *Sefer Me'am Lo'ez*, part one, Genesis (Kushtandina, 1730).  
Quotation according to the Kushtandina [Kushta] edition, 1823, 10.

\* [Translation: All the words of this book are copied and translated from the Gemara and Midrash; for what is there in the holy tongue, I translated here into a European language.]

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### The Anthology *Me'am Lo'ez*

The anthology *Me'am Lo'ez* on the Torah and part of the Prophets and Hagiographa is considered the most important work written in Ladino for all time. This composition is a commentary on thirteen of the twenty-four books of the Bible, written in Ladino, by ten different authors, the greatest Sephardi rabbis, who lived in the lands of the Ottoman Empire, over a period of 166 years, during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The title *Me'am*

1 On the work *Me'am Lo'ez* (hereafter: ML), see M.D. Gaon, *Maskiyot Levav on Me'am Lo'ez* (Jerusalem: Defus Ha'Ma'arav, 1933); S. Rozanes, *A History of the Jews in Turkey and in the Orient* (Tel Aviv-Sofia: Dvir, 1930–1938), 5: 278 [Hebrew]; L. Landau, “The Transformation of the Talmudic Story in ‘*Me'am Lo'ez*’”, *Pe'amim*, 7 (1981): 35 [Hebrew]; L. Landau, “The Shaping of the Homiletical Legend in the Book ‘*Me'am Lo'ez*’”, in I. Ben-Ami (ed.), *The Sephardi and*

*Lo'ez* was taken from Ps. 114: 1: "When Israel went forth from Egypt/ the house

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*Oriental Jewish Heritage Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 213–23 [Hebrew]; Louis Landau lists the translations of *Me'am Lo'ez* into different languages and gives bibliographic references there; see also L. Landau, "Me'am Lo'ez' – Tradition and Its Renewal in Jewish Spanish Literature", in D. Sitton, *Shevet Ve-Am, Literary and Research Forum for History and Social Problems of Sephardi and Oriental Jewry in Israel and Abroad* (Jerusalem: Ha-Hanhalah Ha-Yisra'elit Shel Ha-Federatzia Ha-Sefaradit Ha-Olamit, 1984), 308 [Hebrew]; Pilar Romeu Ferré, *Las llaves del Meam Loez* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2000); A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Daily Life in the Sephardi Family Circle according to the Commentary of Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí for Genesis in the Work *Me'am Lo'ez* (1730)", in Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Yitzhak H̄en (eds), *Women, Children and the Elderly: Essays in Honour of Shulamit Shahar* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Shazar, 2001), 139–71 [Hebrew]; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Everyday Life in the Sephardic Community of Jerusalem according to the Meam Loez of Rabbi Jacob Khulí", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 5, 2 (2001): 133–42; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Esklava de su marido": A Look at Daily Life of the Sephardi Woman according to *Me'am Lo'ez* by Rabbi Jacob Khulí", in T. Cohen and S. Regev (eds), *Woman in the East, Woman from the East – The Story of the Jewish Woman from the East* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2005), 5–33 [Hebrew]; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "The Meam Loez: History and Structure", *Collana di studi ebraici, IV, Il Giudeo-spagnolo (Ladino) cultura e tradizione sefardita tra presente, pasato e futuro* (Livorno: Salomon Belforte, 2005), 155–64; Avner Peretz (editor and compiler), *Da'at Le-Navon. Ribí Yaakov Hulli, Meam Lo'ez Bereshit. Seleksion de tekstos. A Compilation with Quotations, Glossary, and Indices Presented Honorably to Yitzhak Navon, the Fifth President of Israel and Chairman of the National Authority for Ladino Culture in Esteem* (Ma'aleh Adumim: Ediciones del Instituto Maale Adumim, 2006) [Ladino and Hebrew]; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Navegar kreaturas. L'éducation des enfants selon le commentaire de Ya'akov Khulí des livres de la Genèse et de l'Exode dans le Me'am Lo'ez (1730)", *Yod. Revue des Études Hébraïques et Juives*, 11–12 (2006–2007): 35–52; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "La familia judía según el Me'am Lo'ez del Rabino Ya'akov Khulí", *El Olivo*, 21/65–66 (2007): 95–108; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Echoes of the Religious Debate with the Christians in Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's Commentary on the Book of Genesis in *Me'am Lo'ez* (1730)", in D. Bunis (ed.), *Languages and Literatures of Sephardic and Oriental Jews, Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress for the Study of the Heritage of Spain and the East* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik and Misgav Yerushalyim, 2009), 81–92 [Hebrew]; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Perception and Images of the Four Biblical Matriarchs in Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's *Me'am Lo'ez* (1730)", *El Prezente*, 3, *Studies in Sephardic Culture. Gender and Identity* (2009): 212–39; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "El Me'am Lo'ez de Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí (Julí) (1730). Un comentario en Ladino al libro del Génesis", in I. Arellano and R. Fine, *La Biblia en la literatura del Siglo de Oro, BAH – Biblioteca Áurea Hispánica* (Madrid-Frankfurt, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2010), 191–206; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "The History of the Me'am Lo'ez", *European Judaism. A Journal for the New Europe*, Leo Baeck College, 43, 2 (2010): 117–25; A. Meyuhas Ginio, "La Bible Populaire sépharade comme mémoire de la vie juive", Centre Alberto Benveniste pour les études et la culture sépharades, *Histoire et culture du Moyen Âge à nos jours* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris Sorbonne, 2011), 182–200.

of Jacob from a people of strange speech"; the reference is to a foreign tongue.<sup>2</sup> The person who conceived the idea to write a commentary in Ladino on all the books of the Bible was Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí (Culi, Houli, Julí), who was born in Jerusalem around 1689 and died in Kushta [Istanbul] in 1732. The first edition of his work *Me'am Lo'ez*, devoted to Genesis, appeared in print in 1730. This comprehensive, extensive anthology is a treasure of rabbinical exegetic literature organized according to the traditional pattern of biblical exegesis. The author, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, collected his interpretations from the entire body of rabbinic literature, from the Mishnah, Talmud, Midrashim to the philosophical works and kabbalistic exegesis. All of these were cited to explain the biblical verses. The work was written in Ladino, corresponding to the Jewish Spanish fluently spoken by the Sephardi masses at that time. While interpreting the biblical text, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí expanded his canvas and included a presentation of relevant Jewish laws and regulations,<sup>3</sup> and he even taught his readers chapters in Jewish history.<sup>4</sup> Yet, Rabbi Khulí did not consider himself an innovator or decisor of new *halakhot* [religious laws] on proper behavior. He stressed that he wished to provide his readers with "a compendium for all parties, arranged and organized so that they will learn about the festivals and the Sabbaths and all the Jewish holidays ...".<sup>5</sup> He was careful to note, one by one, the sources he used in his work. These sources appear in the margins of the printed *Me'am Lo'ez* books. *Me'am Lo'ez* undoubtedly the zenith of Jewish Spanish literature, enjoyed immediate success and went through numerous editions, which appeared in print in the four most important centers of printing in the Sephardi world: Kushta, Salonika, Izmir, and Livorno,<sup>6</sup> and after

2 The Ladino translation of this verse in Psalms reads: "En saliendo Israel de Ayfto/ La kaza de Ya'akov de puevlo de lenguaje estranyo." See the Bible published by Boyagian (Constantinople, 1873). It also appears in translation as "puevlo איניל'אד'ינאדו" or "puevlo ל'אד'ינאדו". See Avner Peretz, *Da'at Le-Nanon*, 18; E. Benbassa and A. Rodrigue, *Histoire des Juifs sépharades*, 173–75.

3 Thus Rabbi Khulí incorporated the laws of circumcision into his commentary on the *parashah Lekh Lekha*, ML, ch. 6, 193–202; the laws for visiting the sick – into his commentary on the *parashah Vayera*, ML, ch. 1, 206–9, and the laws of mourning and tearing a piece of clothing as a sign of mourning to the *parashah Vayehi*, ML, ch. 11, 468–77.

4 For example, the stories of the kings of Adiabene, Monobaz and Helena in the *parashah Lekh Lekha*, ch. 6, 195–96.

5 ML, 3: Introduction to the book, *Ma'ase Hoshev*. Here and in the ensuing, I quote from the ML edition published in Kushta in 1823.

6 On the many printed editions of ML, see Pilar Romeu Ferré, *Las llaves del Meam Loez*. See also Peretz, *Da'at Le-Navon*, 24–35, especially 30–31. Of note is that the volumes of ML were printed, except for the last edition (Salonika, 1897), in large volumes (folio) – the common format for the printing of the Talmud tractates; this attests to its importance in the printers' view. See *ibid.*, 32. ML on Genesis was printed ten times: Kushta, 1730; Kushta, 1748; Salonika, 1796;

some hesitation, it even earned the approval of the rabbinic elite. Customarily, in the Jewish religious world, a Torah work had to have approbations from the leading rabbis of the time. The reputation that Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí enjoyed in his day made it unnecessary for him to receive them for his work. His successor, Rabbi Yitzhak Magrisso, already required such approval from the Kushta rabbis, when, in 1746, he brought *Me'am Lo'ez* on Exodus to the printing house. This also applies to those who came after him in continuing the writing of the books of *Me'am Lo'ez* in the following generations.

The scholar Michael Molho of Salonika (1891–1964) considered the compendium *Me'am Lo'ez* “an original, popular encyclopedia, the comprehensive summary (*summa*) for the use of whoever was not familiar with Jewish culture and who therefore was unable to directly turn to the sources in order to learn from those what the average Jew is supposed to know about the past of the Jewish people, its beliefs, its traditions, legends, ethical principles, laws, charity regulations, devotion to hygiene, and the like.”<sup>7</sup> These words, written in Salonika, soon after the Holocaust, which destroyed the glorious Jewish community there, by a survivor of the inferno, are powerful and valid to this day.

Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí intended to comment on all twenty-four books of the Bible but owing to his death at age forty-two, he only managed to leave behind his commentary on Genesis and half of Exodus (until the *parashah* Terumah) (1730). The second volume of *Me'am Lo'ez* was printed in Kushta in 1733, after the author's death. In light of the unprecedented success of the work, his disciples and those who honored his memory decided to continue the endeavor. Works with commentaries on Joshua, Isaiah, Esther, Lamentations, Ruth, Ecclesiastes (two books by two different authors), and Song of Songs, were published up to 1899. The compendium *Me'am Lo'ez* is structured according to the order of the *parashot* of the Torah. This work has been examined bibliographically – the many, various sources, which come to over a few hundred, from which the different authors gleaned material for their works, as well as from its

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Livorno, 1822 Kushta (Ortaköy), 1823; Salonika, 1863; Izmir, 1864; Salonika, 1868; Izmir, 1878. This was tremendous distribution for the years 1822–1868, before the period of the Enlightenment – *Haskalah* – in the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, there was a decline in distribution, and in the twentieth century, with the arrival of the Enlightenment among the Sephardi dispersion in the Mediterranean Basin, the work was no longer printed: it had lost the power to speak to the hearts of the masses.

7 M. Molho, *Le Meam-Loez. Encyclopédie populaire du séphardisme levantin* (Salonika s.n., 1945), 5. On him, see also S. Refael, “El archivo epistolar de Michael Molho: caracterización y análisis de las cartas recibidas por él entre 1945 y 1963”, in Paloma Díaz-Mas y María Sánchez Pérez (eds), *Los sefardíes*, 345–56.

literary aspect – the way the authors treat the compilation and presentation of the biblical narrative and the talmudic legends.<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter, I wish to look at the *Me'am Lo'ez* as a historical source and to propose a historical reading in a rabbinical source: what can be learned from the content of *Me'am Lo'ez* about the daily life in the Sephardi family circle throughout the generations, in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. *Me'am Lo'ez* is fitting to use as a historical source – even though the various authors did not intend to write a chapter in history – for two reasons: the first is that the compendium presents and represents Sephardi society in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, one may learn of the daily life in the generation of the originator of the idea to write *Me'am Lo'ez*, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, from edifying statements, personal memories and descriptions that he felt should be given to the reader while studying and discussing biblical verses. For the historian, the great value of these comments and means of expression are inherent precisely in the fact that they were not mentioned by Rabbi Khulí as ordinary arguments, within the framework of a normative work on proper ways of life for observant Jews but rather in the course of offering commentaries on the Bible, which he considered his main goal. Hence, these comments reflect ways of life, familiar to the author in his time and place, without these descriptions being affected by the guiding hand of an editor or rabbinic teacher of the Jewish law. Another reason for reading *Me'am Lo'ez* as a historical source is the decisive influence this work had, on the different authors, in fashioning the visage of Sephardi society in the Ottoman Empire, for the 150 years that passed from the time the first volume of *Me'am Lo'ez* appeared in print. In light of the unparalleled distribution of the work, there is no doubt that its insights definitely influenced the world of Sephardi society in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at least until *moderna* took hold among the Jewish communities in it.

*Me'am Lo'ez* is generally considered as consisting of three parts.<sup>9</sup> The first, called “the classic *Me'am Lo'ez*,” was written in the eighteenth century and comprises seven volumes on the Torah: Genesis; two parts on Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers; and two parts on Deuteronomy. All these volumes were printed

8 See Landau, “Shaping of the Homiletical Legend”; Landau, “The Transformation of the Talmudic Story”, 35–49; Landau, “‘Me'am Lo'ez' – Tradition and Its Renewal”, 307–21. Important work has been done in research of Sephardi literature in general and on the link between it and Spanish literature. See S.G. Armistead and J.H. Silverman, “Christian Elements and De-Christianization in the Sephardic Romancero”, in M.P. Hornik (ed.), *Collected Studies in Honour of Américo Castro* (Oxford: Foundation for the Promotion of Jewish and Cognate Studies, 1960).

9 See Elena Romero, *La creación literaria en lengua sefardí* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 119–39.

in Kushta and written by rabbis who knew the traditional sources well and were thoroughly familiar with them. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí was assisted financially by the *gevir* Yehudah Mizrahi and his sons in printing his work and he thanked them in the introduction to *Me'am Lo'ez*.<sup>10</sup> Rabbi Yitzhak Magrisso, a rabbi and *dayyan* in Edirne, who was a member of Rabbi Khulí's circle, completed the commentary on Exodus (1733; 1746) and wrote exegesis on Leviticus (1753) and Numbers (1764). He, too, was the recipient of economic assistance from the Mizrahi family and the *gevir* Yeshayahu Adgiman. Rabbi Shemaryah Yitzhak Arguëte wrote a commentary on Deuteronomy (1773).<sup>11</sup>

The second part of the *Me'am Lo'ez* compendium is called "*Me'am Lo'ez* in transition" and was written in the second half of the nineteenth century. Rabbi Raḥamim Menaḥem Mitrani of Edirne wrote the commentary on Joshua. Its first volume was printed in Salonika in 1851. The writing endeavor was interrupted by a fire that broke out in Edirne, where the author was located. Mitrani did not manage to find the capital needed to print volume two of his work, even though he went on a fundraising trip with his son. The second volume was printed in Izmir in 1867–1870, after the death of the author. Rabbi Rafael Ḥiyya Pontremoli of Izmir wrote the commentary on Esther that was printed there in 1864.

The third and last part of the anthology *Me'am Lo'ez* is called "the new work" and was written in the final two decades of the nineteenth century by rabbis who had already been influenced by the ideas of *moderna*, the European Enlightenment, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools. At this time external influences were penetrating the Ottoman Empire, the Christian mission, Protestant and Anglican, the Italian Dante Alighieri Society, and above all: the Alliance Israélite Universelle founded in Paris in 1860. Yet, even the later authors followed Rabbi Khulí's system. Rafael [Refael] Benvenisti wrote the

10 ML 16: the eighth section of the Hebrew introduction by Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí to ML: The generosity of the exalted *gevir* Yehudah Mizrahi. The ninth section deals with the division of the future income as determined by the author: the money that the first books will bring in will be allotted to pay the printer and for the printing paper. Any money left over, will be collected and given to the author as recompense for his effort according to the usual amount given to the The Land of Israel emissaries. All else will be completely public property, which will be divided into portions and given for charitable purposes in Kushta and The Land of Israel. Thus, it turns out that whoever bought the book was giving charity.

11 Most of the editions of Deuteronomy are up to the *parashah Ve-Ekev*. The last pages of the commentary by Rabbi Shemaryah Yitzhak Arguëte for Deuteronomy were lost. A number of pages were recently discovered by Dr. Avner Peretz, director of the Ma'ale Adumim Institute of Ladino, and are now kept in the Institute's library.

commentary on Ruth (Salonika, 1882). Yitzhak Yehudah Abba wrote on Isaiah (Salonika, 1892). Shlomo Hakohen wrote *Heshek Shlomo*, a commentary on Ecclesiastes in Jerusalem in 1893. Nissim Moshe Abod wrote on Ecclesiastes in his work *Otzar Ha-Hokhmah* (Kushta, 1898), which is more comprehensive than its predecessor.

Hayyim Yitzhak Sciaky wrote on Song of Songs (Kushta, 1899). He chose to interpret Song of Songs as an allegory on the love of God for his people since he considered it a message of hope for the Jewish people.<sup>12</sup> Sciaky presented himself as a faithful successor of Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí. Aside from his translation, the commentary on Song of Songs contains digressions, including explanations, along with references to Kabbalah or astrology and the interpretation of Hebrew words in Jewish Spanish.<sup>13</sup> Even though he had received a rabbinic education, Sciaky had also been a student of the Alliance and was influenced by its ideas of *moderna*. He was born in May 1853, near Kushta and died in Kushta at the age of 88. In his youth, he dealt with commerce and afterwards devoted himself to studies and became a rabbi and member of the Kushta *Beit Din*. With all of his Jewish and rabbinic education, Sciaky was a modern scholar, who had been influenced by western enlightenment and from his studies at the AIU school. The impression this made on him is noticeable, for example, is his becoming a popular theater actor in the dramatic troop of the Max Nordau Society that was active in Salonika between 1923 and 1933. Sciaky wrote *Universal Jewish History* (eleven volumes printed in Kushta in 1899–1928). Despite all his modern views, Hayyim Yitzhak Sciaky understood the crisis *moderna* created for the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, in that it alienated them from the tradition of their forefathers and made them face the danger of antisemitism, on the one hand, and assimilation on the other. In addition to the commentary on Song of Songs, Sciaky wrote two other works: *Bina Le-'Etim* or *Las reglas de los calendarios* (Kushta, 1897) as well as *Millé De'abot* or *Tésoro del Judaismo Millé De'abot*, which explains the Ethics of the Jewish Forefathers. The latter work was printed in Cairo and Jerusalem in 1907. Sciaky presented secular tradition alongside the religious and Torah learning alongside general education. He wrote in the language that he called “lengua española” – a literary Jewish Spanish, through which he expressed his ideas and new thoughts.

From 1967 to 1997, Rabbi Shmuel Yerushalmi Kreuzer (1921–1997), an Ashkenazi graduate of Lithuanian yeshivot, translated *Me'am Lo'ez* from Ladino into Hebrew, so that this important work is now available to the general public,

12 See Asenjo, Rosa, *El Meam Loez de Cantar de los cantares* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2003).

13 See *ibid.*, 17–18.

which no longer speaks Jewish Spanish or reads Ladino.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in following in the footsteps of Rabbi Khulí and his successors up to the end of the nineteenth century, Kreuzer added and wrote, in Hebrew, his own commentary on Samuel I and II, Kings I and II, Jeremiah, The Minor Prophets, and Psalms, which do not exist in Ladino.

Even though it was written by ten different authors,<sup>15</sup> great uniformity reigns in *Me'am Lo'ez*. All its volumes have deep roots in the soil of rabbinic tradition and present the attitudes of this tradition toward institutions, norms, Jewish rites, history, legend, ethical principles, and messianism; all of this in addition to geography, history of the nations, astronomy, meteorology, agronomy, natural sciences, personal hygiene, magic, and folklore.<sup>16</sup> If there are differences in the various authors' presentations, they derive from the nature of the material they are discussing: Genesis with the myths it contains – versus the dry legal material of Leviticus. Another factor that contributes to the uniformity prevailing among all the volumes of *Me'am Lo'ez* with its various writers is the use of indexes in the manner that Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí arranged them in his time. The uniqueness of these indexes, lies in their being a series of twenty-four different topics, differing in size, that appear at the end of each of the volumes of the compendium *Me'am Lo'ez*. Of them, especially important, is the section of *parashiyot* (chapters), which presents in order the heading that opens each of the chapters of the work, organized according to the continuum of the *parashiyot* in the Torah, corresponding to the weekly Torah portion read in the synagogue, in a way that insures the reading of the entire Torah over the course of the year.<sup>17</sup> Every *parashah* is divided into chapters. This arrangement by *parashiyot* and chapters is the leading, guiding thread woven into all the chapters of *Me'am Lo'ez*. The importance of the *parashiyot* section mentioned derives from the aspiration of Rabbi Khulí and his successors for the readers and those listening to them in the synagogue and family circle to become familiar with the section relating to the weekly Torah reading: covering part of it in the morning before setting out for their workday and part at night, before going to bed.<sup>18</sup>

14 See Peretz, *Da'at Lenavon*, 33–34; A. Meyuhas Ginio, “The History of Me'am Loez”, 124.

15 As an aside, one should note that the scholars of Judaism and Hebrew culture (hebraístas), David Gonzalo Maeso and Pascual Pascual Recuero, include in the count of *Me'am Lo'ez* authors also Abraham Hacohe Benardut, a teacher in the Talmud Torah Hagadol in Salonika, owing to his commentary on Job.

16 See Molho, *Le Meam-Loez. Encyclopédie populaire*, 5.

17 See Romeu Ferré, *Llaves del Meam Loez*; Peretz, *Da'at Levanon*, 21–23.

18 ML, 9: “I si no save *leshon ha-kodesh* meldara esto solo: I veresh de repartir la perasha en siete *halakim* i meldar un *helek* kada dia un poko el dia antes de ir a la butika i otro la noge

Let's return to Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, the initiator of *Me'am Lo'ez*. His early years were spent in Jerusalem. Those were difficult times for Jewish community there, and this is given expression in the statements, which were written by Rabbi Khulí on the story of Lot's capture (Gen. 14), when he turned his attention to the poor of The Land of Israel and compared them to people in captivity and in need of ransom to be freed.<sup>19</sup> In time Rabbi Khulí went to Safed with the aim of working on the editing of his grandfather's books, and in 1714, when he was about twenty-five, he left for Kushta and continued his endeavor there. Rabbi Khulí belonged to the rabbinic elite of his generation, and he had good relations with the relevant influential centers. His father was Rabbi Makhir Khulí, who immigrated to Jerusalem from Candia on the island of Crete, around the time the Ottoman Turkish captured the island from the rule of Venice, in 1699. In the Hebrew introduction to *Me'am Lo'ez*, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí mentioned his father who had left "from his town in the cities of Frankia with plenty of money and possessions and settled in the holy city of Jerusalem whence he traveled to the holy city of Safed."<sup>20</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's maternal grandfather was Rabbi Moshe Ben Ḥabib (1654–1696), one of the greatest sages of Jerusalem, who served there as a head of a yeshivah [*rosh yeshivah*]. He specialized in divorce matters and in releasing *agunot*. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí is the one who published his grandfather's writings: in 1729, Moshe Ben Ḥabib's *Ezrat Nashim*, which dealt with the laws of the *aguna*, was printed in Kushta. While he was in Kushta, Rabbi Khulí made the acquaintance of Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes, author of *Mishneh La-Melekh* [Second to the King], devoted to glosses and comments on Maimonides (he is "the king"). While still dealing with editing his grandfather's works, Rabbi Khulí joined the yeshivah of Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes.<sup>21</sup> Upon the rabbi's death in 1727, his writings were turned over to

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antes de echar adormir de modo ke kada dia elhad asta shabat akavash de meldar toda la perasha." The first day of the week, "elhad" in Jewish Spanish deserves attention. This name is used by Sephardim instead of the Spanish term for this day, Domingo, which means "day of the Lord."

19 ML, 179: "Los aniyim de The Land of Israel ke son los proves ke moran en Yerushalayim i Hebron i Tzefat se kontan komo kautivos i llyevan mungo *tsa'ar* kon las *umot*." In the continuation, Rabbi Khulí added: "I komo yo fui nasido i kreado en akeyas partes, vidi los males ke sigieron i sierto los esklavos ke estan en Malta tienen mas repozo ke ellos." ML, 180. On Jews who fell into the captivity of the Knights of St. John on Malta, see E. Bashan, *Captivity and Ransom in Jewish Society in the Mediterranean Countries 1391–1830* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1980), 109–35 [Hebrew]; E. Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea during the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Turcica*, 33 (2001): 135–47.

20 ML, 5: Introduction to the book.

21 Cf. below chap. 3, n.184.

Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, who made a three-year effort to proofread and edit them. As early as 1729, while still involved with editing and explicating the writings of his teacher, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí began work on his independent exegetical work, *Me'am Lo'ez*.

Rabbi Khulí's teachers wrote in Hebrew. Thus, there a reason to ask why this rabbinic scholar turned to writing precisely in Ladino. It is inconceivable that he was incapable of doing so in Hebrew. Rabbi Khulí earned much praise for his works, such as, for example, from Rabbi Haim Yosef David Azulai (1724–1806), the Hid"á.<sup>22</sup> Undoubtedly the choice of target audience that Rabbi Khulí had decided to address in his work is what prompted his decision about the language in which he wrote. He preferred composing for the needs of the Sephardi public, which in the eighteenth century already did not know and was not familiar with Hebrew and certainly had a hard time reading it. Conversely, they knew Jewish Spanish and read Ladino – the language of the translation of the Holy Scriptures – written in what is known as Rashi script.<sup>23</sup> Here is the place to note that the spoken literature, passed orally from generation to generation, was consolidated and formulated before the literature written in Ladino. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the use of Rashi script was limited. The tremendous fame of the compendium *Me'am Lo'ez* – printed in it – made Rashi script common and widespread from the eighteenth century on. This century was the golden era of creativity in the Ladino language against the decline and waning of the knowledge of Hebrew among Sephardim.<sup>24</sup> The work by Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, *Me'am Lo'ez*, opened this period and after it came the other writers who continued on his path and his exegetical project. *Me'am Lo'ez* led to the revival of literary writing in Ladino. For example, see the Ladino Bible translation by Abraham Asa printed in Kushta in 1739–1745.

At the beginning of *Me'am Lo'ez*, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí placed two introductions. The first, "The Introduction to the Book", is in Hebrew, while the other, "The Introduction", is in Ladino. The language used attests to which target audience each of the two introductions was geared. The first is intended for *talmidei hakhamim*, and it explains forcefully how the author feels that the main distinction of study is that it leads to deeds. Since the people could not read the words of the Sages as they were written in Hebrew, the people would not behave in practice, the way the Sages used to instruct them in their writings; it turned out that the Sages did not attain the goal they had set for

22 See Molho, *Le Meam-Loez. Encyclopédie populaire*, 89.

23 See above Introduction, n. 66 and below n. 42.

24 D.M. Bunis, *Judezmo: An Introduction to the Language of the Ottoman Sephardim*, 17–49 [Hebrew].

themselves, since the people could not read their writings. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí succeeded in understanding that the continuation of presenting traditional thought in Hebrew missed its target and that one had to adopt a new way and a new language. Consequently, he took upon himself the setting out on a new path to make the tradition of Jewish thought over the generations, as it had been accumulated in Hebrew, accessible to the Ladino-reading public of his time and place. This applied to the collection and summarizing of Hebrew spiritual written meditation until the period of Rabbi Khulí, so that “the people should hear and understand the explicated Bible and attain discernment from man to woman to the young ones of the Jewish people.”<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly Rabbi Khulí's endeavor was richly rewarded: *Me'am Lo'ez* was the most widely read work among the Sephardim in their oriental dispersion, and it was found even in the poorest home, in which they usually had no other books. Fathers gave the book as part of the dowry to their daughters. The historians Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue state that *Me'am Lo'ez* defined the outlines of the image of the common Sephardi religious world until the modern period.<sup>26</sup> In distinction from the sixteenth-century work by Rabbi Yaakov Ben Yitzhak of Yanow, *Tse'edah Ure'edah*, which from the outset – as its name attests – was intended for reading by Ashkenazi women,<sup>27</sup> the author of *Me'am Lo'ez* intended it explicitly for the general public. Yet, due to the Ladino language in which it was written, in time *Me'am Lo'ez* became the reading material for Sephardi women on the Sabbaths. On Sabbath mornings, after the *dezayuno* [breakfast] eaten on the Sabbath after the *Shaharit* prayer service – when all work in the house was put to a halt, my grandmother, my father's mother, Simha Eliachar Meyuhas,<sup>28</sup> who knew how to read and write Ladino, would invite her neighbors to sit in the kortijo and read to them from *Me'am Lo'ez*.<sup>29</sup> One assumes that my grandmother continued to do so as long as she and her family lived in the heart of Jerusalem, in rented apartments, in Ohel Moshe, Zikhron Moshe, and Abu Basel.<sup>30</sup> Here, there were certainly listeners for my grandmother's reading from *Me'am Lo'ez*, since many of her neighbors were Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi women. In time, the Meyuhas family acquired a piece of land in the new neighborhood of Kiryat Moshe, which was then outside the

25 Introduction to the book, *Ma'ase Hoshev*, ML, 1.

26 Benbassa and Rodrigue, *Juifs des Balkans*, 72–76, especially 75.

27 See, for example, Yaakov ben Yitzhak Achkenasi de Janow, *Le commentaire sur la Torah, Tseenah Ureenah*. Traduction du yidich, introduction et notes par Jean Baumgarten (Paris: Éditions Verdier, 1987), 7–29.

28 On her, see chap. 3 below.

29 Interview with Mrs. Ruth Barouch Senderov on 4 August 2002.

30 Interview with Mrs. Ruth Barouch Senderov, 14 September 2012.

city, and in 1924, moved into her new home.<sup>31</sup> In this neighborhood lived both Sephardim and Ashkenazim and the neighborhood synagogue served both communities. It is doubtful that my grandmother could continue her tradition of reading from *Me'am Lo'ez* there.<sup>32</sup> My grandmother had in her possession a copy of the Livorno 1822 edition of *Me'am Lo'ez* on Genesis. Later, she presented the book to her daughter, Esther-Seniora Meyuhas Barouch.

From Mrs. Rachel Alhasid, a native of Jerusalem,<sup>33</sup> I heard how the men and women waited for the Sabbath. In the winter, they sat around the 'mangel' – oven in Turkish – which gave off pleasant heat,<sup>34</sup> while the father of the family – Rabbi Yehudah Elazar<sup>35</sup> – would read to them the weekly Torah reading in *Me'am Lo'ez*. Mrs. Alhasid recalled that the women in the group paid close attention and even asked questions. Thanks to Ladino, with which they were familiar, the Sephardi women could follow what was written in *Me'am Lo'ez*, and because of this work, they could follow the Torah reading in the synagogue. In any event, the author did not intend this work only for women.<sup>36</sup>

In the memoirs Mrs. Maryse Choukroun née Confino wrote, she tells about her grandfather, Albert Confino, who was born in 1866 in Karnabat, then Eastern Rumelia, today Bulgaria; in time, he became a teacher, principal, and founder of a number of AIU schools.<sup>37</sup> According to family tradition, the Confinos originated in Catalonia from where they were exiled in the Expulsion from Spain. Mrs. Choukroun recalled that on the Sabbath the family would rise early to go to synagogue. Upon conclusion of the prayer service, which ended around 10 a.m., the worshipers were offered Araq with bischochikos and huevos haminados. After they had eaten their fill, the congregants went home. In the family home, they sat around the table and ate the main meal of the day. Upon the conclusion of the meal, some went to rest, while others gathered around one of the family members who read the weekly Torah portion aloud from

31 Cf. below chap. 3, n.104.

32 The way of life in the new neighborhoods that were built in Jerusalem differed from that common in the veteran neighborhoods. See Ya'akov Yehoshua, *Companias en la vieja ciudad de Yerushalayim. Descripciones de la vida sefardita en el seculo pasado* (Neighbourhoods in Old Jerusalem), Jerusalem, Rubin Mass, 1971 [Hebrew]. Cf. also chap. 3, nn. 190-91, on the Purim celebration di los Meyuhasim.

33 Interview with Mrs. Rachel Alhasid née Elazar on 1 March 2011.

34 Cf. n. 56 below.

35 On the Jerusalemite Elazar family, which resided around the Baqashot Courtyard and, on Rabbi Yehudah Elazar, see Ya'akov Elazar, *Courtyards in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Tnu'at Yad La-Rishonim, 1975), 116-29 [Hebrew].

36 See also Landau, "Me'am Lo'ez – Tradition and Its Renewal", 308-9.

37 The settlement is in the Carpathian Mountains, at the foot of the Rhodope Mountain.

*Me'am Lo'ez*.<sup>38</sup> We thus see that the reading of *Me'am Lo'ez* was common in different locations of the Sephardi dispersal in the Mediterranean Basin. Moshe David Gaon wrote in his book *Maskiyot Levav* (Fancies of the Heart), "Even today [1933], one can see that when evening descends ... Sephardi rabbis sitting in different synagogues reading chapters from *Me'am Lo'ez* to the congregation of the faithful ... who drink in their words thirstily."<sup>39</sup> The writer Ya'akov Yehoshua, too, mentioned the Ḥakham Yehoshua Burla, who read *Me'am Lo'ez* on the Sabbaths in one of the synagogues in the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup>

Dispersed throughout Rabbi Khulí's *Me'am Lo'ez* are many terms in future plural, which are aimed at the audience of listeners, in the format common to preachers: *de'u* (*savresh*) [know]; *binu* (*entenderesh*) [understand].<sup>41</sup> Indeed, *Me'am Lo'ez* was intended to be read aloud and was used as such. In the Hebrew introduction to *Me'am Lo'ez*, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, openly declared that his target audience is not his peer rabbinic scholars but the entire body of Sephardim. He did not apologize for writing in a foreign language and mentioned a series of great rabbis who wrote in Arabic, such as Rabbi Se'adya Gaon and Maimonides.

The second introduction to *Me'am Lo'ez*, written in Ladino and is geared to his intended reading audience and their level of education. Thus, for example, when the author speaks about the famous Rashi, he finds it necessary to explain in detail: "A great sage from the city of Troyes named Rashi."<sup>42</sup> In that introduction, the author repeats his description of the cultural status of Hebrew

38 Maryse Choukroun, *Mon Grand-Pere Albert Confino*, 23.

39 M.D. Gaon, *Maskiyot Levav* (Jerusalem: Edited by the author; Defus Ha-Ma'arav, 1933): "Todavía hoy [1933] es posible encontrar hacia la caída de la tarde...rabinos sefardíes sentados en diversas sinagogas leyendo capítulos de él [del Meam Loez] ante los oídos de los fieles...que beben con sed sus palabras".

40 Ya'akov Yehoshua, *Ḥakahamim in Old Jerusalem Their Dealings and Their Livelihood* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968) [Hebrew] Idem, *Neighbourhoods in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, Rubin Mass, 1971), 35 [Hebrew]. Yehoshu'a Burla was the father of the Hebrew writer Yehudah Burla.

41 A. Meyuḥas Ginio, "The Meam Loez: History and Structure", *Collana di studi ebraici*, IV, *Il Giudeo-pagnolo (Ladino) cultura e tradizione sefardita tra presente, pasato e futuro* (Livorno: Salomon Belforte, 2005), 155–64; O. Schwarzwald, "Le style du Me'am Lo'ez: une tradition linguistique", *Yod. Revue des Études Hébraïques et Juives*, 11–12 (2006–2007): 76–112; A. Quintana, "Formules d'Introduction et structure discursive dans le Me'am Lo'ez de Ya'aqov Khulí", *Ibid.*, 113–40.

42 Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's: Author's Ladino introduction: "Un savio grande de la sivdad de Troyes ke se llama Rashi," ML, 6. This refers to Rabbi Shelomo Yitzḥaki (1040–1105) of Troyes, Champagne, the greatest commentator on the Torah and the Talmud.

in his generation, ruining the fact that people do not know the language and that even those who know the words do not know the meaning of their utterances. Day by day the level of Torah study is declining and people are forgetting the laws and commandments of Judaism.<sup>43</sup> Rabbi Khulí has recourse – this time in Ladino – to repeat the description of the cantor chanting the Sabbath Torah reading, while “many present do not know anything at all about the reality of the *parashah*; about what is he talking”<sup>44</sup> He goes on to warn his generation: “And on Judgment day, *yom ha-din ha-gadol ve-ha-nora* [the awesome, fearful Judgment Day], they will ask a person: ‘In all the many years you lived in that world, tell us what you learned and what you know about the *parashah* and the *haftarah* of each week, which it is obligatory to study and know.’ And certainly [the person being questioned] will be highly ashamed and worthless, since he does not know what to answer. About that one should say, ‘Woe for that shame, woe for that humiliation,’ and his punishment will be severe.”<sup>45</sup> So – added Rabbi Khulí – is true of rules of Jewish law: “No one knows how to read and understand a law from the *Shulḥan Arukh*, since there is no one who knows and understands the Holy Tongue, so there is no one who knows the laws he has to keep and obey.”<sup>46</sup>

Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí cites another reason for writing his work in Ladino: Each person is obliged to read the *parashah* every week, twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic: but in his generation they had forgotten Aramaic, too, which had once been a spoken language.<sup>47</sup> Now that each *parashah* is written in Ladino, every one can read it and fulfill his obligation. In this context, we catch a

43 ML, 7: “No entienden *leshon ha-kodesh* i *afilu* los ke saven los biervos no entienden lo ke kitan por la boka. I dia en dia se va apokando el meldar i olvidandose la ley de la djente i los rijos del judezmo”.

44 Ibid., “I dia de *shabat* melda el *ḥazan* la perasha enel sefer Tora i munga djente no tienen avizo de el *metziut* de la perasha en ke es lo ke avla”.

45 “I en la ora del djuzgo ke es *yom ha-din ha-gadol ve-ha-nora* le preguntan a la presona en tantos anyos ke estuvistes en akel mundo dimos ke es lo ke deprendites de la perasha i la *haftara* de kada semana ke es ovligo de meldrala i entenderla. I sierto ke se topara muy averguensado por no saver ke responder. I konviene dezir sobre esto: *Oy leota busha oy leota kelima...*”

46 *Me’am Lo’ez*, 7: “I tambien por kuento del rijo del judezmo no ay ken sepa meldar un *din* de *Shulḥan Arukh* porke no entiende *leshon ha-kodesh* i ansi no save los *dinim* ke tiene ovligo de azerlos”.

47 Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí called Aramaic “the language of the *falaḥim*”: in the episode of Laban the Aramean and Jacob [Ya’akov] the Patriarch, when they called – each in his own language – a name for the monument they raised: Gal-ed or Jegar-sahadutha (Gen. 31: 47), Rabbi Khulí wrote: “ke Lavan su avla era en *targum* ke es la avla de los *falaḥim...*” ML, 341 on *parashat Vayetze*, chap. 1.

glimpse of daily life among Sephardim in Rabbi Khulí's generation: They want to know the Torah and its interpretations, "but when a person returns from his store, he does not find what to learn, for if he takes to hand a midrash or *Ein Ya'akov* or the *Shulhan Arukh* or other books, even if dealing with legends, they are quite difficult for him and hard to be followed, and since he understands nothing he nods off and sleeps. And in the winter nights, he must rise at dawn, but he does not find anything to deal with until the day is nigh, so that precious hour is wasted in trivial matters of daily life, until he does not know what to do."<sup>48</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí deals with those "long winter nights" elsewhere in his Ladino introduction, when he promises his readers that "in the long winter nights you will have something to immerse yourselves in, and not only will you be occupied and the time pass, but you will even gain benefit for your soul since everything in this book was translated from the words of the *gemara* and *midrash*, for what was given in them in Hebrew I have translated into a European [franko] language."<sup>49</sup> "Frankia" is a term for Italy and countries of western Europe.<sup>50</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí spent some time on the range of languages in the world and noted that the members of his generation did not know Turkish – the language of the rulers of the land, the Ottoman Turks – and therefore, more than once, fell victim to swindlers and cheaters, who used to write forged letters in Turkish, called *ojitis*<sup>51</sup> and collude with a Turk and show him a way to get money out of a Jew ..."<sup>52</sup> In the story about the history of Joseph the son of the Patriarch Jacob [Ya'akov] (Genesis, *Miketz*, chap. 1), Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí wrote that "even though Joseph interpreted his dream for him and spoke with

48 ML, 7: "Pero kuando viene la presona de su butika no topa ke meldar ke si tomara un midrash en la mano o *Ein Ya'akov* o *Shulhan Arukh* o resto de libros aun ke son de hagada para el son muy karos i ondas i siendo no entiende nada se keda durmiendo i las noges del invierno ya se alevanta demadragada ma non topa en ke enbeveserse asta ke salga el dia i ansi enflua akeya ora luzia en avlas del mundo por no saver ke azer".

49 ML, 10: "I las noges del invierno ke son muy largas ternesh en ke enbeveservos i ternesh gusto de meldar kualker paso de este livro tanto ke sean *dinim* tanto ke sea deklarado la perasha tanto ke sea algun *ma'ase* ke se trusho afronto en medio de la avla i *melvad* de lo ke vos enbevistes i pasash tiempo tambien kavoaresh provego a guestra alma siendo todas las avlas de este livro son trezladadas de gemara i midrash. Ke lo ke ay ayi en *leshon ha-kodesh* lo trezladi aky en franko".

50 See the author's statement about his father who "left his town in the cities of Frankia." Cf. above n. 20.

51 The term 'ojitis' refers, probably, to the Turkish word *hüccet*, which has the general meaning of document. In Ottoman documents, this word is used to indicate a document produced by the qadi, whose authority included financial laws such as debts, bankruptcies, and the like.

52 ML, 42.

him he did not speak well, just as there are others who know broken Turkish, since they do not know the *shoresh* (root) of the words, and it is a shame to rely on someone who does not know how to speak properly.”<sup>53</sup>

The solution Rabbi Ya‘akov Khulí thought of for the issue of the ignorance of Hebrew among his brethren, the members of his generation, was to turn to the people in a language they do understand, that is, Ladino. Furthermore, the Ladino that Rabbi Khulí used in *Me‘am Lo‘ez* was not the polished, grandiose literary language employed, for instance, by Rabbi Moshe Almosnino of Salonika in his work *Hanhagat Ha-Hayim* [*Regimiento de la vida* (1567)], but the Jewish Spanish language as it was spoken by the “masses” – *hamon ha‘am* – the term invoked by Rabbi Khulí.<sup>54</sup> Rabbi Ya‘akov Khulí explained and enumerated a few of the reasons why the Sephardim of his generation could not understand what sixteenth-century rabbanim – such as Rabbi Moshe Almosnino – wrote in Ladino: “as he was wont, with Spanish grammatical forms and words, which are difficult for residents in these areas of Turkey, Anatolia, and Arabistan to understand ... and even the script [soletreo] of these gentlemen is other and different, and though he [the author] is justified, the people living in these areas cannot comprehend what is written and cannot learn and profit from it ...”<sup>55</sup>

### Everydaylife of the Sephardim in their Mediterranean Dispersal According to the *Me‘am Lo‘ez*

The homes in which the Jews of Jerusalem lived in the generation of Rabbi Ya‘akov Khulí were built of stone with the addition of plaster and whitewash. In the homes of the lower social classes there was only one room. Living conditions in the Old City of Jerusalem did not change in the two hundred years after the Rabbi Khulí’s death. In the homes of the Jews and the Christians, there was no division between two wings: a male-public section and a female-private section. In their homes the Jews of Jerusalem cooked on an open fire over which was an iron grate, and they used to bake in a public oven that was heated

53 ML, 416: “Aun ke Yosef le solto su suenyo i avlo kon el pero kere dezir ke no save avlar bien komo la djente segun ay algunos ke el turkesko ke saven es yerado ke no konosen el *shoresh* de los biervos i es verguensa de enreyñar a ken no save avlar bien.”

54 See, for example, ML, 7.

55 ML, 7: “Pero sus avlas son muy seradas i tambien el soletreo de ditos sinyores es de otra manera ke aun lo suyo es lo dirigo i verdadero, pero siendo la djente de estas partes no lo entienden no pueden aprovegar de el...”

from morning to evening. Lighting came from a candle placed in a glass cup. For heating, they usually put a clay pot in the center of the room (in wealthy homes they used copper bowls), which they filled with hot coals.<sup>56</sup> Under such conditions, it is thus no wonder, that the houses were often consumed by fire. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí assured his readers that any house in which words of Torah were heard at night was guaranteed not to be destroyed. Apparently, owing to crowded living conditions, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí felt he had to mention the need to maintain a degree of modesty that a person should maintain concerning marital relations:

For if a person is awake, and even in another room, it is forbidden to engage in sexual activity. It is so, if this is a person over four years of age who already knows how to talk and even if there is a partition of ten *tefahim* high that separates [him from his parents]: and if one engages in intercourse where a child is sleeping, it can cause the child a trembling of hands and feet. And as for those who go to their father-in-laws' home, it is seen as very immodest [bestialidad grande] to close oneself in the room while the others are awake, for it is a sin to think of it, [one must wait] until all have gone to sleep and the world is silent.<sup>57</sup>

The nuclear family in the Jerusalem Jewish community was small. It generally consisted of parents and their children, and rare were the instances in which three generations lived under one roof, since life expectancy was short and, for various reasons, frequently people left the city. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí referred to people's attitude to the death of the elderly: "And they attribute this to happenstance and say he was very old and it is *mi-derekh ha-teva* [natural] to die, or because he suffered from *shidafon* or other incurable diseases, or that he died in a *magefah* [plague] and they do not see anything *hidush* [new] in many people dying and he was one of them."<sup>58</sup>

Especially relevant to our issue is the author's reference to "elderly and ill who are penned up in their homes ...." In the Jewish community there were

56 Cf. above n. 34.

57 Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 1. ML, 347: "I los ke van en kaza de su suegro por algunos dias es bestialidad grande de enserarse en su kamareta antes ke se durmen todos ke siendo estan despiertos en akeya kaza es pekado grande de pensar en elyo sola mente despues ke se durmen todos ke esta el mundo kallado".

58 ML, 271: "...diziendo ke ya era muy viejo i *derekh ha-teva* es de morir o ke estava adolensiado kon *shidafon* o resto de hazinuras ke no teniya remedio de escapar o ke murio de *magefah* i no les viene de *hidush* siendo ven munga djente ke van muriendo i el fue uno de ellyos".

many solitary old people who had come to Jerusalem toward the end of their lives to die and be buried there. Popular belief held that at the time of resurrection, the dead of The Land of Israel would rise forty years before those buried elsewhere.<sup>59</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí also paid attention to the issue of wills and even mentioned that it was common in Frankia [Europe] that if a man died and left two or three sons, the firstborn took his place and conducted the matters of the house and when the firstborn died, the oldest of the brothers would step in and so on. Therefore, the young pay respects to the older, since they know that in time they will be under their command.<sup>60</sup>

While studying the story of the Tower of Babel, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí notes the mentally ill: the tower's builders "were those people who are similar to the crazy of the *timarana*, who the minute they are being whipped become a bit subdued. But their insanity returns, for the minute they are struck with the second lash, they forget the first. But at exactly the moment they receive the blow their sanity returns to them."<sup>61</sup> The miserable conditions in which the sick lived in general and the mentally ill in particular in Jerusalem was attested to by doctors who visited there, even one hundred years later, over the course of the nineteenth century: Ludwig August Frankl (1810–1894), physician and literary critic, who was sent to Jerusalem in 1856 and established the Lámel school,<sup>62</sup> and Dr. Moshe Wallach (1866–1957), who settled in Jerusalem in 1891 and established a clinic and the first Jewish hospital in the city.

About the Jewish woman it is written: "The King's daughter is all glorious within."<sup>63</sup> Life in a Muslim city increased the social tendency for the woman to be cloistered within the bounds of her home. Even though there were many widows in Jerusalem who had to earn their own livelihood and support the members of their households, generally women spent their days in housework and childrearing. The wealthy among them had female servants, including

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59 ML, 452–53.

60 ML, 302. Genesis, *parashat Toledot*, chap. 1: "I ansi usan *hayom* en la Frankia ke el ke se muere i desha dos tres ijos el *bekhor* entra en su lugar i gobierna la kaza".

61 ML, 149: "I ansi dita djente fueron asimijados a los lokos de la timarana ke la ora ke los estan bastoniyando se kevrantan algun poko pero su lokura lo rekiere ke kuando alevanta la mano para darles el sigundo golpe ... se olvidan del primero sola mente la mizma ora ke llyevvan del golpe le viene el sezo en su lugar lo mizmo eran la djente de *dor haflaga*".

62 Named for Simon Edler von Lámel (1766–1845), a wealthy businessman from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The school was established in Jerusalem thanks to a contribution by his daughter in 1856.

63 Ps. 45: 14.

Muslims.<sup>64</sup> Other than visits to the bathhouse and laundry done in the stream, outside the confines of the home,<sup>65</sup> and family events, the mass celebration on the last day of Passover, and pilgrimages [*zi'yara*] to gravesites of the holy, such as the grave of the Prophet Samuel [Shmuel] or Rachel's Tomb, the Jewish woman in Jerusalem, in Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's generation, did not have many opportunities to meet people beyond the family circle. Rabbi Khulí mentions the custom of pilgrimage: "And *ad hayom* [to this day] the Jews of Jerusalem have a custom to go once a year to Bethlehem to Rachel's Grave where they recite *tefilah* (prayer) and study night and day, and this is a place for an outing and is very pleasant."<sup>66</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí thought that it was forbidden for a woman to walk about the streets of the city, and if she had to go out of the house for any urgent reason, she should look only downward and not at people, especially if this was the night of her immersion [in the ritual bath], for even though she was a proper woman and all her fellow inhabitants were righteous, none of whom thought about a transgression, there is still the possibility that the children she will give birth to will be close to *mamzerim*, [illegitimate children] for she might see a man she fancied, and thought comes to action, and when she is with her husband, the form she saw will reappear.<sup>67</sup> Keeping the woman closed with the confines of her home was a salient principle for Rabbi Khulí. The author of *Me'am Lo'ez* on Genesis enumerated ten curses rained upon womankind owing to Eve's sin.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that Rabbi

64 See: A. Cohen and E. Ben-Shimon Pikali, *Jews in the Muslim religious court: Society, economy, and communal organization in the 16th century* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1993), 394, no. 457 [Hebrew], on the release of a Muslim slave from her Jewish female master (in 1579).

65 See above Introduction, n. 71, about the meeting of the sixteenth-century pilgrim, the Portuguese friar, Fr. Pantaleão de Aveiro, with women who were doing their laundry in the Shilo'ah stream and the conversation he had with one of them, a Jewess who was a descendant of the exiles from Spain.

66 ML, 366. Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 5: "I *ad hayom* una vez al anyo van los djidios de Yerushalayim a Beit Lehem en la fuesa de Raquel i azen *tefilah* i meldan una dia kon su noqe i es lugar de paseo i muy gustoso".

67 ML, 127: "De aky deprendimos ke no es lisenziada la mujer de kaminar por la plasa i kuando sale por algun *hekhras* es ovligada de tener los ojos en basho i no ir mirando la djente *ubefrat* siendo noche de *tevila* ke aun ke eya sea buena djudia i la djente de su lugar sean todos *tsadikim* ke dinguno pensa en koza de *avera* kon todo esto ay *metsiut* ke sus ijos ke pare de su marido sean *karov* de *mamzerim* porke viendo algun mansevo ke le parese en sus ojos tengalo por seguro ke la *mahashava* aze munga *pe'ula* ke akya propia ora ke esta kon su marido le viene en tino la forma ke vido".

68 ML, 112. Genesis, *parashat Bereshit*, chap. 9: the sadness of menstruation, blood of a virgin, nine months of pregnancy, fear of spontaneous abortion, labor pains – there is no greater

Ya'akov Khulí also enumerated ten curses given to Adam for Eve's sin.<sup>69</sup> The seventh curse with which the woman is burdened is that she must "cover her head. She is forbidden from speaking to an unknown man. She cannot appear in the window and when she puts her child to sleep, the neighbors should not hear her voice."<sup>70</sup> Here, too, we enjoy a precious peek into the daily life of the Jewish woman, her clothing, and the lullabies she sang to her children in their cradles.

The episode of Dina "the daughter whom Leah had borne to Jacob [Ya'akov]"<sup>71</sup> (Gen. 34: 1), served, as expected, for Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí to provide advice to his readers: "A man must teach this chapter to the members of his household for it has a moral and is a good lesson for the women who should remain in their homes and not stand near the windows when men pass."<sup>72</sup>

The woman is obligated to watch over the *kashrut* of the foods served on her table: "Owing to the vegetables such as spinach and lettuce and the *yaprakis*" and the '*perisil*' as well as to the salads full of small worms, it is imperative that special care be taken in inspecting them and the woman of the house is not

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pain in the world, "*ke no ay tan fuerte dolor en el mundo.*" On the surface, it seems that the author commiserated with the woman's difficulties, but he is actually stressing the intensity of the harsh punishment for Eve's sin. The problems in raising children, feeding them, clothing them, and carrying them in their [mothers'] arms; she is not fit to bear witness; through her sin, Eve, the first woman, caused her descendants to be mortal. That being the case, women are obliged to three commandments: laws of menstruation, separation of *hallah* (a portion of dough), and lighting Sabbath candles. Whoever is not meticulous in observing these commandments, wrote Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, will die in childbirth, but whoever will obey them in strict accordance with the law – will save herself.

69 The dimensions of his body were reduced; his strength was weakened; the soil was cursed against him and no longer gave him its yield but produced many weeds; man must work the land to earn his bread; the snake, which lost its legs and slithers on its stomach, cannot serve man as a beast of burden; and above all, man lives in the east, far from the Divine Presence, which is in the west.

70 ML, 112, Genesis, *parashat Bereshit*, chap. 9: "Es ke siempre deve de ir kovijada la kavesa ke no se le vean los kaveyos i no avlar kon ombre ajeno ni amostrarse delante de djente ni apararse por la ventana i quando kuna a su kriatura ke no se sienta la voz entre la vezindad sola mente kantanro kon voz basha. I todo esto podia eskuzarlo si no komia de akel arvol".

71 ML, 357, Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 3: "Dina ija de Lea ke le pario a Ya'akov".

72 ML, 356, Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 3: "Este kapitulo tiene ovligo kada uno de meldarlo a la djente se su kaza ke es kastigaryo i dotrino a las mujeres". ML, 357: "Agora sitireshe el dizastre ke akontesyono en una muchacha por salir de kaza ke de esto se preva ke deven las *betulot* de estar enseradas en kaza ke no las vea dinguno kquanto mas las kazadas i despozadas".

meticulous in this and relies upon the maid who is not interested at all in issue of *kasher* food, or this is handed over to an old Jewess whose vision is not acute.<sup>73</sup> We gain a clear view of the Sephardi kitchen in the Mediterranean dispersal. The menu included, green vegetables and salads alongside dishes of stuffed vegetables. In the family home, the housewife managed the kitchen, having at her side the maid, who perhaps was not Jewish and thus did not especially care about observing the laws of *kasher* food. In addition, in the homes of Sephardim were relations who were spinsters and continued to live with their relatives until old age. Here we must emphasize that in the attitude Rabbi Khulí displayed toward women, he was continuing the tradition that had always been common among Sephardim, and this did not change when they settled in the Ottoman Empire. So, for example, in the work *Seder Nashim – Sidur di Mujeres*,<sup>74</sup> printed in Salonika around 1550 – some 180 years before the first appearance in print of *Me'am Lo'ez* on Genesis – the author of the prayer book mentioned the duty of the Jewish women to examine closely the vegetables served to the family and to make sure worms were not hidden in them:

So it is necessary to be careful to observe all the laws of *kashrut* of cleaning, and salting, and meat and cheese and not clean with a food knife and not to rely at all on that was *kashered*, and she must ask her husband when he brings her the meat if there is something to do to make it *kasher*, and to check for worms in vegetables and lentils and the matters of fish and liver and similar items, since we are fed by her hands, and transgression over anything is her responsibility. And if she does not know, she should be careful to learn and to always ask, and even if she knows, she should make believe that she does not know, so that if she sees something strange in any organ of any chicken while plucking feathers, be it a

73 ML, 254: “segunda es en las komidas ke pueden ser *ma'akhalot asurut* por mungas sibot. Si *mehamat* del mal de los guzanos ke ay en el pazi i espinaka i yaprakes i pereshil i salatas i resto de verdures ke estan yenos de guzanikos muy pekeniyos i kere mungo judezmo para mirarlos, i la *ba'alat ha-bayit* no tiene kargo de esto i suvre la eskalva ke poko le enfade o la *djudiya* vieja ke no tiene vista para atentarlos por ser muy delgados.”

74 This book is found in the Rara collection of the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem and its call number is Ro(e) 99A681. It is written in Ladino in square Hebrew letters and vocalized. See O. (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald, *Seder Nashim: A 16th Century Prayer Book for Women in Ladino, Saloniki (Sidur para mujeres en ladino, Salónica, siglo XVI)* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 2012) [Hebrew]. The work is limited to a women's home prayer book. See *ibid.*, 13.

wound or a defect or a hole or any other thing, she should immediately tell her husband who will show it to any sage ...<sup>75</sup>

In this instance, too, we clearly see the Jewish home in Salonika in the sixteenth century: the husband makes the purchases in the market and brings home vegetables, lentils, fish, fowl, and meat for cooking. The woman is obliged to clean all products well. If any doubt arises, she must turn to her husband and seek his advice. The author informs us in his introduction<sup>76</sup> that some members of his generation “do not teach them [the Jewish girls], saying that it is great effort for them to learn the letters and the vowels and the details of the language, and some of them think that the prayers are long and they will spend too much time on them and not be able to serve their small, infant children.” Yet, the author of the prayer book stresses, it is incumbent upon the women to pray and that it is possible for them to pray in a language they understand: “All Jewesses must recite the prayer [*shaḥarit*], and *minḥa*, and *arvit* every day and all the blessings over the things they enjoy in this world.” To whomever is afraid to do so, “because it seems to them that one must say a great deal and they cannot do so because they have to take care of their husbands and their children ...”, the author recommends not to fear at all, “because this [reciting the prayers and blessings] is so little that they can learn it in a short time, especially [since] it is written in Ladino for which study of the letters and the vowels and the solitreo [the script] will be enough ...”<sup>77</sup>

We thus see that Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí did not change but continued the tradition that was common among the Sephardim in their oriental dispersal. Rabbi Khulí was impatient with the women who cared more for the cleanliness of their homes than they cared for the Sabbath: if a small child spilled water or urinated the woman hurried to use a rag and dry the home, thereby being more meticulous about cleanliness of the home than the cleanliness of her soul.<sup>78</sup> Rabbi Khulí criticized the women of his generation, “who after they finish their meal leave the table by themselves without saying the *berakhah* (the Grace after Meals), while on this issue there is no difference between men

75 Ibid., 245. The author’s name has been positively identified by the scholar and bibliographer, Dr. Dov Cohen: Rabbi Meir ben Shmuel ben Ibn Benest (Benvenisti) of Salonika, the author of *Meza del Alma* – a Ladino adaptation of the *Shulḥan Arukh* by Rabbi Yosef Karo from 1568. See above chap. 1, n. 26.

76 *Seder Nashim*: Introduction A, 61–62.

77 Ibid., 65.

78 ML, 366, Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 5.

and women since everyone is obliged to recite the *berakhah* [Grace] before and after meals.”<sup>79</sup>

The attitude of the author of *Me'am Lo'ez* coincides with the accepted status of women in Jewish law throughout time. The historian Yaron Ben-Naeh wrote about women in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire: “We are dealing with a declared non-egalitarian, traditional society, in which the limits of each class are clear and visually recognizable, a society in which each person internalized while young his station, his functions, his duties, and his rights in it.”<sup>80</sup>

The scholar Rachel Elior studied women's standing in the Jewish religion and determined that that world is one of patriarchal-religious concepts, which reflects reality from a masculine point of view, placing the women in an inferior status. This scholar elaborated on the common grammatical root of the Hebrew words *mishpahah* [family] and *shifhah* [woman-slave].<sup>81</sup> The Babylonian Talmud described the creation of the woman, when God took a rib from Adam and gave it to a woman to serve him.<sup>82</sup> It is no surprise that Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí used the term *shifhah* when describing the position of the wife relative to her husband. The author of *Me'am Lo'ez* wrote in his commentary that the woman “must be like a slave to her husband: she must prepare his meal day and night and wash his clothes, and when her husband prevails over her, she shall not have the right to refuse his command.”<sup>83</sup> Even when Sarah sought to

79 ML, 213, Genesis, *parashat Vayera*, chap. 1: Women in past generations, wrote Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí: “Tenian mucho kargo del judezmo i temor del *shem yitbarakh* i no eran komo las de estos tiempos ke quanto akavan de komer se alevantan de la meza sin dezir *berakhah*. Ke sepasen por sierto ke no ay dinguna diferencia en esto particular de ombres a mujeres ke todos tenemos ovligo grande de dizir *berakhah* antes de komer i después”, ML, 213.

80 Y. Ben-Naeh, “On Women and the Study of Women”, *Cathedra*, 10 (1982): 101–2 [Hebrew].

81 Rachel Elior, “Present but Absent,” “Still Life,” and “A Pretty Maiden Who Has No Eyes”: On the Presence and Absence of Women in the Hebrew Language, in the Jewish Religion, and in Israeli Life” in *Will You Listen to My Voice? Representation of Women in Israeli Culture*, ed. Yael Atzmon (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuḥad Publishing House, 2001), 42–82, especially 46 [Hebrew] A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Esklava de su marido”. A Look at the Daily Life of the Sephardi Woman in Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí's *Me'am Lo'ez*”, in *Woman in the East, Woman from the East: The Story of the Oriental Jewish Woman*: 25–33 [Hebrew].

82 TB Sanhedrin 39a.

83 ML, 112: Genesis, *parashat Bereshit*, chap. 9: “Es de ser esclava de su marido de tener kargo de apareserle su komida dia i noche i lavarle su ropa i ke el marido podeste sovre elya ke no tenga orden de refuzar su palabra”. This is the eighth curse put upon Eve for her sin. See also Elior, “Present but Absent”, 45–46, who cites a few documents on the duties of the wife to her husband, such as from Maimonides.

punish her slave Hagar, she could not do so without receiving the permission of her husband, Abraham.<sup>84</sup>

Concerning the story of Rachel and the idols (Gen. 31), Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí wrote: And this teaches us to keep far distant from her [the menstruating woman] ... and they cannot eat together from one plate and she is not permitted to light his pipe or to make his bed or to pour his cup of wine or any other act of endearment.<sup>85</sup> When describing the virtues of the Matriarch Sarah, Rabbi Khulí made remarks, by way of contrast, defaming the women of his day: the home managed by Sarah the Matriarch was suffused with *berakhah* [blessing] “unlike the other women, who pay no attention to household expenses and do not think of ways to save; all they want to do is spend their husband’s money so as to do whatever they wish.”<sup>86</sup> Yet, despite all this, the husband must honor his wife: from the story of the Patriarch Abraham and Sarah his wife the author learned that wherever Abraham went, he first pitched a tent for Sarah and then for himself. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí wrote that a Jewish man must respect his wife since blessedness fills a home because of her.<sup>87</sup> But from the ending we find here, we understand the ordinary situation

The masses of the people who curse and demean their wives must realize that this is a serious transgression and it is even dangerous, since when there is no harmony between them, the *Shekhinah* leaves them ... and any man who hits his wife, it is as if he hit a comrade, and if he always hits his wife, the leaders of the city are obliged to punish him and excommunicate him and make him swear that he will not continue to do so, because that is how non-Jews behave. If she unfetters her tongue, however, by cursing him to his face or she humiliates her father-in-law or mother-in-law in front of her husband, then it is permitted to beat her.<sup>88</sup>

84 ML, 191: Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 5: ML, 191: “De esto prevaresh ke no tiene odren [sic; orden] la mujer de azer dinguna koza sin lisensia de su marido onde vimos ke Sarai no kijo kastigar a su esklava sin lisensia de Abraham”.

85 ML, 329: Genesis, *parashat Vayetze*, chap. 1: “Ke no pueden komer juntos en un plato ni le puede ensender la pipa de tabako ni azerle la kama ni inchirle el vazo de vino ni dinguna koza de amistad”.

86 ML, 293. Genesis, *parashat Hayye Sarah*, chap. 2: “Es ke la *berakhah* se topava en kaza ke era rigidora no komo resto de mujeres ke no les enfade del gaste de kaza ni pensan en eskusar sola mente lo ke bushkan es devzoltar a su marido por azer su gusto”. See also A. Meyuhas Ginio, *Perception and Images*, 231.

87 ML, 167, Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 2.

88 ML, 167, *ibid.*: “Sigundo *hidush* mos aviza ke siempre se akavede el ombre en el *kavod* de su mujer porke la *berakhah* se topa en la kaza por su kavza...I ansi deven saver el *hamon*

It should be noted that Rabbi Khulí does not instruct the husband to hit his wife, but uses the Hebrew term: *mutar* – “is permitted” – to beat her. Clearly according to the norms the author of *Me'am Lo'ez* presents to his readers, the woman is inferior in status to the man. Even though, Rabbi Khulí considered it necessary to vilify those who are disappointed by the birth of daughters. Things went so far that it became customary for the midwives not to tell the mother whether she had delivered a son or a daughter, until the mother's pain had been abated, because some women were so upset when they heard they had had a daughter, they were liable to die since they were in great danger.<sup>89</sup> Once a child is born, he is given a name. The custom among the Sephardi community is to name the newborns for their grandparents.<sup>90</sup> This was not so in the stories of the Patriarchs in Genesis. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí made the effort to explain that since in his time we do not know to which of the Tribes of Israel the newborn belongs, he is called after his grandfather. Furthermore, those generations were filled with the holy spirit and knew what was going to happen, so they named their children for future events.

In his commentary to Exodus, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí commented regarding verse 1: 7 in the book: “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them,” for “they were not similar to our days, when whoever has a large family and is engaged with his children has trouble, because he has no means to support them and clothe them and he toils and suffers in his lifetime to do this, since then they [the children of Israel] were very wealthy ....”<sup>91</sup> Infant mortality in the Jerusalem community in Rabbi Khulí's generation was high

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*ha'am* ke tiene su luenga ujada de maldezir i dizonnar a su mujer sepase ke es yero grande i *mevad* ke es pekado se rekerse mucho dezastre ke en no aviendo paz i amor entre los dos se aparte la *shekhinah*...I todo ombre ke *harva* a su mujer es tanto komo si *harvara* a su *haver* i si es su manyia esto de *harvarla* akorruto deven los rejidores de su lugar de kastigarlo i enjirimarlo i tomarle *shevu'a* ke no alse mano del todo porke esto es *ma'ase goyim*. Ma si elya tiene la boka suelta ke lo maldize en su kara o ke menopresia a su suegro o su suegra delante de su marido estonces es *mutar* de *harvarla*”.

89 ML, 364: “I uzansa de las komadres es de no dezir si es ijo o ija asta ke repoze la parida de sus dolores ke ay algunas ke se toman *tsa'ar* saviendo ke es ija i pueden morirsen siendo estan en *sakanah* grande”. See also A. Meyuhás Ginio, “The Tragedy of Having a Daughter”, *El Prezente*, 8, in print [Hebrew].

90 ML, 149: “En akeyos tiempos poniyan nombres nuevos a sus ijos i no los nombravan kon nombre de su padre asigun uzamos agora ke el nieto yeva el nombre de su avuelo...”.

91 *Me'am Lo'ez* part two, commentary on Exodus, Izmir edition, 1863, 3: “I no asimijavan a este tiempo ke el ken tiene famiya muncha i esta kargado de kriaturas tiene tristeza porke no tiene modo para mantenerlos i vestirlos i pena su vida para azerlos siendo todos eran rikos rikisimos...”.

and remained so until the beginning of the twentieth century. The author of *Me'am Lo'ez* rebuked whoever took the death of an infant with equanimity – for many young children died in plagues and of smallpox –<sup>92</sup> and he warned whoever took lightly the preparation of shrouds for a dead infant: “That there be no part from old material as some do, for if a young infant [*kriaturika chika*] of their's should die, they wrap him or her in their shirt and use it for shrouds.”<sup>93</sup> Rabbi Kuli believed that infants died because of the sins of their fathers, and the father had to think about his deeds, to repent of his evil ways, so that harm would not come to him or his children.<sup>94</sup>

The father was obligated to educate his son: he had to teach him Torah and he had to teach him a trade.<sup>95</sup> Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí praised the crafts. A man had to know how to earn an honorable living. The boys studied in a *Talmud Torah*, and the teachers of the young children received their pay from the community. The author of *Me'am Lo'ez* urged people to check closely whether the teacher taught the children well or perhaps he did his work fraudulently.

From what Mrs. Rivka [Rebeka] Peretz née Ginio (1918–2008), a native of Jerusalem and an informant for Ladino folktales and songs, wrote to me, at my request, one may learn of the daily life in the *kutub* [*qutef*] – the Sephardi *Heder*. There was cooperation between the *Hakham*, the teacher, and his wife [*Rubisa*], who was at home and helped her husband with his daily routine.<sup>96</sup>

92 ML, 151, Genesis, *parashat Noah*, chap. 9: “se murio de *magefah* o virguela asigun murieron muchos...”.

93 ML, 470, Genesis, *parashat Vayehi*, chap. 11: “I ternesh kargo ke no sea yenso viejo segun azen algunos ke le muere alguna kriaturika chika ke su kamizikas las azen mortajas”.

94 Ibid.: “Los hijos chikos yevan el pekado de su padre”.

95 ML, 161, Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 1: “El primero es ke sea *mishtadel* ke no salga su ijo *am ha-aretz*” [ignorant].

96 On Mrs. Rivka (Rebeka) Peretz, see also below chap. 6, n. 139. According to Mrs. Peretz's story (registered in 1999), when “a child was wild, the rabbi would ask his wife to bring him a bowl with hot water. He would dip the child's foot in the water, effectively rooting him in place. At the same time he would declare that his intention was to hammer a nail through the foot into the floor so that he could not move. Every now and then he would ‘check’ whether the foot had become soft and finally try to hammer the nail (obviously) between the child's toes. To the pleading of the *Rubisa*, the rabbi would let go of the child, of course while being promised that the boy would behave well in the future. This would serve as a warning to the other pupils in the *heder* not to disturb during the lesson. Mrs. Peretz wrote down the words to the song for a child going to *heder*: ‘Ala tora ala tora/ Avramiko la dira\Kon el pan i el kezo\ El livriko in el petcho\A meldar se va yir inderecho\ Onde vas ijiko de bouen jidio?\A meldar la ley del Dio\...El haham te aharvara\La bolissa te eskapara\Il Baba te dira\Siete mil barouch-haba\Ke ya vino il ijo de meldar.’ I have listed the words as Mrs. Peretz gave them at the time. The influence of French, which she

Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí stressed in the story of the happenings of Joseph and his brothers that a father must not discriminate between his children and give one more than the others: "And from this is a proof, that whoever has two children should dress them in the same manner and not give one more than the other."<sup>97</sup> This was said in regard to the coat of many colors that Patriarch Ya'akov gave Joseph, his beloved son (Gen. 37: 2–40).

Rabbi Khulí was convinced that children should be brought to the synagogue during prayer services and taught to answer "Amen"; but he rebuked those who brought their children to the synagogue because they want to hear their screams and talking and wish to adorn themselves through them, as they are dressed in Sunday clothes. In his opinion, the father must teach his son to answer "Amen" and to recite the *Shem'a* and not let him wander about the congregation and do nonsense, as some do, who enjoy spoiling their children and thus disturb the worshippers. So, for example, if during the *Amidah* prayer, the toddler begins to cry, the father must take him in his arms and calm him down.<sup>98</sup>

The synagogue was the center of community life and all community members had to honor it: "When a person wants to go to the synagogue, or when he is about to pray the afternoon or evening service, he should first check his clothing and his body to see they are completely clean."<sup>99</sup> For washing the body, they went to the bathhouse – the Turkish *Hamam*. "And if you look closely," wrote Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, "you will find many people who come to the synagogue tired from a day's work in the store, wearing a shirt without a robe ... and it is a great disgrace to come to the synagogue dressed in such a way, for they do not even appear in front of people that way." One must come to the synagogue "with respect and elegance as one comes before a king to ask for mercy."<sup>100</sup>

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had learned at the St. Joseph school, Jerusalem is noticeable in the spelling of the word *bouen* (good) instead of *buen* in Spanish. See also, Ya'akov Yehoshua, *The home and the street in Old Jerusalem, selections from the atmosphere of bygone days* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1966), 92–103 [Hebrew]. On page 95 is the song for the child who is going to the Talmud Torah with one additional line: Tu padre te eskulara\i la madre le dira\ siete mil barukh ha-ba\[your father will bring you from the *heder* and mother will tell him 7,000 times welcome].

97 ML, 378, Genesis, *parashat Vayeshev*, chap. 1: "I de esto se preva ke el ken tiene dos ijos ke les viste de un modo i no regale al uno mas ke al otro".

98 ML, 26, Genesis, *parashat Bereshit*, chap. 2.

99 ML, 362, Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 4: "ke kuando va la presona al Kal o kere dezir *tefilah minha arvit* es ovligado badekarse sus vestidos i su puerpo ke esten muy limpios".

100 ML, 416–417, Genesis, *parashat Miketz*, chap. 1: "I no komo azen algunos ke vienen kansados de la butika...".

Many of the Jews of Jerusalem lived on charity, but there were also merchants among them, traders in textiles and traders in spices, moneychangers and artisans, such as leatherworkers, butchers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, wine-makers, and millers. Commercial activity of buying and selling took place in the market, which was organized and arranged under the supervision of the authorities. Active in the market were Muslims, Jews, and Christians, who traded with each other.<sup>101</sup>

Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí noted, in connection to the story of Joseph “that all merchandise he touched appeared blessed. He was not like the merchants who sell in installments and when they want to sell for cash, sell cheaply. But Joseph even when he sold for cash made a nice profit.”<sup>102</sup> Rabbi Khulí gave his opinion on the place of the currency in international trade and remarked that “the kings issue coins boasting their name,” and he noted that “the Turkish coin is not accepted by merchants in the cities of Frankia.”<sup>103</sup>

The common pastime in male society was drinking coffee accompanied by smoking tobacco and hashish. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí remonstrated against those “who at bedtime, light the tobacco pipe and lie down to sleep without reciting *Kri'at Shem'a*,”<sup>104</sup> and those who are used to learning in the synagogue in the winter “must be careful not to enter in to the congregation with a pipe in their hand or to talk about ordinary things.”<sup>105</sup> With regard to the story of Lot and the angels, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí mentioned the custom of talking about the ways of the world with visiting strangers as a means of communication: “And Lot sat with the angels and spoke about the ways of the world as is customary when the strangers ask the head of the household to tell him his opinion on who are the important people of his city and about their nature.”<sup>106</sup>

101 D. Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century. The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 141–54.

102 ML, 397, Genesis, *parashat Vayeshev*, chap. 3: “Ke su *hatzlahah* era muncha a tanto ke toda merkansia ke tokava kon su mano pozva la *berakhah* en elya. I tambien no era komo resto de merkaderes ke para ganar en la ropa la venden fiada por mezes i ken kere vender kon la moneda en la mano vende barato lo kual Yosef aun ke vendia kon los As en la mano ganava mucho”.

103 ML, 162, Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 1: “la estampa de Turkia no pasa en la Frankia”.

104 ML, 319, Genesis, *parashat Vayetze*, chap. 1: “I no komo azen algunos ke kuando se echan en la kama esenden la pipa de tabako i se kedan durmidos sin dezir Shem'a”.

105 ML, 322, Genesis, *parashat Vayetze*, chap. 1: “Deven akavedarse mucho de no estar kon la pipa di tabako dientro del Kal o de avlar kozas del mundo”.

106 ML, 227: “I se asento Lot kon los *malakhim* avlando del mundo i asegun es la uzansa ke el forastero le demanda a *ba'al ha-bayit* ke le de avizo de los grandes de la sivdad ken y ken son”.

Among the Ottoman rulers in the country, just like the European nobility, hunting had always been the favorite pastime. Within the context of the gifts Patriarch Jacob [Ya'akov] sent to Esau his brother to assuage him (Gen. 32), Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí mentioned: "And his sent him one very precious fowl called a falcon, since Esau was hunter, he sent him this bird to serve him in his hunting."<sup>107</sup>

From the different comments Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí made while presenting his biblical commentary to the books of Genesis and Exodus in his work *Me'am Lo'ez*, one may learn of the behavioral norms common in daily life in his time and place. Furthermore, we are permitted to draw conclusions about the norms and social mores acceptable to the author of *Me'am Lo'ez*, and in contrast to them, those that were rife in practice among his contemporaries but unacceptable to Rabbi Khulí.

In consideration of the tremendous fame, prestige, and defining authority that the work *Me'am Lo'ez* garnered over the generations, one may state that generations of Sephardim took upon themselves the norms considered worthy by Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí in his day and in the view of the different writers who continued and expanded his exegetical endeavor. Moreover, from reading *Me'am Lo'ez* one may learn about the ways of life considered proper and which were presented as a model for many among the Ladino-reading Sephardi communities in the Mediterranean Basin in the past two hundred years, from the days of Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí until the beginning of the twentieth century.

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<sup>107</sup> ML, 347, Genesis, *parashat Vayishlah*, chap. 1: "I tambien le mando una ave estimada ke se yama falkon ke siendo Esau era patron de kasa le mando dita ave ke sirve para elyo".

## Immigrants in the Land of Their Birth: The Sephardi Community in Jerusalem. The Test Case of the Meyuḥas Family

For we are brothers

GENESIS 13:8

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Each went his own way: countries, times, and different imprints on their personal memory separated them ...

RONIT MATALON, *Facing Us* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved and Sifriah La'am, 414, 1995), 121.

[\* Translated into English by Marsha Weinstein (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henri Holt, 1998)]

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### Modernization Processes in the Ottoman Empire

In the introduction to this volume, we mentioned the book by the Spanish senator, a physician by profession, Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*,<sup>1</sup> which appeared in Madrid in 1905. This was the second book by Senator Pulido to deal with Sephardi Jews, the descendants of the exiles from Spain, and their dispersal throughout the world. In this work, Senator Pulido focused on the situation of Sephardim the world over, at the beginning of the twentieth century, according to information he had collected as a result of extensive correspondence with the leaders of their communities. In his initial letters to them, the senator posed identical questions to his correspondents asking about the history of the community and its leaders. On pages 460–67 of his book, Pulido presented the information he had received about Sephardim in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, which

1 A. Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí* (Madrid: E. Teodoro, 1905; edición facsímil – Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993). See also Introduction, n. 2.

had come from Albert Antébi (1873–1919), the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) representative in Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> and Moshe Azriel (1881–1916), a publisher.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Antébi replied in French and Senator Pulido published his answers in Spanish translation. Mr. Moshe Azriel responded in “rather good” Spanish – as Pulido described it. Additional information was given to Pulido by Mr. Rafael Cassares, the Spanish consul in Jerusalem. At the start of the chapter on Jerusalem comes information about “the distinguished, Ya’akov Shaul Elyaschar [sic!] the chief Rabbi of Palestine” and a picture of the Rabbi at age 89 appears in it (photo no. 143).<sup>4</sup>

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- 2 On him see E. Antébi, *L’homme du Sérail. Albert Antébi 1873–1919* (Paris: Nil Éditions, 1996). This biography was written by his granddaughter. Albert Antébi was born in Damascus, Syria, was educated in Paris, and eventually became the principal of the AIU school in Jerusalem; he was known for having great influence in the Ottoman ruling circles there. In effect, he was the uncrowned leader of the *Yishuv* in Ottoman Palestine and the intercessor between it and the Ottoman masters of the country. Michelle Campos considers him a definitive example of the “assimilated Sephardi Jew.” See Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers. Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: University Press, 2011), 218.
- 3 On him see D. Tidhar, *Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel*, 2: 1054 [Hebrew]. This encyclopedia is available on the Touro College website: <http://www.tidhar.tourolib.org/tidhar/view/2/1054>. The Azriel family’s printing house was founded in Jerusalem in 1900. Moshe Azriel published *El Tesoro de Yerushalaim; Calendario de Yerushalaim*; the newspaper *El Liberal*, which in time became the Hebrew daily *Ha-Herut*; and novels in Ladino as well. On him, see also above, the Introduction, n. 3. On the newspaper *Ha-Herut*, see also below n. 20 and ch. 6 n. 8.
- 4 Rabbi Ya’akov Shaul Eliachar – Yissa Berakhah – died in Jerusalem in 1906. The picture published in Pulido’s book was used for a stamp produced by the Israel Philatelic Service in honor of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah, at the initiative of Mr. Oded Eliashar [Eliachar] of Jerusalem, on July 25, 2006, for the hundredth anniversary of the Rabbi’s demise. On the course of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah’s life, see Abraham Yaari, *Remembrances of the Land of Israel*, pt. 1 (Tel Aviv: Masada, 1974) [Hebrew]; after the death of Rabbi Ḥaim Farḥi; N. Efrati, *The Eliachar Family in Jerusalem: Selected Chapters in the History of the Yishuv in Jerusalem in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University and Rubin Mass, 1975), 45–143 [Hebrew]; E. Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 607–20 [Hebrew]; G. Pozailov, *The Sages of Four Holy Cities*, v. 2: Sages of Jerusalem (Jerusalem: Religious Education Administration, 2001), 559–92 [Hebrew]; Z. Zohar, *Luminous Face of the East: Studies in the Legal and Religious Thought of Sephardic Rabbis of the Middle East* (Sifriat Hillel Ben-Haim: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuḥad, 2001), 223–36 [Hebrew]. Ya’akov Sha’ul Eliachar lost his father, Rabbi Eliezer Yeruḥam Eliachar, head of the ritual slaughterers and examiners in Safed, when he was seven. His family suffered from the upheavals of the times and the changes in rule in mid-nineteenth century. His grandfather, Ya’akov Wilna, lived in Hebron, where he was called, owing to his integrity, by the byname “The Straight One”

(Hebrew: *ha-yashar*) and that is the source – so wrote Pulido – of the name “El-Yashar” (“The Honest One”). The child Ya’akov Shaul Eliachar moved to Jerusalem with his mother; in time she remarried, to Rabbi Benyamin Navon, who adopted the boy and became his teacher and mentor. Rabbi Yissa Berakhah was a genius in Torah studies and wrote books of *responso*, *pyyutim*, sermons, and innovations in Torah learning. He had a daughter and three sons. In 1853 he was authorized in Jerusalem as a *dayyan* and teacher. From 1869 he served as the president of the religious court in the city. In 1880, he relinquished the position of Rishon Le-Zion in favor of his *meḥutan* [in-law], Rabbi Refael Meir Panigel (author of *Lev Marpe* (1887) – the father of Vida Leah, wife of his oldest child, Rabbi Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar, known by the byname Rav Ḥam”a. On Rav Ḥam”a, see Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 229–41; Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 621–26. On the wife of Rav Ḥam”a, Vida Leah, see *ibid.*, 627–28. Eulogies about her, after her death at the age of 105, appeared in the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, 23/24, year. 6, 13 April 1949: 18. On Rabbi Refael Meir Panigel, see Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 70–74. After the passing of Rabbi Panigel, in 1892, Ya’akov Shaul Eliachar was named the Rishon Le-Zion and *Ḥakham Baṣi*, and he served in this position until he died in 1906. See Ephraim Cohen-Reiss, *Memories of a Son of Jerusalem* (1933–1936) (Jerusalem: Hotza’at Sifriat Hayishuv, July 1967), 117–19 [Hebrew]. In his book, *Living with Jews*, 612, Eliyahu Eliachar gives a physical description of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah as Ephraim Cohen-Reiss depicted him in his memoirs: “Standing erect, a broad forehead, blazing eyes, the hair of his head had not fallen out, and his white beard flowed long. Always dressed cleanly and highly polished. With unhurried strides, and pleasant of speech that no one criticized. I never saw a colored scarf on him but only white, unwrinkled ones. Drawing the eye of one entering his presence were his hands and long fingers like those of a violinist, tapping on a golden box in which he kept his snuff. He was pure of body, pure in his dress, and pure in his dealings with people.” In contrast to this description, we find Menaḥem Ussishkin’s impression in his story “Four Guards” that appeared in the annual *Aḥiasaf* (1905): 60 [Hebrew]. The first three guards are Christians, who faithfully watch over the place they were assigned to. Conversely, the fourth Jewish guard makes a difficult, dreary impression. Ussishkin tells how he paid a visit to the home of the Rishon Le-Zion Yissa Berakhah, and he levied incisive criticism on this Sephardi Rabbi and his community. Ussishkin asked the Rabbi why the situation of the Jews was so bad, when the Turkish government was not depriving them of rights. The elderly Rabbi replied, “We are in exile.” See Nurit Govrin, *Honey from the Rock: Studies on the Literature of Eretz-Israel* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence Publishing House, 1989), 45–52 [Hebrew]. Ephraim Cohen-Reiss (Jerusalem, 1863–Nice, France, 1943) belonged to a family from the *Prushim* community of the Ashkenazi Old *Yishuv*. The unfathomable differences between the impressions of an Ashkenazi Jew from the Old *Yishuv*, albeit he was educated in Germany, and the Zionist Ashkenazi Jew who emigrated from Europe, is striking to the reader. About the house of the Rishon Le-Zion, Eliyahu Eliachar wrote that it was next to the compound of the four synagogues in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, at the center of which stood the synagogue of Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakkai. Three holders of the title Rishon Le-Zion lived in that house: Rabbi Panigel, Rabbi Yissa Berakhah, and Rav Ḥam”a. In 1904, the Eliachar family went to live in the Even Israel neighborhood, one of the new

Pulido wrote a biography of the Rabbi, born in 1817, telling of his family origins, his expertise in Talmud and all the commentators, and also noting that Rabbis from Turkey, Italy, Germany, and Morocco turned to him for advice and for decisions on halakhic matters. Pulido even went on to list a number of the works by Yissa Berakhah. Of importance for our discussion are two issues about which one learns from Pulido's statements regarding Rabbi Yissa Berakhah: the Rabbi's knowledge of languages and his journeys beyond the borders of The Land of Israel.

Ángel Pulido wrote that Rabbi Eliachar spoke Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Italian, and Greek.<sup>5</sup> The Rabbi was sent as an emissary on behalf of the Sephardi community of Jerusalem to raise funds abroad<sup>6</sup> and spent time in Izmir,<sup>7</sup> Leghorn [Livorno],<sup>8</sup> and Kushta, where he lived for six months in the home of the

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areas constructed in Jerusalem close to Jaffa Road. See: Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 610–11. In his day, Rabbi Yissa Berakhah visited the Jewish *moshavot* (colonies) Petah Tikva and Rishon le-Zion and supported Jewish agricultural settlement, when he proposed solutions to the issue of agricultural work during the *shemita* year. This was 1889: to set aside a plot that would serve as untilled soil and in which farming would be forbidden, or to sell the field to a reliable non-Jew, as is done on Passover. Rabbi Yissa Berakhah gave a *hekksher* [Rabbinic approval] to wine produced by the Rishon le-Zion winery. He gave his agreement to the opening of the 'eskolas' – the schools of the "Ezra" organization, the educational network in the country of which the aforementioned Ephraim Cohen-Reiss served, from 1903, as principal, and the Alliance schools – and permitted the teaching of Arabic in the new schools, relying upon Maimonides, who also wrote in Arabic. In 1899, Rabbi Yissa Berakhah gave his patronage to the *Safa Berurah* Society, whose goal was the inculcation of the Hebrew language. He maintained connections with Sir Moses Montefiore and with Rabbi Yehudah Hai Alakalay. Rabbi Yissa Berakhah wrote some twenty books and booklets. From all corners of the Diaspora, people turned to him with halakhic questions. He also wrote *piyyutim* and *mizmorim*, which were sung by many to one of the tunes that were common and familiar at the time.

- 5 Of note is that in his memoirs Ephraim Cohen-Reiss mentioned that Rabbi Yissa Berakhah "understood a bit of English." This was cited in conjunction with a meeting of Louis Ganz of New York with the Rabbis Shmuel Salant and Yissa Berakhah. See Cohen-Reiss, *From the Memoirs*, 115. Cohen-Reiss also wrote that "Elyashar often took up his pen: he wrote books, created rabbinic rhymes in Hebrew. In addition to that he also understood, beside *Spanyolit*, the Italian language too," Cohen-Reiss, *From the Memoirs*, 156.
- 6 Cohen-Reiss relates in his memoirs that Yissa Berakhah traveled as an emissary to Europe in his early years. See *ibid*.
- 7 See also Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 58, on Yissa Berakhah's trip to Izmir in 1845, and 63, on his mission to Egypt in 1856.
- 8 In Livorno, Rabbi Yissa Berakhah settled the dispute over the will of the Qa'id [master] Nissim Semama of Tunis, which designated 200,000 francs for the establishment of a yeshivah in Jerusalem. See Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 68; Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 610.

community's wealthy leaders, members of the Camondo family with whom he had commercial relations.<sup>9</sup> This last point is particularly important for our discussion, since the Camondo family had been connected to Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) from the beginning of its activity. In 1863, Abraham Bekhor Camondo established the regional AIU committee.<sup>10</sup> In other words, Rabbi Yissa Berakhah was probably aware of the organization's aims and its vision of modernity for oriental Jews; and this stance certainly influenced his positive attitude to the founding of modern schools in Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> Regarding the many journeys of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah, noteworthy is that the Rabbi enjoyed the protection of Italian nationality. Rabbi Yissa Berakhah, who as a child had witnessed the humiliation of his father, Rabbi Eliezer Yeruḥam Eliachar, by Abdallah, the pasha of Acre – this occurred after the fall of the *gevir* [wealthy man; pillar of the community] Rabbi Ḥayim Farḥi (1820) – exploited a trip to Leghorn to receive Italian patronage, which was capable of protecting him on his many journeys. On 9 June 1873 he received from the Italian consul in Jerusalem Italian passport no. 11.<sup>12</sup> A number of his descendants continued to hold Italian nationality at least until the end of the British Mandate in Palestine.<sup>13</sup>

In the current discussion, I wish to present a few of the descendants of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah and his eldest son, Rabbi Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar, known by the byname Rabbi Ḥam"ā, children of the Eliachar and Meyuḥas families, as a test case for the encounter of members of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem with modernity, with Western-European education, and the acculturation process – acquiring culture, cultural shift or change – that they underwent owing to the aforementioned education and that modified their way of life, whether they emigrated overseas or whether they continued to live in their native city – Jerusalem.

Acculturation is the bequeathing of cultural heritage – skills of knowledge, insight, and ethics, imagination and emotion alongside social solidarity – that is transmitted by society, to the individuals that comprise it, from their childhood onward and over the course of their lives, from one generation to the

9 Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 609–10. Of note here is that in his youth Rabbi Yissa Berakhah made his livelihood through commerce, and he had dealings with the bank of Camondo, *ibid.*

10 P. Assouline, *Le Dernier des Camondo* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1997).

11 On Rabbi Yissa Berakhah's attitude to education and enlightenment, see Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 175–89 as well as n. 4 above.

12 See Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 651–52. Michelle Campos notes that living in Jerusalem in the early twentieth century were 10,000 foreign citizens alongside the 30,000 Ottoman subjects. See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 63.

13 Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 651–52.

next. A basic level in this process is language. For immigrants, there is a need to take leave of their mother tongue and to acquire a new language, that of the absorbing country.<sup>14</sup> Language is the key to man's existence. It is something man practices every moment of his life: speech, writing, dreams, expressing oneself in conversation and receiving information, in political or scientific discourse, and in literary writing. Language is the means that provides the immigrant entry into the new society and familiarity with its laws.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Julia Kristeva has determined that separation from one's native language is traumatic and results in voluntary silence and muteness.<sup>16</sup>

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- 14 E. Olshtain and G. Horenczyk (eds.), *Language, Identity and Immigration* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2000), ch. 1, 11–13. Based on the study by John Berry, “Psychology of Acculturation: Understanding Individuals Moving Between Cultures”, in *Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology*, ed. R.W. Brisliu, four types of acculturation are discussed. Ibid, 16–22. In the third part of the book by Olshtain and Horenczyk the subject of language is discussed: on the one hand, maintenance of the mother tongue, while on the other acquisition of the dominant host language; also covered are the stages of transition until the victory of the dominant language (ibid., 174). The fourth part of the Olshtain–Horenczyk book deals with the phenomenon of bilingualism, meaning the alternating use of two or more languages. Ibid, 210–17. Noted in the study by E. Olshtain and B. Kotik “The Development of Bilingualism in an Immigrant Community” is the official, legitimate status of the language of the country in a nation-state. Described on page 206 is the struggle of the *Yishuv* in Palestine, at the start of the twentieth century, to revive the Hebrew language and to designate the language being rejuvenated as a prime goal toward renewal of a national entity. Therefore, it was necessary to refrain from using foreign languages, whether they were imported into Palestine by immigrants from the Diaspora or were spoken by natives of the country, such as Jewish Spanish, which in Jerusalem – the center of the Sephardi community in Palestine – was known as *Spanyolit*. The aforementioned study stresses that *Spanyolit* did not attain a high standing in *Yishuv* public opinion. Development of the topic of minorities and multiculturalism in a liberal democracy has been discussed in H. Adoni, D. Caspi, and A. Cohen, *Media, Minorities and Hybrid Identities: The Arab and Russian Communities in Israel* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2006). These authors point out the special importance of language in the process of social integration of immigrants, and the melting pot ideology in contrast to a multi-cultural society (ibid., 13–24) in the context of four types of consumers of culture; they also stress the primary role of language in the web of the immigrant's relations with the new society within which he is to be absorbed.
- 15 Julia Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown: An Invitation into Linguistics*. Translated from the French by Anne M. Menke (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 3–7; 278.
- 16 Julia Kristeva, *Étrangers à Nous-Mêmes* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 26–30. Julia Kristeva stresses that this is referring to children (ibid., 28). Owing to this, the foreigner works at manual labor, such as housekeeping, sport, shipping, childcare, and the like (ibid., 28). Kristeva discusses muteness that depletes the spirit and intelligence because of depression. The

In a recent article, the scholar Mario Cohen stresses the difficulties encountered by Sephardi immigrants from the Ottoman Empire who reached the countries of South America at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and this despite their fluency in Jewish Spanish.<sup>17</sup> Migrants must pass through acculturation steps in the country to which they have immigrated,<sup>18</sup> whether this be permanent immigration or temporary, whether it was the result of the operation of Push factors (conditions and circumstances, such as religious persecution, wars, economic crises, and the like, which push the emigrants to abandon their places of residence), or derived from the force of Pull factors (comfortable, promising living conditions in the target country, which draw potential immigrants).<sup>19</sup> An example of Push factor migration, apt for the subject at hand – the Sephardi community in Jerusalem – is the emigration of a member of this Old *Yishuv*, Benjamin Ben Eliyahu Ginio, from Jerusalem to Brazil. This was after Benjamin's eldest brother, Moshe Ginio, who at the time had been recruited into the Ottoman army in the First Balkan War, had gone missing without a trace. The boys' father, Eliyahu Ginio, mustered all the financial resources he could assemble and sent his second son, Benjamin, abroad immediately upon the promulgation of the order to report for duty in the Ottoman army that applied to him. In time, Benjamin Ginio had his younger brothers, David and Shmuel, join him. Their descendants live in Brazil to this day. The announcement of the call to report for recruitment was publicized by the *Mukhtarim* [leaders] of the Jewish community in Hebrew in the daily newspaper *Ha-Ḥerut* on 25 Iyar 5672 (1912). The order applied to people born in 1891 [1308 AH].<sup>20</sup>

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alien will always be distinct from the native speaker in some way either through his accent, or through the tone of his words. In the continuation of the discussion, Kristeva deals with the Greeks and Barbarians; the chosen Jewish people; the Christian tradition of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine; Dante, the exile of the Late Middle Ages; the Renaissance; and the Enlightenment period. According to her, modern nationalism appears beginning from the second half of the eighteenth century and comes to expression and realization from the French Revolution onward.

- 17 M.E. Cohen, "Un exemplo de integracion a traves de la lengua", *Aki Yerushalayim*, 88 (31 oktobre 2010): 20–22.
- 18 J. Berry, "Acculturation and Adaptation in a new society", *International Migration Quarterly Review*, 30 (1992): 69–85.
- 19 Shaul Zarhi, the entry: "Immigration" in *Social Science Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (Merḥavia: Sifriat Poalim, 1964) [Hebrew]; Ch. Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity and Social History", *International Review of Social History Supplement* 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 1–17; Shalva Weil (ed.), *Roots and Routes: Ethnicity and Migration in Global Perspective* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Magnes Press, 1999).
- 20 See S. Zekharya, *Jews and Jewish Institutions in the "Street of the Chain" in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Zur-Ot Press, 1995), 36 [Hebrew]. About the *Ha-Ḥerut* newspaper, see Bezalel,

Since immigrants must undergo acculturation processes in the country to which they have immigrated, the two processes are interwoven – acculturation and migration. The sociologist Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt has determined that migration means the physical passage of a person or a group from one society to another. Generally, this shift requires abandoning one social system and entry into another with the process having three stages: motivation for emigration; physical passage from the original society to the new one; absorption of immigrants into the new society. The migrant must acquire new skills: language, technical roles, and ecological orientation.<sup>21</sup> All of these construct a new self-image.<sup>22</sup> The migrant's level of acculturation depends on his success in acquiring for himself the complex of roles and routines of the absorbing culture: language, dress, religious beliefs, economic activity, and daily way of life.<sup>23</sup>

The political scientist Gabriel Sheffer differentiates between migrants and diasporans and states that until the twentieth-century immigrants tried to hide their ethnic origin and their habits; to limit their links to their native land, and to assimilate, as quickly as possible, into the absorbing society. Over the course of the past century, changes occurred in the approach of the newly arrived: the greater the migrants' self-confidence, the more their desire to hide their origin declined.<sup>24</sup> Sheffer's conclusion is that migrants and diasporans do not constitute "imagined societies" or "invented societies." Their identity is a combination of primal psychological and symbolic elements and qualifications, and they strive to maintain continuity even when they try to feel at home outside of it, namely, in their absorbing countries.<sup>25</sup>

I wish to present the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem and to argue that, even though its members did not leave their or their fathers' native city, yet; by virtue of the historical circumstances operating in their hometown from the middle of the nineteenth century on: the reforms of the Ottoman regime; the schools established by the Ottoman government; by the Alliance Israélite Uni-

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*You Were Born Zionists*, 164–65 [Hebrew]. Among the paper's editors were Avraham Elmaleḥ, Yehudah Burla, and Ḥayim Ben Atar. See *ibid.*, 165–70.

21 On migration and immigrants, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants: A Comparative Study Based Mainly on the Jewish Community in Palestine and the State of Israel* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1975), 1–27.

22 *Ibid.*, 6.

23 *Ibid.*, 9–17.

24 G. Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9–16, 112.

25 *Ibid.*, 257. See also G. Sheffer, *Who Leads? Israeli-Diaspora Relations* (Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuhad, 2006), 302 [Hebrew]. The author deals with the question of whether the Jewish Diaspora is unique.

verselle and the educational institutions of different Christian missions; the appearance of the Zionist movement and its institutions;<sup>26</sup> and the actions of the Mandate Authority in the twentieth century – as a result, the nature of Jerusalem changed as did living conditions in the entire country. The members of the Old Sephardi *Yishuv* in Jerusalem with whom we are dealing underwent a process of acculturation even without migrating from the place in which they were born. Adaptation to the new conditions created around them obliged the Sephardi Jews to relinquish primary identity traits, such as the status of Jewish Spanish (*Spanyolit* or Ladino) as their mother tongue, alongside French as the language of culture, and conversely, adopting the Hebrew language; replacing local, traditional dress with European garb; and instituting social acceptance – albeit limited – of women in the labor force for hire outside the confines of their homes.<sup>27</sup> These processes of adaptation are typical of immigrant societies. In this manner, the Sephardi Jews became, in effect, immigrants in their homeland and had to go through stages of absorption and coping in light of the encounter with new languages and cultures. Moreover, the *aliyah* [immigration to Eretz Yisrael – The Land of Israel] of Jews from Europe, North Africa and Oriental countries, from the close of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth, turned the Old Sephardi *Yishuv* in Jerusalem, which in the past had comprised the majority of the Jewish community there, into a minority among the general Jewish population of the city. This sense of being a minority, displaced and excluded from leadership positions – which is also characteristic of an immigrant society – left its mark on the behavior of the Sephardi Jews in the reawakening Zionist society in the Land of Israel in general and in Jerusalem in particular.

26 P. Morag Talmon, “The Place of Zionism in the Consciousness of the Sephardi Community in Jerusalem toward the End of the Nineteenth Century”, in H. Lavsky (ed.), *Jerusalem in Zionist Vision and Realization* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1989), 46–53 [Hebrew].

27 The women of Jerusalem were involved in economic endeavor, but the role of the Sephardi women in this activity was solely marginal. See M. Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?: Jewish Women in Jerusalem, 1840–1914* (Haifa-Tel Aviv: University of Haifa and Zmora Bitan, 2001), 137–45 [Hebrew]; see also P. Bourdieu, “La domination masculine”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 84 (1990): 2–31, on the economic function of women in modern society. For comparison on the role of Sephardi women during the transition period of Sephardi society, between tradition and *moderna*, from mid-nineteenth century to World War II, in the Balkans, see Jelena Filipović and Ivana Vućina Simović, “La lengua como recurso social: el caso de las mujeres sefardíes de los Balcanes”, in Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez (eds) *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo*, 259–69.

Modernization processes took place in the Ottoman Empire from the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The military defeat by Russia at the end of the eighteenth century is considered the main catalyst leading to the reform movement. Napoleon Bonaparte's attempted invasion of Egypt and Palestine (1799–1804), even though it did not turn out well and ended in an Ottoman victory, left its impression on the local population. In light of the failures suffered by the Ottomans over the course of the “long” nineteenth century at the hands of European forces in the Balkans, the Ottoman authorities began to feel that the languor of the empire stemmed from a lack of development and modernization in comparison to its European foes.<sup>29</sup> In 1839–1876, the *tanzimat* reforms were promulgated at the initiative of the central authorities. These reforms improved the status of non-Muslims, who until then been considered *dhimmi*,<sup>30</sup> and granted them citizenship status.<sup>31</sup>

The European powers – Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, and England – occupied themselves with the Eastern Question and competed with each other to establish bases of economic and cultural influence throughout the empire and especially in Jerusalem, the city holy to the Christians. Representatives of missionary organizations founded hospitals, schools, postal agencies, and pilgrim hostels whose numbers continuously grew the more the means of transportation and to a certain extent personal security improved, and a lively movement of immigrants and pilgrims from all over Europe and elsewhere began to head for Jerusalem. Whereas in 1800, some 9,000 people lived in Jerusalem; by 1840 the population numbered 12,000; in 1880 – about 31,500; in 1910 – some 70,000.<sup>32</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Jews were the largest ethnic group among the inhabitants within the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem: on the eve of World War I, 45,000 Jews lived in the city, of them some 25,000 were

28 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 22–23; Norman A. Stillman, *Sephardi Responses to Modernity* (Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995).

29 B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), chapter 3, 40–72.

30 B. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, chap. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). See also, Y. Harel, *By Ships of Fire to the West: Changes in Syrian Jewry during the Period of the Ottoman Reform (1840–1880)* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2003), 130 [Hebrew]. Harel contends that the status of *dhimmi* was one of the factors behind the voluntary isolationism of Christians and Jews and the construction of their lives within autonomous, neighborhood, community frameworks with religious-ethnic characteristics.

31 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 22–36. Already mentioned was the Italian nationality that Rabbi Yissa Berakhah had obtained at the time. See above n. 12.

32 Y. Ben Arie, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century. The Old City* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984), 351–63.

Ashkenazim and 20,000 Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews.<sup>33</sup> The city of Jerusalem became a municipality in 1864, one of the two first cities in the empire to gain this status, alongside the capital Kushta (Istanbul).<sup>34</sup> From the 1870s on a brisk surge in construction took place in the city and its environs among all sectors: Jews, Muslims, and Christians.<sup>35</sup> The educational institutions established by the different missionary bodies influenced the advancement of the traditional *talmudei torah* in the city owing to the competition between them.<sup>36</sup> Of note is that even the Ottoman authorities founded their own schools in Jerusalem and Acre.<sup>37</sup>

### The Alliance Israélite Universelle

Until the close of nineteenth century, the Sephardi community members, speakers of Jewish Spanish and writers of Ladino, were the majority and backbone of the *Yishuv* in Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> There is no doubt that their life was influenced by the activity of the European powers in the city; yet the main thrust of influence resulting from the encounter of Sephardim there with modernity derived from the endeavors of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), which was founded in Paris in May 1860.<sup>39</sup> AIU was an organization of Jews who already

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- 33 Ibid. Also see Yehoshua Ben Arieh, "From Eastern Country to Outside the Wall: Sephardi and Oriental Communities in Jerusalem, from the Beginning of Modern Times to the Establishment of the State of Israel", *Etmol, Journal for the History of the Land of Israel and the Jewish People*, 208 (Kislev 5770–Nov. 2009): 1–3 [Hebrew].
- 34 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 168–82. See also Ruth Kark, "Activity in the Jerusalem Municipality at the End of the Ottoman Period", *Cathedra*, 6 (1977): 74–91 [Hebrew]. For a general survey of the Jews in Palestine, see Tudor Parfitt, *The Jews in Palestine, 1800–1882*, The Royal Historical Society, Studies in History (Woodbridge: Published for the R.H.S. by Boydell, 1987).
- 35 Ben Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century. Emergence of the New City*, chaps. 2–4, 178–274.
- 36 See Harel, *By Ships of Fire*, 110, 241.
- 37 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 70–71.
- 38 Y. Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: Emergence of the New City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 208–46. See also Efrati, *Eliachar Family*, 147; P. Morag-Talmon, "Faith in Democracy and the Democratic Activity of the Sephardi Elite in the *Yishuv* Period", in A. Gal *et al.* (eds), *In the Democratic Way: On the Historical Sources of the Israeli Democracy* (Sdeh Boker: Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev): 303–23 [Hebrew].
- 39 Among the founders of the organization were young liberals: the engineer Jules Carvallo, Isidore Cahen, Aristide Astruc; Eugène Manual, Narcisse Leven, and the lawyer Adolphe Crémieux, a French statesman who served as the minister of justice in the French government and was president of the organization from 1863 to 1880. He was originally named

enjoyed emancipation and who sought to advance and help Jews who had not received it and whose weakness and disadvantaged situation were conveyed in the Damascus Blood Libel affair (1840) and the episode of the kidnapping of the boy Edgardo Mortara from his parents' home in Bologna (1858). France's policy in 1850–1860, under the rule of Napoleon III, was well suited to the establishment of a Jewish organization, lead by French Jews, for an international civilisatory mission (mission civilisatrice) among the Jewish dispersal.<sup>40</sup> The AIU's declared purpose was the protection of Jewish rights. Its motto was "All Jews are responsible for one another" (Tous les israélites sont solidaires les uns des autres), which attests to the aspiration to provide help and support to Jewish communities wherever they may be. Of particular note is that the AIU did not seek to encourage emigration of Jews from oriental countries to the west; quite the contrary, its leaders would certainly have been horrified at the sight of Ottoman Jews in their robes [*antari*] and turbans [*posh*] on their heads wandering around the streets of French cities. The AIU's aim was to promote the oriental Jews, perceived as backwards by the heads of the organization, where they lived through teaching modern subjects such as mathematics and geography alongside productive trades and occupations, such as tailoring, carpentry, shoemaking, and also commerce, especially accounting, which were studied in trade schools, and above all to have them acquire knowledge of French.

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Isaac Moïse. Charles (Karl) Netter, AIU's first general secretary, in time led the endeavor to establish the first agricultural school in Palestine: Mikveh Israel (1870).

- 40 See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism and Modernity* (Tel Aviv: Broadcast University, Ministry of Defense Publications, 2002), 73–107 [Hebrew] and idem, "Some Observations on Multiple Modernities", in D. Sachsenmaier and J. Riedel with S.N. Eisenstadt (eds), *Reflections on Multiple Modernities, European, Chinese and Other Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 25–41. Eisenstadt stresses that in the early period of the spread of modernity post-revolutionary France and England were perceived by other European societies as the message-bearers of enlightenment; how much more so, among non-Western societies who had only marginal status in the international system at that time. See Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism and Modernity*, 44–52. The AIU was tightly administered by a 30-member Central Committee, located in Paris and elected by the organization's General Assembly. Two-thirds of the members of the Central Committee had to be residents of Paris. Mainly during the period of Adolphe Crémieux's leadership, there was close cooperation with the French Foreign Ministry and government authorities in the French colonies. On the encounter between the cultural activity of the AIU and French interests in the Ottoman Empire, see A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 145–57. The AIU also assisted the Jews of Romania, Russia, Poland, and Hungary. At the time of the 1881 pogroms in Russia it cooperated with the Jewish Colonization Association and other Jewish organizations to arrange emigration from Tsarist Russia.

Through all of these, the AIU sought to bring about an improvement in the political, economic, and social standing of the Jews in the oriental countries. Yet, we must keep in mind that the education with which the AIU inculcated Jewish youth in its schools opened a wide window for the pupils to the world outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire and that competency in French gave these students the instruments to try to advance themselves through immigration to centers of culture, even though this was not the original intention of the founders of the AIU. To attain its educational aims, the AIU was assisted by a significant contribution from Baron Maurice Hirsch – one million francs in 1874 and another ten million in 1889 – to establish its schools: the first in Tetuán, Morocco (1862).<sup>41</sup> In Jerusalem, the AIU began its activity in the 1880s.<sup>42</sup>

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41 The AIU set up a network of schools throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans. The first school was established in Tetuán in 1862. In 1867, the first AIU school in Damascus was founded. In Aleppo the AIU school began operation in 1869, and in 1872, a girls school was opened there. See Harel, *By Ships of Fire*, 113–20. In 1873 the AIU school in Izmir was founded; see Rodrigue, *French Jews. Turkish Jews*, 144. Rodrigue pays particular attention to the life story of Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi, who had been educated by the AIU. After he completed his studies at a rabbinical seminary in Paris, he returned to Turkey in 1897; in 1909 he was chosen chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire. The selection of an Allianciste – a protégé of the AIU – to this office indicates the victory of the AIU-educated people in the community. From then on, most of the Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire were led by AIU graduates. In 1892, an AIU school was established in Jaffa, and in 1898 a girls' school was founded there. In many instances, the activity by the AIU was slowed down or even halted owing to the intervention of the nation states that arose on Ottoman Empire lands as a result of the Berlin Congress (1878). On the nation states and their attitude to the various interpretations of modernity and their struggle to impose it, see Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, 25–41 and idem, *Fundamentalism and Modernity*, 44–52. In 1908, the Young Turk Revolution, which removed the final barriers applying to non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, took place; at that time a new element appeared among the Jews of the Empire – Zionism. The AIU, led by Salomon Reinach, Leven, and Bigart, took an avowed anti-Zionist stance. It stressed the unity of fate of all the Jews wherever they might live and refused to consider Palestine – Eretz Ysrael: The Land of Israel – as a separate, distinct factor. See also below chap. 5 nn. 101–03, on the exchange of letters with the Spanish senator Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández. In 1912, on Ottoman Empire soil were 72 AIU schools and in Morocco, 14. From the eve of World War II, the AIU concentrated its activity to North Africa.

42 Ephraim Cohen-Reiss, a native of Jerusalem, educator and principal of the Lämel school, established in Jerusalem, on behalf of the Ezra Association, where the German language was studied, wrote in his memoirs that “the AIU organization had thought of the idea of founding its own school as early as 1875, after the visit by Montagu and Dr. Asher in Jerusalem ... the edifice for the school was ready at the time of Montagu’s visit and the task of establishing and developing the institution was assigned to Jerusalem-born,

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire continued to consider their lives in the present as the undisturbed continuation of the past in which their forefathers had lived. Beginning from the second half of that century, the influence of modernity on their way of life and their modes of thought becomes noticeable. One may describe modernity as a new type of civilization, originating in Western Europe<sup>43</sup> from which it spread to Central and Eastern Europe, to North and South America, to the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The core of modernity is the development and consolidation of new interpretive methods on the nature and essence of the world. At the heart of this development stands human autonomy and liberation of mankind from the chains of traditional cultural, religious, and political authority, with the firmly established premise that owing to rational scientific investigation and enquiry, it is possible to achieve control of the universe and the fate of mankind.<sup>44</sup> We are not speaking, however, of unconditional aping but of the selective adoption of new ideas and integrating them into existing traditions. Modernity spread to all corners of the Earth yet did not give rise to a single, sole institutional model but rather to a few modern patterns that constantly change and comprise a number of economic, ideological, and political structures, in line with the extent of the influence of the European factors, on the one hand, and traditional societies and their attitudes toward the West, on the other.<sup>45</sup> These political structures were distributed through highly influen-

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Nissim Behar, one of the first graduates of the AIU in Paris." See Cohen-Reiss, *Memories of a Son*, 86.

- 43 S.N. Eisenstadt stresses that the combination of modernity and Westernization, which was common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is no longer accepted today, when a number of nationalist movements think that there is no need to westernize in order to be modern. Moreover, there is also a possibility for modernity that does not turn its back on the traditions of the forefathers, such as the Meiji Restoration in Japan. Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, 44–107.
- 44 The aim of creating a new man to build a new society through political means is a modern phenomenon whose roots are in the Jacobean movement during the French Revolution. See Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism and Modernity*, 10–13. On modern phenomena in Jewish society in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century versus the position of the Ḥatam Sofer of Pressburg, who determined that “new is forbidden by the Torah” as well as the approaches of Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Ḥai Uziel, on the one hand, and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, on the other, on the issue of *halakhah* and customs of Sephardi communities, see Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism and Modernity*, 19–31. On the political and cultural program of modernity, see *ibid.*, 47–107.
- 45 Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, 25–41. Eisenstadt emphasizes that the reception by non-Western societies of institutional patterns originating in Western civilization involves a lengthy process of selection, of reinterpretation, and of the development of new institutional patterns. See *ibid.*

tial agents of socialization, such as schools, hospitals, commercial agencies, and army barracks, along with the reading of masterpieces of modern literature, in the original language or in adaptations to the local tongue, beside popular literature such as dime novels that were widely disseminated, through the press.<sup>46</sup>

The Sephardim saw in modernity the adoption of languages, dress, and a small part of the Western European way of life, particularly that of France. Among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, the influence of European elements, foremost among them the AIU, alongside the Christian missions, is striking. There is no way to exaggerate in the assessment of the AIU's affect on the lives of the Jews in the Empire; the adoption of modernity, however, was not a passive process on the part of the Jews there. One may learn, for example, from the life story of Rabbi Ḥaim Naḥum Effendi,<sup>47</sup> that the local elite – in this instance in the Ottoman Empire – cooperated with the AIU. The case of Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1858–1922), who was invited to teach Hebrew at the AIU school in Jerusalem, is likely to inform us of the collaboration between the local, traditional elite families in the city and *the* modernist – the reviver of the Hebrew language.<sup>48</sup> One must remember that along with AIU's influence in the direction of acquiring and adopting French, we are also witness, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to the outburst of vitality in the annals of Jewish Spanish and in Ladino literature. A new fashion of novellas translated from French, Italian, Russian, and Arabic swept over the audience of Ladino readers, mainly in newspapers published in Ladino, so that they became – alongside books in Ladino – faithful, loyal agents of modernization.<sup>49</sup> We observe a goal

46 A. Meyuḥas Ginio, "La prensa y la literatura en Ladino como agentes de modernización", *El Presente* 4: 49–59.

47 See above n. 41 as well as E. Benbassa, *Un grand Rabbin sépharade en politique 1892–1928* (Paris, Presses de CNRS, 1990); E. Benbassa (ed.), *Ḥaim Naḥum, a Sephardic Chief Rabbi in Politics, 1892–1923: Selected Writings and Documents* (Jerusalem: Dinur Center, 1999). On the status of the *Ḥakham Baṣi*, see also Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, *The Istanbul Court Record in Matters of Ritual and Ethics 1710–1903* (Lod: Orot Yahadut Ha-Maghreb, Institute of Research and Publication of Sephardic Rabbinic Writings, 1999), 15 [Hebrew], 20–24; Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 153.

48 This issue will be discussed below. See n. 70.

49 Moshe David Gaon, *The Ladino Press: A Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute; 1965) [Hebrew]; E. Romero, *La creación literaria en lengua sefardí*; I.M. Hassan, "El estudio del periodismo sefardí", *Sefarad*, 26 (1996): 229–231; S. Stein Abrevaya, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); E. Romero, "La prensa judeoespañola contra los recelos, la burocracia y la censura", in M.P. Asuero and K. Gerson Ṣarhon (eds), *Ayer y hoy de la prensa en judeoespañol* (Istanbul: Actas del simposio organizado por el Instituto Cervantes de Estambul en colaboración con el Sentro de Investigaciones sobre la cultura sefardí

toward constructing a link to the European-Sephardi past by Sephardi community members and noting their unique history. In 1899, the Kadima Society was founded in Salonika by *talmidei ḥakhamim* [Torah scholars]: yeshivah students who had learned French and other secular subjects as well. Such societies of *maskilim* called for a certain type of modernization: they formed the bridge between traditional and modern society and attenuated the intensity of the crisis.<sup>50</sup> To be sure, modernity was a source of conflict; but it could reach the Sephardi masses only through a covenant with tradition, so the Sephardim remained for a long time in a situation wavering between tradition and modernity.<sup>51</sup> In the context of the topic of our discussion, of note is that in Jerusalem the Sephardi family continued to be the primary social cell, within whose framework the social life of its members was conducted. I personally remember how both my father, Moreno Meyuḥas, and his brother, my uncle Yosef Meyuḥas, would visit their parents every week and join in the family gatherings, which continued to be held in the family home as in days gone by. The brothers continued to do so until both their parents were gone, despite the fact that they were the first generation in their family to abandon the Rabbinate, which had been the occupation of their forefathers for generations<sup>52</sup> and headed for university studies in cultural centers abroad. Moreover, both had cut themselves off from meticulous fulfillment of all the commandments.<sup>53</sup> All the same, the family net connections continued to function as before. One may argue with a great deal of certainty that there was no culture war in the Sephardi Old *Yishuv*. The modern Sephardim, born at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, continued to honor the tradition of the parental home, and their parents did not exhibit religious zealotry

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otomana turka, 2007): 9–35; O. Borovaya, “The Emergence of the Ladino Press: The First Attempt at Westernization of Ottoman Jews 1842–1846”, *European Judaism*, 43/2 (2010): 63–75; Meyuḥas Ginio, “La prensa”, 49–59; D.M. Bunis, “The Changing Faces of Sephardic Identity as Reflected in Djudezmo Sources”, in Winfried Busse (ed.), *Neue Romania 40 Judenspanish* 13 (2011): 47–75.

- 50 E. Benbassa, *Une diaspora sépharade en transition*, Istanbul xve-xxe siècle (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993).
- 51 A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Los sefardíes de Jerusalén”, *Anuario de Filología*, Universidad de Barcelona, 21, no. 8 (1998–1999): 145–231.
- 52 See Abraham Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 203–42 [Hebrew]. On the Meyuḥas family in Jerusalem during the period of the British Mandate over Palestine, see Y. Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem during the British Mandate. Neighborhoods. Houses. People*. 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 2011) [Hebrew]. On the CD-ROM, see the entry “Ha-Shem Meyuḥas”.
- 53 On the process of secularization, see D. Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada, 1978); B. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

and did not boycott their descendants who did not observe the commandments in the way they had done over the course of their lives.

In 1880, the AIU Central Committee decided to open a school in Jerusalem, which in time would be named for Adolphe Crémieux, after his passing. Preserved in the AIU Archives in Paris is a public appeal promulgated by the Central Committee, entitled “The Palestine Project” and it reads as follows:

All of the memoranda sent to the Central Committee by the members of the International Committee in response to a bulletin from 6 November 1889 agree on the need to establish, as soon as possible, in Jerusalem, good schools for boys and girls. There, obviously, teaching will be placed only in the hands of teachers who conduct a religious way of life and have a spotless reputation. One of our distinguished correspondents wished to begin solely with a school for boys and only later to open a school for girls; another suggestion is to first establish a compound for children where the mothers could see their children more easily and where the children would receive preparation for school life; a third [committee] member demands the combination of the educational institution with the agricultural school in Jaffa, according to the plan from the meeting in August 1878. In conclusion, there is agreement on the need for schools in Jerusalem.

We have asked on what resources we can rely for founding these institutions and how these resources can be obtained and developed. The members who replied to us on this point were of the opinion that it is fitting for the Alliance to be the one to establish and maintain these schools and that the resources required must be raised through a public appeal to personages, societies, and communities that show interest in the Jews of Palestine. No other practical means were proposed. The Central Committee believes, in principle, that it is not possible to turn to the *halukah* nor to adopt any measure that would seem like foreign intervention in the methods of distribution of this resource.

As a result, in its [the Committee’s] bulletin, which is under the printer’s roller, is an appeal that we have the honor of sending you herewith. Just at the moment of printing, M.S. Montagu<sup>54</sup> of London, a member of the International Committee for Palestine, wrote us a memorandum, according to which, this august colleague will be able, apparently, in cooperation with other personages to take care of the construction of the

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54 A family of bankers in England, which produced statesmen and public figures. On the visit of Samuel Mordekhai Montagu, Baron Swaythling, to Jerusalem, see Cohen-Reiss, *Memories of a Son*, 29–31, 68, 86, 221.

boys' school in Jerusalem. For us this will provide great encouragement and influence.

The Central Committee hopes that our appeal will be answered. If the committee members wish also to receive pledge forms, the Central Committee will be pleased to announce [this matter] in its monthly bulletin. The Committee is prepared to send them examples of the appeal, and in general to provide them with all the means that will contribute toward and assist their good intentions.

In anticipation of your reply, we ask you, distinguished gentleman, with great respect,

In the name of the Central Committee, signed Isidor Loeb. Adolphe Crémieux.<sup>55</sup>

Appended to this was a memorandum on the founding of schools in Jerusalem.

The AIU Central Committee has begun gathering pledges toward the founding of a boys school and a girls school in Jerusalem.

This project, from which people were always deterred owing to the special difficulties involved in it, can now be started with a chance for success, and will encounter, among the consular corps, as well as perhaps among part of the Jewish population, uncommon assistance of good will and sympathy. This will be a school that will later have appended to it workshops for trades and orphanages for young men and for young women, which will turn into the starting point for our activity in Jerusalem and in which will be gathered Jewish artisans and craftsmen, the future students of the agricultural school in Jaffa. The costs for this or these institutions, which could be founded later in Jerusalem and other cities of Palestine, will be high, and in this resides the main difficulty. We cannot hope that we will succeed in attracting to us the important contributions sent annually from Russia, Morocco, Algeria, and not even the donations sent from the Western countries. Moreover, the *ḥalukah*, which in certain aspects is the mortal blow to Palestinian Judaism, can be annulled only gradually and when the new generations, after having received improved education, a higher sense of the recognition of self-worth, and become equipped, thanks to commercial, agricultural, or

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55 Bulletin de Souscription 1880 pour la fondacion d'écoles israélites a Jérusalem. Adresse à l'Alliance israélite universelle, 35, rue de Trévis, à Paris, ou au Comité local le plus rapproché. Paris, le 15 janvier, 1880. Archives de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris (hereafter: AIU Archives, Paris): Israel 1E2, 1880.



FIGURE 4 *The Alliance Israélite Universelle School in Maḥane Yehudah, Jerusalem.*

PHOTO ARCHIVES OF YAD YITZḤAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.



FIGURE 5 *The Emblem of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Jerusalem.* PHOTO ARCHIVES OF YAD YITZḤAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.

professional training, with other means of sustenance, will spontaneously refuse to live from hand-outs whose least defect is the nurturing of idleness and laziness. All our effort must be directed to attaining this goal and establishing a good school in Jerusalem, where it is surprising that one cannot find a Jewish institution of this type alongside those founded by other faiths, will be the first step that one must take on this path.

Detailed below are the amounts needed to build the school and fund the equipment for 400 children – 200 boys and 200 girls; staff salaries; books and notebooks; a hot lunch. It is stated explicitly that the children will learn German at the school as well as sewing.

The Central Committee is turning to all members of AIU; to anyone who finds interest in the future of the Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine; to the distinguished presidents of the AIU Committees and their colleagues; to the distinguished members of the International Committee of the Palestine project; to the distinguished Rabbis; to the distinguished presidents of the Jewish communities and their colleagues; to all the Jewish associations and ask them to begin, posthaste, the signing of pledges and [we] express confidence that everyone will wish to contribute to this project which affects a matter so important to the hearts of all Jews.<sup>56</sup>

One discerns the caution demonstrated by the leaders of the AIU about activity in Jerusalem and their emphasizing their wish to not engage in conflict with the local Jewish leadership: they stress that the teachers in the school, once functional, must “conduct a religious way of life and have a spotless reputation.” Similarly, they also point out that it will not be possible to make use of the contributions reaching Jerusalem from the Diaspora. In this context, we are going to encounter a dispute that broke out in 1903 between the Jerusalem Rabbis and Mr. Albert Antébi, principal of the AIU school, over the use of the Rothschild family’s annual contribution that was enjoyed by the Jews of Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup> The AIU heads say explicitly that they were deterred from activity in the city of Jerusalem in light of the many difficulties it involved. This caution on the part of the AIU certainly prevented a rift between the supporters of modernity and their families in the Sephardi Old *Yishuv*. We have already mentioned that the process of accepting modernism among the Sephardim was not passive and that the local elites played a vital, active role in the acceptance of modernity. The Western European Jewish organizations, such as Ezra (the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden), the German parallel to the AIU, were helped by local Sephardi elite.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the Rabbis, the community’s leaders, had ongoing correspondence with the AIU on the establishment of the school in

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56 Ibid.

57 This matter will be discussed in the ensuing. Cf. below n. 69.

58 E. Benbassa, “The Process of Modernization of Eastern Sephardi Communities” web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies/pdf/02\_benbassa.pdf [Accessed 14.5.2010].

Jerusalem, and they even turned to AIU, before the school was actually erected, the same way they addressed other benefactors in large cities, with requests for help considering the difficulties of sustaining themselves in the city. Available in the AIU Archives in Paris is a letter dated Tuesday, 18 March 1873 [19 Adar 5633]. Addressed to “Princes of the Hosts of Israel, Leaders of the Diaspora of Israel, Pursuers of Justice ... the lofty Association of Alliance Israélite, may the Lord sustain them in life and protect them, and their leader, the most distinguished honorable gentleman, his name is known at the gates, the minister and commander, the prince, Adolphe Isaac Cremieux, may his Creator sustain and protect him ...” The letter was written in Hebrew in cursive Sephardi script, and in it the writers thank the addressee for his letter of 24 February in which they were informed of the AIU’s intention “to build a *Talmud Torah* educational facility for the young Jews and that the society will take this school under its patronage when Jews will study the language and writing of the state and tools will be given to the young people.” The writers stress their inability to bear this burden; but “if the mighty society, may the Creator sustain and protect it, will spread its wings to assist with help for the building, we will dedicate some rooms in the name of the society, may the Creator sustain and protect it, and we will write on a beautifully decorated stone that these rooms were built with their help and the children will learn the writing and language of the state from a learned man and outstanding scribes at a fixed time every day for the writing mentioned and that they may learn trades under the supervision of the leaders of our kolel ...” The letter bears the signature and seal of Rabbi Meir Panigel the Rishon Le-Zion; in the center of the seal is his title in Ottoman Turkish<sup>59</sup> and in the margins his title in Spanish first, then followed by Hebrew; Ya’akov Valero, *gabbai aniyim* (collector of money for the poor) in Jerusalem, whose signature is written in Hebrew and French; and Avraham Ashkenazi, *Ḥakham Baṣi*, whose title appears in the Ottoman Turkish seal, and in the margins first in Hebrew and then in Italian.<sup>60</sup> Particularly interesting is the reference of the Jerusalem letter writers to teaching: “the writing and language of the state” alongside study of trades. Undoubtedly, the leaders of the AIU were thinking of the teaching of French even though in AIU schools pupils also studied Turkish as the language of the state: the reply of the Jerusalem Rabbis on this topic, however, is not unequivocal.

59 Namely, “*re’is-i-meclis-i ruhani*” [head of the spiritual council].

60 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel IV L 1 4747. Beginning in 1869, secular people participated in community leadership. Ya’akov Valero was chosen to serve as president of the Consistoire [Committee]. See Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionist*, 53.

In a letter dated 6 May 1901 [15 Iyyar 5661],<sup>61</sup> the Rabbis of Jerusalem – Sephardi and Ashkenazi – address “Your excellencies, dear sirs, the pillars of support for the Jewish people, the leaders and directors of Alliance Israélite Universelle, may the Lord sustain and protect them,” with a call: “Until when shall Zion be without mercy!” They are complaining about a bout of thirst that has struck the city as the result of a severe drought – “the withholding of the rains” – “and what will the exhausted poor do, choose to die by famine or by thirst? And another terrible misfortune is that because of the lack of water the people are prevented from building houses and a few thousand Jewish and non-Jewish laborers stand idle from their work and became hungry as well as thirsty!” so they ask for donations of money. The letter was signed by Rabbis and distinguished citizens of Jerusalem. In the margins is a line in French designating the address for a reply and asking to direct a response to this request to the distinguished chief Rabbi Eliachar and Salant as well as to Mr. Valero. At the end of the letter is an appeal, signed by hand in combination with the seal of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah; Rabbi Shmuel Salant; and the leader of the Prushim, Eliyahu David Rabinowitz.

Another letter, on the same subject, was sent on 11 June 1901 [4 Sivan 5661]<sup>62</sup> addressed to “The dear, exalted, distinguished observant Jews, princes and rulers, supporters of their people and their land, the leaders of Alliance Israélite Universelle, may the Lord sustain and guard them.” The signatories to the letter presented the immensity of the expenses involved in transporting water from place to place, and they ask: “Please have mercy, please take pity, and support us soon, make haste and save and rescue [us], and the Lord will fill in the breaches among his people and the Holy City will be restored.” This was signed by Sephardi and Ashkenazi dignitaries: Rabbi Ya’akov Meir, Gavriel Shabetai (who added the honorific *s”t* [ט"ט; in Hebrew: *sofo tahor*; or: *sofo tov*; meaning that no members of his Jewish family converted to Christianity] to his signature), Yoel Moshe Salomon, Naftali Tzvi Porush, and others. In this case, too, five lines were added that describe the trouble of the Jews of Jerusalem, “and also the elders of Jerusalem such as we do not remember such as terrible drought as this” and at their end comes the signature and seal of Rabbi Yissa Berakhah, who signed in solitreo script; his seal in Ottoman Turkish reads: – תואבאעאתי קדסי שריף ותואבאעאתי, “the *Hakham Başı* of noble Jerusalem and

61 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel, IV L 7093. The Rabbis of Jerusalem’s plea: “Until when shall Zion be without merci” recalls Zekhariah [Zechariah] 1, 12: “Then the angel of the Lord answered and said: O Lord of hosts, how long will thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah...”.

62 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel, 7329.

those subordinate to it",<sup>63</sup> in French and Hebrew; Rabbi Shmuel Salant signed in Hebrew letters with his seal in German; Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim signed in Hebrew with his seal in Hebrew and German, reading "Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim, Rabbi of the Ashkenazi-Prushim Community," accompanied by a drawing of the Jerusalem wall, cypress trees, and domes.

In 1882, the school *Torah U-Melakha* was established in Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> This was the first modern school in Jerusalem in which general subjects were taught, along with Jewish studies, as well as various trades, such as tailoring, carpentry, shoemaking, blacksmithing, and so on, which were intended to provide the students with the possibility to earn a livelihood, without having to rely upon the money of the *halukah*. The first principals of the Jerusalem school were Nissim Behar (1848–1931)<sup>65</sup> and Albert Antébi, mentioned above.<sup>66</sup> In the AIU Archives in Paris is a letter of complaint, dated 13 Adar 5663 [9 March 1903], from the Rishon Le-Zion Yissa Berakhah and with him the Rabbis Nissim Navon, Shmuel Meyuḥas, Yitzḥak Ashkenazi *s"t*, Yosef Nissim Burla, and Ḥaim Aharon Valero, head of the Jerusalem Lay Committee [*Va'ad Gashmi*], to Rabbi Zadok Hacohen, "chief of the Consistoire Rabbis," in which they protest – in "the approaching Passover," owing to the harsh winter, in which they frequently had heavy debts, for the payment of which they relied

on the great princes of the Rothschild family, may the Lord sustain and protect them, in Paris, certainly in this year too they will send aid as they do every year for *Kimḥa d'Fisḥa*. Now, behold, every year the assistance mentioned came through Mr. Antébi but because, as we informed your good selves last week in a detailed letter, Mr. Antébi plots secret intrigues

63 The authority of the *Ḥakham Baṣi* applied to Jerusalem and its outlying areas. See Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 47. The title: *Ḥakham Baṣi* is reproduced in the corresponding Hebrew letters.

64 The Alliance campus near the Maḥaneh Yehudah market included in its time three educational institutions: the trade school, a girls school, and a boys school. On the ruins of the first two, at the corner of Agrippas and AIU Streets, Merkaz Klal and the building near it were built; while the boys school, which was declared a heritage building, still stands.

65 Nissim Behar was born in Jerusalem and was one of the first graduates of the AIU school in Paris. See Cohen-Reiss, *Memories of a Son*, 86. Nissim Behar directed the AIU school in Jerusalem from 1882 to 1887. In 1901 he was sent as an emissary of the AIU to New York. See also Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 154. Campos stresses Behar's call to acquire Ottoman nationality. Of note is that Nissim Behar's two sisters had already studied in Paris at ENTO, from age fifteen, and after finishing their studies, they became teachers in the AIU schools. Fortuna Behar was the principal of the Evelina de Rothschild School in Jerusalem.

66 See above n. 2.

to trouble our community and to take revenge upon us and, perhaps one may say, to also change things regarding the generosity of the princes [of the Rothschild family] mentioned from what has been customary in previous years. So we present our complaint to the Rabbi, may his candle light the way, to have mercy on our dear community and its sages, its poor, its widows and its orphans and to try to see to it that the aid will come from the princes, may God sustain and protect them, for the worthy purpose for the benefit of the poor as done every year, and we, on our part, are ready to send to your distinguished self precise lists of all the recipients in detail.

The writers make their plea that it should not happen that “such a great, ancient community as ours, may its creator protect and sustain it, be a plaything in the hand of anyone, even the head of a school like Mr. Antébi.”<sup>67</sup> Rabbi Yissa Berakhah added his Hebrew seal to this signature: “Ḥakham Baṣi Jerusa[lem] and its outlying areas; in Ottoman Turkish and French: Jacob Shaul Eliachar grand Rabbin de Jerusalem et de la Palestine.<sup>68</sup> Interesting is the mention of “Palestine” in the French version of the seal, and this in consideration of the fact that Palestine was not seen as an Ottoman administrative unit. Ḥaim Aharon Valero, may its creator protect and sustain him, added his signature in Hebrew as “head of the Lay Committee [*Va’ad Gashmi*] in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be built and established soon in our days, Amen; and in French, “Président du Comité Israélite à Jerusalem 5651–1891.” Added to the signature of Yosef Nissim Burla was a tri-language seal in Hebrew, French, and Arabic. The Hebrew stated “The seal of the Kotel of the Sephardi Committee in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be swiftly built in our days, Amen; and in Arabic, “Head of the Sephardi Hekdesh Association of exalted Jerusalem.” On the whole, it is interesting to compare the differences in the versions in the various languages and the role of the French language among the committee’s Sephardi members in comparison to the German language among their Ashkenazi brethren. To the crux of the matter – the complaint against Albert Antébi – we see that relations between the AIU leaders and the Jerusalem Rabbis were not always smooth and that the worries expressed by the AIU leaders with re-

67 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel, No. 9296, dated 9 March 1903 [13 Adar 5663]. The term: *Kimḥa d’Fisha* – in the Aramaic language – mentioned in the letter, meaning: the grain of Pesah [Passover], refers to the annual help extended to the needy, every year before the Passover, so as to help them make *matzot*. See: TY, *Baba Batra*, 12: 4.

68 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel No. 9296.

gard to the Jerusalem Rabbis about impairment to the traditional contributions to the Jerusalem Jews – was not unfounded.<sup>69</sup>

When Nissim Behar was principal of the AIU school in Jerusalem, he invited Eliezer Ben-Yehudah to teach the Jewish subjects in Hebrew there.<sup>70</sup> Inspired by Eliezer Ben-Yehudah, people devoted to the Hebrew language gathered around him, among them Yehiel Mikhal Pines,<sup>71</sup> and his sons-in-law, Yosef Meyuḥas,<sup>72</sup> and David Yellin.<sup>73</sup> Here we have a definite example of cooperation among the local elites – Sephardi and Ashkenazi; religious and secular; western and oriental – and the influence of modernity, in this instance the revival of the Hebrew language by Eliezer Ben-Yehudah. The men and women who taught at the AIU schools had been educated in France.<sup>74</sup> Since the Ashkenazi Rabbis opposed the establishment of the AIU School in Jerusalem, for fear of detriment to the Ḥaredi education – most of its students came from Sephardi

69 Cf. above n. 57.

70 Eliezer Ben-Yehudah – reviver of Modern Hebrew was born in Luzhki, Lithuania, to a Ḥaba'd *ḥasid*. When he was a yeshivah student in Polotsk, he was attracted to the Haskalah. In 1877 he completed his secondary education. In 1878 he arrived in Paris intending to study medicine. For various reasons, he abandoned this plan and decided to study at the AIU seminar with the goal of becoming a teacher at the Mikveh Israel agricultural school. In 1881 he immigrated to Jerusalem with his young wife, Devora, née Jonas. The couple decided to speak only Hebrew. Ben-Yehudah wrote for the newspapers *Ha-Ḥavatzelet* and *Mevaseret Zion*, he founded the paper *Ha-Zevi*, and taught at the AIU school in Jerusalem.

71 Yehiel Mikhal Pines (1843–1913), a writer from among the leaders of the *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel. In 1878 he immigrated and settled in Jerusalem. He played an important role in acquiring land for Jewish settlement.

72 Yosef Bar"an [בר"ן, son of Rabbi Natan] Meyuḥas (1868–1942), an educator and writer who was one of the leaders of the Jerusalem Sephardi community. In 1920–1931, he was head of Jerusalem Jews' Committee. On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 243–87.

73 David Yellin (1864–1941), educator and scholar, one of the leaders of the Jewish population in the Land of Israel, studied in Yeshivat Etz Ḥayim and in 1882 registered for the AIU school. In time he became a teacher there. He served as president of the Hebrew Teachers Association; was the founder and principal of the Hebrew Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem, an expert on medieval Hebrew poetry in Sepharad, and took part in the establishment of the *Va'ad Ha-Lashon* (The Committee of the [Hebrew] Language), the National Library, and the B'nai B'rith branch in Jerusalem. David Yellin was deputy mayor of Jerusalem (1920–1925) and president of the Elected Assembly of the National Committee (*Ha-Va'ad Ha-Leumi*) (1920–1928).

74 See Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, and A. Rodrigue, *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Transition, 1860–1939: The Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

families.<sup>75</sup> Some two hundred students studied in the Jerusalem school; about one-quarter of them lived in the school buildings and were supported by the founding organization – AIU.

In 1884, an AIU girls school was established in Jerusalem. Sewing and embroidery were also taught there. Also the female instructors at the AIU school had been educated in Paris. That same year, 1884, an AIU school was founded in Haifa, which continues to operate to this day. In 1892, in Jaffa, a boys school was established, and in 1898, a girls school. In the newspaper *El Tiempo* (1906), published in Istanbul, on pages 299–300, is a feature, signed by Avraham Elmelekh, entitled, “The Population of [School] Students in Jerusalem for the School Year 1907/1908.”<sup>76</sup> The author – described in the paper as “nuestro corresponsal [our correspondent]”<sup>77</sup> – begins with the statement that “education in the Holy City is progressing year by year.”<sup>78</sup> He enumerates in his article schools and kindergartens alongside yeshivot and talmudei torah. In the ensuing the author enumerates all the Jewish educational institutions, noting alongside each the year of its establishment. The first on the list is “The AIU Jewish school for boys. Founded in 1882. Number of students 450. Taught are Hebrew, French, Arabic, Turkish, English, and an advanced course in business.”<sup>79</sup> The second is “The AIU trade school founded in 1882. The number of students 150. In the dormitory 75, external, 65, working at weaving [here the French word: tissage is used] 89. They teach French, English, and a course in Hebrew every Sabbath.” In the continuation in the article is a list of the subjects studied, and they include blacksmithing, carpentry, mechanics, weaving and dyeing.<sup>80</sup> The third in the writer’s list is “An AIU workshop for girls, founded 1904.

75 Cohen-Reiss wrote in his memoirs that “the Ashkenazim saw it merely as a Sephardi institution, like all the schools of this society in the Oriental countries,” Cohen-Reiss, *Memories of a Son*, 86.

76 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel IE2. “La poblacion eskolaria en Yerushalayim por el anyo eskolaryio 1907–1908.”

77 “Our resident-correspondent.” It is interesting to note the use here of the Modern Spanish word: corresponsal.

78 La instruksion en la sivdad santa se adelanta di anyo en anyo. Las eskolas i los azilos [kindergartens] ansi las yeshivot talmudei tora estan yenos.”

79 Eskola israelita de ijos por la instruksion dela Aliansa fondad enel 5642, numero de los elevos 450 se enbeza el hebreo, el fransez, el arabo, el turko i el englez i un kurso superior komersial.”

80 Eskola profesional dela Aliansa fondada enel 5642 numero de elevos 140 internos 75 externos 65 lavorantes en el tissage 89. Se enbeza el fransez, el englez, i un kurso de ebreo kada shabat. Se enbeza tambien los ofisios: skultura, ferrariya, sharpanteriya, mekanika, kovriya, fonderiya tissage i tintoreriya.”



FIGURE 6 *Weaving workshop at the Alliance School, Jerusalem.* PHOTO ARCHIVES OF YAD YITZHAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.

The number of pupils is 70; they are taught tatting and embroidery.”<sup>81</sup> Only in fourth place appears the Lämél School, which was founded in 1856. This apparently attests to the central position of the schools established by the AIU in Jerusalem. In seventh place comes the “‘Bezalel’ School for Arts and Crafts founded in 1904. The number of students is 7 ...”<sup>82</sup> In eighth place appears “The girls school ‘Evelina de Rothschild.’ Founded by Baron Leopold de Rothschild in 1888 ... The number of students is 600. They teach English, Hebrew, and sewing.” Striking is the large number of students in the school directed by Ms. Annie Edith Landau (1873–1945).<sup>83</sup> In ninth place comes “The AIU girls school founded in 1906. The number of students is 250. They teach French, Hebrew, and sewing.”<sup>84</sup> Number twelve on Elmelekh’s list is the ‘AIU kindergarten, founded in 1905. The number of pupils is 70. They teach French, Hebrew, sing-

81 “Atelye por muchachas dela Aliansa fondado enel 5664. Numero de elevas 70. Se enbeza dantileriya i filo.”

82 “Eskola por el ofisio i el arte Bezalel fondada enel 5664. Numero de elevos 7...”

83 “Eskola de ijas ‘Evelina de Rothschild’ fondada por el baron Leopold de Rothschild enel 5624 ... numero de elevas 600 se enbeza el englez el ebreo i la kostura.”

84 “Eskola de ijas dela Aliansa fondada en 5666. Numero de elevas 250. Se enbeza el fransez, el ebreo, i kostura.”

ing, and so on.”<sup>85</sup> Before this institution, mentioned as number eleven on the Elmelekh list, we find “Three kindergartens, the first founded in 1903, the second in 1905, and the third in 1908. They teach Hebrew, singing, and so.”<sup>86</sup> In an interview I conducted with Mrs. Rachel Elazar Alḥasid of Jerusalem, she stressed that she had attended a kindergarten where they spoke Hebrew, and this was despite the fact that her father, Rabbi Yehudah Elazar, served in the Jerusalemite Rabbinate. However, “he was not conservative and he wanted his daughter to be among the first to know the Hebrew language.” Moreover, Mrs. Alḥasid remembered the *Tu Be-Shevat* [Fifteenth of the month of *Shevat*] celebrations, when “the kindergarten children went out to plant trees. This was a national holiday and they sang new songs in Hebrew, “To the Field,” “The Almond Tree Is Blooming.”<sup>87</sup> Of special note is the difference between these kindergartens and those of the AIU: In the latter they learned French alongside Hebrew and singing. This was not so of the other kindergartens.

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85 “Azilo dela Aliansa fondado enel 5664 numero de elevos 70. Se enbeza el fransez, el ebreo, el kante etc.”

86 “Tres azilos por ijos i ijas fondados el primero enel 5663, el sigundo enel 5665, i el tersero enel 5667. Numero de elevos 300. Se enbeza el ebreo, el kante etc.”

87 Interview on 1 March 2011 conducted at the home of Mrs. Rachel Alḥasid née Elazar, who was born in Jerusalem, in the second decade of the twentieth century. Mrs. Elḥasid studied at an AIU school, since her parents, when they were emissaries for a year in Egypt, wanted her to study French. This, too, was a sign of the times: the daughter of Rabbi Elazar studied in an AIU school. Mrs. Rachel Elazar Alḥasid mentioned in her statements that “also Rabbi Ya’akov Meir sent his granddaughter to an AIU school”. Rabbi Ya’akov Ben Kalev Merkado Meir (1856–1939), a native of Jerusalem, was the chief Sephardi Rabbi in Salonika in 1908–1919. In 1921 he was elected Rishon Le-Zion – the Sephardi Chief Rabbi. Rabbi Meir supported fostering and promoting the use of the Modern Hebrew language in the Land of Israel. In time, Rachel Elazar married into the Elḥasid family and lived with her husband in Jerusalem. In 1938, her husband decided to leave the country because his livelihood had dwindled – he owned a quarry at the Kastel – owing to riots that had broken out during the Arab Revolt. Rachel Elḥasid remained behind, living with her parents, and left the country only in 1943; she then settled in the United States, where she resided until she returned to Jerusalem. Rachel Elazar Alḥasid told me about the occasion of the selection of the *Ḥakham Baṣi*: “The Committee of the community chose the person. The community gave its approval. Then they sent an announcement to Kushta. When the *Ḥakham Baṣi* there verified the selection, they would inform the Turkish ruler of Jerusalem and the Jewish Community about the selected individual. The investiture was a particularly important ceremony. Even the Muslims stood in the streets to see it”. On the festive parades in the cities of the Ottoman Empire, see also above chap. 1 n. 64.

The institution appearing as number thirty-five on Avraham Elmelekh's list is the veteran school "Doresh Zion," which was founded in 5626 [1876],<sup>88</sup> and the number of students it had in the 1907/1908 school year – 60. In this school the pupils studied Bible, *Shulḥan Arukh*, Talmud, Turkish, and Hebrew. At that time, many of the children belonging to the Sephardi community in Jerusalem studied there. If we, however, compare the number of 60 to the numbers 450 and 140, which Elmelekh gave for the AIU schools, we can draw the conclusion regarding the level of popularity of the latter schools among members of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv*. In the continuation of this list, Avraham Elmelekh enumerates orphanages, talmudei torah, yeshivot, the school for the blind, and others.

No one disagrees that AIU garnered rewards for its work in Jerusalem: on the list of members (adhérents) of the AIU who raised their contributions in 1928 appear many Sephardi names – Amiel, Ancona, Abulafia, Angel, Ben-Nun, Bichacho, Eliachar, Faraji, Yitzḥak Cohen, Levi, Meyuḥas, Molho, Panigel, Piggotto, Shem-Tov, Tadjer, Gino [i.e., Chinio] – alongside Ashkenazi names – Oplatka, Barsky, Berman, Hashimshoni, Peres, Strechilevitz, Sachs, and others.<sup>89</sup> To sum up this topic: the AIU schools in Palestine-The Land of Israel, I feel it is worthwhile citing the letter by Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Ḥai Uziel, then chief Rabbi of the Tel Aviv–Jaffa community, from 7 Av 5684 (7 August 1924), which is located in the AIU Archives in Paris.<sup>90</sup> In the letter's text, typewritten in Hebrew, Rabbi Uziel addresses "the distinguished gentlemen, heads and leaders of Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris," and he writes that "the world revolution born because of the last war" [World War I] has led to increased influence of the national states supporting use of the national language. "With this change, French, which until now has been the international diplomatic, commercial, and cultural language is leaving the world stage ..." That being the case, the Rabbi urges the AIU leaders not to close the AIU schools because of their "lack of French nature," but rather he asks them to continue to maintain the schools, "even if you [AIU] will have to relinquish their French essence, for it is not the French language that is your main purpose, but rather it is solely Hebrew national education and scientific enlightenment that accompanies it, that was and will be the aim and justification for your schools existence ... and

88 The historian Bezalel determines that the school was established in 1866 by the benefactor J. Rosenthal of Paris: "But its actual founder and first principal was Rabbi Yitzḥak Prague, an Ashkenazi who had turned into a Sephardi." See Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 88.

89 AIU Archives, Paris: Israel 9096/4, 13 janvier 1929.

90 AIU Archives, Paris : Israel IM1–3972.

I am afraid that the fifty years of effort of the AIU's functioning will be for naught." Rabbi Uziel goes on to say that if the question should arise "From where will we find all the teachers needed for religion and Hebrew? Since they are the backbone of the education needed for Jewish children now, then he is ready to offer the AIU leaders his services "taking full responsibility, to find for you the teachers who will satisfy you in all dimensions." However, as noted, after World War I, the AIU activities were concentrated in the North African countries which were then under French control.

### A Jerusalemite Sephardi Family in the Change of Time: The Test Case of The Meyuḥas Family

At the focal point of the discussion in this chapter, I wish to present the test case of the Meyuḥas family. In 1905, the Ottoman authorities conducted a population census in Jerusalem.<sup>91</sup> On 8 July 1905 [1321 AH], the deputy of the clerk responsible for population registration came and listed the inhabitants of the area known by its Arabic name, Tawahin, near the Yacobia neighborhood, where stood the Jewish neighborhood Mazkeret Moshe, one of the new neighborhoods built outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup> In the Meyuḥas family home, the clerk registered the following: men and youths first, and after them the women and girls. On the list appear the names of the inhabitants, their birthplace, their professions or jobs, and even details describing the external appearance of the men but not of the women. In the Meyuḥas home the clerk counted seventeen people: the head of the family was Raḥamim (Shlomo) Meyuḥas.<sup>93</sup> He was born in Jerusalem in 1862 [1278 AH]. His profession was Rabbi [*Hakham*], and he knew how to read and write Hebrew. The clerk noted that he was tall, his hair black, and his eyes black. As for his wife Simḥa, born in 1865 [1281], the clerk mentioned that her father, Moshe Eliachar, bore the

91 *Ceride-i nüfus*. See Israel State Archives, Mekor Ḥaim, Jerusalem, 1203: 41–45. My son, Dr. Eyal Ginio, received this document from his student, Eliḥai Knafo, and read and translated it into Hebrew from the original Ottoman Turkish, and I thank him for his assistance. See also Adar Arnon, "Population Censuses in Jerusalem toward the Close of the Ottoman Period," *Cathedra*, 6 (1977): 95–107, as well as Uziel Schmelz, "The Population in Area of Jerusalem and Hebron in the Early 20th Century," *Cathedra*, 36 (1985): 123–63; idem, "Population characteristics of Jerusalem and Hebron regions according to Ottoman census of 1905", in G. Gilbar (ed.), *Ottoman Palestine 1800–1914* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 5–67.

92 In the early 1880s. See Y. Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: Emergence of the New City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 152–56.

93 On the Rabbi and emissary Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas (1862–1941), see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 208–12. See also table 3 there. Cf. also below n. 98.



FIGURE 7  
*Rabbi Raḥamim Son of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas.* THE MEYUḤAS FAMILY COLLECTION OF PICTURES.

title of ‘effendi’ as the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.<sup>94</sup> Living in the home were also Raḥel [Rachel], Raḥamim’s mother; his younger brother Elazar, born 1868 [1284 AH], a moneychanger [ṣarāf], who knew how to read and write Hebrew and spoke Arabic; his wife Sultana, born 1872 [1288 AH]. The children were: Raḥamim’s only son (at that time; the younger son, Yosef, was born in 1906) – Moreno Shlomo Yosef, my father, was then four years old. His hair and eyes were listed as black and he had no physical defect. After him comes, Avraham, Elazar’s only son, born in 1900 [1316 AH], and Shlomo, born 1885 [1301 AH], the orphaned child of Yosef Meyuḥas, Raḥamim’s deceased brother.<sup>95</sup> Of Shlomo Meyuḥas, the information was that he studied in a yeshivah. After the boys, the girls were registered. The daughters of Raḥamim Meyuḥas were: Merkada, born 1893; Seniora, born 1899; and the one year-old twins, Raḥel and Leah. The name ‘Merkada’ [meaning: bought], an appellation used as a charm, was given to the oldest daughter, Rivka Merkada, since three boys, who had all died before the age of one, had been born before her. At the end of the list appeared the names of Elazar’s daughters: Leah, born 1894; Raḥel, born 1896; Joya, born 1901, and Esther, born 1904. Elazar’s two youngest daughters, Alegra and Fortuna, had not been born as yet. Following this population registration, the people listed down received a document attesting to their status. I have the one given to my aunt, my father’s sister, Leah Meyuḥas, stating:

94 Rabbi Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar (1848–1924) was known by his by-name Rav Ḥam”a. On him, see E. Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 612–26.

95 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 207. There he tells of Yosef Meyuḥas’s illness and about the recommendation he received in 1888 from the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Meir Panigel and Rabbi Yissa Berakhah in order for him to seek a cure abroad. Cf. n. 99 below.

This is a certificate issued on behalf of the Ottoman State. This certificate was given on 8 July 1905 [1321], and it notifies that Leah, whose name, family name, status, and description given above, is a subject of the exalted [Ottoman] state and as such has been registered under the heading of the population [*nufus*] listing in the manner noted in the foregoing. Signed: The Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>96</sup>

The Meyuḥas family had previously lived in the Shalshélet [Chain] neighborhood in the Old City within the walls. In the summary of a document published by the historian Amnon Cohen,<sup>97</sup> it appears that “Esther, daughter of Shlomo Moreno Ben Yosef Meyuḥas and her mother, Raḥel, daughter of Raḥamim Ben Yosef Penso have given power of attorney to Raḥamim son of Shlomo Moreno to sell one-quarter of the house in the Shalshélet neighborhood in the Shuk Ha-Krozot (*sūq al-dilālīn*). Registered on 20 Shawwāl 1308 [29 May 1891].” Esther Meyuḥas, who married Aharon Simḥa and died young in childbirth, and her mother Raḥel Meyuḥas née Penso, were the sister and mother of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, mentioned in conjunction with the population census held by the Ottoman authorities in Jerusalem in 1905.<sup>98</sup> For the purpose of the legal activity of selling, the Sharia Court took the trouble to hold a session in the home of “Yosef Ben Suleiman (Shlomo) Moreno, who avowed before the court, after “he had been identified physically,” as required by Sharia law,

declared and testified about himself that he was of sound body and mind and graced with all the legally relevant characteristics, that he had given power of attorney and set instead of himself and alternately in his place, his brother of sound mind present with him at the Sharia hearing that had been convened and noted above, the aforementioned Raḥamim Ben Shlomo, and this for the [purpose of] sale...The latter [Raḥamim Shlomo] accepted the power of attorney on himself in terms of Sharia tradition.

96 This document, too, was read and translated from Ottoman Turkish by my son, Dr. Eyal Ginio.

97 Document no. 253 in the book by Amnon Cohen, with Elisheva Ben-Shimon-Pikali and Eyal Ginio, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court: Society, Economy and Communal Organization in Ottoman Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003), 90 (3) [Hebrew].

98 Cf. above n. 93. On Esther Meyuḥas and her mother, Raḥel Meyuḥas, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 206.

These statements refer to Yosef Meyuḥas, the firstborn son of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas, known as an ill person.<sup>99</sup> An echo of these legal actions reverberated in the things my uncle, Refael [Rafael in Ladino] Ben Rabbi Mordekhai Ben Rabbi Shmuel Yom-Tov Meyuḥas (1901–1978), told me.<sup>100</sup> Refael Meyuḥas was wont to say that in the past, the members of the Meyuḥas family had been rich in property, houses, and fields. But in time, when the property remained in the hands of the young sons of the family, they sold off their holdings and declined in status.

Another document in the collection of *Jews in the Moslem Religious Courts*,<sup>101</sup> dated 1886, attests to the Jewish settlement in the Naḥalat Shimon neighborhood and its environs: “Yosef Ben Raḥamim Ben Yosef Meyuḥas gives power of attorney to Abud Ben Avraham Ben Eliyahu, resident of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, to administer for him rooms in the Naḥalat Shimon neighborhood that belong to him.” In 1863, a number of family members built their home in Kefar Ha-Shiloaḥ.<sup>102</sup> My paternal grandfather, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas was born there. During World War I, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas was a member of the *Vaad Adat Ha-Sep̄haradim* in Jerusalem.<sup>103</sup> In 1924, he was among the founders of the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood, a religious garden community, and at the time he was a member of the neighborhood committee.<sup>104</sup>

In this chapter, I wish to present, contrasting each other, the daughters of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, who married men who lived in Jerusalem and re-

99 See above n. 95.

100 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 200.

101 Amnon Cohen *et al.*, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Courts*, 52, number 21, n. 17.

102 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 15–21. Ben-Yaacob elaborates on the circumstances under which the Meyuḥas family members transferred their place of residence to Kefar Ha-Shiloaḥ. Cf. below nn. 322–27. In time, Ya’akov Meyuḥas gave power of attorney to a Christian to administer a plot of land for him in Kefar Silwan [Ha-Shiloaḥ]. See A. Cohen *et al.*, *Jews in the Muslim Religious Courts*, 644, doc. no. 645, which mentions “a plot of land in Kefar Silwan that includes a house received as a legacy from Ḥaim Ben Bekhor Meyuḥas and his daughter Clara.”

103 *Ibid.*, 208.

104 Y. Rudick and N. Cohen Berezovsky, *Kiryat Moshe: History of the Kiryat Moshe Neighborhood and the “Ohel Yitzḥak” Synagogue in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 2008), 162. On page 166, numbered listing 63, appear the names of “Meyuḥas Raḥamim and Simḥa + Leah and Raḥel, Hame’iri 17.” On the map of the distribution of lots in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood, which appears on the book’s endpapers, the lot of Meyuḥas Raḥamim is marked as no. 35; this is the original number that appears in a 5687 [1927] report. Today this is lot 17. See also page 69, a list of members’ names and the number of the lot belonging to each of them in the 5687–1927 report.

sided there permanently, on the one hand; and the daughters of Elazar Meyuḥas, Raḥamim's brother, four of whom married men who lived abroad and who permanently resided in large cities abroad. As far as I can judge, from personal acquaintance with these figures, one cannot discern any difference at all except, of course, varying economic ease among the brothers' daughters. The difference is noticeable and striking between the mothers – Simḥa Meyuḥas née Eliachar and her sister-in-law Sultana Meyuḥas née Penso – on the one side, and their daughters, on the other. While the mothers continued to go about in traditional garb: a long dress, a coat, and a yazma on their heads, all the daughters dressed in European clothes, wore hats and high-heeled shoes. Their hair was short and styled in European fashion. They took good care of their hands and their nails were finely manicured. Whereas the men in the family – Raḥamim Shlomo and his brother Elazar – continued with traditional Sephardi garb, a long shirt, a belt around the hips, on top of it a long coat, and a turban, their sons wore European clothes. The mothers spoke only Jewish Spanish or *Spanyolit*, as it was known in Jerusalem. However, Simḥa Meyuḥas knew how to read and write in Ladino, which was written in Hebrew letters – probably thanks to her family origins: daughter of the Rishon Le-Zion – but she was not able to speak Hebrew. In contrast, all the girls in the family knew the same European languages and would talk among themselves in a charming mixture of languages of Levantine women: French mixed with *Spanyolit* and Hebrew alongside English. Only the younger daughters of the Meyuḥas brothers – Leah the daughter of Raḥamim Shlomo; Alegra the daughter of Elazar; and Fortuna [Furtun] the daughter of Elazar – worked outside their homes for a salary. Leah taught at the AIU School in Jerusalem, Alegra worked in Barclay's Bank, and Fortuna worked in the main office of the Postal Service.<sup>105</sup> None of their older sisters worked beyond the confines of the home except for Esther-Seniora, the daughter of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas. For her own reasons, she decided to insist on not getting married and displayed initiative by going to Paris (where in 1927 she joined her brother Moreno, who was studying civil engineering) and acquiring training as a qualified seamstress, a profession she could ply within her father's home. She worked until

105 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem in the Mandate Period: Neighborhoods, Houses, People* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 2011) [Hebrew]. See vol. 2, chap. 6: Nahla'ot, Memories and Dwellings, 771. In the Zikhron Tuviyah neighborhood, 99–101, Agrippas–50, Ha-Carmel (a corner building) lived Elazar (also written Eliezer) Meyuḥas, his wife, Sultana, and their daughters: "One daughter a clerk in the post. A second daughter a clerk in Barclay's Bank." The Census of the Jewish population was conducted by the National Council and began on 19 Elul 5699 [3 September 1939].

she married Ephraim Barouch, a well-to-do merchant, and at his request she ceased taking jobs for money.<sup>106</sup> The four older daughters of Elazar Meyuḥas emigrated from the country through marriages: Leah married the Bucharan Issachar Issacharov, a wealthy goldsmith, and immigrated with him to Tsarist Russia. When the revolution broke out there, the couple and their two children set out on an obstacle-laden path to return to Jerusalem. Leah died from a caecum attack en route, on Persian soil. The widower finally arrived in Jerusalem and married his wife's sister Joya, who raised her orphaned nephews, a boy and a girl, together with the four girls the couple had. They immigrated to Europe and lived in Berlin, Paris, and finally, on the eve of World War II, settled in London.

Issachar's brother, Benjamin Issacharov, married Esther the daughter of Elazar Meyuḥas, and they too moved permanently to London. Raḥel, daughter of Elzazar Meyuḥas, married Shaul Akereb, a wealthy merchant originating from Baghdad, who made his fortune in India. The couple immigrated to Egypt, where they lived with their sons and daughters in a European suburb of Cairo – Heliopolis – until they were forced to uproot themselves in the 1950s. The mother, Raḥel, already a widow at that time, settled in Paris. Her children immigrated to distant Canada. There were strong, lifelong connections between the daughters of the Meyuḥas brothers, and those living abroad often visited Jerusalem, where their widowed mother Sultana Meyuḥas and two younger sisters lived.

Two sons of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, Moreno and Yosef, were the first generation to abandon the Rabbinate and choose free professions that they studied at universities abroad. Thus, they were temporary immigrants, during the time of their studies. In his youth, my father, Moreno Meyuḥas, studied at the Doresh Zion school,<sup>107</sup> at the AIU school, and upon the outbreak of World War I, when that school was closed by order of the authorities – for AIU was identified with France, which was the enemy of the Ottoman Empire – he transferred to study at the Ezra teachers seminary, and after that, at the

106 See Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?*, 146–49. This is the place to note that Shilo pays attention to the role of the Evelina de Rothschild School for Girls on the issue of turning the needle trades from domestic work to cottage industry. Esther Seniora Meyuḥas studied at this school, where she had learned English, until her older sister, Rivka Merkada, took her out of it and put her into the St. Joseph school, where the language of instruction and study was French, as this was perceived to have higher social prestige. To pay the tuition, Rivka Merkada, also a former pupil of Evelina de Rothschild, would cut fabrics for the Arab village women who sewed their clothes by themselves. Interview with Mrs. Ruth Senderov née Barouch on 27 July 2002.

107 See no. 35 in Avraham Elmelekh's list, above nn. 77–88.

general teachers seminary under the direction of David Yellin, which had been founded in 1903.<sup>108</sup> Moreno Meyuḥas studied civil engineering in Paris in 1924–1928. At that time, France's immigration policy was welcoming in light of the exhaustive loss of young men in World War I. The institutions of higher education in France did not require a French baccalauréat of their students; entry examinations were sufficient. My father told me about the entry exam he had passed for the *École spéciale des travaux publics du bâtiment et de l'industrie* (the advanced school for public works of building and industry). Upon his return to Jerusalem, he worked in his profession as a civil engineer and was a businessman and director of companies.<sup>109</sup>

The younger brother, Yosef, who had been educated at the Doresh Zion school and the general teachers seminary directed by David Yellin, studied education and psychology at the University of London in 1931–1935. Yosef Meyuḥas was the pioneer who introduced supplementary education in Israel and was among the founders of the Hebrew scouting movement in The Land of Israel.<sup>110</sup> He also made his emigration temporary, and upon the completion of his studies, he returned to Jerusalem. One may attribute this attitude on the part of the two brothers to the strength of the Sephardi family and to the concern they demonstrated toward their family – their parents and their sisters – who remained in Jerusalem; but, no less, one must ascribe the brothers' return to the city of their birth to the Zionist education they received from David Yellin, with whom and with his brother-in-law, Yosef Bar"an Meyuḥas, they maintained familial<sup>111</sup> and friendly relations their entire lives. Of note is that following the custom of Sephardi society of those days, the Meyuḥas family, which was of limited means, invested all the resources they could muster into their sons, but not their daughters.

From the comparative presentation of the sons and daughters of Raḥamim and Elazar Meyuḥas – whether they were those who immigrated abroad or the ones who returned to the city of their birth, Jerusalem – we see that one cannot distinguish essential differences in their ways of life; their external appearance and clothing; the conduct of the nuclear family and above all: preservation of

108 See Ya'akov, *Meyuḥas Family*, 213. On David Yellin, see above n. 73.

109 See A. Meyuḥas Ginio. "Delineation of the Figure of a Sephardi Maskil in the Changes of the Times. Moreno Meyuḥas, of blessed memory (1901–1985)", in R. Toeg (ed.), *Sephardic Jews in The Land of Israel in Changing Times, a Collection of Articles* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Dinur, 2000), 65–71 [Hebrew].

110 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 214.

111 David Yellin was the brother-in-law of Yosef Bar"an Meyuḥas. Both of them married daughters of Yehiel Mikhal Pines. On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 243–87. See also Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem, CD-ROM*, 159, 163, 165, 737, 1115, 1117, 1125, 1132, 1142, 1159, 1165, 1565, 1567, 1583, 1792, 1815.

Sephardi-style tradition, whether the family's daughters who made their emigration permanent owing to marriage or to the family's sons who made their emigration temporary for the purpose of studies, or the sons and daughters of the family who continued to live in Jerusalem, and who almost, except for short trips, did not leave its borders their entire lives. Hence, the family members who stayed in Jerusalem – who changed their ways of life, and foremost switched their Jewish Spanish, or *Spanyolit*, mother tongue to Hebrew – became immigrants in their country of birth, even though they did not go beyond the borders of the city in which they were born.

For the purpose of comparison, I wish to look at the life stories of the descendants of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas and their maternal cousins, the descendants of Rav Ḥam"ā – Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar. Rav Ḥam"ā and his wife Vida Leah née Panigel had six boys and three girls. The oldest was Simḥa Meyuḥas, my grandmother, about whose family we spoke above. Her sister, Esther, married Rabbi Refael Calamaro who traveled the world – Europe and North Africa and reached as far as India and China – as an emissary of Jerusalem and The Land of Israel. During his travels, he acquired French citizenship. His wife, Esther Calamaro, continued to live in Jerusalem, except for a certain time in which the family lived in Egypt, where the father served as a *dayyan* [religious judge]. Two of their daughters married men in Egypt and lived there until the 1950s, when they immigrated to France. The firstborn son, Jacques Calamaro, immigrated to France around 1904, where he worked as a pharmacist. He married Anna, an Ashkenazi Jewess from Poland, and settled in Boulogne-sur-mer. The second son, Shlomo-Paul, left Jerusalem in 1907, when he was sixteen years old and immigrated to Argentina. In 1908, Paul accepted his brother Jacques's invitation and moved to Paris, where he worked as a bookkeeper in a commercial company. From Paris he went to Marseilles, where he married Violette Shamash, from a family originating in Baghdad, and worked in his father-in-law's business. On the eve of World War II, the family migrated to Casablanca. Paul Calamaro was a community leader and served as the head of the Zionist Federation in Casablanca for many years.<sup>112</sup> Yosef Eliachar,<sup>113</sup> the eldest son of Rav Ḥam"ā was born in Jerusalem, received a Jewish Rabbinical education but decided to deal in commerce. He was active in public affairs and served on the Jerusalem municipality; he was president of the Sephardi Community Committee in 1925–1927, a member of the first Elected Assembly of the Jews in The Land of Israel, and a founder of the Zikhron Moshe neighborhood,

112 On him, see Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 644–45, as well as what Paul's son, Charles Calamaro, living in Paris, wrote about him at my request on 3 November 2009.

113 On him, see Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 645–47.

where he built his home in 1907. His three children – two sons and one daughter – lived in Jerusalem. Two of his grandsons immigrated to the United States in the 1950s.

Rav Ḥam”a’s second son, Yitzḥak Shem’aiah Eliachar,<sup>114</sup> was born in Jerusalem. He received a Jewish Rabbinical education and was intended for the Rabbinate; but he preferred to turn to Hebrew education and joined a group of young Jerusalemites who nurtured the Hebrew language and preached for national revival, among them David Yellin, Yosef Bar”an Meyuḥas, and others. Three of his four sons lived all their lives in Jerusalem. One son immigrated to the United States. His oldest daughter immigrated to the United States with her husband who was an American Jew, but after a number of years they returned to Jerusalem. The second daughter immigrated with her husband to Argentina and lived there the rest of her life. The third daughter lived in Israel with her family. Rav Ḥam”a’s son, Moreno Eliachar, was a banker. For a certain period he lived in Beirut, where he directed a branch of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. His two sons lived in Israel. Ya’akov and Meir Eliachar, sons of Rav Ḥam”a had no descendants. Bella, the youngest child in the family, married Yosef Ḥafif, a native of Aleppo, immigrated with him to Egypt, and settled in Cairo. The most important figure for the topic of our discussion is that of Rav Ḥam”a’s youngest son – David Eliachar. He, too, like his brothers received a Jewish Rabbinical education, but along with his Torah studies, he learned French, with private teachers, so that he could register for medical school abroad. With his parents’ agreement, he went to Beirut, where he studied medicine and received his physician’s diploma, with the authorization of the Health Ministry in Kushta, even before World War I. In 1911 he set out to specialize in gynecology in Paris and continued to live there until his death. David Eliachar married Renée Weil, of a Jewish family stemming from Alsace. His descendants live in Paris to this day.<sup>115</sup>

The phrase “with his parents’ agreement,” which we used above, comes from the autobiographical work by Eliyahu Eliachar, grandson of Rav Ḥam”a, who was the son of Yitzḥak Shem’aiah. The book *Living with Jews*, was written some seventy-five years after that episode.<sup>116</sup> I feel that this expression attests to a tradition that was common in the family and from which we learn that Rav Ḥam”a and his wife VIDA Leah, even though they must have been saddened by the young, talented son not choosing a life of Torah study but rather medicine, still did not try to stand in his way; quite the contrary, they helped him

<sup>114</sup> On him see, Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 629–36.

<sup>115</sup> On Rabbi Ḥam”a’s sons and daughters, see Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 640–48.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 648.

to realize his dream and become a physician. In this context, it is worthwhile relating a story I heard from Dr. Yehudah Tadjer-Tagar,<sup>117</sup> the youngest son of my aunt Rivka Merkada née Meyuḥas, and her husband, Menashe Tadjer. Yehudah, born 1923, lost his father when about thirteen old and lived with his mother and brother in the home of his grandfather, Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, in Kiryat Moshe, Jerusalem. In 1938, Ya'akov and Meir Eliachar – the sons of Rav Ḥam"ā and uncles of his mother, Rivka Merkada – turned to the boy, bereft of his father, and offered financial support to pay for his studies, if he agrees to learn in a yeshivah, since – as they explained to him – there were no more Rabbis in the family. The boy agreed to try yeshivah studies during his summer vacation from school, but he eventually gave up on the proposal.<sup>118</sup> We learn from this story that the sons of Rav Ḥam"ā were aware of the new direction taken by the young people of the family and tried to change it.

In the case of Rav Ḥam"ā's sons and daughters, too, we see the influence of modernity in the guise of Western culture on the family members. The younger they were, the greater and more intense was the influence of modernity on them. They abandoned the Rabbinate and switched to dealing in commerce and public affairs. Except for two of them, the sons and daughters of Rav Ḥam"ā continued to live in Jerusalem and were close to the Zionist movement, supported the revival of Hebrew, and took an active part in settling Jerusalem. On the whole, activity on behalf of reviving Hebrew was a primary basis – sometimes the only one – for the link between the young people of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem with the Zionist movement. The community youngsters founded clubs and associations to foster the Hebrew language. Thus, in 1903, Avraham Almaleḥ established the *Tze'irei Yerushalayim* association, which set as its goal the nurturing of Hebrew speaking among the young people of the community. There were a few hundred members in this association, including Ben-Zion Taragan and Shlomo Israel Cherizly, who were also involved in fostering Ladino language and literature.<sup>119</sup> The family unit among the members of the Sephardi community was strong, and even those descen-

117 On him, see G. Strassman, *Back from the Gallows*, the story of the Yehudah Tagar's secret mission to Iraq in 1951 (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1992) [Hebrew].

118 Interview with Dr. Yehudah Tagar (Tajer), conducted on 12 Jan. 2009. In Kiryat Moshe, where the family lived at that time – around 1938 – there were no yeshivot and the boy was sent to an Ashkenazi yeshivah in Givat Shaul, which was headed by Rabbi Sonnenschein.

119 On them, see chap. 4 below. See also Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 207–10. Campos also mentions, in this context, the criticism cast by the leaders of the Zionist movement – such as Dr. Arthur Ruppin – against the members of the Sephardi community for not exhibiting enough enthusiasm for the Zionist movement. See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 201–2.

dants of Rav Ḥam”a who immigrated abroad continued to visit the family home in the neighborhood of Mevor Barukh in Jerusalem. One must remember that the matriarch, Vida Leah, lived a long life: she died in Jerusalem at the age of 105, and her children and grandchildren visited her often. In addition, the sons and grandsons of Rav Ḥam”a who settled in France hosted the family members who came to study or work there. My father told me that he had been a guest at the homes of members of the Calamaro and Eliachar families. I find it doubtful that the aunt Renée Eliacher née Weil maintained Sephardi tradition in her home, but in any event, she was the one who helped her niece Esther Seniora Meyuḥas to become acquainted with her seamstress and to learn the fine points of the profession of elite sewing in Parisian style. When Yehudah Tagar was captured in Iraq in 1951 as an Israeli Zionist secret agent and imprisoned there for a full ten years, the address of Dr. Edouard Eliachar – the son of Renée and Dr. David Eliachar – in Paris served as the post office box for the exchange of letters between him and his family in Israel, when his captors allowed him to write and receive letters.

In contrast to their parents and their two older sisters, all of Rav Ḥam”a’s descendants wore European clothing, spoke European languages well, and dealt with commerce, pharmacology, engineering, education, and medicine. From an examination of their life stories, we come to the same conclusion we drew from the lives of the sons and daughters of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas: even without leaving the borders of Jerusalem, Rav Ḥam”a’s descendants became immigrants in their land of birth.

We began our discussion with the Rishon Le-Zion Yissa Berakhah and his generation. We reviewed the lives of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren descended from his firstborn, Rav Ḥam”a.<sup>120</sup>

The motto I chose for this chapter, taken from the novel by Ronit Matalon, *Facing Us*, which describes the life of a family of Jewish immigrants from Egypt, in the 1950s. The said novel focuses on the difference in the fates of immigrants that stems, to a great extent, from their situation in the destination to which they chose to immigrate.<sup>121</sup>

In precisely the case of the descendants of Rav Ḥam”a, one may find similarity and not difference in the ways of life, external appearance, and spoken

120 Rabbi Yissa Berakhah had three sons and one daughter. See above n. 4.

121 Ronit Matalon, *Facing Us* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved and Sifriah La’am, 414, 1995), 121. [Translated into English by Marsha Weinstein (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henri Holt, 1998)] The novel tells of the happenings in the twentieth century of an Egyptian-born Jewish family, whose children scattered and immigrated to different destinations in Europe, Africa, and Israel. Cf. the motto to the present chapter.

language, whether they are offspring who continued to live in the city where they were born: Jerusalem, or whether they are the ones who emigrated abroad. I attribute the joint lines of similarity among all the descendants of Rav Ḥam”a foremost to the strength of the Sephardi tradition as experienced in the family home, which was maintained continuously, for a number of generations, in the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem and which was not sundered nor broken by a culture war between traditionalists and modernists.

The Sephardi Rabbis cooperated in inculcating modern education, which included secular studies, for boys and girls, applying a practical approach and recognizing the power of education to help the family’s livelihood.<sup>122</sup> The descendants of the Rishon Le-Zion Yissa Berakhah first lived in within the walls of the Old City and then, beginning from the close of the nineteenth century, in the new neighborhoods established outside the walls of Jerusalem. Even in these neighborhoods, their homes were within walking distance of each other.<sup>123</sup> The deep-seated permanency in this location helped preserve the family ethos. No less than that, discerned in this is the similar nature and level of education from the schooling of the AIU and the French language that it taught its students and which assisted them to go to study or settle on French soil with a basic element of acculturation – knowing the local language – already having been acquired. In light of the importance that it is worthwhile, in my opinion, to attribute to permanent dwelling in Jerusalem over several generations, the question is posed: How many offspring of the heroes of our current discussion today – in 2014 – live in Jerusalem, the city which was their familial home for a few hundred years? In Yehoshua Ben-Arieh’s comprehensive study there appear thirty-three heads of households with the name Meyuḥas.<sup>124</sup> This study is based on the population census in Jewish Jerusalem conducted by the *Va’ad Ha-Leumi* [National Committee] in 1939. One must keep in mind that the number refers to heads of families, taking no consideration of their children, who lived under the same roof. In other words, when counting all people living in Jerusalem, in 1939, with the name Meyuḥas, we are likely to arrive at a much higher number. In the 1995–1996 city telephone directory, one finds forty-three entries with the family name Meyuḥas. In the 2009–2010 edition are twenty six listings for the Meyuḥas family name, while in the 2012–2013 phone book there are only twenty three occurrences. Even if we take into account the extent of

122 See also Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 404–8.

123 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem in the Mandate Period*, CD-ROM, appendix to the book: Family name: Eliachar.

124 Ibid., Family Name: Meyuḥas.

decline in the Sephardi nuclear family in the last two generations,<sup>125</sup> we still have evidence of emigration from Jerusalem. From personal knowledge, I can say that living in Jerusalem today are four great-grandchildren of Rav Ḥam"ā. From among the children of the great-grandchildren living in metropolitan Jerusalem today are three sons and one daughter. All eleven of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas's grandchildren were born in Jerusalem. Two of them bear the name Meyuḥas and live elsewhere, but two of his granddaughters, one grandson, and three great-grandchildren continue to live in the city. This situation attests not only to the fate of the family of the Rishon Le-Zion Yissa Beraḥah and the family of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, but the fate of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem. This group, which in the past wore the crown of leadership of the Jewish Old *Yishuv* in the city, has lost its standing, owing both to demographic changes as well as to sociological and political transformations that occurred among the Jerusalemite Jewish inhabitants with the waves of immigration from Europe and from mizraḥi communities in North Africa and in the Orient, as well as from the voluntary<sup>126</sup> acceptance of modern ideas in general, and the Zionist ethos and the Hebrew language in particular, by the leaders of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem.

*The History of the Meyuḥas Family in the Balkans and in Istanbul  
(Kushta)*

At the end of the 1960s, my father, Moreno Meyuḥas, and his younger brother, my uncle, Yosef Meyuḥas, decided that it was time to initiate the writing of a book which would record the family history, since they realized that their sons and daughters knew nothing about the family past. The two turned to the scholar Avraham Ben-Yaacob of the Jewish National and University Library and put the task into his capable hands. In 1977 appeared the work by Avraham Ben-Yaacob, *Yerushalayim Bein Ha-Ḥomot: Le-Toledot Mishpaḥat Meyuḥas* [Jerusalem Within the Walls: The History of the Meyuḥas Family], which was dedicated to the memory of my uncle, Yosef Ben Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, who passed away before the writing of the book was completed.<sup>127</sup> On 2 March 1977, a launching was held for the book *Yerushalayim Bein Ha-Ḥomot* at the

125 For example: my grandfather and grandmother – Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas and his wife, Simḥa Meyuḥas née Eliachar – had six children who reach adulthood, out of ten births. My husband, Gavriel Ginio, and I have three children who reached adulthood out of three births.

126 See below chap. 6. See also Natan Efrati, *The Sephardi Community in Jerusalem*, 24–29 [Hebrew].

127 See Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*. See also A. Meyuḥas Ginio, "El Purim de los Meyuḥasim: entre la historia y el folclore", *El Olivo*, 21, 45 (1997): 5–25; T. Alexander, *The Heart is a*

Residence of the President of the State of Israel, in the presence of the President – Ephraim Katzir, who accepted a copy of the book. As source material for the work, the author, Avraham Ben-Yaacob, used documents and manuscripts that he located in the Jewish National and University Library, the Ben-Zvi Institute, Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, and other private and public collections<sup>128</sup> as well as interviews he conducted with family members and questionnaires distributed among the latter. In 1992, the 500th year to the expulsion from Spain, a number of family members, led by Yosef Ben Bekhor Meyuḥas, a Distinguished Citizen of Jerusalem, who was in charge of the treatment of street gangs for the Jerusalem Municipality, and his wife, Miriam Engelberg Meyuḥas, gathered Meyuḥas family members at the Jerusalem Theater. The relatives had been invited to come through notices in the daily newspapers, and the building, which has 950 places, was completely full.

The Meyuḥas family was, for many generations, one of Rabbis. Therefore, one can trace its history on the basis of works by its scions and their signatures on approbations and in registrations of rabbinical court proceedings. By dint of diligent research effort, Avraham Ben-Yaacob constructed a family tree. This scholar located, in the works by Meyuḥas family members, mentions of the names of some of the extended family: men and women, and even found the family links among them. This was published in Ben-Yaacob's Meyuḥas family history, in which the author enumerated and detailed the Rabbinic works by family members. Below I present the essence of his presentation.

Among the Meyuḥas family members, a tradition has been handed down by which they stem from the Parosh family of the tribe of Judah, of whom 2,172 came to Jerusalem with Zerubabel Ben Shaltiel and the returnees to Zion<sup>129</sup> and were listed among those bringing the wood offering for the Temple.<sup>130</sup> According to this tradition, the Meyuḥas family members are descendants of

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*Mirror: the Sephardic Folktale. Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

128 A detailed list of sources appears in Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 489–95.

129 Ezra 2: 3; Nehemiah 7: 8. Mentioned in Ezra are “the children of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two” who came with Ezra from Babylonia to Jerusalem (Ezra: 2, 3). Nehemiah mentions Parosh Paḥath-moab among those who signed the pledge to observe the Torah laws (Nehemiah, 10: 14: “The chief of the people: Parosh, Paḥath –mo’ab”). The Mishnah explains: “Tanna taught: The sons of Parosh.

130 “Paḥath-Moab, son of Yehudah are identical with the sons of David the son of Yehudah” (TB, Ta’anit 4, 26a; 28a). Ben-Yaacob, *The Meyuḥas Family*, 11–12; A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Ma’ase Ba-Agunah, Monastir, 1643”, in M. Orfali, A. Toaff, S. Regev (eds), *East and Maghreb: Researches in the History of the Jews in the Orient and North Africa*, 8 (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2008): 29–30 [Hebrew].

King David.<sup>131</sup> The Mishnah states that the Parosh family was in charge of two of the nine days of the wood offering. These days were festive days for special families and on them the family members volunteered for the wood offering at the Temple. The two days on which the Parosh family volunteered the wood offering were the fifth of Av and the first of Tevet.<sup>132</sup> Written evidence for this tradition among the Meyuḥas family members is found in the proceedings of a *Beit Din* which met in Monastir (Manastir, Bitola, Bitolj) in Macedonia, in 1643, to discuss the case of an *agunah* from that community. The first of the signees on the receipt of testimony at the court was “Rabbi Ya’akov Meyuḥas of the family of Parosh Ben Yehudah.”<sup>133</sup> In time, the *dayyanim* of Monastir, who had trouble in making a decision, turned with a question to Rabbi Ḥaim Shabbetai of Salonika (c. 1555–1647).<sup>134</sup> There was a common practice among Jewish communities that the Rabbis in peripheral communities would turn to famous Rabbis in main communities to receive advice and guidance.<sup>135</sup> The text of the question with the reply of Rabbi Ḥaim Shabbetai has been preserved for generations in his work *Iguna*.<sup>136</sup>

We do not have details about the *dayyanim* other than their names. Two of them, Ya’akov Ha-Meyuḥas and Shlomo son of the distinguished Rabbi Naḥmias, served at the two sessions of the Monastir *Beit Din*. The second *dayyan* at the first session, Shabbetai son of the distinguished Rabbi Se’adyah, was replaced at the second session by Reuven Brondon. Since Rabbi Ya’akov Ha-Meyuḥas of the Parosh Ben Yehudah family signed first in both instances, we may assume that he served as the president of the court. In the text of the signature of the court president his lineage is given: he asserts that he is the descendant of the Parosh family from the tribe of Judah, mentioned a few times in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. We assume that as a *talmid ḥakham* [Torah scholar], Rabbi Ya’akov Meyuḥas was familiar with these sources; he did not, however, consider it necessary to define the source of his relationship with the Parosh Ben Yehudah family, and he probably was referring to the family tradition. This assumption receives support in the writings of another member of

131 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 11. Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba-Agunah*”: 21–36; Alexander, *The Heart is a Mirror*, 239–56.

132 *Ta’anit*, chap. 4, 26a. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 11–12.

133 Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba-Aguna*”: 25–31.

134 On Rabbi Ḥaim Shabbetai, see *ibid.*: 27–28.

135 J.R. Hacker, “Jewish Autonomy in the Ottoman Empire – Its Scope and Limits. Jewish Courts from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries”, in A. Levy (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1994): 153–87.

136 Rabbi Ḥaim Shabbetai, *Iguna* (Salonika, 1641). See Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba-Aguna*”, 28 nn. 39–40.

the Meyuḥas family, Rabbi Refael Bakhar [*Ben Kevod Rabbi*: son of the distinguished Rabbi] Shmuel Meyuḥas (1695–1771)<sup>137</sup> of Jerusalem, author of a number of halakhic works,<sup>138</sup> who held the position of Rishon Le-Zion in Jerusalem from 1756 until his death in 1771. From 1753, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas was the head of the most important of the Jerusalem yeshivot: the Beit Ya‘akov yeshivah, which was founded by Rabbi Ya‘akov Israel Pereira from Amsterdam and bore his name.<sup>139</sup> In 1775, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas wrote in his author’s introduction to *Peri Ha-Adamah* that “we have an accepted tradition that the fundamental root of our family stems from the tribe of Judah.”<sup>140</sup> In 1722, that same Rabbi Refael Bakhar Meyuḥas wrote, while still a young man, a booklet entitled *Megilat Yoḥasin* [Family Lineage].<sup>141</sup> When he mentioned his grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas, he described him as “a prince in Israel, a *paqid* and trustee, from the descendants of the courtiers, from the stock of the pedigree and the elevated, and his forefathers served in the Temple.”<sup>142</sup> We see that the family tradition was known and accepted (“we have an accepted tradition,” wrote Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas) even a hundred years after the time of Rabbi Ya‘akov Meyuḥas of Monastir and at the other end of the Mediterranean Basin.

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- 137 The name “Meyuḥas” appears first as a private name and only later on as a family name. Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas signed his name in his first book: “Meyuḥas son of the honorable Rabbi Shmuel.” The name Refael was added during his life, apparently – in line with accepted tradition – when suffering a serious illness. Toward the end of his life, he wrote: “Refael son of the honorable Rabbi Meyuḥas” as well as “Refael son of Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas”, but also “the humble Meyuḥas”. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 90–147 and A. Cohen (ed.), *Mameluke and Ottoman Rule 1260–1804* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Keter Publishing, 1981), 274 [Hebrew].
- 138 Among his works: *Minḥat Bikkurim* (Salonika, 1752); *Peri Ha-Adamah* (Livorno, 1753; Salonika, 1763); *Penei Ha-Adamah* (Salonika, 1776); *Mizbe‘aḥ Adamah* (Salonika; 1776). The latter two works appeared after the author’s demise.
- 139 See Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 90–147; *Hebrew Encyclopedia*, entry: Meyuḥas. 23: 144–45.
- 140 Refael Bakhar Shmuel Meyuḥas, *Peri Ha-Adamah*, vol. 3 (Livorno, 1755). This four-volume work deals with Maimonides, responsa, and *derashot* on the Torah. On page 16 of the first printed edition, published by Rabbi Shmuel Yom Tov Meyuḥas in 1875, there is a quote from statements written about “the root of our family,” by the Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, in his work *Peri Ha-Adamah*.
- 141 See below nn. 177–91.
- 142 “The booklet *Megilat Yoḥasin*, the story and miracle that happened to the famous Rabbi the Gaon, author of *Sefer Peri Ha-Adamah*, Rabbi in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be built up. In 5483 (1722) this Gaon wrote in his handwriting.” Printed in Jerusalem (1875); second edition, Jerusalem (1975).

Stored in the Ben-Zvi Institute Library in Jerusalem are documents from 1876,<sup>143</sup> regarding Rabbi Nissim Eliyahu, called Rabbenu Meyuḥas, that offered the lineage of the bearer of the letter of mission, which was directed to the leaders of Jewish communities and asked beseechingly for help for the poor of the Holy City of Jerusalem. One should take note that presentation of a pedigree was a widespread, set formulation in letters of mission. The letter mentions “The great Rabbi, stronghold and tower, the miracle worker, author of the book *Peri Ha-Adamah*, may his merit protect us, amen, and his other holy books, and our crowning glory, cited in his book, part three whose introduction, where it is noted that the fundamental root of his family stems from the tribe of Ye’udah may his merit protect us, amen ...”<sup>144</sup> In the letter of mission given to Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Ben Yosef, his lineage is given, and it is noted that one of his glorious forefathers, author of *Peri Ha-Adamah*, “is the one who cites in his book *Peri Ha-Adamah*, part three, in his introduction that the fundamental root of his family stems from the tribe of Ye’udah, may his merit protect us, amen.

The earliest of the Meyuḥas family members we know of is Rabbenu Meyuḥas Ben Rabbi Eliyahu, who wrote an exegesis on the Pentateuch and lived in Greece, apparently in the twelfth century.<sup>145</sup> Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, mentioned above, gives the name of Rabbenu Meyuḥas in his work *Peri Ha-Adamah* and adds: “He belongs to our family.”<sup>146</sup> From this, we can determine, with a high degree of certainty, that whoever is called by the name Meyuḥas and who lived in the Balkan region, were part of the same family.

Avraham Ben-Yaacob also mentioned in his book Rabbi Meyuḥas Ben Yehudah who lived in Candia [Heraklion] in the island of Crete, around 1400. In the continuation of his discussion in the chapter “The Meyuḥas family in Greece and Turkey,” Ben-Yaacob notes six other Rabbis of the Meyuḥas family, who served in the communities of Ioannina, Salonika, and Monastir.<sup>147</sup> A few of them were known to the author only by name. Rabbi Shmuel son of the distinguished Rabbi Yehoshua Meyuḥas, who served as *dayyan* in “Kernanyia which is surrounded by the Arta River” in Greece, signed on 26 Nisan 5289 (1529), as “the most humble of the students” and the third and last of three *dayyanim*

143 M.D. Gaon Collection in the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library: Mss: 10/3; 1/4–6/4. See Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 240; 413–16.

144 *Ibid.*, 3/10. The Hebrew letter *alef* in the name הַאֵלֶף is used to avoid writing the Hebrew letter *heh*, representing the name of God. Cf. n. 159 below.

145 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 32–33. Some scholars date him later, to the fifteenth century; however, it is accepted that he lived in Greece, *ibid.*

146 *Peri Ha-Adamah*, author’s introduction.

147 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 32–34. See also A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba’aguna*”: 21–36.

(the others were Rabbi Moshe Ḥagiz and Rabbi Matityahu son of the honorable Rabbi Menaḥem), a receipt of testimony at the *Beit-Din*, on giving validity to the will of Rabbi Avraham Ovadia, who left “money and property and a gold coin ... in total close to the sum of 60 *perahim* with the value of the property ... for the poor of the two synagogues ...in the city of Arta.” This will was printed in the work *Benyamin Ze’ev* by Rabbi Benyamin Ben Rabbi Matityahu.<sup>148</sup> Another member of the Meyuḥas family was Rabbi Pinḥas son of the honorable Rabbi Shabbetai Meyuḥas. He signed – the first of three – as a *dayyan* in the Ioannina community, two questions that were sent to Rabbi Shmuel Ben Moshe Qala’i, author of *Mishpetei Shmuel*. These questions were included in the work by Rabbi Shmuel Ben Moshe Qala’i mentioned and thus reached the later generations. The first question is dated 11 Marḥeshvan 5339 (1578) and concerns a loan of money on the basis of a promissory note. The other, which had been registered three days earlier, dealt with the suit of a Jew who was “a cook and seller to Jews.” One day the first Jew sold to another Jew, whose name was Moshe Razon, a dish “with its bowl.” When he went after a time to ask for his bowl, he saw from afar that the one holding the bowl had bought a meat dish, so he followed him and found him eating from his bowl with another Jew, a Greek doctor, and a converted Jew. The owner of the bowl told the religious court how “smoke had come out of his ears,” and he had quarreled with the person holding the bowl and said to him, “It is not enough that you are eating an impure, forbidden food but you put in my bowl making it forbidden and impure.” The court was told that “the dish they were eating was mixed with sour milk called *yogurt*.”<sup>149</sup> Rabbi Gershon Meyuḥas was one of the signatories on an approbation written in Salonika on 22 Tevet 5374 (1613) and published in print in a collection with nineteen approbations in Ladino from the Salonika community.<sup>150</sup>

Of particular interest is the information on Rabbi Meyuḥas Ben Eliyahu who lived in twelfth-century Greece and on Rabbi Meyuḥas Ben Yehudah who live in Candia around the year 1400. Since these are times long before the expulsion from Spain, it is not out of the realm of supposition that the Meyuḥas

148 Rabbi Benyamin ben Rabbi Matityahu, *Benyamin Ze’ev* (Venice 5299 [1539]), par. 422, 553b–554a. On Rabbi Benyamin ben Rabbi Matityahu who served as a Rabbi in Arta, see J. Hacker, “Jewish Society in Salonika and Its Area in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries – A Chapter in the History of Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire and Its Relations with the Authorities” (Ph.D. dissertation presented to the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1978), 167–68 [Hebrew].

149 Rabbi Shmuel ben Moshe Qala’i, *Mishpetei Shmuel* (Venice, 1578), section 68: 53.

150 H.R. Molho and S. Amarillo, “A Collection of Salonika Askamot in Ladino”, *Sefunot*, 2 (1958): 26–60, especially 48. The *askamot* [*Haskamot*] were given in the period 1555–1676.

family were originally Romaniotes and in time its members “took on Sephardi ways” and became Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim. From the text of the halakhic question Rabbi Ya‘akov Meyuḥas and his colleagues presented to Rabbi Ḥaim Shabbetai at the religious court, we clearly learn that a number of the testimonies given to the court were presented in Jewish Spanish.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, there is no doubt that Rabbi Ya‘akov Meyuḥas of Monastir, who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century, knew and was familiar with this language. In any event, the family tradition, preserved among the Meyuḥas family members, does not support the possibility that their family was originally Romaniote. Perhaps, this approach should be examined in light of the social prestige that exiles from Spain attributed to themselves and which they enjoyed for generations after the expulsion.

From the interviews conducted by Avraham Ben-Yaacob, we learn that the Meyuḥas family members presented him a family tradition from which one understands that prior to the Expulsion from Spain, the family lived in the Kingdom of Castile. At the time of the Expulsion the family’s five brothers went into exile. Their names, which were Moshe, Shmuel, Refael, Yosef, and Avraham, are repeated again and again in the different branches of the family. During their wanderings, Avraham died on the way; two of the brothers – Shmuel and Yosef – remained in the Diaspora: the first in the Balkans and the other in Kushta. One may perhaps find support for this tradition in that from the questionnaires distributed by Avraham Ben-Yaacob among the family members: it turns out that many of them were born in Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece.<sup>152</sup> At the same time, however, we must not forget the historical geography of the process of settlement of the Sephardim in the Balkans: as early as the Ottoman conquest in the fourteenth century, in the Balkan regions there was slow but steady immigration of Jews from the coastal strip to the interior of the land. Members of the first generation of exiles from Spain settled, first of all, in the coastal cities, primarily in Salonika, but their descendants proceeded from the coastal cities of northern Greece to the interior parts of the country, approaching Macedonia and Bosnia. So it was for the Meyuḥas family members: in the fifteenth century they settled in the cities of Salonika, Arta, and Ioannina; in the seventeenth century they moved to Monastir-Bitola. In the middle of that century one branch of the Meyuḥas family immigrated to Jerusalem.<sup>153</sup>

151 Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba-Aguna*”: 33–34.

152 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 478–86: Table 8. A list of the Meyuḥas family members in Israel in 1973.

153 Meyuḥas Ginio, “*Ma’ase Ba-Aguna*”: 25–26.

According to the family tradition, preserved among relatives, two of the five brothers who had been exiled from Spain with the Expulsion – Moshe and Refael Meyuḥas – immigrated to the The Land of Israel and reached Jerusalem in about 1510. One of them dealt with grain trade and the other was a ritual slaughterer.<sup>154</sup> Some of the Meyuḥas family members persisted with these professions in the coming generations as well. The family tradition also relates that Meyuḥas family members established the synagogue named for Yoḥanan Ben Zakkai in the Old City of Jerusalem, which is why they had the exclusive right to be the *Ḥatanim* [grooms] of the Torah scrolls on the festival of Simḥat Torah.<sup>155</sup>

Another family tradition tells that the Meyuḥas family originated in Spain, from which they were exiled in the Expulsion of 1492. They reached the Ottoman Empire and lived there some seventy years, and then went on to move to other districts of the Balkans. When they lived in the Ottoman Empire, they were awarded a *ferman* from the Ottoman sultan, whence their name: Meyuḥas [in Hebrew: privileged]. The family name had previously been Bakhar. Some add that the Meyuḥas family members are the descendants of Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Verga, author of *Shevet Yehudah*.<sup>156</sup> The writer and educator Yosef Ben Raḥamim Natan Meyuḥas wrote that the family name is Bakhar Meyuḥas and that it “has been living for about two hundred years in The Land of Israel and it originated in Spain. It, too, came among the exiles to Turkey, and its members settled in Kushta, Bulgaria, and Jerusalem.”<sup>157</sup>

As he continued with his discussion in the chapter “The Meyuḥas family in Greece and Turkey,” Avraham Ben-Yaacob mentioned Rabbis from the Meyuḥas family who lived in Kushta throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>158</sup> The first among them were two brothers, Rabbi Avraham and Rabbi Natan, the sons of Rabbi Yehudah Meyuḥas. The historian Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, who edited the registry of the *Beit Din* Issur Ve-Heter in Kushta 5470–5663 (1770–1903),

154 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 12. Ben-Yaacob learned of this tradition from Shlomo ben Refael Meyuḥas in Jerusalem who received it from his forefathers. See also Alexander, *The Heart is a Mirror*, 239–56.

155 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 12, where there is also a bibliographical note about the history of this synagogue. Ben-Yaacob did not find historical support for this Meyuḥas family tradition. See also Alexander, *The Heart is a Mirror*, 239–56. The author bases herself upon interviews she conducted with a number of men and women in the family.

156 Ben-Yaacob, 12. Ben-Yaacob based himself on David Tidhar, *Encyclopedia of the Founders*, vol. 11, entry: Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Meyuḥas, 3845 [Hebrew].

157 Ibid. Ben-Yaacob quotes in his n. 11, the “Jerusalem” Annual of Rabbi Avraham Moshe Luncz, vol. 9, 295.

158 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 35–44.

noted a number of Rabbis from the Meyuḥas family who lived in Kushta in the eighteenth century.<sup>159</sup> In 1746, one of them, Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas, mentioned above, signed second among the Rabbis of Kushta on a letter of appointment by Pekidei Yerushalayim in Kushta. In 1748, Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas signed a Rabbinic ruling disparaging the expensive clothing among the Jerusalem Jews.<sup>160</sup> He founded a *Beit Midrash* in Jerusalem which bore his name: Beit Avraham, and it was headed by Rabbi Meir Sornaga.<sup>161</sup> Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas was the person who encouraged Rabbi Yitzḥak son of the distinguished Rabbi Shemarya Arguëte to go on to complete the project of Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí and Rabbi Yitzḥak Magrisso and to write a commentary in Ladino – *Yalqut Me'am Lo'ez* on Deuteronomy.<sup>162</sup> Rabbi Yitzḥak Arguëte mentioned Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas with great esteem in his introduction to this commentary and noted that it was Rabbi Meyuḥas who had urged him to continue with the undertaking of the Ladino commentary to the Bible, and even wished him a long life, so that he would be able to complete the interpretation on all twenty-four books of the Bible, the goal that the initiator of the *Me'am Lo'ez* – Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí – had set for himself at the time:

With the permission of the leader, our teacher and Rabbi, the supreme sage, great teacher, the greatest of his people, the leader of his nation, lighting the way, learned in justice, he should be called *Kadosh*, he who is the greatest scholar of the Sanhedrin [meaning: sages], our honorable, distinguished Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas, may his soul be bound up with the bonds of life. And he ordered that you should be firm, the task left to

159 Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, *Pinkas Beit Din Issur Ve-Heter Be-Kushta 5470–5663 (1770–1903)*, 84–85, discusses three Rabbis from the Meyuḥas family who lived in Kushta in the eighteenth century. In the continuation of the discussion, documents are cited which Meyuḥas family Rabbis signed: on pages 125–28, doc. no. 11 according to the author's enumeration; pages 132–33, doc. no. 14; pages 157–59, doc. 29; page 172, doc. 39; pages 182–83, doc. no. 44; page 192, doc. 49; pages 214–15, doc. 63; page 222, doc. 68. The historian Makovetsky stresses in the introduction to her book that not all the pages of the registry were complete when she obtained them. From this, one may assume that the list of Rabbis from the Meyuḥas family is not exhaustive. The name Yehudah (יהודה) sometimes appears as Ye'uda (יאודה). This stems from the writers avoiding writing consecutively three of the letters in the Tetragrammaton, which are found in the name Yehudah; thus, they substituted *alef* for *heh*. Cf. n. 144 above.

160 *Ibid.*, 84.

161 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 38.

162 *Yalqut Me'am Lo'ez* on Deuteronomy, 1 (Kushta, 1772). See also chapter 2 above as well as Moshe David Gaon, *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel*, 395 [Hebrew].

you by your forefathers, go in this strength of yours and deliver Israel. May He certainly bless me, may it be His will that the Lord will give his spirit upon you and the merit of the Torah will be of benefit to you, that all you do will be for a blessing, and God will give you plenty, the blessing of a long life of serenity, a life of peace, that they shall join together. So that you will be able to edit and interpret all twenty-four books of the Bible from beginning to end, so it can be read and understood easily, so that the Torah of the Lord shall be familiar to them like a set table and ready to be ingested by all the Jewish people.<sup>163</sup>

*The Meyuḥas Family in Jerusalem: The Megilat Yoḥasin of the  
Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas and the Purim de los  
Meyuḥasim*

As far as we know, on the basis of written sources,<sup>164</sup> Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas was the first of the Meyuḥas family to settle in Jerusalem. He emigrated from Salonika in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>165</sup> We do not know the circumstances of the immigration of Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas, who “was the support and leader and the one who averted disaster in Jerusalem all his days,”<sup>166</sup> to Jerusalem. One tends to think that his motive was a yearning for Zion and his heart’s desire to die and be buried in The Land of Israel.<sup>167</sup> Many of the immigrants to Jerusalem were *talmidei Ḥakhamim* [Torah scholars].<sup>168</sup> Apparently, Rabbi Shmuel immigrated with his family, since two of his sons continued to live in Jerusalem and even served, each in his own time, as *parnasim* [leaders] of the

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- 163 *Yalqut Me’am Lo’ez* / is a treasure of *aggadah* commentaries and *halakhah* on Torah, Prophets, and Hagiographa / written in the Ladino language by the prefect, righteous / Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí, *zatza”l* [blessed be the memory of a Tzadik [righteous] / proof reader and editor of *Mishneh La-Melekh* / and this part was completed by the outstanding sage Rabbi Yitzḥak Arguète, *zatza”l* / one of the greatest Rabbis of Kushta / translated for the first time into the Holy Tongue / by Shmuel ברה”י [son of Rabbi Ḥaim] Yerushalmi (Jerusalem: Wagshal Ltd., 1968), 12. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 38–39.
- 164 Ben-Yaacob *Meyuḥas Family*, 81 Ben-Yaacob based himself on Arieh Leib Frumkin, *Toledot Ḥakhmei Yerushalayim* [*History of the Sages of Jerusalem*] (Vilna: 1874; edited by Eliezer Rivlin (Jerusalem: 1928–30; repr. 1969), part. 3, 85 [Hebrew].
- 165 In the early seventeenth century the situation of the Jews in Jerusalem was at its nadir. See above chap. 1 nn. 92–98; toward the middle of the century, however, the situation improved with the establishment of Yeshivat Beit Ya’akov (1658).
- 166 Frumkin-Rivlin, *History of the Sages*, part. 3, 85.
- 167 See A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Daily Life in the Sephardi Family Circle according to the Commentary of Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí for Genesis in the Work *Me’am Lo’ez* (1730): 139–71, especially 155–56 [Hebrew]; Y. Ben-Naeh, “Chelebi Yaakov Elnekaveh’s Emigration from Istanbul to Jerusalem”, *Cathedra*, 144 (2012): 21–34, especially 23, 29 [Hebrew].
- 168 *Ibid.*, 23, 29.

community. The *parnasim*, or *berurei ha-ir*, were elected by the tax-paying public and together with the members of the *ma'amad* [the elders of the community] conducted the affairs of the community and were part of the Rabbinic elite there.<sup>169</sup> We know of two of the sons of Rabbi Shmuel: Rabbi Meyuḥas Bakhar Shmuel<sup>170</sup> and Rabbi Moshe the Parnas, also known by his names Avraham-Moshe, or Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas. It seems they were wealthy; Avraham Ben-Yaacob wrote in his book<sup>171</sup> that in 1706, when the *berurei ha-ir* were ordered to pay off from their own property the debts of community members, who did not have the means to pay their royal debts, all *berurei ha-ir* hid from the “hateful minister” and the Jews of Jerusalem were left like a flock without a shepherd. “Only one, single man from *berurei ha-ir* did not want to join the fleers and hiders. He endangered himself and appeared openly as the leader of the people”, this was “the wise, excellent, honorable Rabbi Meyuḥas son of the honorable Rabbi Shmuel, who stood in the breach for his people and was even imprisoned by the ruler and freed only after he paid with his own money the large sum of 146 tur’ (*tugra*)”. The person who was the *parnas* [leader] of the community, Rabbi Ḥayim Arokh,<sup>172</sup> gave Rabbi Meyuḥas a document according to which he would be able to collect his losses from the community chest. Rabbi Meyuḥas hesitated and feared to execute this right, so he sent a question to Rabbi. Avraham Israel Ze’evi, who replied that “it is valid to collect what is his from the best of the property of the *hekdesh* and he takes what is his and there is no reason at all for apprehension, and this instruction comes from the document noted ....”<sup>173</sup>

Rabbi Avraham Moshe Meyuḥas, the second son of Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas, married Reyna Confrada.<sup>174</sup> We know of two of their sons: Rabbi Shmuel Bakhar Meyuḥas (who had same name as his grandfather) and Rabbi Moshe Bakhar Meyuḥas. We learn of the history of both of them from the work by the

169 M. Rozen, *The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century*, 108–41; Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans.*, 182–90; Idem, “Chelebi Yaakov Elnekaveh’s Emigration from Istanbul to Jerusalem”.

170 The name ‘*Meyuḥas*’ apparently was used as a private name and along with it the name of his father, the Rabbi, Shmuel. Cf. n. 137 above

171 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 81–86.

172 On him, see A. Morgenstern, “And to be the bearer of the burden of my suffering brothers’: Tuviyah Ha-Rofe and the Jews of Jerusalem 1715–1724”, *Cathedra*, 142 (2011): 27–54, especially, 45 n. 66 [Hebrew]. There the author quotes Rabbi Moshe Ḥagiz, who was born in Jerusalem in 1672 and who wrote on Ḥayim Arokh: “Who came and defiled the land and by force of the lies he told, wanted to prevail over the holy congregation ... this accursed person caused damage”.

173 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 86 and references there.

174 *Ibid.*, n. 13.

Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas Bakhar Shmuel (1695–1771)<sup>175</sup> – the grandson of Avraham Moshe Meyuḥas, the son of his son Shmuel Bakhar Meyuḥas and his wife Raḥel Bat Avraham<sup>176</sup> – entitled a booklet *Megilat Yoḥasin* [The Family Tree].<sup>177</sup>

Shmuel Bakhar Meyuḥas, the father of Rabbi Refael died young, when he was in Egypt. At that time his children were his three-year-old firstborn and his two-year-old brother. Their mother, Raḥel, died in 1744. After their father's passing, the two boys – the oldest, in time Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, and his brother, Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas – were supported by their grandfather, Rabbi Avraham Moshe Meyuḥas. Their uncle, their father's brother, also helped maintain them. Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas told in *Megilat Yoḥasin* how, in 1722, a severe drought occurred in the country, “And there was hunger in the land the likes of which will not occur again and, at that time, all the Jews sold all they had in their houses and nothing remained in the Jewish homes except their corpses and there was no bread and no water.”<sup>178</sup> At that time, a tyrannical, cruel ruler came to Jerusalem, Yusuf Pasha was his name, “a bitter enemy and troublemaker for the Jews,” who persecuted the Jews of Jerusalem “with a cruel, malicious heart”. Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas – the grandfather of the author of *Megilat Yoḥasin* – “a prince of Israel, an officer and trustee a descendant of the nobles, from high lineage, and his forefathers served in the Temple, a God-fearing person and one of those who think of His name, seeking the good for his people,” had the courage to present himself to the “hateful, bitter enemy,” with “great sobs, with entreaties and supplications, to plead for his people.”<sup>179</sup> This hateful person took his wrath out on the Rabbi and imprisoned him. In ex-

175 In this case, too, the name appears: “Meyuḥas” as a private name, while the name “Refael” was added later, apparently when he recovered from a severe illness.

176 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 87.

177 This work was published in Jerusalem in 1875 by Rabbi Shmuel Yom Tov Meyuḥas. On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 28 n. 48. He was among the first settlers of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood outside the walls of Jerusalem. A second edition of the work was published by his son, Refael Meyuḥas, a hundred years later, in 1975, in commemoration of his wife, Leah (1904-1973), the daughter of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas. The booklet is sixteen pages long. The final one is dedicated to “the root of our family – Meyuḥas – we have a tradition from our fathers that we descend from the tribe of Ye’udah, may his virtue protect us, Amen.” The text of this work appears in Ben-Yaacob's book the *Meyuḥas Family*, 444–48.

178 Ibid., 445. Here and in the ensuing I quote from *Megilat Yoḥasin* according to the version printed in Ben-Yaacob's book, *Meyuḥas Family*, 444–48.

179 Ibid.

change for his release, that tyrant demanded a ransom of 91,000 kuruş that would be paid within 91 days.<sup>180</sup>

Rabbi Moshe was forced to pledge to pay the sum. “And on that day there was a great mourning in Jerusalem, and all the people responded and said: It is good to inform our brethren, the men of our redemption who are in Kushta, may the Lord protect them, and [ask] that they should seek a way to save us from the hand of our enemy who seeks our harm.”<sup>181</sup> We see that the helpless Jews of Jerusalem saw no way out other than to address the Jewish community in the capital, Kushta. They cast lots “and the lot fell on the young head of the grandson of the *nagid*, I Refael Bakhar Shmuel Meyuḥas, may the Lord protect him and save him. And my spirit roiled, for what am I and what is my life to come before kings and deputies. I am slow of speech and slow of tongue and I am inarticulate.”<sup>182</sup> We have here the topos of a messenger who does not consider himself worthy and capable of his task, in the way that Moses replied in his time, on the occasion of the bush all aflame and yet not consumed.<sup>183</sup>

Rabbi Refael took the mission upon himself and set out with a servant lad as a companion. They headed for the port of Jaffa and embarked on a ship, which

180 Ibid., 446. Rabbi Moshe Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas was famously praised, and the The Land of Israel emissaries, who used to tell their listeners in the Diaspora about the history and behavior of the The Land of Israel sages, told of him: “I heard from the emissaries from The Land of Israel wonders about his piety and holiness and one time he offered his soul to honor God’s name, in order to save his flock” is quoted by Avraham Yaari, *Emissaries from The Land of Israel: The History of Missions from Palestine to the Diaspora from the Destruction of the Temple until the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1951), chap. 5, 122 [Hebrew].

181 Ibid.

182 Ibid.

183 Ex. 4: 10; 6: 12. See T. Alexander-Frizer, *The Heart is a Mirror*. 239–56, on: “The Second Purim of the Meyuḥas Family”. On the reference to Moses, see *ibid.*, 246–47. Tamar Alexander categorized the story of the *Purim Sheni* [Second Purim] of the Meyuḥas family in Jerusalem, which was celebrated on 15 Adar, as the genre of family legends: a celebration in remembrance of miracles that occurred to communities or families and individuals. Also see Dovid Rossoff, *Where Heaven Touches Earth: Jewish Life in Jerusalem from Medieval Times to the Present* (Jerusalem: Guardian Press, 1998), 122. The existence of the family legend attests to the high self-image of the family members, and indeed, the members of the Meyuḥas family believed that they originated with the sons of Parosh Ben Yehudah, and even from the descendants of King David. Testimony of their privileged status was their exclusive right to choose the *ḥatanim* (grooms) for the Torah on the Simḥat Torah holiday in the synagogue on the name of Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai in Jerusalem. The Meyuḥasim claimed that if a non-family member dared to take this privilege for himself, he would die within a month. *Ibid.*

“was ready to sail at that moment to Kushta”. When they arrived there, members of the community led them to the “*Beit midrash* of the *tanna*, the honorable Teacher and Rabbi Rozanes [Rosanes], may the Lord protect and redeem him.” This was Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes, author of *Mishneh La-Melekh* [Second to the King], which is devoted to halakhic matters following Maimonides, who is the king. Rabbi Rozanes was the teacher of Rabbi Ya‘akov Khulí, author of *Me‘am Lo‘ez*.<sup>184</sup> Rabbi Khulí edited his teacher’s writings after Rabbi Rozanes’ death in 1727. Rabbi Refael Meyuhas told Rabbi Rozanes everything that had happened to him and about the Jerusalemites.

The Rabbi invited “the minister and commander the prince of Israel who stands at the king’s gate, our teacher the Rav Çelebi Zonana, may God sustain him and protect him”, who asked Rabbi Refael to be his guest.<sup>185</sup> When Rabbi Refael told him of the events in Jerusalem, the *gevir* [wealthy man; pillar of the community] rose up from his seat, “And he rose and sat upon the ground crying and mourning over the distress of Jerusalem”. One sees that Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes hoped to avail himself of the *gevir*’s connections in the Sultan’s court in order to save the Jews of Jerusalem. In any event, in a dream at night it was revealed to Rabbi Refael that evil would befall the members of that household, and only if they fled their home could they be saved, by virtue of their hospitality. The master and his household fled from the house in small boats in the dark of night, and in the morning, one old woman, who had not left the house, was indeed found dead – “fallen on the ground, dead from the plague.”<sup>186</sup> The grateful *gevir* acted magnanimously: He both had things set with the authorities according to his own good willing as well as with the will of the Lord and also gave a very large amount of money worthy of being honored before kings, to revive the soul of the oppressed. As the hand of God was good to him and I am the humblest on the earth, I have seen the greatness of his loving kindness and his faith that acted and accomplished.”<sup>187</sup>

Rabbi Refael left to return to Jerusalem and chose “to travel via Alexandria to prostrate himself on the grave of Father, may his virtue protect us, Amen,

184 See above, chap. 2, n. 21.

185 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuhas Family*, 95 n. 28: Çelebi Ya‘akov Ben David Zonana. The meaning of the name: ‘celebi’ is yearnings. This by-name was sometimes given to a very young, only child. See Morgenstern, “Tuviah Ha-Rofe and the Jews of Jerusalem”, *Cathedra*, 142 (2011): 27–54, especially, 49, n. 86, in which this author quotes Y. Ecker, “הבאזרגיאן של אוג’אק הניצ’רים: Biography of a Function” (M.A. Thesis; Tel Aviv University, 2002), 27–46. Cf. n. 172 above. Ya‘akov Ben David Zonana was the main supplier of the Janissaries.

186 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuhas Family*, 447.

187 *Ibid.*, 448.

who died before his time and outside his place by the decree of the Almighty on high.”<sup>188</sup> After he had prostrated himself on his father’s grave, Rabbi Refael set out, astride a donkey, to go by land to Jerusalem. He was attacked by “nine men holding drawn swords and their faces like fiery flames.” They ordered the Rabbi to take off his clothes and they took his money, his donkey, and his clothes, leaving him with nothing. They cursed him “in their language” – referring to Arabic, in distinction from the spoken language of Rabbi Refael and his generation of Sephardim: Jewish Spanish – and beat him mercilessly. But, now came the miracle: The Rabbi’s neck became hard and turned into marble and the swords of the attackers, who each in his turn tried to hit him – broke in two, when they struck his neck. The frightened robbers left their victim alone and attempted to flee. The Rabbi feared for his life, “Where shall I go and where can I flee in the desert, in the wilderness, and they left me neither bread nor water. And then after a short time, the robbers returned and told the Rabbi that all their limbs were shaking and they could not take a step, then they decided: ‘let us give the Jew back all his belongings; perhaps the Lord will take pity on us and forgive us for our having sinned doubly.’”

The Rabbi, who was lying on the ground, his head covered in mourning, felt revived and blessed the Lord. The robbers approached him in trembling and fear, “from fear of the Lord and the splendor of his glory” and “desperately” seeking forgiveness from him, and they returned to him everything they had taken by force. In time the Rabbi wrote that he immediately decided, “That same day I took it upon myself and upon my offspring to make every year on the 15th of Adar a joyous banquet to praise and glorify for the miracles and for the redemption and for the saving acts that the Holy One blessed be He has done for me as a sign for good and for all descendants.”<sup>189</sup> At the same time, there happened to come before the Rabbi “a man whose face was like fiery flames,” and he asked him where he was headed. The Rabbi replied that he intended to go to Jerusalem and his interlocutor said to him “pleasant things,” “I shall lead you on the way, do not fear, for now there is no Satan or bad misfortune along the way.” And in a minute, a miraculous shortcut was made for the Rabbi and he arrived in Jerusalem: “So in just a moment I came to the Holy City, may it be built, Jerusalem. May the Holy One blessed be He make me worthy of seeing the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Lord His kingdom and the Lord shall become king of the entire universe, He shall be whole and His throne whole in Jerusalem, our Master, our Creator, our Designer, our Healer.”<sup>190</sup>

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188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

This is the Meyuḥas family Purim story, which was treated and studied by the folklore and literature scholar Tamar Alexander. The story that deals with the miracle that happened to the narrator is told in first person and defined by Alexander as a memorate – a personal story describing a historical event.<sup>191</sup> This story, which is cited in the booklet *Megilat Yoḥasin*, is drawn from historical facts, the events of 1723, and linked to historical figures: Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes and the *gevir* Ya‘akov Ben David Zonana. All of this serves as proof of the validity of the things related. The family tradition attests to the elite status the family members attributed to themselves and to the preservation of this tradition; this applies as well to the family members insistence on their exclusive right to call the *ḥatanim* to the Torah on Simḥat Torah, in the Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakkai synagogue, which they built, according to family tradition, when they arrived in Jerusalem in 1510.

All of this together demonstrates the sense of superiority as well as separateness from the other members of this community that the family members attributed to themselves and which reinforced this feeling. The constituents of the Meyuḥas family used to hold the *Purim de los Meyuḥasim* on the 15th of Adar every year, when they would have a *se’udat Purim* [Purim meal] that went on for the entire day. The times of the meals were adjusted to when the men returned from the synagogue. The focal point of the celebration was the reading of the family scroll [*Megila*]. This reading was storytelling that created reality: the reading of the scroll created the ceremony and at the same time reinforced it and preserved the story of the miracle.<sup>192</sup> Yosef Ben Bekhor Meyuḥas told Tamar Alexander that his father had asked him “to maintain the forefathers’ heritage.”<sup>193</sup> The son Yosef, who had belonged to *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair* youth movement and was a former member of a kibbutz, saw no need to keep this tradition, owing to his desire and aspiration to integrate within the

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191 Tamar Alexander learned, from personal interviews she had with Meyuḥas family women, about two other miracles attributed to Rabbi Refael: a story of a miracle of the return of Torah scrolls, which became known publicly as *Megilat Saragossa*, telling of Jews of that city, and a story about the miracle of the revival of a Christian child, who was murdered on Passover eve and his body was discovered in the Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai Synagogue in Jerusalem. This miracle had been attributed to Rabbi Kalonymus at the time. The interviewee, Simḥa Meyuḥas, in her conversation with Prof. Tamar Alexander, attributed both of the miracles to Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas. *Ibid.*, 240-45. See also Tamar Alexander, “The Sephardi Legend about Rabbenu Kalonymus in Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*, 5-10 (1984): 85-123 [Hebrew].

192 *Ibid.*, 208-13.

193 *Ibid.*, 243-4. On Yosef Ben Bekhor Avraham Refael, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 18, 21, 29.

new Zionist society, that arose in the State of Israel and which supported the maintenance of a melting pot, which would have the power to turn the immigrants from all the Diasporas into a one nation.

Only after the Six-Day War, in the summer of 1967, after the cessation of the battles, when it was possible for Yosef Meyuḥas to return to the area of his childhood in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ, where he met – my father and I accompanied him on this occasion – the Arab neighbors, who remembered the family members and their holidays,<sup>194</sup> did he decide to fulfill his father's request. On 6 March 1969, Yosef Ben Bekhor Meyuḥas and his wife, Miriam, held a celebration of the *Purim de los Meyuḥasim* in their home in Jerusalem, in which some 150 family members took part.<sup>195</sup> This blessed endeavor was not continued: the facets of life – place of residence, family members' professions, their social relations, their schooling, their education, and their interest in culture and folklore – some were ephemeral and some changed beyond recognition. Thus faded the possibility to return to customs the forefathers had upheld.<sup>196</sup> In this instance, as long as the Meyuḥas family members lived in the neighborhoods founded in Jerusalem in the second half of the nineteenth century, along Jaffa Road such as Ohel Moshe, Zikhron Tuviya and Mazkeret Moshe; where, in the center of the neighborhood, stood the square with the well – the beating heart of the community – they could gather annually to celebrate the Purim of the Meyuḥasim. When the nuclear families lived side by side, forming an extended family – close ties were maintained. When the nuclear families scattered, however, each in its own direction and its own place, the family links dissipated.

Benny Naḥmias, author of *Hamsa: Kame'ot, Emunot, Minhagim U-Refu'ah Amamit Ba-Ir Ha-'Atika Yerushalayim* [Hamsa: Amulets, Beliefs, Customs and Folk Medicine in the Old City of Jerusalem], told that *Sefer Ha-Refu'ah Ve-Ha-Segulah shel Mishpaḥat Meyuḥas* [The book of medicine and charms of the Meyuḥas family] was left for safekeeping with the Arab neighbors in Kefar

194 I witnessed the conversation between Yosef Meyuḥas and the Arab neighbor who lived in the family former house. When Yosef saw the *mezuzah*, which he recalled from his childhood, resting in the niche made for it in the door jamb of the house's entrance, he asked permission from the neighbor to take the family *mezuzah*. The neighbor refused, saying, in Arabic: "It brings good luck." See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 20.

195 Ibid., 29.

196 Pierre Nora studied the disappearance of environments of memory – lieux de mémoire – which are revived by places of memory: milieux de mémoire. Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992). Also see: Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History", trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989), 7–24. Thus, for example, internet activity of Ladino writers creates places of memory, in the absence of environments of memory. See Held, "Digital Homeland", above Introduction, n. 42.

Hashilo'aḥ, when the last of the Meyuḥas family left the village. The Arab neighbors returned the book to Yosef Ben Bekhor Meyuḥas.<sup>197</sup>

Returning to Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, author of the booklet *Megilat Yoḥasin*, in 1753 he was the head of the Yeshivah Beit Ya'akov, which was founded in 1691 by Ya'akov Pereira of Amsterdam and named for him. Also Rabbi Refael's brother, Rabbi Avraham Bakhar Shmuel Meyuḥas, taught in that yeshivah. Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas began his studies in this institution at the age of six or seven. As the *Rosh Yeshivah* (Head of the Yeshivah), Rabbi Refael served as the president of the Jerusalem Rabbinical Court, and he appointed its members in agreement with the *Va'ad Pekidei Eretz Ysrael Be-Kushta* [The Committee of Officials of The Land of Israel in Kushta]. In 1756, after the death of the Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Yisra'el Ya'akov Algazi, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas Bakhar Shmuel was chosen as Rishon Le-Zion and served in this capacity until his demise in 1771. *Pinkas Kushta* [the Kushta registry book], in a letter dated 12 Nissan 5522 (1761), page 45, states that his salary was 450 kurus per year.<sup>198</sup> Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas wrote a number of important Torah studies, including *Peri Ha-*

197 The scholar Benny Naḥmias wrote that when Meyuḥas family members again visited their homes in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ, the "Arabs living there" gave them "two volumes of a book that had been handed over to them by the head of family when it left the village in the War of Independence. The grandfather of the Yosef Meyuḥas discussed here, "Senior Bekhor Meyuḥas, was the only one in the family who was not involved in ritual slaughter; for his livelihood, he carved camels and donkeys out of olive wood, which were sold as souvenirs to tourists who visited Rachel's Tomb or the Western Wall. The Arabs of the area respected him greatly and used to turn to him with questions about health and family. Senior Meyuḥas would seat those coming to ask for his advice on low stools, while he would put the ancient book on the table and leaf through its yellowing pages. He always found the answers in those pages." Benny (Ben Zion) Naḥmias wrote about "*Sefer Ha-Refu'ah Shel Mishpaḥat Meyuḥas*" [The Meyuḥas Family Book of Cures] which was written in the thirteenth century in Spain. Many of the amulet writers active in Jerusalem occasionally copied texts from the ancient book ... the book, which was written in Rashi script and decorated with spectacular, fine metal openwork, eventually made its way into the possession of the Meyuḥas family, who lived in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ." See Benny Naḥmias, *The Meyuḥas Family Book of Cures* (Tel Aviv: Modan, 1996), 75 [ Hebrew]. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 18, 21, 29.

198 J. Barnai, *The Jews in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: under the Patronage of the Istanbul Committee of Officials for Palestine* (Tuscaloosa: Alabama University Press, Tuscaloosa, 1992). See also J. Barnai, "The Names of the Jews in Jerusalem", *Cathedra*, 72 (1994): 135–68 [Hebrew]. On page 156 of the article appear seven names of Meyuḥas family members: Avraham, who was a Ḥakham in the Pereira yeshivah; Eliyahu; Bekhor Shmuel Refael, chief Rabbi 1756–1771 and the head of the Pereira yeshivah; his sons, Benyamin and Mordekhai Yosef; Moshe; and Shmuel Meyuḥas.

*Adamah*.<sup>199</sup> Times were hard for the Jews, and within the Jerusalem community disputes and disagreements broke out.<sup>200</sup> The name of “the humble Refael Meyuḥas Bakhar Shmuel” comes first among the signatories on a letter for an emissary, Rabbi Avraham Revaḥ, may the Lord protect and redeem him, who set out on a mission on behalf of the Jerusalem community to “the glorious city of Fez, may God protect it” in Morocco,<sup>201</sup> in 5631 (1771). Among those signing that letter was also Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Bakhar Meyuḥas, Rabbi Refael’s son, who in time would also serve as Rishon Le-Zion.<sup>202</sup>

The brother of the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas was Rabbi Avraham Bakhar Shmuel Meyuḥas. He married Jamila, the only daughter of Rabbi Tuviyah Ha-Rofe (1652–1729).<sup>203</sup> His well-known work is *Sdeh Ha-Aretz*.<sup>204</sup> His three sons were Shmuel Yitzḥak Meyuḥas, Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas and Yosef Ya’akov Meyuḥas. The two brothers, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas and Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas, are the progenitors of the Meyuḥas family members in Jerusalem.

### *The Descendants of Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas*

In the continuation, I shall dwell on the descendants of Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, for they constituted my father’s family, on which the present chapter focuses. Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas’s son, who also held the position of Rishon Le-Zion in Jerusalem, Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas, was born in Jerusalem in 1736. His famous work is *Birkhot Ha-Mayim* and he used to sign his name with his initials MY”M or Ha-MY”M, standing for: “the young [meaning humble]

199 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 102–115. Ben-Yaacob lists the approbations by Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas and his signature on documents and letters for emissaries’ missions. See *ibid.*, 115–21. See also above n. 138.

200 *Ibid.*, 128–46.

201 As early as 1603, the Jews of Fez passed permanent *Taqqanot* [regulations] to aid The Land of Israel: a tax for the benefit of Jerusalem which was collected on the Sabbath of *Parshat Shekalim* (the first of the four portions read in preparation for Passover).

202 About him, see below n. 206. The letter given to the emissary Rabbi Avraham Revaḥ is kept in a private collection and a copy of it was given to Makhon Ben-Zvi by the Foundation for the Western Wall Heritage, on the eve of Rosh Ha-Shanah 5773. The authors stress the importance of the Western Wall, the place where the Jerusalem Jews pray for the entire Jewish people.

203 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 147–58. On Tuviyah Ha-Rofe and his activity, see Arie Morgenstern, “To Bear the Burden of My Tormented Brethren’: Tuviyah Ha-Rofe and the Jews of Jerusalem 1713–1729”, *Cathedra*, 142 (2011): 27–54 and bibliography there.

204 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 147–58.

Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas.<sup>205</sup> He was also known among the public as a skilled physician.<sup>206</sup> At the time of Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign in Palestine, Rabbi MY" M prevented a tragedy from befalling the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were suspected by the Muslims there of supporting the French. The Rabbi proposed that the Jews reinforce the city walls for free, and indeed, the Jewish inhabitants, with their Rabbi in the lead, carried out the work.<sup>207</sup> Napoleon, as we know, did not come up to Jerusalem but turned northward to Acre.

In 1777 a dispute broke out in Aram Tzova, that is: Aleppo, between Rabbi Shlomo Laniado and Rabbi Yehudah Katzin over the standing of the Frankos – the European Jews – in Aram Tzova. While the former obliged the Frankos to obey the community regulations, the latter released them from this duty. Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Meyuḥas agreed with the former.<sup>208</sup> When the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas died, an argument arose among the Jerusalem Rabbis: part of them wanted to appoint his son, Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas, who was then thirty-three years old, to the honorable office, while others supported his father-in-law, Rabbi Yom Tov Ben Rabbi Ya'akov Algazy. Rabbi MY" M made way for his father-in-law and only after the latter passed away (1802) was Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas appointed Rishon Le-Zion. As we know, in time a similar turn of events occurred with Rabbi Yissa Berakhah.<sup>209</sup>

The two sons of the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas were Raḥamim Bekhor Meyuḥas and Refael Avraham Meyuḥas.<sup>210</sup> From their generation on, Meyuḥas family members no longer served as the Rishon Le-Zion. From then on they were people well versed in Torah learning, *dayyanim* and Rabbis who studied in Jerusalem yeshivot.<sup>211</sup> The historian Yaron Ben-

205 Ibid., 167–80. Ben-Yaacob details Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Yosef Meyuḥas's approbations and signatures on letters and documents, *ibid.*, 180–84.

206 Ibid., 185.

207 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 186–87; Yaari, *Emissaries from The Land of Israel*, 700.

208 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 177. See also n. 82 in the introductory chapter.

209 See above n. 4.

210 On them, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 189–92, and also the Meyuḥas family tree there on 471–77.

211 On the Sephardi yeshivot in Jerusalem toward the close of the Ottoman period, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, "The Yeshivot in Jerusalem and Spiritual Creativity" in Israel Bartal and Ḥaim Goren (eds): *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 328–48 [Hebrew] and the bibliography there. Gérard Nahon, "Yeshivot hiérosolomites du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Les Juifs au regard de l'Histoire," in Gilbert Dahan ed., *Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernard Blumenkranz* (Paris: Picard, 1985), 301–26. See also

Naeh determined that in the nineteenth century over one hundred yeshivot were established in Jerusalem. In his study mentioned above, Ben-Naeh cited Rabbi Yitzḥak Farḥi (1779–1853), who wrote in his work *Tov Yerushalayim*, that a hundred Ḥakhamim received regular support from the kolel, mainly through the “Fund for Talmidei Ḥakhamim,” also known as “Tiferet Yisra’el.”<sup>212</sup> Only ten of them earned their own livelihoods, while the others were supported by money from the *ḥalukah* and provisions of the yeshivot, usually living in dire poverty.

Ben-Naeh, who investigated and located the names of over one hundred yeshivot that operated in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, found that there were two types of these institutions in Jerusalem: yeshivot intended to impart advanced Rabbinic education to those seeking to train for teaching positions and disseminate Torah learning; and yeshivot of Ḥakhamim [Sephardi Rabbis] that were aimed to be places where Ḥakhamim, who had already acquired a thorough Jewish education, would study together. Most of the Sephardi yeshivot in Jerusalem were of the latter type and were funded with the generosity of wealthy individuals. The yeshivot were a source of livelihood for many. These institutions also received a relative portion of the profits of all the missions abroad on behalf of Jerusalem. There were, however, also yeshivot, such as the famous Yeshivat Beit El,<sup>213</sup> who sent their own representatives to collect funds abroad.<sup>214</sup> Bequeathing membership in a yeshivah was common in the nineteenth century. The Meyuḥas family was connected to Yeshivat Ohel Yosef.<sup>215</sup>

The historian Ben-Naeh wrote that “membership and the right to receive monthly provisions were an economic asset that was, at times, given as part of a marriage arrangement, as seen, for instance, in the engagement agreement between the Eliachar and Panigel families in the middle of the nineteenth century”. This is referring to the marriage of Vida Leah Panigel, the daughter of the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meir Panigel (1804-1893); (author of: *Lev Marpe*, 1887) to Rav Ḥam”a – Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar. They were the parents of my grandmother, Simḥa Eliachar Meyuḥas (1865–1951). Since the yeshivot did not

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Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 77–79, as well as Efrati, *Sephardi Community in Jerusalem*, 21–22.

212 This yeshivah was established in 1890 and in 1923 it became the Porat Yosef Yeshivah. Ibid.

213 M.D. Gaon, in his *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel*, vol 1, 138, wrote that this yeshivah was established in 1636 by Rabbi Gedaliah Ḥayoun.

214 Yaron Ben-Naeh (see above n. 211: “The Yeshivot in Jerusalem”) bases himself on Yaari, *Emissaries from The Land of Israel*, 701. The Beit El Yeshivah received permission to send emissaries by itself in 1777. See Yaari, *Emissaries from The Land of Israel*, 24.

215 Yaron Ben-Naeh bases himself on Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 247, where the author discusses an episode in the life of Yosef Bar”an Meyuḥas (1868-1942).

demand daily attendance of the Ḥakhamim who studied in them, there were some who registered as students in a number of yeshivot and could thereby provide for their families. My grandfather, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, was one of the distinguished members of the yeshivot “Ḥesed Le-Avraham U-Binyan Shlomo,” founded by Rabbi Avraham Ben Natan (1747);<sup>216</sup> and “Mazal Tzome’ah,” which was established by the wealthy Mazal Tov, the wife of the benefactor Eliyahu David Ezra of Calcutta and Ronald Sassoon (1882).<sup>217</sup> In the list “Names of the Yeshivot and Their Distinguished Members”<sup>218</sup> appears Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas in the Yeshivah Beit Ya’akov (Sassoon), founded by “the late Ya’akov Sassoon and his wife Rachel from Bombay” as well as the Yeshivah Magen David [Shield of David], established by David Emmanuel Pinto, and the yeshivah of Ya’akov Pereira;<sup>219</sup> the name of the trustee or the sender in the last two instances is the Amsterdam community.<sup>220</sup> Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas’s name appears also for the yeshivot Beit Gedalya and Beit Aharon.<sup>221</sup> Avraham Ben-Yaacob quotes in his book the “list” of the allotment of the money that came from Kushta to a number of Meyuḥas family members in 5674 (1824).<sup>222</sup>

Some people from the Meyuḥas family in Jerusalem dealt with ritual slaughter: one of them was Rabbi Mordekhai Shmuel Yom-Tov Meyuḥas.<sup>223</sup> Members

216 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 208–12.

217 Ibid. Numbers 46 and 64 on the list appended to Ben-Naeh’s article. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 208, 235–40; and the publication entitled: *In a Declining Generation: An Anthology of Articles on Current Issues of the Sephardi Community in Jerusalem* [Hebrew], published by a group of community activists through the publisher and efforts of Y.N. Mizraḥi, Jerusalem, 1935, 25. Noted there is that the trustee or sender is David Ezra of London. This anthology was intended to protest “the decline of the Sephardi community and the reasons for it” and laments the “decline of the Sephardi community in the profession of the Rabbinate.” The purpose of the writing was to clarify “the source of the yeshivot’s incomes and the arrangement for their distribution”. Included among the material in this collection, however, is a list of the “names of the yeshivot and their distinguished members”.

218 Ibid.

219 Ibid., 29–30.

220 Ibid., 25.

221 Ibid., 30–31.

222 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*. 410–11, Ben-Yaacob notes that “this list was in the possession of Rabbi Raḥamim Ben Rabbi Shlomo Meyuḥas and Rabbi Mordekhai Ben Shmuel Yom Tov Meyuḥas of Jerusalem and was published by Pinḥas Ben Tzvi Grayevsky in his *Mi-Ginzei Yerushalayim* [From The Treasures of Jerusalem], booklet 14, Jerusalem, Shevat, 5691 [1931], 13–14, with the title, “The arrangement for the division of the ‘lista’ to the Meyuḥas family members in Jerusalem”.

223 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 199–200.

of another branch of the Meyuḥas family – Siman Tov Meyuḥas and his son Refael – were beadles at the Western Wall and testified before the Western Wall Committee, which was established by the British Mandate authorities in The Land of Israel, in light of the 1929 riots in and which sought to protect the rights of the Jews at the Western Wall.<sup>224</sup>

A number of Meyuḥas family members were involved in education and teaching. Yosef ben Raḥamim Natan (Bar"an) Meyuḥas (1868–1942) was a teacher, educator, writer, investigative reporter, and a known public affairs activist in Jerusalem towards the close of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth. He was among the founders of the Hebrew Teachers Association in The Land of Israel (1892). He was one of the fighters for imposing the Hebrew language in The Land of Israel and made Hebrew the language spoken in his home. He wrote children's literature and dealt with describing the life of the Arabs and their culture. He investigated and collected Sephardic folktales and romances and strove to inculcate this heritage in coming generations. He promoted the merging of the Diasporas of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim. His wife, Margalit, the daughter of Yeḥiel Mikhal Pines (1843–1913), was an Ashkenazi. In 1899, Yosef Ben Raḥamim Natan Meyuḥas took part in the establishment of the Sha'arei Tzedek neighborhood in Jerusalem.<sup>225</sup> The main contribution of Sephardim to Zionism – and Yosef Ben Raḥamim Natan Meyuḥas was one of the leaders in this direction – was in the area of reviving the Hebrew language and instilling it in the schools, education, and the press. The daily *Ha-Ḥerut* appeared in 1909–1917; another paper, *Ha-Pardes – El Paradizo, Der Pardes* – appeared in Jerusalem in 1909, once a week, on Fridays, in Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish. The manager and publisher was Shlomo Israel Cherizli – ShaYi"Sh. He was the son of Luna Rica Meyuḥas (the daughter of Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas, who lived in Kefar Ha-Shilo'ah), and became Cherizli after her marriage.<sup>226</sup> In addition to these papers, one must mention the paper *Hashkafah*, published in Jerusalem "twice a week on Tuesday and Friday," from 1899, under the editorship of Eliezer Ben-Yehudah. The holder of the *ferman* was his wife, Ḥemdah Ben-Yehudah. In the issue of *Hashkafah* that appeared in Jerusalem on Friday, 11 Tammuz 5664, was an announcement with the notification of the engagement of Simḥa Meyuḥas and Ben Zion Ben

224 On them, see *ibid.*, 288–89 and 441: Letter of Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, then chairman of the National Committee [*Ha-Va'ad Ha-Leumi*], to the British district governor concerning damage to the Wall reported by the beadle of the Wall, Ya'akov Meyuḥas, dated 17 April 1944.

225 On him, see Ben-Yacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 243–87.

226 On her, see chap. 4, nn. 134–36.

Shlomo Yosef, on 8 Tammuz 5664. In honor of this joyous occasion, the engaged couple were donating two francs to the *Tze'irei Yerushalayim* Association. We see the place the new press occupied in the social order of the Jerusalem Jews. To sum up the issue, while the Ashkenazi Rabbis waged an all out war against the new Hebrew education and against adding Hebrew and secular studies to the curriculum, since they considered it a danger to their religious identity, the Sephardi Rabbis and public figures supported the new Hebrew education, seeing in it the natural continuation of their identity as Jews.<sup>227</sup>

### *Shadarim of the Meyuḥas Family*

Rabbi Refael Avraham Meyuḥas's great-grandson, mentioned above,<sup>228</sup> was Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Ben Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas, my great-grandfather. He went out as a *shadar* – Rabbinic emissary – on behalf of the Jerusalem community as well as for various institutions operating there. Also appearing in the records of the scholar Avraham Yaari is Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas the son of Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas, who died in Jerusalem in 1804.<sup>229</sup> Yaari determined that from the Meyuḥas's family there were “no less than thirteen emissaries at different times,” who went on missions on behalf of Jerusalem and Hebron.<sup>230</sup>

The institution of sending emissaries from The Land of Israel to the Diaspora countries for the purpose of collecting contributions is a very old one. In the seventeenth century, an emissary of The Land of Israel was called *sheliḥa de-rahmana* [“emissary of mercy”] and only in a later period did the term *sheliḥa de-rabbanan* [“Rabbinic emissary”] come into use. In the eighteenth century also the term *murshesh* [“authorized”], that is, one who has received a document of mission, was applied.<sup>231</sup> The emissaries from The Land of Israel

227 Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 162–77; Díaz-Más and Sánchez Pérez, *Los Sefardíes*, 11.

228 See above n. 210.

229 A. Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*. On Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas, see also nn. 242–43 below. Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas was the son of Avraham Meyuḥas – the brother of the Rishon Le-Zion Refael Meyuḥas – and his wife, Jamila, the daughter of Rabbi Tuviya Ha-Rofe. Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas, the father of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas, was the great-grandson of the Rishon Le-Zion Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas, author of *Megilat Yohasin*. On him see above nn. 178–90; 199.

230 See A. Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, part. 1, 6 as well as the chronological list of *shadarim* in the book by Moshe David Gaon, *Yehudei Ha-Mizrah Be-Eretz Yisra'el*, 285–98, which includes many members of the Meyuḥas family.

231 *Ibid.*, 30. In the Ashkenazi countries, the The Land of Israel emissaries were called *meshulaḥim* [those who were sent]. When setting out, the emissary received a number of documents: a general letter, letters to generous contributors, a document granting legal

were treated respectfully by the communities they visited. Rabbi Moshe Ḥagiz (1672–1750) wrote in his work *Sefer Sefat Emet*,<sup>232</sup> “And the country and all of its inhabitants are suffering from the rebukes and torments for all our Jewish brethren scattered in the Diaspora. So we, the entire Jewish people, must rescue out poverty-stricken brethren who live there [in The Land of Israel], for they are called today ‘Guardians of the Watch of the Tabernacle of the Lord’ and stir them to fitting repentance for the redemption of our mother, the Holy City it shall be called; she is our crowing mother who is captive between Edom and Ishamael.” Statements in a similar vein were made by Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí, author of *Me’am Lo’ez* (1730), “Whoever lives outside of The Land of Israel is obliged to care for the residents of the Holy Land, and he should certainly know that the commandment for *pidyon shevuyim* [Redemption of Captives] is not greater than this concern. This is said regarding the kolel of the *Yishuv* in the city ....”<sup>233</sup> It happened on many occasions that the emissary gave a halakhic ruling on issues of the host communities. His authority derived from the holiness of The Land of Israel and its importance in the eyes of the welcoming congregations. On the first Sabbath after the emissary arrived in a community and had found a place to stay, he gave a sermon in the large synagogue there and sang the praises of The Land of Israel in general, or of the Holy City on whose behalf he had set out on his way, in particular. The sermon was usually in Hebrew – in Sephardi pronunciation – but sometimes in Jewish Spanish. The emissaries were not fluent in foreign languages, and many times they were assisted by translators.<sup>234</sup> Ya’akov Yehoshua wrote about emissaries, saying that “the Sephardi Rabbis had neither relatives nor acquaintances in these countries nor in the Middle Eastern lands, and their knowledge of foreign language was meager, including Arabic. They usually spoke Jewish Spanish, but the main language they conducted their business in and gave their public ser-

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proxy, the terms and conditions of the mission, and a registry notebook for the mission. *Ibid.*, 6. See also Ya’akov Yehoshua, *Ḥakhamim in Old Jerusalem Their Dealings and Their Livelihood* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968), 63–64 [Hebrew]. On the emissaries who came from Jerusalem and their worldview, see Zvi Zohar, *Luminous Face of the East* (Benei Berak: Ha-Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuḥad, 2001), chap. 10, 190–222 [Hebrew].

232 The work was published by Solomon Propes, Amsterdam, 1707: *Sheluḥei Yerushalayim* [Emissaries from Jerusalem], 19–20.

233 Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí, *Me’am Lo’ez* on Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 3, ed. Kushta, 1823, 180: “[El ke] estando en *hutza la-artetz* tiene kargo de los moradores de la tierra santa i tengalo por seguro ke no puede azer *pidiyon shvuyim* mijor ke esto”.

234 A. Yaari, *Sheluḥei Eretz Yisra’el*, 126.

mons in the countries they visited was Hebrew.”<sup>235</sup> I found support for his statements in letters sent by Meyuḥas’ family emissaries to Jerusalem to those who had sent them on their missions. In 1887, the emissary Moshe Meyuḥas wrote from Calcutta to his brother in Jerusalem, asking him to send a letter in English to Mr. Yosef, may the Lord protect him: May the Lord protect him and show him mercy in this manner ...” He then writes the text of the letter he is asking him to send.<sup>236</sup> Obviously, the emissary himself did not know English. Moreover, on 29 Sivan 5686 (1926), the *shadar* Raḥamim Ben Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas – my grandfather – wrote, when in Orán, Algeria, “To our friend, the secretary of our committee, Mr. A. Laniado, may the Lord protect and redeem him.” He reports about the situation of the various charity funds in Orán and asks “to write a *nezer ha-gaba’ut*<sup>237</sup> [ornate, elegant letter] to the honorable, exalted *gevir*, who is good and does good, hastening to perform a mitzvah, Seneyor Mordekhai Azencot, may the Lord sustain him and protect him ... and they should write a letter to him completely in French and with all the praises and gratitude and blessings and ask that he send the names of his dear sons whom he wishes to be blessed together with him every *Rosh Ḥodesh* [New Month] eve etc. etc.” Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas adds a request that the members of the above mentioned committee should write to Seneyor Mordekhai, saying “that at the end of the month of Menaḥem [Av], they will send him an announcement to distribute among the generous givers and they should make and print some 300 announcements in French and send them to him on 1 Menaḥem so that the collector of the funds should pass them out ...” Here, too, the *shadar* needed written material in a language he did not know

235 Ya’akov Yehoshua, *Ḥakhamim in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968), 58–66, especially 60 [Hebrew]. Yet, there were exceptions: see above chap. 1, n. 106, about Rabbi Bekhor Shalom Ginio who knew Turkish well enough to serve as a translator in the *Shari’a* court in Jerusalem.

236 “Le rogo ke devista mandan una karta en inglez *leshem* sinyor Yosef ...” 4/1, 1887, in the Moshe David Gaon Document Collection housed in Makhon Ben-Zvi in Jerusalem. On the emissary Moshe Meyuḥas, see also below nn. 250–52.

237 *Nezer gaba’ut* was an elegant document handed to the local *gabbai*, who was in charge of collecting the money. The more ornate the document and the greater the importance of the signatories, the more it was publicly valued. In response to Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas’s request, the members of the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem informed him that “regarding the *nezarim*, since the membership of the *Va’ad* (committee) has been recomposed, and the month of Nisan came immediately after the elections for the new committee, we were quite disorganized but now the *nezarim* have been prepared and will be sent post haste ...”, Letter 8, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

– French.<sup>238</sup> A letter, as requested by the emissary, was indeed prepared in French, written on a typewriter, and sent from Jerusalem on 29 June 1926. The said letter was addressed to Monsieur Mardoché [in Hebrew: Mordekhai] Azencot, 22 Boulevard du 2e. Zouaves, Orán, and it contained an appeal to M. Mardoché Azencot to take upon himself the function of *gabbai* for the Raḥel Imenu Fund. Furthermore, it was requested that M. Azencot inform the members of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem, by return mail, the names of his precious children, so that the writers, would be able to bless them every *Rosh Hodesh*, at the gravesite of Raḥel Imenu.<sup>239</sup> In a letter from 16 Adar 5686, the secretary of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem informs the *shadar*,”the Rav Gaon Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, may the Lord protect and redeem him”, that he [the secretary] is sending him “announcements printed in the three languages common among the inhabitants of his location, and signed by the chief Rabbis and members of our community committee. We ask your good self to distribute them in the cities and villages near the place he is camped so as to increase the contributions and collections that will be gathered by him at this time.” The committee’s secretary even asks, in the name of the committee, “to hurry to send us as soon as possible all that has been collected by him to date... since our coffer is empty...”<sup>240</sup> A letter with similar text was sent from Jerusalem on 18 Menaḥem Av 5686: the emissary was asked “to inform us with what content and style, in which languages, the announcements should be published ...” In a letter from 22 Elul 5786, the secretary of *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem informs the emissary about the shipment of short announcements signed by the chief Rabbis and the president of *Va'ad Ha-Edah*. The request is “to send us assistance so that we can arrange to rent an apartment for our poor to live in during the coming winter.”<sup>241</sup>

The *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas complained in his letter of 29 Sivan 5686 (1926), mentioned above,<sup>242</sup> that the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem had informed him that he – the *shadar* – did not deserve part of the contribution sent by Seneyor Moshe Nahon from the glorious city of Ascar,<sup>243</sup> since “this had been arranged years ago through an exchange of letters with the

238 The letter under discussion was kept in the Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas file, ט”ש 26, in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 210, on which selections for the letter appear.

239 File Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas in the Archives of *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

240 Ibid.

241 Ibid.

242 Cf. n. 238 above.

243 The city Mascara and in Arabic, Mu'askar, located south of Orán.

previous committee, so I [the *shadar*] did not deserve a portion of it and so on; the truth is that I was very perturbed by this ....” Indeed, in a letter sent from Jerusalem on 13 Sivan 5686, Meir Laniado, secretary of *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim*, wrote, “We have received the money from the glorious city of Askar from Sr. Moshe Nahon from the estate of Abecassis, and the Rabbis declared that this issue had been arranged for years through an exchange of letters with the previous committee, so, therefore he, the *shadar*, does not deserve part of it, in any event when your good self will come to Jerusalem, may it be built and established, the issue will be settled and the matter of the shekalim will be arranged according to the terms of the document of mission and as customary with all emissaries.”<sup>244</sup>

As the *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas saw it, it was only “after I had spoken and intervened by myself in this” – did Seneyor Nahon send the money. He went on to write in his letter that he could have asked the contributor to give the money to him, but he had thought that it was more fitting “not to show him that I am requesting it for my own benefit,” so “I did not speak to him about this at all, but rather told him: here is the address and send it to them”. Therefore, the emissary asks “that the Rabbis avoid disputes when they consider my hard work, and please forgive me for what I have written”.<sup>245</sup> In the same letter, Rabbi Meyuḥas tells that “when I was in the glorious city of Tiaret, may the Lord establish it, Amen, I sent a long letter to my brother-in-law, president of the committee, the illustrious Yosef may the Lord protect and sustain him,<sup>246</sup> and I informed him of the will of Sra. Rachel the widow of the late Mordekhai Hatwil, who requested of her four daughters in her will that they send one thousand francs to Jerusalem, may it be built and established. He certainly reported this to the *Va’ad* and they did everything necessary to obtain the money and not let it go to another institution that does not have rights to it”.

Thus, we see the stiff competition among the Jews of Jerusalem for the contributions from abroad. The emissary even expressed the hope that “when they do obtain the money, they will not deprive me of my part in it.” We are going to see that disputes did break out between the *shadar* and those who sent him

244 In letter no. 9, the Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem. When the *shadar* did return to his city and home, arbitration was conducted between him and his sponsors over the portion he should receive from the donations he had collected, including the contribution from the “estate of Abecassis” mentioned here. See below nn. 269-76.

245 Ibid.

246 This reference is to Mr. Yosef Eliachar, the oldest son of Rav Ḥam”a. On him, see Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 645-47.

about the portion he should be given from all the contributions he raised. Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo attested about himself in that same letter, “I am not meticulous, but I will not forgo my right so that they should deprive me,” and for that reason, he wrote from Tiaret, Algeria, to his brother-in-law, the committee president, Yosef Eliachar, the oldest son of Rav Ḥam”a and the brother of his wife, Simḥa Eliachar Meyuḥas. In response to Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas’s request, there was sent from Jerusalem, on 15 September 1926, a typewritten letter, in French, to M. Isaac Soutto, president of the consistoire Israélite in Tiaret, asking him to deal with the issue of the will of Rachel Ḥava, the widow of Mordeché [Mordekhai] Hatwil: to speak with the deceased’s daughters and her sons-in-law and to ask them to expedite the will and send the sum of one thousand francs to Jerusalem as that generous woman had directed for the Jerusalem community. The letter was signed by the Chief Rabbi of The Land of Israel and the president of *Va’ad Ha-Edah*. A similar letter – with the signatures of the community president as well as the chief Rabbi – was sent, the same day, to M. Joseph Atboul, the son-in-law of Rachel Hatwil, who lived in Tiaret.

On 7 May 1926, an announcement, written in French, was sent from Jerusalem to the gabbai of the Raḥel Imenu and Shimon Ha-Tzaddik funds, introducing the *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas to them and asking them to help him collect money for these funds<sup>247</sup> A similar letter was addressed to the community leaders of the glorious city of Boudeniq.<sup>248</sup> The two documents describe at length the difficult situation of the Jerusalem Jews and implore the benefactors to help them. The poverty of the Jerusalem inhabitants is palpable in the letter in which the *shadar* Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas asks his brother to write to him with a thin nib, since he usually writes on both sides of the paper and the addressee has a hard time reading the written text.<sup>249</sup> In a letter written in 1893, Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas complains and stipulates his troubles: that he’s drowning in deep waters. And why did he choose to leave his home? All the wealthy people in his day – wrote Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas – are Ashkenazim and they are stingy.<sup>250</sup> He goes on to say that he wishes to return to Jerusalem, to the bosom of his family, and to study, night and day for four or five years, so

247 The file of the *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File in the Archives of the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sephardim*.

248 Ibid., Letter no. 13a. Also appended to this letter was the text of a letter to the hosts and the gabbai.

249 “Le rogo quando me eskrive ke me eskriva kon pendula delgada porke me esta eskrievindo de dos partes de el papel i no puedo meldar sus kartas bien”. Letter no. 4/4, Paris 5650 (1890), Moshe David Gaon Collection, Makhon Ben-Tzvi, Jerusalem.

250 “En aguas amargas esto nadando.” Letter 4/5 (5653 [1893]). Ibid.

that he would reach the level of a Ḥakham and even bring his sons to the level of Ḥakhamim. He hopes to raise his family's standing, which was very low.<sup>251</sup> He continues, asking his brother to take good care of his – the *shadar's* – wife and calm her and speak to her with sweet words so that this unfortunate woman will not be too sad.<sup>252</sup> On many an occasion, the sponsors of the *shadarim* would urge their emissaries to transmit the contribution money to their destination as well as “to send us soon the addresses of the wealthy gentlemen in your location so that we can send from here, when the time comes, letters and also telegrams requesting help for Passover needs, and we can thereby help your good self with your task.”<sup>253</sup> A circular dated 15 Menaḥem-Av 5686 (1926), sent to “Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, may his Creator protect and sustain him, *shadar* of our community's kolel in the glorious city of Algiers,” states that “since the money that we have received to date has been completely used up to pay our old debts” and “we owe large amounts to pay for the *matzot* we distributed for Passover” and considering the great hike in rents “of three time or more” ... “in light of all the foregoing, we plead with you ... to send us everything collected as soon as possible ....”<sup>254</sup>

By the waning of the nineteenth century and even more in the early twentieth, the institution of sending fundraisers from The Land of Israel was in decline. The wealthy community members to whom the emissaries turned tended to send contributions through banking institutions directly to the religious and welfare institutions in Jerusalem, without the need for emissaries. So, for example, in a letter in the archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem from the firm Azoulay Frères Successeurs in Algiers, dated 22 August 1919, to the chief Rabbi, Ḥaim M. Eliachar (Rav Ḥam”a), the brothers, the heirs of Yehudah Azoulay, who traded in colonial food products, inform him that they have sent a check drawn on Credit Lyonnais, number C18637, in the sum of one thousand francs, to be divided among the communities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed<sup>255</sup> Even the emissaries on several occasions had recourse to the banking system: Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas wrote,

251 “Alevantar la *mishpaha*h di Meyuḥasin ke esta muy abashada.” Ibid.

252 “Ke mire mungo a mi mujer de afalagarla i tomarla sienpre kon palavras dulces para ke la dizmazalada no tome *tsa'ar*....” Letter 4/6. Ibid. The letter begins on the fourth page. Cf. n. 290 below.

253 A typewritten announcement of 21 Shevat 5686 addressed to “Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, may the Lord [his Rock] and Redeemer protect him, emissary of our kolel, in the glorious city of Algiers.” The Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem.

254 A letter dated 15 Menaḥem-Av 5686, *ibid.*

255 Algiers File, Archives of *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

in his letter from 29 Sivan 5686 [1926], mentioned above, that “today I sent a check of which the portion for the kolel is twelve thousand francs.”<sup>256</sup> In another letter, this emissary comments that “since today is a holiday of theirs and the banks are not open, I cannot send money; I will, God willing, send it on Thursday.”<sup>257</sup> In the same letter, Rabbi Meyuḥas tells how much money he sent in checks. He also added “that besides that, I have sent on my account to my son Moreno, may God protect him, the sum of fifteen hundred francs.” In 1926 Moreno the son of Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas – my father – was studying in Paris. One tends to think that on the account of the incomes obtained by the emissary from the contributions he collected, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, sent money to his eldest son to help him maintain himself and continue his studies. In the same letter, Rabbi Meyuḥas asked his brother-in-law, Yosef Eliachar, “To inform me how much were the francs sold for and to hand over to my son, Yosef, may God protect him, ten Egyptian pounds so that he can pay with those the rent for the house.”<sup>258</sup> The younger son, Yosef Meyuḥas, is the one who took care of family matters in Jerusalem, when his father and brother were abroad.

Another document informs us that the *shadar* Raḥamim Meyuḥas received from “the blessed, dear distinguished brothers, hosts of lovely housing, the source of their Torah, the Frères Azoulay, may the Lord protect and redeem them,”<sup>259</sup> the sum of two thousand two hundred francs which these gentlemen sent from a donation they received for the poor of Zion.” Yet, the emissary was not satisfied, “How astonished I was to receive such a sum as this at a time when the value of the franc was so low ...”. Once again, the *shadar* turned to the Jewish leader of the glorious city of Ghardaïa, Rabbi Avraham Ben Mana Sallam Baluka with a request to increase his contribution. At the end of his letter, the emissary wrote, “And if I were able to go by myself to collect the contribution, I would go for the benefit of ten thousand souls, but now I have waxed old and do not have the strength to do so.”<sup>260</sup> In a letter sent from Jerusalem, on

256 Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem.

257 Document 13, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem.

258 Ibid. The donations came in the value of French francs. In Jerusalem the francs were exchanged for local currency. Cf. below n. 270. See also Ben-Yacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 438–39.

259 Cf. above n. 255.

260 Letter 3, Alger, 1926, in the Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem. In 1926 Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, born in

8 Tishri 5687 [1926], we find the name Avraham Ben Manasalla.<sup>261</sup> In it the Jerusalem community elders complain that “you knew that the value of the franc at this time is very low, so that your donations of previous years were reckoned to be four or five times greater than your recent donation.” Owing to that, the Jerusalem elders ask their correspondents to increase the amount of their contribution. This was written after the *shadar*, Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, returned to Jerusalem from his mission.<sup>262</sup> In light of the decline in the value of the franc, the board of *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* demanded that Rabbi Meyuḥas “remit to us speedily the portion we are to receive – and if his good self does not agree, owing to his demands from the committee, would he then sell the francs and leave us our part in safe currency about which there will be no doubt of loss.”<sup>263</sup>

We realize that a dispute had broken out between the *shadar*, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, and his sponsors over the portion of the money owing to the *shadar* for the contributions he had collected. It turns out that Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas had not met the demand of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem: on 2 Kislev 5687, the president of the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem wrote again to Rabbi Meyuḥas that because “at the meeting held yesterday, it had been decided to address his honor in a letter and to remind him that more than two weeks had passed from the last deadline set by yourself to finish the accounting of his mission and since our funds are extremely low, we ask your good self to turn in his account this week together with the money we are to receive.”<sup>264</sup> In a document from 11 Adar 11 5687 (1927), the *shadar*, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, presented the accounting of the donations he had collected.<sup>265</sup>

The emissary usually collected an allotment from the community and afterward tried to appeal to the generosity of its individual members.<sup>266</sup> The motives for an emissary taking up his task – which often encountered an obstacle course<sup>267</sup> – were many and varied, whether it be to help his community, when

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1862, was about sixty-four years old. The city of Ghardaïa is quite far from Orán, toward the southeast approaching the Sahara.

261 Letter dated 8 Tishri 5686, File of the emissary Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, Archives of *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

262 Ibid.

263 Letter of *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim*, 8 Tishri 5687, *ibid.*

264 The president’s letter in the name of the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem. *Ibid.*

265 Document no. 17, Jerusalem, 1927, *ibid.*

266 Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 47–61.

267 The historian Avraham Yaari found that one out of ten emissaries did not return. See *ibid.*, 29.

it was distressed; to maintain one of its religious institutions; to see to the publication of a religious work – in Jerusalem there were no printing houses until the mid-nineteenth century – or to seek a livelihood. The emissary usually received one-third of the net income he collected.<sup>268</sup> The emissaries kept a *shadar*'s registry notebook in which they listed all their expenses and income during their mission. Upon return, they presented the registry for the review and examination of their sponsors. Located in the file for Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem, is his mission registry notebook for Algeria, 5686–1925.<sup>269</sup> Listed in the notebook were the names of the different communities; the sum the emissary collected in each place; and various comments. Described in the notebook is the route of the emissary Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas from Orán toward the various villages in the surrounding area. On his way, he was assisted by different people, including Rabbi Shlomo 'Amar, who accompanied him to the villages and received a payment of 200 francs, and the beadle Mordekhai Shariqi, who received 100 francs for his effort and did not want to receive more “and said that he is dedicating them to Jerusalem, may it be built and established, and that he is a good person in general” – so wrote the emissary in his notebook. The last income registered was “7 December 1925.” We often see that the *shadar* needed the assistance of local people to guide him on his way.

Written in the file of the *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas is the discussion before the arbitrator over the demands of the *shadar* versus the claims of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah* against the emissary. To the credit of the *shadar* were his expenses: those incurred in The Land of Israel were listed in the value of the Egyptian grush<sup>270</sup> while those made in Algeria were listed in the value of

268 Ibid., 11. From the seventeenth century on, the emissary was given one-third to one-quarter of the entire sum, after deducting expenses.

269 Container no. 6282 in the Archives of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim of Jerusalem*. In Document no. 18, *ibid.*, is the list of sums collected from the different communities “in the order of the journey,” *ibid.*, 10.

270 In the first decade of British rule in The Land of Israel (1917–1927), different currencies were used in the economy, including the Egyptian grush or qirsh (piastre). Qirsh, Gerush, Gersh, Kuruş or Grosi are names for currency denominations used in the Ottoman Empire. Egypt retained the qirsh or grush as its denomination. In Palestine-The Land of Israel this denomination was referred to as: grush, or Egyptian grush. On 1 January 1927, The Palestine-Land of Israel Currency Order was promulgated and from 1928 the Palestinian-Land of Israel currency was the only legal tender valid in the country. See also the account of the emissary's mission to Algeria in document no. 15 in the archives of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem: the exchange rate for francs into Egyptian grush/qirsh was not fixed and changed periodically. The *shadar* Meyuḥas was eligible to 40% of

francs. So, for example, there is a registration of “200 Egyptian grush or qirsh for Rabbi Refael Azriel<sup>271</sup> for his notebook” as well as the emissary’s outlays for clothing and hats, calling cards, New Year’s cards, paper stamp; “for letters and post”; for travel expenses from Jerusalem to the ship; the cost of the ticket for the ship from Jaffa to Marseya – the Ladino name of the port city Marseilles, France; for a third-class sleeping berth on the ship – all are given in pounds sterling and in Egyptian grush or qirsh. Below appear the total “expenses for a hotel in Marseya; the cost of the passage on the ship from Marseya to Orán; travel fees and incidental expenses as specified in his notebook”; “fee for professional services” to sages and *gabba'im* who helped him; “fee for professional services” for the beadles abroad; the cost of passage on the ship from Orán to Marseya; for a hotel and food in Marseya; the cost of passage on the ship from Marseya to Jaffa” – all these are listed in francs.<sup>272</sup> On 19 Ḥeshvan 5690 (22 November 1929), the president of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* wrote “to the great Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas on the issue: His demand from the Va'ad”, and informed him “that the Va'ad has decided to pay your good self the sum of two Palestine pounds for the two notebooks it made available to him”. Included with the letter was a check in the sum of two Palestine pounds. But things did not end there: in the letter by Raḥamim Ben Shlomo Meyuḥas “To the distinguished members of the Executive Committee of our community in Jerusalem, may it be rebuilt”, of the 15th of the month of Ḥeshvan 5693, the *shadar* demands providing him “with the portion he deserves” according to what is registered in the *shadar*’s registry book, since “according to the document of stipulations between the kolel and the emissary, the emissary is entitled to the funds he will determine anew [at the rate] of ten percent of the income ...<sup>273</sup>

In a letter dated 19 Ḥeshvan (18 November 1932), from the vice chairman, in the name of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem, “to the great Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, may the Lord sustain him and protect him, in response to your letter to us from 15 Ḥeshvan 5693, in which you ask for your portion of the funds for 5686 and onward, that is, the fund of Mr. Yosef Babush of Algiers as

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the income. For example, the sum of 3,312 Egyptian grush/qirsh, which the emissary Meyuḥas received according to check number 1919 on 12 Tevet 5686, was 40% of the total of 8,280 Egyptian grush/qirsh, according to the rate of 100 francs to 69 Egyptian grush/qirsh. On 26 Av 5686, the *shadar* Meyuḥas received through Y. Eliachar – without a check – the sum 4,720 Egyptian grush/qirsh as his part, 40%, of the total of 11,800 Egyptian grush/qirsh, according to the rate of 100 franc to 56.5 Egyptian grush/qirsh.

271 From the owners of Azriel Press. See above n. 3 about Moshe Azriel.

272 Document 16, Archives of the *Va'ad Adath Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem, 1926. Cf. also above, chap. 1, n. 15.

273 Letter no. 14 in the archives of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem.

well as from the other funds in Orán, we wish to inform you that after looking into the issue, we see ... that there is a basis for your demand in the sum of 81.70 francs. Would your good self agree to come to the Va'ad's office and go over the notebooks together with the bookkeeper to verify the correctness of this conclusion."<sup>274</sup>

The writer rejected two of Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas's demands but accepted the third. In a letter from 8 Kislev 5793 (7 December 1932), from the chairman, in the name of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sep̄haradim* of Jerusalem "to the Rabbi and Gaon Raḥamim Meyuḥas, Jerusalem: Most respectable Rav. We have the honor of informing you that we have reviewed and looked into your account and found that the sum owing your good self as your part in the income from the fund collected is 76 francs." The sum was determined on the basis of "the notebook of his mission in 5686, pages 145, 126, 89, 88. If there is no appeal on your part about this account, we shall register it in our notebooks and we shall pay you the amount listed above." Noted in the margins of the document was that an examination was made by the accountant of *Va'ad Ha-Edah*, Mr. Yeḥezkel Matalon.<sup>275</sup>

Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas spent a number of years in North Africa.<sup>276</sup> During his period as an emissary, he visited the cities of Orán [Waharan] and its neighboring townships: Tlemcen and Oujda; Tarabulus [Tripoli]. From Orán an announcement was sent to all the surrounding towns and villages about the coming of an emissary from Jerusalem. In Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas's file is a list of places that he visited and the sum of the contributions he received in each one. On 11 Adar 5686 [1927], he presented an account to those who had sent him on his mission: the sum of 3,167 francs.<sup>277</sup> It turns out that a dispute broke out between Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas and his sponsors

<sup>274</sup> Document 2\כֵּלָע in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem.

<sup>275</sup> Letter dated 8 Kislev 5692 (7 December 1932), marked 3\כֵּלָע.

<sup>276</sup> Located in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem 26 ט"ש, is a letter of appointment from the Chief Rabbinate of the Holy Land and the *Va'ad Ha-Kelali La-Adat Ha-Sep̄haradim* Jerusalem, signed by Moshe Franco, Mordekhai Israel, and Benyamin Alcotzer to Rabbi Raḥamim Ben Shlomo Meyuḥas to be "completely and fully authorized and an emissary as customary to collect and gather all the money of the *hek-deshim* belonging to the kolel of the Holy City ... from missions to the outer west." "Tunis, Orán, Constantine, Argil [Algiers], Tarabulus" and all the outlying small towns and villages and referring to the larger towns mentioned. See Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 435. Ibid. (436) is another document, from 1929, informing Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas "that he should prepare himself for a trip." The mission was to be divided between two emissaries.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., container 6282, 80. Meyuḥas Raḥamim. *Shadar* to Algeria. 5686.

on the amount of the sum collected by the former on his mission and from which he was eligible to receive twenty percent. That mission had ended a number of years prior to the time the accounting was completed by the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim*.

It happened on a number of occasions that disputes broke out between two emissaries, who went on a mission on behalf of two different sponsors and their paths crossed in the same communities. Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas arrived in Orán in 5686 (1925–1926), and his route intersected with that of the Tiberias emissary, named Rabbi Israel Turjeman, who was attempting to raise money to construct a marker on Rambam's [Maimonides'] gravesite there. A letter located in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem was written by Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas to "the great Rabbi, Rishon Le-Zion our teacher the Rav Rabbi Ya'akov Meir *shlita*", in which Rabbi Meyuḥas wishes to inform the Rishon Le-Zion "that I have heard say that since twenty-two months here in Orán, may the Lord establish it, an emissary from the holy city of Tiberias, may it be built and established, has been here for a new collection for the building of a gravestone for Rambam, of blessed memory, may his merit defend us, Amen, and his name is Rabbi Israel Turjeman, may the Lord protect and sustain him, and this information saddened me since your excellency and the Rabbis are not unaware of this hard work, that this causes harm since this provides an excuse for donors. And here I have already heard many things about this, and actually this issue is quite astonishing to me ... for certainly such instances as this cause everything to be ruined, and I should think that the Rabbis of Jerusalem, may it be built and established, have the right to ask them [the Tiberias Rabbis] that they should write to him to return or at least leave the vicinity of Orán, may the Lord establish it, Amen, so that damage will not be caused to Jerusalem, may it be built." Then, Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas asked the Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Ya'akov Meir, that he should be so good as to write to the Tiberias Rabbis "so that they should halt their actions concerning this strange situation". Rabbi Raḥamim, who was known among the family as an impatient person, quick to anger, went on to add that "I am truly sorry for I know what I said against them when I saw the harm caused to me by this, and from now on I will tell them they are responsible for this, since a man is not to be held responsible for what he says when in distress ...".<sup>278</sup> Ultimately, the Rishon Le-Zion did turn to the Rabbis of

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278 Letter no. 4: Orán 1925, 4 Tishri 4686.

Tiberias,<sup>279</sup> and the latter instructed the Tiberian emissary to leave the bailiwick of the *shadar* Meyuḥas. Their reply was appended to the letter the Rishon Le-Zion sent to Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas in Orán. Also in the letter Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas sent from Orán to the head of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem, his brother-in-law Yosef Eliachar, on 2 Adar 5686 [1926], he voices fear of competition from an emissary from the holy city of Safed, may it be built and established, lest “he will go to places I have not yet visited and ruin everything for me”, and he notes that he cannot go to certain villages on the border of Algeria without receiving “a permit from the French government, may its glory be increased; as we know a special permit is needed for this, and owing to the doubt I cannot proceed with certainty and incur expenses for this”. The *shadar* adds and asks “that I should receive my portion for this in toto as if they were collected by me”, since this is what was agreed upon prior to his leaving Jerusalem. The writer suggests to *Va'ad Ha-Edah* that if they do not agree to his terms “they should try to immediately send someone else to Algeria, may the Lord establish it, so that he should go for Passover to Ghardaïa, may the Lord establish it, for I shall not go and time is short ...”.<sup>280</sup>

In 5689 (1929), Yosef Eliachar, president of *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sep̄haradim* of Jerusalem, wrote to “my dear friend, Shlomo Maman, *shlita*, in Orán and asked him “to intercede with the government so that it should inform the French consul from here that it should give a permit to travel to Orán, may the Lord establish it, to our *shadar* whose time has already come”; moreover since “time

279 Letter no. 7, Jerusalem 2 Ḥeshvan 5686, signed by the Rishon Le-Zion, addressed “to the honorable, the great Rabbi, Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas, may the Lord protect and sustain him, the emissary of our kolel”, and it states there, “We have received the letter of the Tiberias emissary, and we have written to the Tiberias kolel with the request to halt the activity of their emissary until your good self will finish the district of Orán. The Tiberias kolel agreed to our request and we are enclosing herewith their letter from Rosh Ḥodesh Ḥeshvan this [year]”. In the letter by the leaders and Rabbis of the *Va'ad Ha-Kelali* [General Committee] of Tiberias – Ya'akov Ḥai Zerihan and Eliyahu Ilouz – they are the ones declaring that “even though our kolel, too, was hurt quite a bit by the emissary of Misgav Ladakh, who is carrying out his mission now with the our *shadar* in Iraq, and we are holding our peace, however, for the Rabbi's good self, we have today done as he wishes and sent a telegram to Orán through the president of the consistoire that our emissary should immediately cease the new collecting of contributions, because of the kolel of Jerusalem, may it be built and established, and he will certainly do so speedily”. We see that the above mentioned case of Tiberias was not the only one in which two emissaries encountered each other.

280 Document no. 13, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit* of Jerusalem.

is very pressing and especially after the last riots suffered by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, may it be built and established, and the other places”; the reference is to the riots of 1929. Mr. Maman replied on 13 September 1929 and apologized for the tardiness of his response: he had been ill and when Yosef Eliachar’s letter arrived, the addressee, Maman, had been in Paris “as is my custom every year.”<sup>281</sup>

At the beginning of his letter from 4 Tishri 4686 [1925] – the day after *Rosh Ha-Shanah* – that was sent to the Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Ya’akov Meir,<sup>282</sup> Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas reported about his activities in Orán, to which he had arrived “on Friday, the eve of Rosh *Ha-Shanah*, for good life and peace praise to the blessed Lord”: that same day he met with “the honorable president of the consistoire, his excellency, Seneyor Yitzḥak Ben Sa’adon, may the Lord protect and sustain him, and asked him to arrange in the synagogue that the emissary – as is customary – should bless the congregation of the two days of Rosh Hashanah, “since I want to go to the villages immediately after the holiday. And praise to the Lord, God helped me, for I gained favor in his eyes and he invited me to eat at his home on the second day of the festival and he did what I wished, and I have already blessed the synagogues in the city, and I still have to go to the distant synagogues and I intend to leave them until I return here to collect the contribution ....”<sup>283</sup>

This gives us a comprehensive view of the life and work of a *shadar* from Jerusalem. The description the writer gives of his endeavor deserves attention: “hard work.” Those words recur also in a letter Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas sent about the donation from Seneyor Moshe Nahon from Askar and the portion that he feels he deserves from it and in which he asks his sponsors “that they should consider my hard work.”<sup>284</sup> Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas was equipped with a bi-lingual, Hebrew and French, “forceful appeal” on behalf of the Rishon Le-Zion and the chief Rabbis of The Land of Israel as well as the *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* of Jerusalem, from 10 Elul 5686, 20 August 1926, which opens with the blessing “*le-shanah tovah tikatevu ve-teḥateimu*” (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year) and beseeches the receiver “to

281 The documents are marked as 181 and 1276, in the *Shadarut* to Algeria File.

282 Letter no. 4, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem. Cf. also above n. 241.

283 Letter no. 4, Orán, 5686 (1925–1926), *ibid.* The letter is written in Sephardi cursive script and signed with the stamp of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas.

284 Letter no. 9, Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

extend his help as soon as possible” since “thousands of poor people and widows belonging to the mizraḥi communities in Jerusalem and its environs expect to remain without shelter after the coming season of apartments at the start of the new year [referring to the “Muḥarram; Muḥarrem”], if they will not be given enough help at the right time to find housing for domiciles.”<sup>285</sup> Likewise, in the Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File is a letter of introduction to Seneyor David Salameh presenting him the *shadar*, the “faithful delegate” of his senders, asking him for financial aid, and promising him that “He who grants recompense will send to those who do and for the deeds and merit of Jerusalem, may it be built, will protect you ...”<sup>286</sup> A previous address to “the exalted *gevir*, pursuer of charity and mercy, his home is a center for sages, reinforcing those who study Torah, blessed be the name of his Torah, Se[neyor] David Salameh” was written and handed over to Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas in Jerusalem, in 1924, signed by Shmuel Ben Rabbi Azarya Lupo, president of the Va’ad.<sup>287</sup> On 25 Tevet 5686 (1926) the community president, Shmuel Lupo, signed alongside the chief of the Rabbis the Rishon Le-Zion – serving at that time was Rabbi Ya’akov Meir – on the letter that introduced the “faithful delegate” sent on behalf of the community, “from the families of best lineage in Jerusalem, may it be built.”<sup>288</sup>

Rabbi Eliezer Papo, author of *Pele Yo’ets*, wrote in 5571 (1811), “As we see the maintenance of a person in The Land of Israel is difficult and usually they need to go about until they obtain the role of emissary for a good deed to go abroad for ten years or more and they will live a life of sorrow, they and their wives more than them. And there is great hardship to body and soul for those on the road, as we know”<sup>289</sup> The writer Ya’akov Yehoshua, who was very familiar with the members of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* and their ways of life, wrote that “Rabbis who had sufficient livelihood did not tend to go out on missions. They had

285 Algeria file in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

286 Letter no. 13, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas file, Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

287 Letter no. 11 in the Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, 25 Tevet 5676 [1926], in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem. The letter was signed on 1 Tevet 5684 (1924), before the *shadar* set out on his journey in 1925. Alongside Mr. Lupo’s signature also appears “Chief of the Rabbis, the Rishon Le-Zion,” without any signature.

288 Letter no. 12, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 437. See also Letter no. 10, from 25 Tevet 5686, addressed to the “the trusted *gabba’i* ... Rabbi Refael Zabar ... in Géryville,” was also signed by Rabbi Ya’akov Meir and Mr. Shmuel Lupo.

289 *Pele Yo’etz*, entry : The Land of Israel.

no desire to be separated from their wives and children and to wander about the Diaspora for several months or even years.”<sup>290</sup> Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas concluded his letter of 29 Sivan 5686 to his sponsors in Jerusalem<sup>291</sup> with a request to turn over “to the members of my household the address to which your good self will send me his letter, so that they too shall send me a letter”. The only link between the head of the household and its members were the letters, and there were only a few of them. So Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas asks, in his letter of 25 Iyyar 5686, which was sent from Tiaret, to Mr. Laniado, “secretary of our Va’ad headquarters”: “to inform my family through the committee’s *shammash* [beadle] that they have received a letter from me and that I am in good health, praise the Lord, since time does not permit me to be in touch with them and I apologize greatly for that.”<sup>292</sup>

The historian Avraham Yaari noted that in certain families a hold was kept on going out on missions as a source of livelihood.<sup>293</sup> There were some who went to foreign countries, as emissaries on behalf of themselves, aiming to find succor for themselves and to be cured. That was the case with my grandfather’s brother, Rabbi Yosef Ben Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas, who left for Europe in 1888 to consult physicians; he was equipped with a letter of recommendation from the Rishon Le-Zion, Meir Panigel, and his son-in-law, the head of the Spiritual Committee [*Va’ad Ruḥani*] in Jerusalem, Rabbi Ya’akov Sha’ul Eliachar – Yissa Berakhah.<sup>294</sup> In the letter, the Rabbis praise Yosef Meyuḥas “that he is worthy and respectable in his own right and all the more so ... for the honor of his holy forefathers, may their merit protect us. For over 150 years, generation after generation, Torah has not ceased [to be studied] by descendants and their descendants, to this day.” Here, it should be noted that Yosef Ben Rabbi Shlomo

290 Ya’akov Yehoshua, *Ḥakhamim in Old Jerusalem*, 58. Cf. n. 252 above: in a letter the Jerusalem emissary Moshe Meyuḥas wrote to his brother from Paris, in 1890, he asks him to inquire into the welfare of his wife and children and to assuage his wife’s feeling that she should not be too sad about her misfortune [dezmazalada]. See Document 2/4 in the Moshe David Gaon Collection, Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem.

291 See above n. 238.

292 Letter no. 2, Tiaret, 1926. File of the *shadar* Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas in the Archives of the *Va’ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sep̄haradit*.

293 Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 8.

294 See document 3/11 in the Moshe David Gaon Collection, Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem. This document specifies the issue of Yosef Meyuḥas’s illness, which “while still very young caused him much suffering in the urinary tract, causing great agony.” He did not find relief for his illness in Jerusalem and his physicians advised him “with their wisdom to go abroad to seek a cure.” Ibid. See also above n. 95 and Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 207–8.

Yitzḥak Meyuḥas had family ties with the two who signed his letter of recommendation: his sister-in-law, the wife of his brother Raḥamim Ben Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas – my grandmother Simḥa Eliachar Meyuḥas – was a daughter of the Eliachar family on her father's side, Rav Ḥam"ā – Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar, and the granddaughter of the Panigel family on the side of her mother – Vida Leah Panigel Eliachar, the wife of Rav Ḥam"ā. The family links, from which were woven the social network that encompassed the Jerusalem Rabbis through their families, were well known. In a letter from 1923,<sup>295</sup> Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas was asked by Mr. Shlomo Sornaga, through Mr. Benyamin Alcotzer, to help the widow Raḥel Ya'ish who "is suffering from dire poverty" and the writers called for "obtaining for her some housing among the Montefiore houses of the kolel of our community, and according to her, there is a way if only the committee members would try to do so ... they advised her to go to your good self and you out of the kindness of your heart will appeal to the feelings of our friend Mr. Yitzḥak Eliachar, may his Creator protect and sustain him, who is a member of the committee so that he should look into this issue and perhaps there is some hope, and with my knowing that the gentleman, his brother-in-law, may his Creator protect and sustain him, is a good-hearted man and will certainly do everything possible to benefit her, I do ask your good self again to try as far as possible, from one who holds you in high esteem". Yitzḥak Shem'aiah Eliachar,<sup>296</sup> Rav Ḥam"ā's second son, was the brother of Simḥa Eliachar Meyuḥas, the wife of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas. Rabbi Raḥamim Ben Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Meyuḥas married Simḥa, the oldest daughter of Rav Ḥam"ā, Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar, born in 1865, as we know from the census carried out by the Ottoman authorities in Jerusalem in 1905<sup>297</sup> – when she turned twenty. That means her marriage took place in 1885. This can inform us of the net of connections woven and existing among the Jerusalem Rabbis. The couple's second daughter, Esther Seniora Meyuḥas Barouch, told her daughter, Ruth Barouch Senderov, about the first meeting between her parents: the young woman, Simḥa, was called by her nanny, who suggested that she peek through peephole made for this purpose in the wall of the library of her father, Rav Ḥam"ā, so she could look at her intended groom. Simḥa did

295 Letter no. 5, Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas File, Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sepharadit* of Jerusalem.

296 On him see, Eliyahu Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 629–36. Cf. also above n. 115.

297 See above nn. 93-6.

do so and in time told her daughter that she saw her future husband, a tall, dark-haired man with impressive bearing.<sup>298</sup>

The emissaries from Jerusalem wandered to the ends of the earth. For example, Rabbi Yosef Ḥaim Shrim (1851–1949), on a mission for the Hebron Kolel in 1900, reached India and the Far East.<sup>299</sup> The historian Avraham Yaari enumerated four regions for emissaries leaving from The Land of Israel: the Togarmah/Asiatic and European Turkey; the Mediterranean islands and the Balkan countries in the direction of Hungary; the European mission: Europe, mainly Italy – Venice and Livorno – and Amsterdam, until the beginning of the eighteenth century;<sup>300</sup> Maghreb: North African countries. The emissaries went to the internal Maghreb: Morocco, Gibraltar, and Malta – as well as to the external Maghreb: Tripoli, Algier, and Tunisia; the Arabistan or Persia mission: Syria, Aram Naharaim, Kurdistan, Persia, Afghanistan, and Bukhara. In the year 1753, Rav Ḥid”a – Ḥaim David Azulai – left on a mission for the Hebron community. He traveled through the Sinai Desert to Egypt and from the Syrian Desert to Aram Naharaim and Persia.<sup>301</sup> In 1782–1784, Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas went on a mission whose goal was to print the work *Sdeh Aretz*, written by his father, Rabbi Avraham Ben Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas, the brother of the Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Refael Meyuḥas.<sup>302</sup> Before setting out, he received, in 5541 (1781), from the *Hakhamim* of Jerusalem an approbation for the printing of this work that states about him that “he devoted his body to hopping from city to city” in order to see the work printed. Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas did, indeed, succeed in having the first part of the work printed in Salonika in 5544 (1784). In his introduction to the composition, Rabbi Benyamin Moshe

298 Interview with Mrs. Ruth Barouch Senderov on 4 August 2002. Noteworthy is that also the census takers, who recorded the Ottoman census of 1905, indicated that Rabbi Raḥamim Meyuḥas was tall, had black hair and black eyes. Cf. above nn. 93-4.

299 See Avraham Ben-Yaacob, *The Roaming Emissary: On the The Land of Israel Emissary, Rabbi Yosef Ḥaim Shrim, of Blessed Memory, Author of the Book Devar Yosef* (Jerusalem: Nuriel Shrim Pub., 1998), part. 1, 34–35, 87–92 [Hebrew].

300 The missions from The Land of Israel to western European countries were abolished from the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century at the initiative of the Jewish Community of Amsterdam, where there was founded, in 1824, a center for the money contributed to The Land of Israel from all of Western Europe. See Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 18, 66, 183–86, 833–34. Starting from the middle of the nineteenth century, the only region that the emissaries continued to go to was that of the North African countries.

301 See Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 26 and 137.

302 On him, see above nn. 171-99; 199.

Meyuḥas thanks the *gevir* Barukh Cremona, who made a personal donation for the purpose of the printing and to the *gevir* Yitzḥak Shmuel called Bekhor Modiano,<sup>303</sup> in whose home, in Salonika, he was hosted a number of times.<sup>304</sup> Rabbi Meyuḥas died in Jerusalem in 1804.<sup>305</sup> The second part of *Sdeh Ha-Aretz* was published in Salonika in 5558 (1798) by Rabbi Yosef Ya'akov Meyuḥas, the son of Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas and the brother of Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas, mentioned above.<sup>306</sup>

On occasion, an emissary would change his destination owing to immediate circumstances: This same Rabbi Yosef Ya'akov Meyuḥas went on a mission for Hebron – he was then a resident of it – to Morocco in 1786. His aim, as previously stated, was see to the printing of the third part of the work by his father, Rabbi Avraham Ben Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas: *Sdeh Ha-Aretz*. When he arrived in Marseilles, he heard that the situation of the Jews in Morocco was dire, so he made the decision by himself to go to Italy. There, he did succeed in publishing his father's book. We are told this in his introduction to *Sdeh Ha-Aretz* by Avraham Ben Rabbi Shmuel Meyuḥas, part 3, 5548 (1788).

In 1810, Yosef Ya'akov Meyuḥas was one of the seven dignitaries comprising the sages, officials, and overseers of the kolel of the Holy City of Jerusalem. He died in Jerusalem in 1814.<sup>307</sup> In 1799, his nephew, Rabbi Yitzḥak Ben Rabbi Benyamin Moshe Meyuḥas, was sent to Western Europe; he returned to his city in 1806.<sup>308</sup> My great-grandfather, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzḥak Ben Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas, son of the great-grandson of Rabbi MY"IM – the Rishon Le-Zion Moshe Mordekhai Meyuḥas – went on missions from Jerusalem a number of times: in 1857, he was sent to the external Maghreb in North Africa<sup>309</sup> on behalf of “the

303 Perhaps this is referring to Yitzḥak Shmuel Modiano, born in Salonika in 1755. See Mario Modiano, *Hamehune Modillano. The Genealogical Story of the Modiano Family from c. 1570 to Our Days* (Athens: published by the author, and not for sale, 2000), 41.

304 Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 556.

305 *Ibid.*, 557.

306 *Ibid.*, 556–57.

307 See Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 21; Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 158–61. In his introduction to part 2 of *Sdeh Ha-Aretz*, which he had published in Salonika in 1798, Rabbi Yosef Ya'akov Meyuḥas told about his previous mission to the “cities of Arabistan” and to the cities of Turkey and the Balkans. *Ibid.*, 161.

308 See Yaari, *The Land of Israel Emissaries*, 566; Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 161–66.

309 The destination of the mission was noted as “all the cities of the external Magheb and their environs, may their merit protect us”. Appearing in the list are Tunis and its villages; Algiers and its villages; Constantine and all of its villages; Waharan [Orán]; Tlemcen; Tarablus; Dubru and Oujda and Taza and Qula'yia and Eldeif, “to visit, seek, gather, and

Kolel of the Four Synagogues” in the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>310</sup> In 1860 he was sent to cities in America and Australia.<sup>311</sup> In 1861, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak Meyuḥas was appointed *shadar* “to all cities of the external Maghreb and their environs ...”<sup>312</sup> In 1864 Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak Meyuḥas again traveled to North Africa.<sup>313</sup>

A document from 5624 (1864) noted that the destination of the mission of “our distinguished teacher Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak Ben Yosef Meyuḥas, may his Creator protect and sustain him: “To go to Arabistan and all the towns written in the document mentioned to collect donation from our Jewish brethren who contribute to our people ... and also to take himself to the cities of Australia”. Also mentioned in the letter of mission was the future income of the *shadar*, who on his part obliged himself to present to his sponsors an orderly “register” [*pinkas*] in which would be written his expenses and income. Of note is that

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collect any kind of charity money our oh so merciful Jewish brethren will donate in all the cities mentioned and in their suburbs for the synagogues noted so as to pay our creditors ...” See the document of the *shadar* Shlomo Yitzhak Bakhar Yosef Meyuḥas, M.D. Gaon Archives, Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem, File 3, document (1\3) 5617–5621 (1857–1861).

310 Mentioned in the description of his lineage are his forefathers and the books they wrote: the distinguished Rabbi Yosef Yom Tov Bekhor Refael Meyuḥas, may his merit protect us, author of *Malbushei Yom Tov* about to be published, great-grandson and grandson of the author of the book *Birkhot Ha-Mayim* and author of *Peri Ha-Adamah ...*” Ibid.

311 See document 3/1 in Moshe David Gaon Archives, Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem. Ben-Yaacob cites the text of an authorization document signed by Jerusalem Rabbis that was given to Jerusalem emissaries to cities in America and Australia in 1860. See *ibid.*, 422–23, “We appoint him as completely authorized as an emissary dispatched to do a *mitzvah* from the kolel of Jerusalem, may it be built and established, to go to all cities of America, may God protect them, and their environs, and the cities of Australia, may God protect them, to visit, seek, gather, and collect all kinds of charity money that our Jewish brethren will donate.”

312 See Document 3/14 5621 (1861) in the Moshe David Gaon Archives, Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem.

313 See Document no. 3/3, in the Moshe David Gaon Archives at Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem. 5624–1864. Like its predecessors, this document, too, mentioned the forefathers of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak ben Yosef Meyuḥas and their Jewish religious works. Those who signed it are: Ḥaim David Ḥazan ח"ד, Meir Refael Panigel ח"ד, Yedidya Suzin ח"ד, Mordekhai Eliezer Suzin, ח"ד. On the back of the document is a condensed version in English, which calls for a close look at the signs of the times and notes how great is the reward for one who sees the resurrection of Israel, signed by Chief Rabbi Ḥaim David Ḥazan and followed by confirmations of document's authenticity and the signatures on the back, with the signatures of the General French Consul, 22 September 1864, in French, and the British Consul, in English, their seals along with their signatures.

the *shadar's* income varied according to his mission's destination: "From missions to the cities of Australia, may the Lord make him successful, he will take sixty of a hundred for the Holy City and forty of a hundred for the *shadar's* credit." The longer the mission would take, the more his income would relatively decline. The *shadar* was asked to also open new funds for the kolel of the Holy City. For the cities of Arabistan, it was determined that the division would be such that the kolel would receive two-thirds and the emissary, one-third.<sup>314</sup> In 1870, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak Meyuḥas journeyed again to North Africa on behalf of Batei Maḥaseh [Houses of Refuge] for the poor.<sup>315</sup> In 1871, he traveled to the communities of the internal Maghreb, where he stayed until 1873.<sup>316</sup> Shlomo Yitzhak Meyuḥas married Rachel Penso who gave birth to three boys: Raḥamim Shlomo; Elazar;<sup>317</sup> Yosef; and one daughter: Esther. Yosef was an ill person who did not live long.<sup>318</sup> His son, Shlomo, who had lost his father, grew up in the home of his uncle – my grandfather – Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas.<sup>319</sup>

Members of the Meyuḥas family were quite active as emissaries: so, for example, a person from another branch of the Jerusalem Meyuḥasim – Rabbi Shmuel Yom Tov Ben Rabbi Moshe Mordekhai Meyuḥas (1855–1897) – set out in 1878 as a *shadar* on behalf of the Sephardi kolel in Jerusalem to the cities of Syria, Iraq, Persia, and India, and he stayed there for six years. In 1900 he went on a mission to Egypt and in 1901 he went to India.<sup>320</sup>

314 Ibid., Document no. 3/14.

315 Ibid., Document no. 3/4. See also Ben-Yaacob, 426–29. This concerns a letter of recommendation from the Rabbis of Marrakech for a Jerusalem *shadar*, Rabbi Shlomo ben Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas, who went to North Africa on behalf of Batei Maḥaseh for the poor.

316 Ibid. Document 3\6 (1871). In the document 3\9, the year 1873, appears a letter of recommendation from Rabbi Yosef Elmaleḥ of the Asuera community in honor of the *shadar* from Jerusalem, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak ben Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas, who was visiting North Africa. See also Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 431–33.

317 On them, see above nn. 91–6.

318 On him, see above n. 93.

319 See *ibid.*

320 In the Moshe David Gaon Collection are Meyuḥas family members' documents of mission from 5616–5648 (1856–1888) belonging to Shlomo Yitzhak Meyuḥas, Eliyahu Nissim Meyuḥas, and Yosef Shlomo Meyuḥas as well as the letter by Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas sent from India to his brother in Jerusalem, 5647–5651 (1887–1891). See Letter no. 4/1 in the Moshe David Gaon Collection in Makhon Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem, which was sent from Calcutta to Jerusalem on 2 Tevet 5747 (1887); Letter no. 4/2, sent from Paris in 1890; Letter no. 4/3, also sent from Paris in 1890; Letter no. 4/4 from Paris; Letter no. 4/6 from Paris (incomplete; begins on page 4); on Rabbi Mordekhai Meyuḥas, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas*

*The Meyuḥas Family in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ*

The discussion in this chapter deals with Sephardi Jews in Jerusalem who, with the changes and transformations in the times, became immigrants in their native city, even though they never left it and focuses on the test case of the Meyuḥas family. Of note is that Meyuḥas family members, even though they belonged to the Sephardi Old *Yishuv*, were pioneers in going beyond the walls of Jerusalem: they settled in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ-Silwan and built their home there, in the 1860s. The Arabs, inhabitants of the village, called the name of the Meyuḥas house: Dar Abu Manḥas.<sup>321</sup> The family left Kefar Hashilo'aḥ in the early years of the British Mandate.<sup>322</sup> Avraham Ben-Yaacob, in his book *Jerusalem Within the Walls: The History of the Meyuḥas Family*, offers a number of possibilities to explain the motives for family members to go beyond Jerusalem's walls and build their houses outside them. He came to know these options from interviews he conducted with a number of people from the Meyuḥas family. Some said they abandoned the Old City as the result of a feud between part of the family and the Rishon Le-Zion, while others said that since several family members traded in grain in Transjordan, it happened that they reached the city gates after sunset and found them closed and locked. Consequently, they decided to find themselves a place to live outside the walls. One family member, who was a ritual slaughterer, slaughtered animals in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ since there was no abattoir in the Old City. As he had to come to the city in the early hours of the morning, he preferred to live in the village outside the city.<sup>323</sup> These explanations refer to the occupations of the family members in commerce in grain and in kasher ritual slaughtering. In time, other individuals from the family joined them, including Rabbi Raḥamim Natan Meyuḥas, father of the writer and educator Yosef Bar'an Meyuḥas, mentioned above. In the latter's memoirs, he wrote how his father had told him that they were about to move to dwell in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ:

You have become a village boy, for we are moving our home from now on into the village of Ha-Shilo'aḥ near the city. We shall live there and we shall inhale the light and air. We will no longer drink the turbid well water

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*Family*, 235–40. Rabbi Moshe Meyuḥas stayed in Calcutta and Bombay for several years, and within a short time traveled twice to Jerusalem and back to India. During these journeys he also visited European cities: Paris and London.

321 Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 15–21.

322 *Ibid.*, 20.

323 *Ibid.*, 18.

and no longer eat bought vegetables. For fresh spring water will be our water and with our own hands we will plant vegetables and eat [them]. My father's words, in all their simplicity, at that time were an unfathomable riddle. Village, spring, fresh air, our own planting, was there any way then for Jerusalemites to understand the meaning of these words? The entire geographic world of people of Jerusalem in that period was limited from Jaffa Gate, on the west side of the city, to Zion Gate, south of it: and from the Jewish Quarter to the Western Wall. The most important stroll at that time was the plaza of the Armenian monastery near Zion Gate, where to this day the pine nut trees cast their shadow on the plaza ... our family was, therefore, the first Sephardi family to break through the fence to go beyond the city wall to set up its home on the 'Ophel' beneath which the Shilo'aḥ spring passes ..."<sup>324</sup>

In his work, Ben-Yacob mentions several people from the Meyuḥas family who went to live in Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ.<sup>325</sup> In an article Israel Klausner published about "the aspiration of Jerusalem Jews to till the soil",<sup>326</sup> he stated that in early 5627 (1867), two hundred families, who wanted to switch to working the land, organized themselves. The *ḥalukah* was insufficient as a livelihood. These poor people assembled and chose Rabbi Refael Avraham Ben Rabbi Yosef Meyuḥas "as head and supervisor". Rabbi Refael Avraham helped these people get organized and found a large plot of land that could be acquired for the needs of their settling on it. The people published a printed poster calling for others to help them purchase the land and settle it." The sponsors of this announcement noted that Rabbi Avraham Meyuḥas had helped them by virtue of his connections with foreign consulates. It turns out, however, that their plan did not materialize and until the settling of the Yemenite immigrants in

324 Ibid., 18. In n. 22, Ben-Yacob cites the source for his statement: M.D. Gaon, *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel*, part. 2, 397–98 [Hebrew]; and also: Yosef Bar'an Meyuḥas, in his introduction to his book *The Falaḥim [Peasants] The Life of the Falaḥim in comparison with the life of the Jews in the time of the Bible and the Talmud* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936) [Hebrew].

325 Ben Ya'acob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 18–21.

326 Israel Klausner, "The Aspiration of the Jerusalem Jews to Till the Soil," in *Minḥah Le-Avraham*, a jubilee volume in honor of Avraham Almaleḥ, a native of Jerusalem, the author and man of letters, on reaching the age of seventy, 5645–5715 [1884–1954], presented to him in appreciation by a team of scholars and friends (Jerusalem: Jubilee Committee, 5719), 114.

Kefar Ha-Shilo'aḥ (1884), the Meyuḥas family was the only Jewish family living there.

### Conclusion

Let's return to my father's family. Located in the Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sephardit* of Jerusalem is a death announcement saying:

Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas is no more. In great sorrow we announce the passing of one of the senior Rabbis of our city, one of the Sephardim working on behalf of the public in Jerusalem, and a former member of our Va'ad, Raḥamim S. Meyuḥas, after a lengthy illness and great, bitter suffering. The funeral will leave from his home in the Moshe Montefiore neighborhood at 10 a.m. and the public is invited to participate in it. *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sephardim* of Jerusalem.<sup>327</sup>

With the death of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas the era of emissaries from the Meyuḥas family came to an end. The world of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem had changed from one extreme to another over the course of the life of the last of the *shadarim* of the Meyuḥas family. None of the sons or grandsons of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas studied in yeshivah or devoted himself to serving in the Rabbinate. His children exchanged their Jewish Spanish mother tongue for Hebrew and in their homes their sons and daughters – the grandsons and granddaughters of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas and his wife, Simḥa Meyuḥas née Eliachar – no longer spoke Jewish Spanish as the language employed in their daily lives, even though the older ones among them were familiar with the language to one degree or another. Rabbi Meyuḥas's sons and daughters abandoned the traditional garb of the Sephardi community and adopted European clothing. The youngest of their daughters and all his granddaughters worked for pay outside the home. Eight of his eleven grandchildren had an academic education and have degrees from various

327 Archives of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sephardit*. Container 6203, serial number 5. In the *Palestine Post* of 6 June 1941 appeared an announcement of the funeral of Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, in which took part, among others, the chief Sephardi Rabbi, Rabbi Ben-Zion Uziel, who gave the eulogy. In his speech, Rabbi Uziel mentioned the journeys as an emissary the deceased had made to Algeria, Morocco, and Tangier for the benefit of the Jews of Jerusalem. The Rav M. Ostrovsky, Mr. D. Abulafia, and Mr. D. Sasson also spoke.

universities in Israel and abroad. The dawn of the new world broke over the young men and women of the Jerusalem Sephardi community. But this dramatic change came at a price: loss of the communal and cultural identity of the descendants of Sephardi Jews that had existed in Jerusalem.



FIGURE 8  
*Jaffa Gate*. YAD BEN ZVI PHOTO ARCHIVES. THE KANTOROWITZ COLLECTION. PHOTO ARCHIVES OF YAD YITZHAK BEN ZVI NAMED AFTER SHOSHANA AND ASHER HALEVI, JERUSALEM.

## Beautiful Damsels and Men of Valor: Ladino Literature Giving Us a Peek into the Spiritual World of Sephardi Women in Jerusalem (Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries)

Ahi [la oría de la mar] te contaré mis dertes  
Que te metas a llorar

[\* Translation : There [on the sea-shore] I shall tell you my troubles  
That will make you shed a tear.]

A Jewish Spanish romance. Listed by MOSHE ATTIAS and translated into Hebrew in his *Kansiyonero Yehudi-Sefaradi*, Tel Aviv: Ha-Makhon Le-Ḥeker Yahadut Saloniki, 1972, no. 118, 201-7.

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*Ven kerida ven amada*  
Kantiga lirika (Turkia)

Ven kerida ven amada  
Ven al bodre de la mar  
Ay te kontare mis penas  
Ke te metas a yorar

MATILDA KOEN-SARANO, *Vini kantaremos. Koleksión de kantes djudeo-espanyloes* (Jerusalem: Édisión de la Autora, 2006), 154.

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### Ladino Books Kept by Nona Flor

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, written literature in Ladino burgeoned. Newspapers and books in it appeared in the main cities of the Ottoman Empire, where there were Sephardi communities. The press in Ladino in particular as well as books – some of which appeared as supplements in

Ladino newspapers – served as unmistakable agents for the dissemination of process of *moderna* among its reading audience.<sup>1</sup> Adaptations were made of novels originally written in foreign languages, mainly French, by editors and publishers such as Eliya Karmona (Carmona), Aleksander (Alexander) Ben Guiat, Ben Tzion Taragán, Moshe Azriel,<sup>2</sup> and Shlomo Israel Cherizli (Shirizli) (1878–1938) – who was known by an acronym of his name, *shin, yod, shin* (ShaYi”Sh) – an editor, publisher, and owner of a printing house in Jerusalem, who even had and operated a lending library, for the benefit of the readers. The Ladino books ShaYi”Sh translated, edited, and printed in his city, Jerusalem, were accessible to women readers among the Sephardi Jewish women also thanks to his lending library. This meant that, at the time, they constituted part of the Ladino reading audience, who were nourished by ShaYi”Sh’s Ladino literary endeavor.<sup>3</sup> At the heart of the discussion in this chapter stands Mrs. Flor Pisanti née Ginio (Chinillo) (1885–1958) of Jerusalem. Fortuitously, after the passing of Mrs. Flor Pisanti, her granddaughter, Mrs. Flora Tessone Ben Amram, found in her cupboard, the place she hid objects of value to her – clothing, jewelry, linens – five books, all in Ladino. They consisted of separate booklets that had been bound into five volumes in amateur binding, consisting of thirteen novels and novellas. The format for all was the same: 14 cm long by 11 cm wide. They had been printed on cheap paper yellowed over time.<sup>4</sup> I have

1 See P. Díaz-Mas, *Los Sefardíes*, 155–214; E. Romero, *La creación literaria en lengua sefardí*; A. Meyuhas Ginio, “Encounter and Farewell: The Eastern Sephardi Dispersal and the Vision of Reconciliation of Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández”, in T. Alexander *et al.*, *Iggud – Selected Essays in Jewish Studies*, vol. 3, *Languages Literatures, Arts* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2008): 261–70 [Hebrew]. In this chapter I use the term: *Ladino* as it applies to the written language of the Sephardim.

2 On him, see ch. 3, n 2, above.

3 See A. Meyuhas Ginio, “Tia Flor’s Reading List”, in Ephraim H̄azan and Shmuel Refael (eds), *Mahbarot Li-Yehudit: Studies presented to Professor Judith Dishon* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2012): 389–418 [Hebrew]. All rights reserved to Bar-Ilan University: selections of the article “Tia Flor’s Reading List” are published below by permission of Bar-Ilan University Press. See also E. Lapon-Kandelshein and S. Baruchson Arbib, “Ladino Press in Eretz-Israel: From Bak to Azriel (1843–1923)”, in *Mahbarot Li-Yehudit*, 351–88 [Hebrew]. See also A. Meyuhas Ginio, “A Jerusalemite Sephardic Lady’s Reading List”, in Ch. J. Pountain and E. Romero (eds), *Proceedings of the Fourteenth British Conference on Jewish Spanish Studies* (London: Queen Mary University of London, 2008): 144–52. See also Amélia Barquín López, *Edición y estudio de doce novellas alfamiadas sefardíes de principios del siglo XX* (s.l.: Universidad de País Vasco, 1997) as well as nn. 129–37 below.

4 Below is a list of the five volumes that Flor Pisanti kept in her cupboard and the titles of the books contained in each volume. To prepare this list, I had recourse to the card catalogue of the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem. I thank Dr. Dov Hacoheh, deputy

no way of knowing when they were acquired and read by Flor Pisanti, therefore I chose to present the books according to their year of publication. On the opening page of each book, alongside the work's title, appeared a number of details about the author or adapter as well as the place and year of publication. In instances where that page is missing, I managed to fill in the information with the aid of the detailed bibliographic card file of the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem and studies that have been made on the literary endeavor in Sephardi language.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I wish to depict the flesh-and-blood character of the female Ladino reader and the spiritual world of the Sephardi woman, who then lived in Jerusalem, whose only spoken language was Jewish Spanish and who knew how to read and write in Ladino. As a result of the store of books Flor Pisanti kept in her cupboard, we have first-hand testimony of this reader's spiritual world, as fashioned and influenced by the books she read. The historian Carlo Ginzburg stressed the influence of the reading of books on

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director of the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library, for his guidance and help. The first volume includes (according to their bound order): *Robinson o La mizeria* (Jerusalem: Ben Sion Taragán, 1897). *Anna María o El korason de mujer. Romanso muy ezmoviente por Aleksander Ben Guiat, Esmirna. Tersera vez estampado* (Jerusalem/Cairo: Shlomo Israel Cherizli, 1905). Pereyra, Aharon Elijah et al., *Tefilah lifnei Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi; Tefilah shel hadlakat ner shel Shabbat ve-yom tov; Bakashah nora'ah; Ma'ase de Benei Moshe; Divrei Musar* and *'Akedat Yitzhak Avinu Alav Ha-shalom* (in verse) (Jerusalem: Moshe Mevorakh and Yekutiel Yosha, c. 1900). *El aprezado de la Inkizision* (Cairo. *Folleton del djournal Mizraim*, 1904). *El bezerro. Leyenda djudia revista i korejada por Shlomo Israel Cherizli*. (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizly, 1905). *Enigma o El djidio i la princesa. Pasaje en tiempo del kativerio de los djidios en Bavel*. Translated into Hebrew by Ben Sion Taragán (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizli, 1910). *Hasan-Pasha el terrible. Romanso istoriko* Estampado en *El Mazalozo* de Esmirna 5669 [1911] por Aleksander Ben Guiat (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizli, 1911). *La brigante* (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizli, 1912). *Nikola Primero i el djidio. Lejenda rusa* por Pesah Kaplan. Translated from Hebrew into Ladino (Jerusalem: Libreriya Shlomo Israel Cherizli, 1907). *Lulu* por Hemdah Ben Yehudah. Translated from Hebrew into Ladino (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizli, 1908). *Bianinka Girmayilof. Romanso ruso* (Jerusalem: Libreriya Cherizli, c. 1907). The second volume includes: *Genoveva* por Eliya R. Karmona. (Jerusalem: *El Trezoro de Yerushalayim*, 1905). The third volume includes: *Un krimen salvaje*. (Izmir: Libreriya Efraim Melamed, 1913; Salonika, 1927). The fourth volume includes: *El konde i la kondesa de Karatmor. Romanso de amor por Shlomo Ben Yosef*. (Istanbul: *Buketo de romansos*. Yitzhak Yehudah Arditti, 1920). The fifth volume includes: Eliya R. Karmona, *La ija de la lavandera*. (Jerusalem: Moshe Azriel, 1905).

5 See Elena Romero, *Creación literaria*. In the Valmadonna Trust Library, Fairport, London, is a collection of the same type of novels we are treating and among them are three copies of novellas that Mrs. Flor Pisanti had, *La kavessa del brigante*, *Enigma*, and *Anna María*, which were published by ShaYi"Sh in Jerusalem.

expanding the world of his protagonist, the miller Menocchio, in his time.<sup>6</sup> One assumes that Flor Pisanti read the Ladino books, which were printed in Rashi script and which she took the trouble to keep in her cupboard. Moreover, an aperture has been opened for use so that we can see a bit of the spiritual world of our reader and her peers – the Sephardi women in Jerusalem, speakers of Jewish Spanish and readers of Ladino – who, on the whole, were not wont to express themselves and describe this world. Flora Ben Amram, author of the novel *Nona Flor*,<sup>7</sup> based on her grandmother's life, was kind enough to put the books noted at my disposal for the purpose of this study.

There is no reason to weary the reader with the details of the complicated, twisting plot unfolding in each of the works. It is sufficient to treat the topic of each novel and the similar characteristics displayed by all.

The first volume in Flor Pisanti's library contains religious literature alongside secular. Bound together in this volume are nine novels plus versions of *Tefilah Lifnei Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi* ["Prayer to Be Recited at the Western Wall"];<sup>8</sup> *Tefilah Shel Hadlakat Ner Shel Shabbat Ve-Yom Tov* ["A Prayer for Candle Lighting for the Sabbath and Festivals"]; and *Bakashah Nora'a* ["An Awesome Plea"]. In the continuation appears *Ha-Ma'ase de Benei Moshe* (The Story of the Sons of Moses); *Divrei Musar* [Ethical Exhortations] and *Ake'dat Yitzhak Avinu Alav Ha-Shalom Be-La'az* [The Binding of Isaac, of blessed memory, in La'az]. The prayer for recitation at the Western Wall can be said there or when standing at graves of the righteous: the Matriarch Raḥel, Shmuel the Prophet, Ḥulda the Prophetess, Ḥaggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and Rabbi Ḥaim Della Rosa as well as in Hebron, at the Makhpelah Cave; in Nablus, at the cave of Joseph Ha-Tzaddik; in Tiberias, at the cave of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha-Nes and Rabbi Akiva; in

6 See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 44, through "his largely imaginary descriptions of distant lands, Menocchio's mental universe expanded enormously".

7 See F. Ben Amram, *Nona Flor* (Tel Aviv: Traklin Publishing, 2005) [Hebrew]. In 2006, Mrs. Ben Amram donated the books mentioned to the Institute of Ladino in Ma'aleh Adumim. I thank Mrs. Ben Amram for her significant help without which this chapter could not have been written.

8 In the card file of Makhon Ben-Zvi the name of the publisher is: Moshe Barukh and Yekutiel Yosha; the year of publication is 1900; the author is Pereyra, Aharon Eliyah Raphael Ḥaim Moshe Ben Yitzhak; Pereyra Yitzhak Moshe Ben Aharon Eliyahu Raphael Ḥaim Moshe; and Tarika, Ḥizkiah Shmuel Bekhor Ben Moshe. This title is also found in A. Yaari, *Reshimot Sifre Ladino. Catalogue of Jewish Spanish Books in the National and University Library of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1943), 28, no. 193 Cf. n. 107 below.

Safed, too, at the cave of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yoḥai and Rabbi Eliezer and Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, Rabbi Joḥanan Ha-Sandler, Rabbi Himnuna Saba, and the Ar"i "I en todas *malkhut de tzaddikim i ḥasidim.*" *Ha-Ma'ase de Bene Moshe* (pages 13–29; the story ends in the middle of page 29 and continues with the text of *Divre Musar*) tells of the meeting of a wise man named Barukh Gad (whose name attests to him being a lucky person), who set out from Jerusalem on a good-deed mission to the cities of Persia and Media and met the Sons of Moses, descendants of the ten tribes who are beyond the Sabatyon [sic!] River.

The first of the novels bound in this book is *Robinson Crusoe* (pages 4–124). It was translated by Ben Tzion Taragán and printed in Jerusalem in 1897.<sup>9</sup> Flor Pisanti's copy is torn and missing the first four pages; but on page 38 appears the name of the protagonist, Robinson, when he writes his name in his journal, on 30 September 1659: Robinson arrived on the island mentioned.<sup>10</sup> Quoted on page 42 are the words of the hero who is calling upon God with biblical verses. The citations are in Hebrew with the Ladino translation next to them: "Call upon me in time of trouble, I will rescue you, and you shall honor me" (Ps. 50: 15).<sup>11</sup> The Ladino translation of the Hebrew verse from Psalms is particularly interesting: we see that the translator and editor, Ben Tzion Taragán, did not rely upon the Hebrew knowledge of his readers. Indeed, as early as the eighteenth century the people of the communities in the Oriental Sephardi dispersal were not fluent in Hebrew. Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, author of *Me'am Lo'ez*, complained about this and because of the situation chose to write his commentary on Genesis and half of Exodus in Ladino.<sup>12</sup>

The second novel bound in this volume is *Anna María* (pages 3–112).<sup>13</sup> Anna María was a second chambermaid – "segunda kamarera" – of the baron-narrator. Of interest is the use, in describing the standing of the protagonist, Anna María, of the Ladino translation of the French term *femme de chambre*, chambermaid; and not the terms common in Jewish Spanish: *mosa*, and Iberian Spanish: *sirvienta, criada*. We are dealing with a romantic novel<sup>14</sup> about maid-

9 According to the catalogue in the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library. It is noted there that the novel was published under the name of *La ermoza istoriya de Robinson* or *La mizeria* (Constantinople: 1924).

10 "Entro Robinson en la dita isla."

11 "Llameme en dia de angustia te eskapare i me honradas."

12 See chapter 2 above, nn. 43–6.

13 In the Makhon Ben Zvi catalogue, the title appears as *Anna Maria o El korason de mujer*.

14 In Spanish, *novela rosa*. In Britain it is accepted to speak about literature whose target audience was scullery maids. In general, such novels were published as series (Spanish: *novella de entrega*), or as *Folleton del djournal* (supplements to the paper) in Ladino newspapers. The chapter from the novel would be printed at the bottom of the page, so

servants. The message to the reader was crystal clear -whoever does not protect her virtue and devotes herself to forbidden love with her master will have to pay a heavy price for her sins: for those sweet hours had to lead to sad outcomes.<sup>15</sup> On the last page of the novel appears an announcement about the imminent publication of the novel *Manon Lescaut*.<sup>16</sup> Here we have a definite example of a classic novel from the treasures of French literature adapted to Ladino.

The third novel (after the prayers in Flor Pisanti's volume) is *El aprezado di La Inkizision* [The prisoner of the Inquisition; pages 1–14]. Written on the title page is “adaptado del Franses” [adapted from the French]. It appeared as a “*Folleton del djournal Mizraim*” in Cairo [“en Kairo”] in 1904 and it cost “un grush” [one grush]. The plot takes place in Amsterdam, the capital of Holland, according to the editor in 5410, that is, 1650. The protagonist is a “marrano”, *anus*, a forced convert, who tells how, with the help of his uncle, “I left accursed Spain and sailed from Portugal to Holland”.<sup>17</sup> The father of the narrator-protagonist had been “very wealthy, one of the greatest of the rich of Madrid (the capital of Spain)”.<sup>18</sup> Of special note is the explanation the editor gives, in an aside, for the name of the city Madrid: This is the capital of Spain. From this we see that the editor assumes that the Ladino readers in Jerusalem are not familiar with the name of the city Madrid nor of its standing as the capital of the Kingdom of Spain. Owing to the tremendous riches of the father of the narrator-protagonist, the Christians envied him and accused him of lack of faithfulness to his religion. He was brought before the tribunal of the Inquisition and after him, his son, too, was put on trial by this court, which was ... “A tribunal of Satans. All of the judges were men of stone with hearts of steel; they peered at me with blood-filled tiger's eyes”.<sup>19</sup> There is a moral to be drawn from the protagonist of

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that one could cut and save it for binding later by its owner. The series appeared on the eves of Sabbaths and holidays, so the readers could enjoy reading them in their free time. On these novels, see also A. Barquín López, *Edición y estudio de doce novellas aljamiadas sefardíes*.

15 “Ma estas dulces oras devian tener tristes konsekuensias.”

16 “Sirkamente aparesera”. *Manon Lescaut*, the work of Abbé Prévost (1731). See Romero, *Creación literaria*, 47.

17 “Sali dela maldicha Espanya i me embarki en Portugal por la Olanda.”

18 “Mi padre era muy riko de los mas grandes rikones de Madrid (Kapitala de la Espanya).”

19 “Tribunal de demonios. Todos los djuzgadores, ombres de piedra kon korasones de fiero me miravan kon ojos de tigres sekeosos de sangre”. *El aprezado de la Inkizision*, 7–8. On page 7, the adapter and editor explains to his readers, in a special note, what a marrano is. “Marrano (djudio konvertido por fuerza al kristianismo)” [marrano: a Jew converted by force to Christianity]. The novella *El aprezado de la Inkizision* appeared in two editions:

this novel: “My history is sad as I have said; but it shows, dear brothers, that our religion is, indeed, better; a light that never caused similar acts of cruelty.<sup>20</sup> This novel attests, like a hundred witnesses, to the image of Spain, that is, Espanya, in the eyes of the Ladino-reading, Sephardi Jews: Spain is identified with the Inquisition and its cruelties.

In the introduction, “prefasiyo”, the editor takes upon himself the role of instructor to his readers: everyone had certainly heard about the Inquisition, the terrible tribunal that had left so many sad memories in the countries of France and Spain. It was in Spain that this tribunal was so cruel and zealous. The court was established against Christians who were disloyal to their religion. Within a short time, however, and mainly in Spain, this tribunal served for judging all suspects: Christians and non-Christians.<sup>21</sup> The Jews who had converted, the editor goes on to write, kept all the laws of Judaism in secret at home. These converted Jews, who were called “marranos” were Catholic Christians (Papists), but in church their prayers were directed to the God of Gods and not to Christ. Our forefathers, whether they were marranos or whether they remained Jews suffered greatly. This story shows us more than enough of the barbaric tortures suffered by the innocent victims.<sup>22</sup> Of note is that the term *convertidos*, an Iberian Spanish word, is explained by a Jewish Spanish synonym, ‘*aboltados*’, namely, returnees, or apostates.<sup>23</sup> As we know, the Sephardi communities took into their midst also marranos who managed to escape from the Iberian Peninsula and to return to their Judaism in the oriental

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one as a *Folleton del djournal Mizraim*, 1904; this was the version held by Flor Ginio Pisanti. The other edition appeared in the bottom of the pages of the paper *La Buena Esperansa*, in Izmir, edited by Aron Yosef H̄azan, issues 1711–18, in 1905.

- 20 “Mi istoira es muy triste segun lo avia dicho; ma elya mostra, keridos ermanos, ke muestra religion es aun la mas mijor una luz ke no kavzo nunca krueldades semejantes”.
- 21 “Todos tiene oido avlar de la Inkizision, el tribale tribunal ke desho tantos tristes suvenires en los payses de Fransia i de Espanya. Es en Espanya ke este tribunal fue muy kruel i muy fanatiko. Era kontra los kristianos ke no restavan fieles a sus religion ke este tribunal fue kreado. Ma despues de un poko de tiempo i sovre todo en Espanya este tribunal sirvio por djuzgar a todos los sospechados kristianos i no kristianos”.
- 22 “Guardavan todas las leyes djudias eskondidos en sus kazas. Estos djudios konvertidos [aboltados] ke se yaman “marranos” fueron mismo papazes ma en las “iglesias” sus rogativas eran adresadas al Dio i no al Kristo. Nuestros padres, sea los marranos o los ke kedaron djudios, siempre sufrieron muy mungo. Este kuento nos muestra bastante las sufriensas barbaras di las kuales fueron las inocentes viktimas.”
- 23 See J. Nehama, *Dictionnaire du judéo-espagnol* (Madrid: CSIC, 1977), from *aboltár*; see also A. Perez and G. Pimienta, *Diksionario Amplio Djudeo-espanyol – Ebreo. Lashon Me-Aspamia* (Maale Adumim: Sefarad-El Instituto Maale-Adumim, 2007): “aboltado”.

countries.<sup>24</sup> The author presents his readers the tortures of the Inquisition in all their detail: by rope, by water, and by fire.<sup>25</sup>

The next novel in the volume is *El bezerro* (The calf). *Leyenda djudia revista i korejada por* [a Jewish story adapted and amended by] Shlomo Israel Cherizli, Jerusalem, 1905 (pages 1–14).<sup>26</sup> The plot is set in Rome, where stands a tower with a secret inside it. The rabbi solved the riddle of the tower and the king of the land became a Jew and celebrated Passover with the Jews in great joy.<sup>27</sup>

On pages 15–16, following *El bezerro* come *Pasatiempos*, little diversions of short stories and jokes.<sup>28</sup>

The next novel in the volume is *Enigma* or “*El djidio i la princesa. Pasaje en tiempo del kativerio de los djidios en Bavel*” [The Jew and the Princess. Set in the time of the Jewish exile in Babylonia; pages 1–18]. The novel was translated from Hebrew by Ben Zion Taragán and printed in “La Guerta de Yerushalayim” [The Garden of Jerusalem] 1911, and in *El Meseret*<sup>29</sup> in Izmir, the same year. Flor Pisanti’s copy was printed in Jerusalem by the ShaYi”Sh Library in 1920.<sup>30</sup> The story concerns a Jewish painter from among the exiles of Judea and the daughter of Belshazzar, king of Babylon.

The fifth novel in the volume under consideration is *Ḥasan-Pasha el terrible. Romanso istoriko* Estampado en *El Mazalozo* de Esmirna 5669 [1911] por Aleksander Ben Guiat.<sup>31</sup>

24 See, for example, A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Olas migratorias de judíos y conversos desde la Península Ibérica hacia el Imperio Otomano en los siglos xv y xvi”, *El Olivo*, 71 (2010): 79–92.

25 *El Apresado*, 10–14.

26 Noted in the Makhon Ben Zvi catalogue is that “it was previously published in Ladino, with a few changes, with the title: “The Tale of the Calf”, in an anthology of story *Ḥatan Ha-Melekh Ve-Ester Ha-Shenîya* [The king’s son-in-law and the second Esther], Salonika, 1888”. On page 2 is a picture of Sh.Y. Cherizli with the statement “Cherizli nasio en Yerusahlem en el 15 be-adar 5638” (Cherizli was born in Jerusalem on 15 Adar 5638) [1878].

27 *Ibid.*, 14. “Se izo djidio i festo la fiesta de Pascua kon alegria grande”.

28 On the *Livro de Pasatiempo*, a journal produced by the publisher Shlomo Israel Cherizli that appeared in 1898–1899 and comprised three issues containing stories, proverbs, and the like, see Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists*, 298–99.

29 *El Meseret* [The Joy] was a weekly published in Izmir. See E. Ginio, “Ottoman Jews! Hurry to save our homeland!”, *Pe’amim*, 105–106 (2006) 6 n. 3. See also Romero, *Creación literaria*, 180–82, 231.

30 These details appear on the opening page of the novel, and they match the details found in the Makhon Ben Zvi catalogue.

31 *Hasan Pasha the Terrible. A Historical Novel*. It was published in Ladino in the paper *El Mazaloso* in Izmir by Aleksander Ben Guiat (1–20). The Jerusalem publisher was the ShaYi”Sh Library, 1911. These details appear on the opening page of the novel and match

Of note is that on the final page of this novel is an announcement about the approaching publication of the novel *Enigma* or *El djidio i la princesa, Pasaje en tiempo del kativerio de los djidios en Bavel*, which in Flor Pisanti's volume of novels was bound before the novel *Hasan Pasha*. This shows us that the owner of the books, Flor Pisanti, was the one who bound them as she saw fit.

The plot of *Hasan Pasha the Terrible* describes the rise of a simple slave to the level of vizir. While enjoying that status he became the terror of the public. Especially important for us is the opening of the second chapter, in which the editor, ShaYi"Sh, turns directly to his readers and says that "so that our readers should understand ["por el intendemiyento de nuestros lektores"], we consider it necessary to devote a chapter teaching them what Algeria, Tunisia, and even Morocco were a hundred years ago. These countries were the center of the Berbers: thieves, pirates, and criminals. In those days, the editor-explicator continues, steamships were not yet in operation and sea journeys were undertaken by sailing vessels. The kingdoms of England and Holland possessed colonies outside of Europe, in Asia, Africa, and America ["kolonias afuera della Evropa en la Asya, Afrika i Amerika"]. But France had important interests in ports in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The pirates attacked the ships of the English and the Dutch, but mainly of the French; this came about because the former only passed through, sailing in the waters of those countries, while the latter sought to gain a foothold in the country and opened war to conquer Algeria. Whoever read the novel in the ShaYi"Sh edition could, therefore, study a chapter in international relations à la the nineteenth century. The readers of the novels were women and men; thus, the Sephardi women, too, who spent most of their time raising children and managing their households, gained a smidgen of general education, thanks to these novels.

The sixth novel in this volume is *La brigante* (pages 1–20). On the opening page are the details about the novel that was printed in Izmir in 1913 and in Jerusalem, by ShaYi"Sh, in 1915.<sup>32</sup> It deals with the adventures of a band of robbers in the state of Missouri in the United States. There, in the Wild West, even a five-year-old girl knew how to use a knife. On the last page of the work ap-

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the details in the Makhon Ben Zvi catalogue, in which information is given about the life span of Hasan Pasha, 1720–1790. In the novel itself, however, chapter one speaks of events taking place in 1770–1800. On the paper *El Mazaloso*, edited by Aleksander Ben Guiat, see Romero, *Creación literaria*, 181.

32 Romanso imitado por Aleksander Ben Guiat. Publikado kon el titulo de: "Madame Gakigi en Amerika" en *El Meseret* de Esmirna anyo 13 en 5670. Yerushalaym 5672. Estampado por la libreria de Shlomo Israel Cherizli en Yerushalaim.

pears an announcement about the coming publication of *Pavlo i Virzhinia*,<sup>33</sup> a novel ranking among the best classics of French literature.

The seventh novel in the volume is *Nikola Primero i el djidio. Lejenda rusa por Pesah Kaplan*. It was translated from the Hebrew, *Nicolas the First and the Jew. A Russian Story*, by Pesah Kaplan (pages 1–13).<sup>34</sup> The story is about a Jew who used to travel among the villages on the Russian-Polish border, who earned the protection of the king and was privileged to receive the price of the inn from which he had been ejected.

The eighth novel in the volume, *Lulu*, by Hemdah Ben-Yehudah (pages 1–15)<sup>35</sup> is of particular interest within the confines of our discussion, since the story, translated from Hebrew, sheds light on the web of relations between the Old *Yishuv* and the *Hovevei Zion* pioneers as well as the members of the First *Aliyah* in The Land of Israel: how the latter were seen by the former. The story's protagonist, Lulu (Penina in Hebrew; Pearl in Arabic), the daughter of Yemenite immigrants, is married to Raḥamim, as Sephardi labourer, "*lavorador sefardi*," according to the translation from Hebrew into Ladino, who was known in public for his strong body, "*konsido por su puerpo grande*." This husband has imprisoned his wife in the house – the kortijo – and beat her.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, Lulu flees, with her infant son in her arms, to her father's home, which was steeped in poverty; her father sought some relief by trying to convince her to return to her husband's house. The daughter refused, left her parents' home,

33 *Paul et Virginie* by Bernardin de Saint Pierre, 1787. See also O. Borovaia, "The role of translation in shaping the Ladino novel at the time of westernization in the Ottoman Empire (A case study: Hasan-pasha and Pavlo y Virzhinia)," *Jewish History* 16 (2002): 263–82.

34 Noted in the catalogue of Makhon Ben Zvi is that "the novel had been published earlier in Ladino as a *folleton* in the paper *Hashofar* in Philipopoli in 1901. It was printed in Jerusalem by Shlomo Israel Cherizli in 1907. The name of the translator was omitted. On the title page: Empremeria Karmona i Zara, Kairo. Actually, it was printed in Jerusalem, by the ShaYi"Sh press, but owing to censorship they concealed the place of publication and the name of the printer." Philipopoli is Plovdiv, the second largest city in Bulgaria, where an important Jewish community resided.

35 In the catalogue of Makhon Ben Zvi the story *Lulu*, by Hemdah Ben-Yehudah, is listed as translated from Hebrew. It was published as a *folleton* in the paper *Hashofar* in Philipopoli, in 1902, in Ladino and it was printed by Shlomo Israel Cherizli in 1908. Here, too, it is registered as having been printed by the press Empremeria Karmona i Zara, Kairo, but actually, as noted, it was printed in Jerusalem, and its place of publication and the name of the printer were concealed owing to censorship. The Hebrew source appeared in the paper *Hashkafah*, Jerusalem, 3rd year, 1902. See also, Romero, *Creación literaria*, 246.

36 On wife-beating, see Y. Yehoshua, *Old Jerusalem in the Eye and the Heart* (Jerusalem, 1988), 211–12 [Hebrew]. This book is a collection of writings by Ya'akov Yehoshua, edited and published by his son, the Israeli writer A.B. Yehoshua, after his father's demise.

and she came to a *moshavah* – “kompanya”; in an aside, the translator explains that “este modo yamavan las kolonias” [that was how they called the *moshavot*]. The difference between the terms “kompanya” and “kolonya”, which was the word commonly used by the farmers of the first *moshavot*, indicates the alienation between the Old *Yishuv* and the New. Hemdah Ben-Yehudah does not ignore the apprehension of Lulu, the heroine of her novel, from life in the *moshavah*: “Los moradores de la kompanya son todos apikorsim” [the inhabitants of the *moshavah* are *apikorsim*], claims Lulu; yet with no other choice, Lulu went to the *moshavah*, where she hired herself out as a worker. She learned to speak Hebrew [“אב'לאר איל איבראו!”; avlar el ebreo!] – the exclamation point and emphasis are in the original –. Undoubtedly, knowledge of Hebrew was perceived by the author as the height of social integration. Lulu lived in the *moshavah* for three years. Every time she visited her relatives in Jerusalem, she told them about the beautiful life in the *moshavot*.<sup>37</sup> She [Lulu] said that the farmers were good and kind. One of the men of the *moshavah* fell in love with her and asked her to be his wife.<sup>38</sup> Lulu married him and changed her non-Hebrew name to a Hebrew one: Penina. Her good life from then on was described as follows: From then on she considered herself as the luckiest woman in the world! When she had spare time, she read Hebrew books, and in each one she discovered new things and new worlds. Moreover, from these books she learned that she was now living a completely new life.<sup>39</sup> Especially important is the presentation of books and reading them as an educational factor to be praised and a way to attain happiness, by adopting “new things and new worlds.” The emphasis is on the word “new” and concisely, *moderna*. Of course, we must keep in mind that these things were written by Hemdah Ben Yehudah, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah’s second wife, who, as is well known, belonged to the New *Yishuv* and was one of its cultural heroes. In the family paper *Hashkafah*, she published stories, features, sketches, and fashion news.<sup>40</sup> Ben-Yehudah wrote

37 *Lulu*, 14–15: “La ermoza vida de las kolonias dezia ke los kasalinos son buenos i piadosos”.

38 *Ibid.*, 15: “kolonista se la amava i la demando por mujer”.

39 *Ibid.*: “I de estonses elya se kontava komo la mujer mas venturosa del mundo entero! Mientras de tiempo libero elya estava siempre meldando livros en ebreo i kada livro le diskuvria nuevos kozas i nuevos mundos. De estos livros elya entendio tambien ke agora elya vivia de una vida enteramente nueva”.

40 Nurit Guvrin, *Honey from the Rock: Studies on the Literature of The Land of Israel* 45–52 [Hebrew]. On the whole, the *halutzim* did not look kindly upon the Old *Yishuv*. Menaḥem Ussishkin’s story *Arab’ah Shomerim* (Four guards), which appeared in *Lu’ah Ahīasaf*, 1904: 60, deserves mention again. See above chapter 3 n. 4. See also Ḥ. Hazaz, *She Who Sits in the Gardens* [Hebrew], 5. Cf. above: Introduction, n. 16. Even Yehudah Burla (1886–1969), who was a Sephardi, did not withhold his criticism from his fellow community members. See

stories about the lives of Yemenites and Sephardim in Jerusalem, which she presented in a patronizing view from above to below, as people who had to abandon their foreign, strange ways of life and to advance to the world of *moderna*. What could a woman in Flor Pisanti's generation think of Lulu? This is not a heroine from some far-off strange, alien country, but a close neighbor, a member of the Yemenite community, whose socio-economic situation, in those days, was particularly dire. I have no way to answer that question, but I am permitted to state that thanks to Hemdah Ben-Yehudah's story, the reader, Flor Pisanti – even if she did not leave her city, Jerusalem, and never once visited a *moshavah*, from among those established in Judea and Galilee – could gain an impression from the manner of the presentation of the way of life of settlement members, men and women of the First Aliyah. Even though the description given of the *moshavot* was clearly utopian, this was still one way to become familiar with it.

The ninth and final novel in this volume is *Bianinka Girmayilof. Romano ruso*, imitado por Aleksander Ben Guiat (pages 1–20; the book was interrupted on page 21, which is torn in the middle). The novel, copied by Aleksander Ben Guiat, was published in *El Meseret*, in Izmir, in 1903.<sup>41</sup> The plot of this novel is set at the time of the end of the rule of the Russian Tsar Pavlo (Pavel, Paul; 1796–1801). The father of the female protagonist was a general in the Tsar's army. Also living in the same castle was the general's protégé, a handsome young man named Michel, about twenty-four years of age. He was the son of a count, an exile for political reasons “un egzilado [izo surgun] politiko”. Of particular note is the explanation the editor gave for the Spanish word “exilado–egzilado”. He defines it by combining two words from two different languages: a Jewish Spanish word and a Turkish word: “izo” [Jewish Spanish: made] and “surgun” [Turkish: sürgün, exiles or refugees].<sup>42</sup>

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Y. Yehoshua, *Old Jerusalem*, 236–40. See also: Tamir Karkason, “The Attitude of Eliezer Ben Yehuda and His Periodicals To The Sephardim, 1879-1908”, M.A., Thesis presented to the University of Tel Aviv, November, 2013, including bibliography.

41 In the Yad Ben-Zvi Library catalogue, it is noted that the book is an adaptation of a work by Alexandre Dumas, père, whose plot takes place in Russia. This item was originally printed in the work *Crimes Célèbres* (Paris, 1839). The book was published in Jerusalem by the ShaYi”Sh Library in Ladino. The title page lists its place of publication as Cairo, though it was actually printed in Jerusalem. As mentioned (cf. n. 35 above) owing to censorship regulations, the place of printing and the name of the real publisher were concealed. In the above mentioned catalogue, there are also references for this information.

42 *Bianinka Girmayilof*, 1.

In a separate volume, among Flor Pisanti's books, appears the novel *Genoveva* – the protagonist's name – by Eliya Karmona.<sup>43</sup> At the end of Flor Pisanti's copy, the date 7 August 1916 is written in pencil. This copy was tattered and missing the beginning of the book. On pages 52–53 of this copy written in colored pencil ("copy" pencil) were the letters missing in the printing: on page 52 in square script – on page 53, letters in Ladino script (soletreo). This is a story set in the Middle Ages, the count (Konde) Sedjefredo was called by his king to report for a war campaign, leading his knights. His demure wife, the Countess (Kondesa) Genoveva, who originated from Brabante (Brabant), falls victim to the plot woven against her by the "prokorador", whom her husband had appointed to run his estate during his absence. While the innocent countess is "amiga de los proves" [a friend of the poor], the evil "prokorador" is known for his "ipokreziya" (the word is explained in the body of the text in Hebrew as *hanifut*), his obsequiousness. The countess, who is saved from death in recompense for the good deeds she has done for the poor, raises the son to which she has given birth – his name is Doloro from the root "dolor" [pain] – in a large cave [una grande *me'arah*, the last word in Hebrew] and educates him to be God-fearing. Upon the return of the count, the evil person receives his punishment and the countess is restored with honor to the palace. The moral for the readers is that when one does what is good and right on this earth, God rewards him.<sup>44</sup> The medieval atmosphere is palpable in the novel: the protagonists live in a *kastilyo* [a castle]. They hear "trompetas de gerra" [the blasts of war]. The protagonist is called to take part in the "war. The Moors [Moros] of Spain have suddenly attacked France, threatening to destroy it, and two knights have brought the orders of the king."<sup>45</sup> The fighters have gathered in the great hall of the castle, armed from head to toe.<sup>46</sup> The countess presents her hus-

43 In the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library catalogue, the book is noted as having appeared in Ladino in Jerusalem in 1905, under the title: *Istoria de Genoveva*, in the series *Biblioteka di el trezoro de Yerushalayim*. Noted in the comments: "an intriguing, amusing, and ethical work. Third edition, freshly edited and proofread," in Ladino, in Rashi script. The previous edition was printed in Salonika, with the title *Istoria de Genoveva*, 1900. On Eliya R. Karmona, editor of the publication *El Juquetón*, a "humor journal", in Constantinople (Kushta). See Romero, *Creación literaria*, 183, 206, 224, 231–33, 241–42. On page 67 of the copy, that belonged to Flor Pisanti, appears the title *Genoveva no. 5*. This was a novel that appeared booklet [*folleton*] after booklet and was then bound by its owners. One may assume that Flor Pisanti possessed a copy that had been printed in Jerusalem.

44 On page 89 of Flor Pisanti's copy: "Kuando se aze bondad sobre la tiera, el Dio lo paga".

45 "Gera. Los moros de la Espanya vinieron sufito sobre la Fransia amenazandola de destruir la i dos kavalieros trusheron los ordenes del rey".

46 "Los kavaleros estaban akojados en la grande sala armadas del pie asta la kavesa".

band his sword and says, “Use these weapons for the glory of the Lord and the homeland, in order to protect the honest and the suffering innocent and to punish the guilty.”<sup>47</sup> We see the chivalrous ethos of medieval court literature of Latin Europe. Of particular note is the mention of God as “Dio” in the singular. In Iberian Spanish the term is, as we know, Dios; the Jews were meticulous about avoiding the ending of the word, which alludes to plural. The atmosphere in medieval, Latin Europe, is hundreds of years distant from the way of life of the Sephardi community in nineteenth-century Jerusalem; even if the Spanish romances, which continued to be common among the women of the community, were replete with stories of clashes between knights, charming maidens who were taken captive, and kings and their courts. Yet, modern literature in Ladino brought a medieval atmosphere to the homes of its readers, including Flor Pisanti. As one learns from the book by Flora Ben Amram, *Nona Flor*, her grandmother, the reader Flor Pisanti, internalized this atmosphere and constructed in its wake the stories and legends she presented her listeners in her city, Jerusalem, toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century.

The third book among Flor Pisanti’s volumes is missing a title or an opening page. Her copy begins on page 9. On page 17, however, there is a title, *Un krimen salvaje* [a wild crime].<sup>48</sup> The story’s plot takes place in France in the years 1846–1869 and includes a beauty on her deathbed; a duel, a murder by an unknown hand that occurred in a village near Grenoble (in Ladino: גרינובלי), which is in France, and an abandoned infant adopted by a priest. The father of the female protagonist used to take a walk with her, every day, “in the Luxembourg Gardens, one of the best places for a walk in Paris.”<sup>49</sup> One of the male protagonists invites his friend to a party at his aunt’s home at 6 PM “sesh ala franka.”<sup>50</sup> meaning six o’clock according to the European clock, which differs

47 “Azete de estas armas por la Gloria del Dio i de la Patria por defender inocentes ke sufren i kastigar a los culpables”.

48 According to the Makhon Ben Zvi Library catalogue, the novel was printed in the journal *El Judeo*, of Constantinople (Kushta), 4th year. It also appeared in print through the Ephraim Melamed Press in Izmir no later than 1913. Indicated on page 49 of our copy is the “Libreriya i Emp’ Efraim Melamed” [The Library and Press of Ephraim Melamed]. The novel was published in installments: 20 booklets, 16 pages each. It was printed again in Salonika, 1927. The novel was originally written in French. The reprintings of the said novel, in the span of a few years, are likely to attest to readers’ interest in this novel in Ladino.

49 “En la guerta de Luxemburg uno de los mijores lugares de paseo de Paris.” *Un krimen salvaje*, 25.

50 *Ibid.*, 49.

from the Turkish, which divides the day into two: day and night, with each of them divided into twelve, like the number of hours in the day or night.<sup>51</sup> The word “reloj” [clock] is explained, in an aside, as “ora” [hour].<sup>52</sup> The protagonist admits he has forgotten to set his clock.<sup>53</sup> In the end, the complicated tangle is resolved and the evil ones punished. The plot is so intricate that the editor finds it necessary to intervene, more than once, by addressing the readers directly: “As our readers have already understood.”<sup>54</sup>

The fourth book kept in the cupboard by Flor Pisanti is *El konde i la kondesa de Karatmor*.<sup>55</sup> The plot of this novel takes place in the West Indies, in China, in London, and in Paris. In part it is an epistolary novel. The count and countess are estranged; a young knight is kidnapped; a young girl falls in sin; blackmail over love letters, and so on. The author follows the system of introducing the figures one by one, and in the ensuing develops the relationships among them and presents them to the reader. Of note is the use the author makes of the Sephardi proverb: The darker the night becomes, the closer the dawn approaches.<sup>56</sup> The proverb, well known to speakers of Jewish Spanish and readers of Ladino, brings them closer to the story’s protagonists and their plots. As the author weaves the story’s plot, the author quotes, in Jewish Spanish, a popular romance: “Sleep, sleep, beautiful maiden/sleep without worry or pain/here your servant who is desiring so much/to see your dream with great love/”.<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere a sorrowful romance is quoted: “You entered my garden/you picked all the flowers/you ate your fill of all the honey/you left me with the pain/”.<sup>58</sup> While describing a letter addressed by one of the main figures to his love, the author is alluding to the words of another popular romance when he writes,

51 See A. Wishnitzer, “Our Time: On Durability of the Alaturka Hour System in the Late Ottoman Empire”, *International Journal of Turkish Studies* (2010): 16/1–2.

52 *Ibid.*, 133.

53 “Olvidi de demomentarla” (‘kordiarla’).

54 “Ke nuestros meldadores ya lo entienden”

55 The novel is listed in the catalogue of Makhon Ben Zvi Library as: “Romanso de amor por Shlomo B. Yosef. Buketo de Romansos.” It appeared in Kushta, by the Arditi Press in the year 1920. In previous editions the novel is called: *El Mundo* and it appeared in Kushta, 1881; in Jerusalem, 1888; Cairo (indeed: Jerusalem), 1907. It was published in 15 booklets, 16 pages in each booklet. Page number 33 in Flor Pisanti’s copy bears the title: ‘buketo de romansos’ no. [numero] 3. Page 129 bears the title: “buketo de romansos no. 9.”

56 “Kquanto mas oskurese está la nochada mas presto amanese”.

57 “Durme durme ermoza donzeya\durme durme sin ansia i dolor\ ek tu esklavo ke tanto dezea\ver tu suenyo kon grande amor\”.

58 “Entrates en mi verdjel\akojates toda la flor\ te komites toda la miel\mi deshates kon la dolor\”

“the nightingales singing in the spring,”<sup>59</sup> apparently thinking of the romance: “The Nightingales Sing in the Month of May.”<sup>60</sup> The link the author constructs between the novel and the romances, which are quite familiar to the readers, especially the women among them, brings them closer to the convoluted plot, which takes places in distant, strange countries. Also interesting is the biblical image the author invokes when he describes “the young man, who comes, like Noah’s dove, bringing an olive branch in her mouth.”<sup>61</sup> The image of the heralding dove is common in Christian literature, but the use of Noah’s Hebrew name, “la palomba di No’ah,” proves that the version of this novel under discussion is aimed at a Jewish audience. In this novel, too, the author conducts a dialogue with his readers: what did “this accursed count”<sup>62</sup> intend, the writer asks his readers, on the one hand he wants to kill his wife but he also wants to save his enemy, her beloved. A direct address to his audience, especially the women readers, is found in the continuation: “Should it be agreeable to you dear readers and above all to the beautiful women readers, let’s return, for a while, to look at our heroine Aspaziya (Aspasie in French), whom we left in that situation.”<sup>63</sup> Another direct approach to “the distinguished men and women readers” is: “This is what we are about to begin to tell our distinguished men and women readers.”<sup>64</sup>

The fifth volume in Flor Pisanti’s library is *La ija de la lavandera* [The daughter of the washerwoman] by Eliya R. Karmona, who was the editor of the humor journal *El Jugueton*, in Constantinople (Istanbul; Kushta).<sup>65</sup> The plot takes

59 “Los bilbilos i pasharos kantando en la primavera”.

60 “Los bilbilikos kantan en el mez de mayo”.

61 “El mansevo ke vino komo la palomba de Noah, a traer en su boka la rama del olivar”. Ibid., 79.

62 “este maldicho konde.”

63 “Si los plaze a los keridos lektores i sovre todo alas ermozas lektrisas vamos a ver un poko ala sinyora Aspaziya ke la deshamos en akel estado,” *ibid.*, 22. In the work *La famiya misteriosa*. Teatro en 4 aktos en poezia konfuzido de Jakim Behar, Trieste, published by the Abraham B. Altabib Press, 1888/1889, which I saw in the British Library, London, there appears an appeal to “keridos leedores.” This Hispanism is understandable owing to the location of the publisher: Trieste. I thank Ms Ilana Tahan, the librarian responsible for the Hebrew sections of the British Library, for her advice and assistance.

64 “Esto es lo ke vamos empear a kontar a nuestros onorabiles lektores i lektrisas”. Ibid., 39.

65 According to the Makhon Ben Zvi Library catalogue, it was published in Jerusalem in 1905, by the Azriel Press, in the series, *Guerta de romansos* (Garden of Romances). The publisher was Benyamin Ben Yosef in Constantinople and the title page states that this is the thirteenth book produced by this publisher. Stated on the opening page of copy we have that it was published by Henri Shaltiel in Constantinople, in 1923, in the *El Jugueton Meseret Han* Press, Istanbul. On that same page appears a list of titles – listas de libros

place in Paris, and it deals with the daughter of a washerwoman who is married to a banker's son; a false accusation of jealousy; waifs; servants who are scoundrels; thieves and a fortune teller who reads cards. The protagonists of the novel are not Jews at all: they attend church<sup>66</sup> and call for the priest ["un pretre"] to conduct a wedding.<sup>67</sup> At the heroine's wedding party, people dance a waltz, a mazurka, and a quadrille.<sup>68</sup> The author explains to his readers, in the context of a notice in a newspaper, which tells of a woman who threw herself into the Seine, that the "Seine" is a river in France.<sup>69</sup> The novel presents the ideal husband: young, handsome, honest, wealthy, educated, from a good family. We can imagine for ourselves how enchanting this ideal was for young women in Jerusalem in Flor Pisanti's generation. For an eligible young man, a proper marriage is to a girl with a dowry; even though a wealthy husband can forgo it.<sup>70</sup> The good life was depicted through the description of the woman, who after giving birth, had three maid-servants put at her disposal, so that she should not exert herself at all.<sup>71</sup>

This concludes the survey of Flor Pisanti's books. A number of characteristics are common to the novels described above, despite the differences in locations and time periods in which the various plots took place as well as the variety of publishing houses that printed these books and their locations. A most important characteristic is the didactic approach of the editors in Ladino. They sought to provide their readers with plots from the big world outside the limited boundaries of the Jerusalemite Sephardi kortijo. Since they were thoroughly familiar with their target audience, they considered it fitting – as we saw during the course of our discussion – to serve as instructors for the readers and through different explanations, to help them become acquainted with the background of the plots of the novels they read as well as the geography and

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metidos en vendita – for sale and their prices range from 12 grush to 30. Prospective buyers should contact Henri Shaltiel, whose address is given as the Balat Quarter in Istanbul. The novel *La ija de la lavandera* is also mentioned in Romero, *Creación literaria*, 231. On the journal *El Juqueton*, see also Díaz-Mas, *Sefardíes*, 177.

66 *La ija*, above n. 53, 198. In issue 89 of the journal *El Amaneser* (The Dawn), Istanbul, 4 July 2012, is an article by Klara Perahya that treats a novel by this name.

67 *La ija*, above n. 53, 172.

68 *Ibid.*, 82.

69 "una mujer se echo a la "Seine". Un rio de Fransiá". *Ibid.*, 153.

70 "un mansevo ermozo, onesto, riko, instruido, bien elevado". *Ibid.*, 47–50.

71 "Tres mosas eran metidas a dispozision por no azerla penar del todo". Ya'akov Yehoshua informed us that the only time of pampering for a Sephardi woman in Jerusalem was the day after the delivery. See Y. Yehoshua, *En la casa y en la plaza en la vieja ciudad de Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1966), 82–83 [Hebrew]. See also below n. 101.

history of distant countries, which were the scenes of the events described. Thus, a historic explanation was given for the Spanish Inquisition; for the names of the capitals of the European kingdoms; the episode of Europe's colonial domination of the northern part of the African continent. Furthermore, the Ladino lexicon was not always sufficient to enable a faithful rendering of texts from modern European languages (mainly French) into the reading language of Sephardim since the Middle Ages: Ladino. Moreover, the editors of the Ladino works employed a system of explaining words in the body of the text to assist their readers in reading comprehension. No uniform system was applied in providing the explanations; not even in the same novel. At times the explanations are given in Ladino, through synonyms and textual clarification. Sometimes they were made with the help of Turkish words, while on other occasions, with the assistance of Hebrew words, from among those that had become part of the Ladino lexicon.<sup>72</sup> A few examples follow: *matrimonio* [kazamiento]<sup>73</sup> – marriage. Here the explanation is given through the use of a synonym from the spoken Jewish Spanish language. In the ensuing in the same novel: “*luna de miyel*” [honeymoon] – a custom unknown among Sephardi communities in the Orient – is explained textually, in a parenthetical aside, by the words: the first month of marriage.<sup>74</sup> It is important to note that, in the explanation, the word “*kazamiento*”, which is common in the spoken language, is used. The explanation for the phrase “*vuestra ija es unika*” [your daughter is an only child] is – “*regalada*”.<sup>75</sup> In this instance, too, a word taken from the spoken Jewish Spanish language is used to define the Jewish Spanish literary word “*unika*”, which comes from the Latin: *unica*. Later on the same page, is an identical type of example, “*es superfluo*” [this is too much] is explained by ‘*demazia*’.<sup>76</sup> In the same novel, the Jewish Spanish word “*el úespede*” [guest; *huésped* in Iberian Spanish] is defined by the Turkish word (as pronounced by the Jews) – “*musafir*”.<sup>77</sup> On page one of the novel appears the word “*ebanist*” [carpenter; *ebanista*, in Iberian Spanish], which is explained parenthetically by the Turkish word for carpenter: “*marangoz*”. This word is common for Greek-speakers, *μαρρανός*. Elsewhere, the word “*paradizo*” is explained parenthetically, through

72 See Michal Held, “La sinagoga i su Beit Midrash, a study of the Hebrew element in written Jewish Spanish in a new Israeli Hebrew language environment”, in *Studies in Modern Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald* (Jerusalem, 2013): 631–94 [Hebrew].

73 *La ija de la lavandera*, 22.

74 “primer mes de kazamiento”, *ibid.*, 82.

75 *Ibid.*, 20.

76 *Ibid.*

77 *Ibid.*, 112.

the Hebrew term, *gan eden*.<sup>78</sup> In the novel *Genoveva*, the editor parenthetically explains the word “ciervo” by the Hebrew word “*ayyal*” [deer].<sup>79</sup> In the same novel, the editor uses the Hebrew word *me’arah* in the body of the text: “una grande me’arah” [a large cave].<sup>80</sup> In the ensuing, in the same work, the Spanish word “otoño” [autumn] is explained by the Turkish expression “son bahar”.<sup>81</sup> In the novel *El Konde i la Kondesa de Karatmor* the term “un eko” [echo] is explained parenthetically, as “bat kol” [Hebrew: echo].<sup>82</sup> “Aldea” is defined as “köy” [village in Turkish].<sup>83</sup> A sofa is a kanapé, the source being the French word: canapé.<sup>84</sup> The term for nightingale, “rosiñol” (from the French rossignol) is explained as “bulbul”, nightingale in Turkish.<sup>85</sup> This word was absorbed in Jewish Spanish as ‘bilbil’; so one finds “los bilbilkos kantan” and so on. “El evanjil” is explained, parenthetically, as the Bible of the Christians – “la biblia de los kristianos.”<sup>86</sup> Especially interesting is the word “inkuesta” [investigation], which is defined, in the novel *Un krimen salvaje* by the Turkish word “istindak”. The meaning of this word, “istintak”, is: investigation.<sup>87</sup> The use of the vocabulary of Ottoman Turkish is likely to attest to the time and education of the editors, who transposed novels from different languages into Ladino and had to grapple with the limitations they encountered while using the lexicon of the latter. Ultimately, the editors were aware of the difficulties in reading comprehension among the target audience of their readers so they sought to make the task easier for them.

### Nona Flor the Storyteller

Who was Mrs. Flor Ginio Pisanti, who holds center stage in our discussion? The Ginio (Chinillo, Tchenyo) family belonged to the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem. We have already mentioned that the family originated in the cities of

78 Ibid., 172. The same explanation also appears in the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, 44. *Gan eden* was an expression understood by Jewish Spanish speakers and Ladino readers; while “paradizo” was a foreign word.

79 Ibid., 43.

80 Ibid., 26.

81 Ibid., 43.

82 *El konde i la kondesa de Karatmor*, 7.

83 Ibid., 78.

84 Ibid., 109.

85 *Un krimen salvaje*, 119.

86 Ibid., 109.

87 Ibid., 59. Sometimes *d* is pronounced in Turkish as *t*.

Saragossa (Zaragoza), Hajar, and Qualatayud in the Kingdom of Aragón.<sup>88</sup> Over the course of the fifteenth century, a number of family members who lived in the kingdom converted to Christianity.<sup>89</sup> Others remained faithful to their Judaism and were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula during the Expulsion of 1492. Some of them turned northward to the Kingdom of Navarre, where Jews could live, until they were driven out of the kingdom in 1498.<sup>90</sup> They possibly had a temporary foothold in Montpellier in the Kingdom of France.<sup>91</sup> In the seventeenth century, they were already living in Salonika and belonged to Kolel Aragon there.<sup>92</sup> The first of the family to immigrate to The Land of Israel was Rabbi Ya'akov Ginio (1775–1875), a rabbi and kabbalist, who first settled in Jerusalem and then moved to Hebron.<sup>93</sup> We may reasonably assume that as a rabbi and mystic, Rabbi Ginio immigrated to the Holy Land to die and be buried in it, as did many in those generations; possibly, his move was also connected to messianic hopes and calculations for the End of Days, which were made around 1840. Rabbi Ya'akov's sons, who continued to reside in Salonika, supported him. His son, Shalom Ginio, who lived in Jerusalem, had already chosen to deal in a trade and not in the rabbinate; around 1840, he received an Ottoman *ferman* permitting him to make wine and was the owner of a *mehane, taverna* (a public house) in Jerusalem. His grandson, David Ginio, established a winery, which was housed in the basement floor of the family residence on The Yehudim Street in the Old City<sup>94</sup> and began to market his products to

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- 88 See M. Serrano y Sanz, *Orígenes de la dominación española en América*, vol. I: “Los amigos y protectores de Cristóbal Colón” (Madrid: Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 25, 1918), cccxciv–cccxcvii, lxxii. See also Y. Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, English Translation by Louis Schoffman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), vol. 2, 321–22; A. Blasco Martínez, *La Judería de Zaragoza en el siglo XIV* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1988); A. Meyuhas Ginio, “Wine Production in Jerusalem,” in *The Mediterranean and the Jews. Society, Culture and Economy in Early Modern Times*, in E. Horowitz and M. Orfali (eds), vol. 2 (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), 157–74, and the bibliography there. Cf. chap. 1 nn. 34, 103–7, and 124.
- 89 Yitzhak Baer determined that Ginio family members apostatized at the time of the Tortosa Dispute (1413), *History of the Jews*, vol. 2, 321.
- 90 See above chapter one n. 34. See also B.J. Gampel, *The Last Jews on Iberian Soil: Navarese Jewry 1478–1498*, 188.
- 91 See Avner Peretz, “From Jerusalem to Aragón in the Time Tunnel”, *Aki Yerushalayim*, 13 (1992): 46, 3–8 as well as Meyuhas Ginio, “Wine Production in Jerusalem”, 165–67.
- 92 M. Molho, “Synagogues in Salonika”, in *Saloniki, Ir Va –Em Be-Yisra’el* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Ha-Makhon Le-Ḥeker Ya’adut Saloniki, 1967), 174–85, especially: 182 [Hebrew].
- 93 Cf. above chapter one, nn. 142, 212.
- 94 On the Ginio family winery and wine store, see S. Zekharya, *Jewish Merchants and Artisans in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Zur-Ot Press, 2002), 93–95 [Hebrew], as well as the article by

buyers from among the Jewish and Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to a few Muslims – who had to abstain from wine owing to a religious prohibition they were subject to – seeking a *Dawa* [Arabic: medicine] for themselves.<sup>95</sup>

David Ginio (1850–1916) and his wife Sarah of the Eliyahu Jaḥon family (?–1936) had three sons who reached maturity, Shalom Bekhor, Eliyahu, and Yitzḥak, and two daughters, Flor and Raḥel. He and his household were among those who had come from Salonika<sup>96</sup> and belonged to the Jewish Spanish speaking, Ladino writing, Sephardi community, in Jerusalem.<sup>97</sup> The Sephardim from Salonika were proud of their Sephardi heritage and considered themselves as the successors of the Golden Era Sephardi Jews.

Flor Ginio Pisanti, was the great-aunt of my husband, Gavriel Ginio. She was born in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1885 and died in 1958, in the New City, which had been built up outside the walls. Flor and her husband, Ben Zion Pisanti, who died in 1936, lived in a house Flor had inherited from her father, David Ginio, at 3 Malki Street in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood, opposite the Sephardi synagogue there.<sup>98</sup> I never met Tía [aunt] Flor – as she was called by her nephews and their descendants – she passed away before I married my husband, but I did hear much about her from the family members upon who she left a deep, abiding impression. Those who knew her were amazed by her beauty, the life lessons she had learned and taught, her pleasant manner, the home remedies she was so adept at preparing, her sweeping joie de vivre, and the love she felt for all who surrounded her, family members, neighbors, acquaintances, young and old alike. The particular interests I

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Shaul Angel-Mal'akhi in *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohel Moshe Neighborhood 5643–5743* (Jerusalem, June 1983), 28 [Hebrew].

95 See Gavriel Ginio, *Even Me-Avnei Yerushalayim. Mi-Sippurei Yalduti U-Baḥurati* [One of the stones of Jerusalem, Stories from my Childhood and Youth] (Jerusalem: published by the author, 2009), 91 [Hebrew].

96 On the history of the Ginio family, see: A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “‘Io so el amigo del rey’: Portrait of Albert (Alberto) Tchenyo (1890–1943)”, *Ladinar: Studies in the Literature, Music and History of Ladino Speakers*, 3 (2004): 31–64 [Hebrew]. Also see: Y. Yehoshua, *Between Tradition and Social Atmosphere in the Sephardi Neighborhoods of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1979), 52. See also Gavriel Ginio, *A Stone from the Stones of Jerusalem*, n. 95 above.

97 For a review on the history of the Sephardim, see Paloma Díaz-Mas, *Los sefardíes. Historia, Lengua y cultura* (3rd ed., Barcelona: Riopiedras, 1997). On the Sephardim in Jerusalem, see A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “Los sefardíes de Jerusalén,” *Anuari de Filologia*, 21 (1998–1999), E/8: 231–44; idem, “The Sephardi Community in Nineteenth Century Jerusalem: The Case of the Ginios (Chinillos)”, *Nova Renascença, Revista Trimestral de Cultura* 18, (1998): 335–51.

98 Y. Ben-Arieh, *The New Jewish City of Jerusalem during the British Mandate Period: Neighborhood. Houses. People*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzḥak Ben-Zvi, 2011), 1071 [Hebrew].

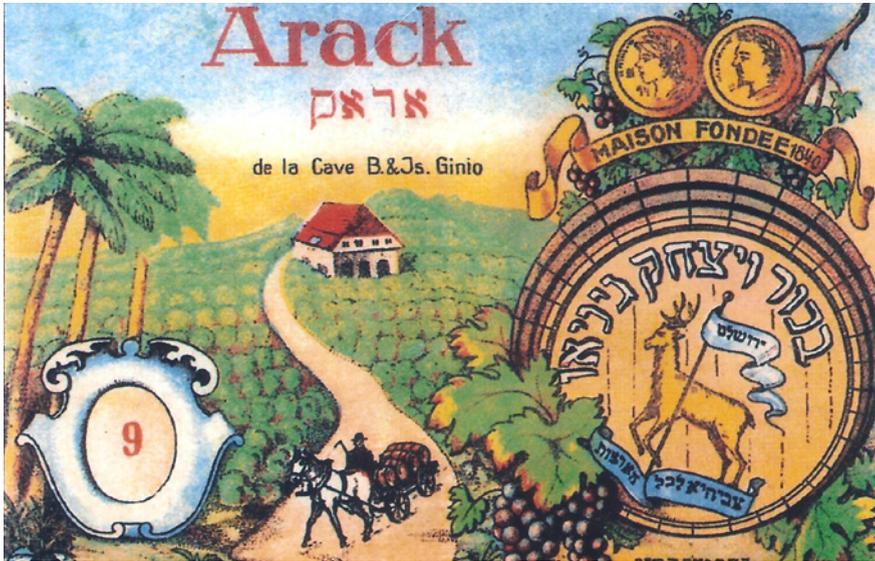


FIGURE 9 *The Ginio Winery: a bottle ticket.* THE GINIO FAMILY COLLECTION OF PICTURES.



FIGURE 10 *The Ginio Winery on Rehov Ha-Yehudim, Jewish Quarter, Jerusalem.* THE GINIO FAMILY COLLECTION OF PICTURES.

have – as a historian dealing with the history of the Oriental Sephardi dispersal in the Mediterranean Basin and with Ladino culture – in the life of Flor Pisanti stems from her being well-known as a teller of legends and stories, whose topics were chivalrous princes, captive princesses, kings and queens, and Djohá – the figure of the fool, about whom humorous stories and jokes were widely disseminated throughout the Mediterranean Basin.<sup>99</sup> Flor Pisanti spent most of her life in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem,<sup>100</sup> to which her parents, David and Sarah Ginio, moved in the first decade of the twentieth century from their home on the Yehudim Street, in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.

In the generation and place of Flor Pisanti, only a few Sephardi women succeeded in acquiring a limited education, which consisted mainly of knowing how to read and write in Ladino, which they were taught by a *maestra*, a teacher of young children.<sup>101</sup> Most of the women were illiterate and their time was spent in childrearing and running their households.<sup>102</sup> Obviously, princes, dukes, and counts were unknown and did not form part of the life experience of Sephardim in Jerusalem, so the question must be asked: From where did Flor Pisanti glean her stories? The answer lies in the tradition of the romance, which prevailed among the Jewish Spanish speakers and readers of Ladino for hundreds of years and which preserved memories of the Iberian Peninsula, whose heroes were kings and knights, captive virtuous women, and daring fighters.<sup>103</sup> It is noteworthy that in his “Introduction to the Book,” which he

99 See M. Koen-Sarano, *Djohá ke dize? Kuentos populares djudeo-espanyoles (Sephardic Folktales)* (Jerusalem: Kaza Editora Kana, 1991) [in Hebrew and Ladino].

100 Y. Ben Arie, *City in the Mirror of the Period: The Beginning of Modern Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1988), p. 115 [Hebrew].

101 See Ya'akov Yehoshua, *Ḥakhamim in Old Jerusalem Their Dealings and Their Livelihood* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968, 81–82 [Hebrew]). There were *maestras* [women teachers] who taught the girls, in addition to reading and writing, also to write letters in fine penmanship. The girls memorized the blessings and learned how to pray as well as to embroider. In rabbinic families, there were girls who studied at home and others who studied in the *heder – kutab*. See Y. Yehoshua, *Neighborhoods of Old Jerusalem: The Atmosphere of Bygone Days* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1971), 187 [Hebrew]. See also idem, *The Home and the Street in Old Jerusalem: The Atmosphere of Bygone Days* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1966), 91–96 [Hebrew].

102 See Y. Yehoshua, *The Story of the Sephardi Home in the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1976), 159.

103 M. Attias, *Romansero Sefaradi: Romances and Folksongs in Jewish Spanish* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 1955) [Hebrew]; Y. Yehoshua, *Between Tradition and Atmosphere*, 56; S. Refael, *The Knight and the Captive Lady: A Study of the Jewish Spanish Romance* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1998) [Hebrew].

wrote, in Hebrew, to *Me'am Lo'ez* his Ladino commentary on the Book of Genesis, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí pointed out, that people of his generation had “foreign books called *istorias*”, “which were fabricated by non-Jews”.<sup>104</sup> We cannot know for certain to which books the author was referring; nevertheless it is also worth remembering what Captain Domingo de Toral y Valdés relates in his memoirs, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, about the Jews he had met in Aleppo who knew how to speak Spanish well and who possessed books written by Spanish poets.<sup>105</sup> To be sure, these statements were made about Aleppo, an important city, standing on a strategic crossroads, in which European consuls were present, to which came and from which went out merchants from the entire Mediterranean Basin; thus, its situation was unlike that of mountainous Jerusalem, the birthplace of the author of *Me'am Lo'ez*, which at that time was two days distant from the seashore and the major commercial pathways. We may, however, compare Aleppo to the Ottoman capital, Istanbul – Kushta. One may reasonably assume that Jews there, who were involved with international trade,<sup>106</sup> could read books written in Spanish, in Latin letters, in distinction from books written in Ladino, in Hebrew letters. Yet, we must remember that Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí criticized these “non-Jewish books,” written by Gentiles, not by Jews, and those who peruse them: “The plague has spread and they have taken to works leading astray that are of no use, full of lies”. In light of the canonic status acquired by *Me'am Lo'ez*, it is difficult to attribute to these “apocryphal books” a great influence on the spiritual world of Sephardim over the generations.

In the case of Flor Pisanti, who was born in Jerusalem 150 years after the first volume of *Me'am Lo'ez* appeared in print, we are witness to the decisive influence of another factor: modern literature in Ladino, a product of the last decade of the nineteenth century, part of it original works but most of it adaptations from European languages, mainly French, such as the novels published Shlomo Israel Cherizli at the time. The author of *Divrei Musar*<sup>107</sup> attests to the expansion of the Ladino reading public, toward the close of the nineteenth

104 *Me'am Lo'ez*, 1, Introduction, *Ma'ase Shoke'a*.

105 See Introduction chapter above, nn. 72–78.

106 See, for example, B. Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); Leah Borenstein Makovetsky, “The Jewish Economic Elite in Aleppo during the Ottoman Period (16th–18th Centuries)”, in M. Orfali, A. Toaff, S. Regev (eds), *East and Maghreb. Researches in the History of the Jews in the Orient and North Africa*, 8 (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2008): 185–217 [Hebrew].

107 *Divrei Musar* (in *la'az*) that come from the heart. “What I learned when a child from my grandfather [...ke topi de mi senyor papo], the divine kabbalist, sage of the secrets ... the honorable Rabbi Refael Haim Ben Yitzhak Moshe Pereyra ...”. See also above n. 8.

century: “In the past, the practice of reading and studying and being meticulous about Judezmo [Judaism/the Jewish Spanish language] was not as widespread to the degree it is now”.<sup>108</sup> This work, in the possession of Flor Pisanti, was bound together with *Ma'ase de Benei Moshe*, along with a few translated novels. Modern literature in Ladino, which in large part belonged to the genre known as “romantic novels”, presented to the Ladino reading men and women, toward the close of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth: Paris and London, St. Petersburg and Istanbul, the West Indies, and the American Wild West.<sup>109</sup> In such a way, this literature, despite having little value as Belles Lettres, contributed to expanding the horizons of its readers, who consistently bought the newspapers or booklets in which these romantic novels were published, in installments, and devoted their meager spare time to poring over them. Moreover, the female reader we are focusing on, Flor Pisanti, internalized the topics about which she read and turned them into narrative material that she passed on orally, in time, to her listeners.

The storyteller created a triangular link between the popular folktales and legends as they were handed down orally from mother to daughter over the generations; the stories of the novels, which she read in Ladino, about non-Jews living in faraway lands; and the educational message that she wished to transmit to her family members, the listeners to the tales and legends she told them all her life.<sup>110</sup> The language of narration employed by Flor Pisanti was Jewish Spanish, coinciding therefore with the first stage enumerated by the folklore scholar Galit Ḥasan-Rokem in the narrative of the folktale in Israel: narrative in the language of the ethnic community.<sup>111</sup> Jewish Spanish was Flor Pisanti's only language: she knew neither Hebrew nor French, which the next generation of Sephardi Jewish women learned – including her daughters – at the AIU school in Jerusalem.<sup>112</sup> As a reader, Flor Pisanti stood at the node of the

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 36: “En tiempo de antes no avia este karal de melder i akavedar en el judezmo komo agora”. See above n. 8.

<sup>109</sup> The plots of the books Flor Pisanti kept in her cupboard were set in these places.

<sup>110</sup> See Michal Held, “Ande 'stan todas las konsejas?/Where are all the tales?": On the Immersion of Folktales in the Personal Narrative of a Jewish Spanish Storyteller of Jerusalem”, in T. Alexander et al., *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*, 23 (2005): 39–60, especially 41 [Hebrew].

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 51. Michal Held quotes Galit Ḥasan-Rokem, “The Study of the Processes of Change in the Folk Narrative”, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*, 3 (1982): 136 [Hebrew].

<sup>112</sup> On Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded in Paris in 1860 and its activity in Jerusalem, see chap. 3 nn. 40–43, 56–91. The first AIU elementary school in The Land of Israel was founded in Jerusalem in 1880. See E. Benbassa and A. Rodrigue, *Histoire des Juifs Sépharades*, 208–20.

intergenerational turn over: between her mother's generation, whose literate women read rabbinic literature – especially the volumes of *Me'am Lo'ez* – in Ladino, and her daughter's, in which those educated by the AIU read French literature in the original and had no need for adaptations in Ladino, as were made for the members of Flor Pisanti's generation. For the latter, Jewish Spanish was their only spoken language. If these women knew how to read and write, they could do so in Ladino – the written language of Jewish Spanish – and they comprehended well what they read in that language. In this they differed from the readers of Hebrew, who did not always correctly understand the meaning of the words they read.<sup>113</sup>

The author of the *Me'am Lo'ez* volume on Genesis, Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí, evoked, in the tales he offered in his work, memories of the Sephardi world prior to the Expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. For example, “The Tale of a King Named Don Pedro”,<sup>114</sup> which is definitely a Spanish name as is the title “don” appended to it; but Rabbi Khulí did not note this or even mention the term “Sefarad” [Sepharad] in his work, even though he did use “Frankia”, that is, Europe, a number of times in it.<sup>115</sup> The world of Rabbi Khulí was the Ottoman Empire in general and the cities Jerusalem and Kushta in particular. Thus, Rabbi Khulí wrote that those living in Kushta do not go out of their homes during a storm in contrast to “those who have never seen a sea, when they come to Kushta, you will see them going into a boat even if the weather is bad”.<sup>116</sup> Women who could read *Me'am Lo'ez* in Ladino, or listen to the work being read in the synagogue or in the family circle, could visualize Kushta the capital and the boats setting sail on the waters of its straits. In contrast, the new readers, who had at their disposal modern books in Ladino, were already able to sail on the wings of their imagination to far distant regions, such as Paris, St. Petersburg, or the Wild West. Their daughters, educated by the AIU, were soon able to read French literature in the original.

The Jerusalem-born writer and historian Ya'akov Yehoshua wrote that “the rabbis' wives knew to read Ladino in Rashi script. They frequently took in hand

113 Compare what Rabbi Ya'akov Khulí wrote in *Me'am Lo'ez*, Introduction, 6–7: “Son muy pokos los ke saven meldar un *pasuk* a los derechas...i *afilu* los ke saven los viervos no entienden lo ke kitan por la boka.”

114 See *Me'am Lo'ez*, 43, *parashat Bereshit*, chap. 4.

115 See, for example, *Me'am Lo'ez*, 302, *Parashat Toledot*, chap. 1, on the issue of primogeniture in Europe: “I ansi usan *hayom* en la Frankia ke el ke se muere i desha dos tres ijos el *bekhor* entra en su lugar i gobierna la kaza”. See also, chap. 2, nn. 20, 49–50, and 60.

116 *Me'am Lo'ez*, 184, Genesis, *parashat Lekh Lekha*, chap. 4: “La djente ke no vieron mar en sus dias kuando vienen a Kushta los veresh ke entran en el kaik aun ke aze ludos fuerte”. *Kayik* – *kaik* is a Turkish word meaning: “boat”.

*Me'am Lo'ez*, a book of legends found in every home in The Land of Israel and the Diaspora. These legends amused them on the Sabbath and holidays, and particularly on the long winter nights. The *rubisot* [rabbis' wives] learned reading and writing in Ladino in *heder* as children.<sup>117</sup> Yehoshua stated that the wives of rabbis differed from the other Sephardi women in their spoken language as well. Two forms of Ladino were common in the Jerusalemite Sephardi home: the speech of those who were not immersed in the Torah world, the definite sign for whom was in the husband calling his wife by name, and the wife addressing her husband by name. "Not so the rabbis' wives. They address their husbands in special language suffused with reverence and politeness. This was a noble spoken language – that of the rabbinic nobility". The wife always turned to her husband in third person.<sup>118</sup>

From personal knowledge, I can review the development of the reading process among Sephardi women in Jerusalem, in the context of the female members of my family, the Meyuḥas family: my grandmother, Simḥa Meyuḥas (1867–1951), who belonged to the generation that preceded Flor Pisanti's, and her daughter Esther Seniora Barouch (1899–1997), who was born in Jerusalem about a generation after Flor Pisanti. My grandmother's mother tongue, as well as that of her six children, was Jewish Spanish; but whereas her sons and daughters acquired knowledge of European languages at the schools of the AIU, of St. Joseph, of "Ezra", and of Evelina de Rothschild, Jewish Spanish was the only language, both spoken and written, of their mother. My grandmother, who was the oldest daughter in a rabbinic family, the granddaughter of the Rishon Le-Zion Ya'akov Sha'ul Eliachar – Yissa Berakhah – and the daughter of Rabbi Ḥaim Moshe Eliachar – Rav Ḥam"ā,<sup>119</sup> studied reading and writing of Ladino in Rashi script in the family home in Jerusalem, together with her younger brothers. In time, she married Rabbi Raḥamim Shlomo Meyuḥas, who was an emissary of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem.<sup>120</sup> On the Sabbath, when all work was halted in the home, the Rabbanit Simḥah Meyuḥas used to invite her neighbors to her home and read to them from the religious work *Me'am Lo'ez*.<sup>121</sup> Her daughter, my aunt Esther Seniora Barouch, née Meyuḥas, who studied at the Evelina de Rothschild school as well as at St. Joseph in Jeru-

117 Yehoshua, *Hakhamim in Old Jerusalem*, 25.

118 Ibid., 26. In his book *The Neighborhoods of Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1978), 159 [Hebrew], Yehoshua says that the Salonikan Sephardi language, as developed on the pages of the press and literary works published in Salonika – the Jerusalem of the Balkans – was considered the most noble and original version of the Jewish Spanish language.

119 On them, see above chap. 3, Immigrants in the Land of Their Birth, nn. 359–67.

120 See above chap. 3.

121 See above chap. 2, nn. 276–79.

salem, did know how to read and write in Ladino, in Rashi letters, as she had studied, like her mother before her, at home with a *maestra* [woman teacher]; but for pleasure, she used to read magazines and novels in French. My aunt's daughter, Ruth Barouch Senderov, attests that her mother did not have books in Ladino.<sup>122</sup> The youngest of my grandmother's daughters, Leah Meyuḥas (1904–1973), who was a teacher by profession and who taught at the Ben-She-men youth village and at the AIU school in Jerusalem, was already an enthusiastic reader of Hebrew literature, and she had a substantial collection of Hebrew novels. The stories and legends she used to tell the children of the family – including me – were recited in Hebrew. This fits the definition of the third and final stage of those that Ḥasan-Rokem enumerated about the narrative of folktales in Israel: Israeli storytelling in Hebrew.

Considering the position of Flor Pisanti, as a reader of novels in Ladino, in the middle between the women reading religious literature in Ladino and those reading novels in modern languages, there is, in my opinion, great interest in studying the course of her life, while emphasizing her as a reader and while examining the influences her reading could have had on the way she saw the world.

I drew information on Flor Pisanti and her life from two written sources and from stories told by family members.

The first written source is the books by Ya'akov Yehoshua, a writer and historian, who documented the lives of his Sephardi brethren in Jerusalem.<sup>123</sup> Yehoshua was a relative and close to the Ginio family: his aunt, Tamar Yehoshua, married Ḥakham Shalom Bekhor Ginio, Flor Pisanti's brother. His sister, Esther Yehoshua, married Meir Ḥai Ginio, the son of Tamar and Ḥakham Shalom Bekhor. While still a lad, Yehoshua worked in the textile store of Ben Zion Pisanti, Flor's husband. In his memoirs, which he published as a series of books, Yehoshua drew the figures of Flor and her husband, alongside her parents and her brothers – members of the Ginio family.

The second written source is the novel *Nona Flor*, which was written by Flora Tessone Ben Amram, Flor Pisanti's granddaughter, the daughter of her daughter, Vida Pisanti Tessone.<sup>124</sup> Flora Ben Amram was not aiming to write a

122 Interview with Mrs. Ruth Barouch Senderov on 4 August 2002.

123 See Y. Yehoshua, *Childhood in Old Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1965) [Hebrew]. Idem, *Home and the Street*; idem, *Ḥakhamim in Old Jerusalem*; idem, *Neighborhoods of Old Jerusalem: The Atmosphere of Bygone Days* (1971); idem, *Neighborhoods of Old Jerusalem* (1978); idem, *Sephardi Home in the Jewish Quarter*; idem, *Between Tradition and Atmosphere*. All these books were published by Rubin Mass.

124 See above n. 7.

historical study: she wrote a novel based on the biography of her grandmother, drawn from her memories and from interviews she conducted with family members. The novel was prompted by yearnings for the family atmosphere that had been and is no longer and out of a desire to document a cultural heritage that is on the way to extinction.<sup>125</sup> Especially important for our topic are the descriptions of Flor Pisanti as a storyteller and as an ardent reader of Ladino literature. On page 15 of the novel *Nona Flor*, we read that whenever the young Flor went out of her family home to the street in the Yemin Moshe, “immediately a gang of children gathered around her, this one taking her hand and that one pulling her dress’s sleeve, and all of them calling, “Flor, Flor, we want a story, we want a story.” Flor gently patted the hair of a runny-nosed imp, hugged her neighbor’s daughter, and led the group to the internal courtyard. The children sat around her on the steps of one of the houses, some of them leaning against her chest, all ears primed for the sound her lilting voice – rising and falling, sad and happy, now softer now louder, telling of princes and princesses, forests and lakes, wizards and fairies, palaces and fortresses. Flor led the children, as far as her rich imagination could take them, to distant lands and enchanted spaces, and only the voices of the mothers calling their children to come home, brought them back to the reality of the narrow alley, the descending twilight, and the chill of night ....” Obviously, the narrator, Flora Ben Amram, born in 1936, could not have been present at the events that would have taken place when Flor was still a young woman in her father’s home; but, as the granddaughter of Flor Pisanti, this author, too, had listened attentively to this type of stories and on the basis of her memories and personal experience, she described her grandmother, in her youth, relating legends to the children of Yemin Moshe. In her book *Nona Flor*, Ben Amram draws from her own memories and her personal experience:

Nona Flor is sitting at home on the sofa, in the dining area lit by the light of the setting sun. I am sitting next to her, hugging her shoulders, and at her feet sit ... my childhood girlfriends, listening closely to the sharp-witted jokes and stories that Nona Flor would tell in Ladino. They are as charmed by her utterances as if they understood her speech, and I translate for them, sentence by sentence, and at the end of the story all of them break out in ringing laughter and get up to hug Nona Flor with tears in their eyes. We were all charming young girls aged sixteen. My friends

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<sup>125</sup> See F. Ben Amram, “To Document Cultures on the Way to Extinction”, *Ha’aretz/Books*, 3, 23 May 2005, questionnaire (21) [Hebrew].

loved to come to listen to Nona Flor telling jokes about Djohá and stories with a moral.

The story that is related at that point in the novel is about a king and his youngest daughter, who loved him “more than a pinch of salt”.<sup>126</sup> From Flora Ben Amram’s testimony we learn that the storytelling by her grandmother, Flor Pisanti, was in the communal language – Jewish-Spanish or Ladino, as it is commonly referred to in Israel today; that she wanted to give her listeners a message, which incorporated a moral; and that the topics of hers stories were jokes about Djohá and legends about kings and princes.

The novel *Nona Flor* informs us that its protagonist, Flor, was an enthusiastic reader of Ladino literature. This is important testimony as to Flor Pisanti’s status when she was reading and about her reading material. The author, Ben Amram, writes, “It seemed that Flor spent many hours knitting; she was always holding one needle under her arm and knitting with slow, monotonous movements, and then wondrously – in no time at all, a beautiful, multicolored vested would be ready. She immediately began knitting another”. To this point, we see the traditional tasks of a woman of valor supervising her home; but, when she goes on, Ben Amram relates “that when she was tired of knitting, she would be steeped in reading. Flor had loved to read from childhood but she did not always find time for it. Now, that she was living in Vida’s [her daughter’s] house, she had loads of free time and once a week one of the grandchildren would escort her to the small library just up the street, on the second story of a small house. She would slowly trudge up, and from time to time had to stop and catch her breath, while being supported by her escort. I was usually the one to accompany her to the library ... it was only a dark, single room, filled with wall-to-wall shelves loaded with books, and in the center of the room stood a small table on which were a pile of books and booklets, most of them in Ladino. When the librarian saw Flor enter the room exhausted, he would hurry to bring her a chair and greet her: “Bievenida kerida Flor, komo ’stas” [Welcome dear Flor, how are you]. The two would begin to chat in Ladino, the librarian asking her how was the book she had read, Flor answering him with a smile and telling him how much she had enjoyed the book. He would recommend another book or two, remembering that she really loved folktales, legends, and even stories of romantic love ... Whenever she did not have the strength to go up the street and climb the stairs to the library, Nona would ask me to change books

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126 Ben Amram, *Nona Flor*, above n. 7, 16–21.

for her. The librarian knew which ones she had read, and was rarely wrong, sending a volume she was already familiar with."<sup>127</sup>

We have already mentioned, how, after Flor Pisanti's death, her granddaughter, Flora Ben Amram, author of *Nona Flor*, found in her grandmother's cupboard a number of books in Ladino. In the days when she was taking books from the library, as described in *Nona Flor*, Flor Pisanti had already been forced to leave the home she had inherited from her father, David Ginio, in Yemin Moshe, where she had lived with her husband and her two daughters. Like most of those evacuated from the Yemin Moshe neighborhood, toward the end of the 1948 war in Jerusalem, she moved with her older daughter, Merkada, to the abandoned Arab village, Lifta. After the death of her elder daughter, Flor Pisanti went to live with her only surviving child, Vida Tessone, in a house located on David Yellin Street in Jerusalem. The library described in the novel *Nona Flor*, then, stood at the top of one of streets, Meyuḥas, ShaDa'L, or Valero, which lead from David Yellin Street toward Maḥaneh Yehudah. I was not able to find out exactly where this library was situated nor who the librarian was; but there certainly were lending libraries in Jerusalem that had Ladino books as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, when Shlomo Israel Cherizli (ShaYi"Sh) ran his press and a publishing house on the ground floor of the family home, on 30 Carmel Street in the Ohel Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem.<sup>128</sup> In time, ShaYi"Sh's business was located on Jaffa Street in Jerusalem (where the Klal Center stands today) and served both as a bookselling establishment and as a lending library.<sup>129</sup> Beginning in 1902, Cherizli and Taragán edited a literary monthly called *La Huerta* [*Guerta*] *de Yerushalayim* [The Garden of Jerusalem], in which appeared literary articles, episodes in the history of the Jerusalem *Yishuv*, and various translations. From 1906 on, it was prohibited to print material without special permission of the Turkish authorities.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 206–7.

<sup>128</sup> Y. Katz et al. (eds.), *Ohel Moshe: Centennial of the Neighborhood and its Synagogues 1882–1982* (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim for the Research of Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, 1984), 33 [Hebrew]; Pinḥas Ben Tzvi Grayevsky wrote in an anthology he edited and published, entitled: *Even ShaYi"Sh*, [in Hebrew: Marble Stone]. In *Commemoration of One of the Precious Members of Zion* (Jerusalem: Published by P. Grayevski, 1938) [Hebrew], that Shlomo Israel Cherizli came from a rabbinic family. In 1899, he bought, together with Ben Tzion Taragán, the printing house of Eliezer Ben Yehudah, in which he had previously worked. On Cherizli, see Romero, *Creación literaria*, 188–89, 208, 227–28; she spells the name as Cherezli. The family originated from Serres in the Macedonia region of northern Greece.

<sup>129</sup> A discussion with Aḥiya Cherizli, the youngest son of ShaYi"Sh, Jerusalem, 22 December 2005.

Taragán left Jerusalem and moved to Alexandria.<sup>130</sup> Cherizli continued with his literary endeavors, bypassing the censorship limitations, claiming that the books had been printed in Cairo (Kairo in Ladino). During World War I, Cherizli's printing presses were expropriated by the Turks retreating from Jerusalem. At the end of the war, he again opened "a small book shop" that served as a center and club for booklovers.<sup>131</sup> Many of the modern novels in Ladino ("livros de historias i romansos en Judeo-Espanyol") were published by him and by Moshe A. Azriel.<sup>132</sup> These were Ladino translations of novels written in European languages, alongside traditional midrashic works and religious poetry, as well as original novels written by local authors in Ladino or Hebrew.<sup>133</sup>

The Cherizli family had marital ties with the Meyuḥas family. Luna Rika, the daughter of Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas,<sup>134</sup> was the wife of Refael Cherizli (1856–1926). Their son was Shlomo Yisrael Cherizli, known as: ShaYi"Sh. When the father of Luna Rika Cherizli, Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas mentioned, decided "to wed a different woman instead of his wife ... perhaps then the Lord will favor me with male children from the second wife," a feud broke out between him and his wife, Oro, the daughter of the kabbalist Rabbi Yosef Bekhor Vital: "Between them there were quarrels, arguments, and demands ... both about her *ketubbah* as well as about the *nikhsei melog* [property that a wife brings into the marriage; though not listed in the *ketubbah*] that her husband, the distinguished, honorable rabbi, may his Lord and Redeemer protect him, received from the rabbi, the Holy Ḥasid of Isarel, the distinguished, honorable Rabbi Vital, of blessed memory, her father, as is known, and after all these things, they reached an understanding ...".

130 On Ben Tzion Taragán, see Romero, *Creación literaria*, 246–47.

131 P. Grayevsky, *Even ShaYi"sh*, 9–10. In an essay included in that anthology, Shaul Angel-Malakhi wrote that "ShaYi"Sh would sit in his store on Jaffa Street between the Alliance and Even Israel, reading, translating, and printing novels in Ladino," *ibid.*, 28.

132 On him, see chap. 3, n. 3.

133 Yehoshua, *Between Tradition and Atmosphere*, 55–56. On Moshe Azriel, see Romero, *Creación literaria*, 188, 228–29, 242. Romero states that there was cooperation between ShaYi"Sh and the editors of the Ladino newspapers in Izmir and that novels first printed there were later printed by ShaYi"Sh in Jerusalem, *ibid.*, 227, 230–31, 250.

134 On him, see Ben-Yaacob, *Meyuḥas Family*, 389–90, document 23: an open letter by the Jerusalem emissary Rabbi Yosef ben Rabbi Mordekhai Meyuḥas to the Jewish communities of Hong Kong, Singapore, Rangoon, Bombay, and Calcutta asking for contributions for the Jews of Jerusalem; 2 Shevat 5640 (1880). On Luna Rika, daughter of Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas and granddaughter of the kabbalist Rabbi Yosef Bekhor Vital and her family, see: Moshe David Gaon, *Oriental Jews in The Land of Israel* (Jerusalem, published by the author, 1938), 298 [Hebrew].

In the agreement made between the parties in 1889, it was determined that the woman, Mrs. Oro “would live in the houses in a unit in the new neighborhoods, which he has in the Ohel Moshe Society ....”<sup>135</sup> Since Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas was a *shadar* and was about to travel “abroad, for a good life and peace”, financial arrangements have been made to provide for the woman, Mrs. Oro, through Rabbi Meir Merkado, who has also signed the agreement in the name of the woman, who “ordered me to sign/ the second signer/ in the place indicated for the pen Mrs. Oro, may she be blessed /the humble Merkado Meir ם"ד. The latter was also a trustee for her property, her expenses, and the inheritance of Luna Rika, the only daughter of Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas.<sup>136</sup> We can learn from the agreement the degree of literacy of Sephardi women in Jerusalem: Oro the daughter of Rabbi Yosef Bekhor Vital needed an agent to sign in her stead on the financial agreement with her husband. As far as these things relate to a woman’s ability to defend her material and legal rights, we learn from this agreement that when the “issues of quarrels” that broke out between the husband, Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas, and his wife, Oro daughter of Rabbi Vital, were settled, it was determined in the agreement, “that his wife, Mrs. Oro, she be blessed, mentioned cannot curse the distinguished, honorable Meyuḥas mentioned, may the Lord protect and redeem him”: neither he nor his descendants.<sup>137</sup> It turns out most of the power of a woman to threaten her husband was in her unrestrained tongue and that invoking a curse could be the way a women could demand her rights. One tends to think that Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas, who yearned for a son,<sup>138</sup> feared the evil eye and sought to insure himself and his descendants from the harm of curses.

On the whole, the status of Jewish women worsened in the generations after the destruction of the Second Temple. The Rabbis degraded women, and on numerous occasions denigrated them. Sephardi women, who lived in the countries of the Ottoman Empire, faced the same situation. Life in a Muslim city was not kind to Jewish women, who were required to supervise the functioning of their households, to obey their husbands will and to follow local

135 The Ohel Moshe neighborhood was established in 1882 from the funds of the Mazkeret Moshe Foundation established in 1874. Cf. n. 128 above.

136 The text of the agreement is found in the M.D. Gaon Collection of Makhon Ben-Zvi: ms 4, no. 11.

137 Ibid.

138 The introduction to the agreement of 1889 explicitly states: that “he had agreed with the notion [of Rabbi Yosef Mordekhai Meyuḥas] to marry a woman instead of his wife, the honorable, modest Mrs. Oro for perhaps the Lord will favor me with male children from the second wife ...”. Ibid.

custom, to spend their lives concealed under the roof of the family abode: “The honor of the princess is within.”<sup>139</sup> In line with what was customary in the world of the Ottoman Empire, women were not supposed to go about the streets of the town.<sup>140</sup>

Ya’akov Yehoshua includes in his memoirs precious information about the lives of the Sephardi women, members of Flor Pisanti’s generation. The data he cites is particularly valuable owing to the astuteness of his observations and descriptions of the women and their lives as they were in contradistinction to the way generations of male writers were wont to do, who when they wrote about women considered it sufficient to rebuke them and give them instructions on what is a befitting way of life for a proper Jewish woman. Yehoshua described the daily life of Sephardi women, covering the joyous occasions, the sadness, the difficulties, and mutual aid between neighboring women: he knew how to tell of the “women’s parliament” – *mislis* [*majlis*; august council], where the neighbors and female family members consulted on how, with the given limitations of their lives, to conduct their endeavors in the best possible way. Most of them had been born in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, within its walls, and lived in small, crowded apartments, around a courtyard [“el kortijo”]. The way of life of the Old City’s Jewish Quarter residents differed from that of the inhabitants of the new neighborhoods that arose outside the walls, but there were mutual visits between those living in the city and outside of it [“afhuera dela ciudad”].<sup>141</sup> Family visits took place mainly on Saturday night, after the end of the Sabbath.<sup>142</sup>

Yehoshua described the daily routine of the Sephardi women in Jerusalem. During the day the women were occupied in housekeeping and preparing the evening meal, which was the main one of the day. Twice a week they used to knead dough for baking bread in the neighborhood oven. Once every few days came laundry day: “dia de lavado”. The Sephardi homemakers remained close

139 Ps. 45: 14.

140 On the standing of Sephardi women, see A. Meyuhas Ginio, “Daily Life in the Sephardi Family Circle according to the Commentary of Rabbi Ya’akov Khulí for Genesis in the Work *Me’am Lo’ez* (1730)”, in Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Yitzhak Hen (eds.), *Women, Children and the Elderly: Essays in Honour of Shulamit Shahar*, ed. (Jerusalem: Merkaz Shazar, 2001): 139–71 [Hebrew]; Idem, “Esklava de su marido”: A Look at Daily Life of the Sephardi Woman according to *Me’am Lo’ez* by Rabbi Jacob Khulí”, in T. Cohen and S. Regev (eds.), *Woman in the East, Woman from the East – The Story of the Jewish Woman from the East* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2005): 25–33. Cf. also chap. 2, nn. 63–89.

141 Yehoshua, *Story of the Sephardi House*, 10–20. On the *mislis*, see *ibid.*, 152. Also cf. above, Introduction, n. 92.

142 Yehoshua, *Story of the Sephardi House*, 23.

to their homes, cared for their children, and were dependent upon their husbands: the Sephardi woman had no money of her own. Shopping in the market: “*esmersar*” was done by the husbands. The feminine ideal was “*nekochera*” – a model housewife who cared for her children and her home. In their little spare time, usually on Sunday, when the family ate their fill from the Sabbath leftovers, the Sephardi neighbour women would gather around “*biver sigaro*” [to smoke, literally: to drink a cigarette, which they made themselves], to chatter, and consult with one another.<sup>143</sup> This was a fitting time to hear a story of the kind Flor Pisanti used to tell. The Sephardi women knew how to be happy, to sing, and to adorn themselves on occasions of joy, such as family celebrations, in which the whole neighborhood took part. The Sephardi women of Salonikan origin did not dress the same as the Jerusalem natives, who covered their entire body, as customary in the Orient, but continued with the clothing tradition of Salonikan Jewish women: A half-exposed bosom with only a piece of lace covering it. They wore a robe [*sayo*]; their shoulders were covered by a small shawl [*shalziko*]; over the dress they tied an apron [*devantal*] decorated with strips of lace; an outer coat [*antari*]; the headcovering [*kofya*], whose snood was embroidered with beads and sequins.<sup>144</sup> A married women’s head-covering was called *yazma*.<sup>145</sup> A few years before World War I, three photo studios were opened in Jerusalem – by non-Jews. Later, a studio was opened by the Jew Bassan on Ḥabashim [today: Ethiopia] Street: then the Jewish people of Jerusalem began to have their pictures taken.<sup>146</sup> The novel *Nona Flor*<sup>147</sup> is embellished with a photo of a young Flor Pisanti, adorned with her jewelry, in traditional Salonikan garb.

Mrs. Rachel Elazar Alḥasid, the daughter of Rabbi Yehudah Elazar, told me in an interview I held with her in Jerusalem,<sup>148</sup> how the children of her generation would play with home-made toys prepared by the mother and the grandmother. “There were no children’s books,” said Mrs. Alḥasid, and the mothers told and sang romances to the children. The fathers read the children Bible stories at bedtime.

Ya’akov Yehoshua related that house of Flor Pisanti’s father stood in the lane of the synagogue, the main street of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood, near the Sephardi synagogue. The home of Flor and her husband, Ben Zion Pisanti, was

143 Ibid., 22–58. In Turkish they say: *sigara içmek* – to smoke a cigarette.

144 Yehoshua, *Story of the Sephardi House*, 89.

145 Ibid., 114.

146 Yehoshua, *Home and the Street*, 22.

147 See above n. 7.

148 Interview with Mrs. Rachel Elazar Alḥasid in her home in Jerusalem on 1 March 2011.

located nearby<sup>149</sup> as was the house of Flor's oldest brother, the Ḥakham Bekhor Shalom Ginio. Ben Zion Pisanti had a textile store in the Old City. The house of Ben Zion and Flor was dubbed "the house of joyous occasions" ["la caza de alegrías"], for that was where the youth of the neighborhood used to gather when the Sabbath was over. Ya'akov Yehoshua told of Flor Pisanti that "this woman enchanted everyone who saw her, with her beauty, nobility, and especially her pleasant way of speaking."<sup>150</sup> Flor's mother, Sarah Ginio, was the daughter of the Ḥakham Eliahu Jaḥon, who taught Torah in Salonika and immigrated to Jerusalem in his old age. There he founded the first reformed "heder", in which the language of study was *Spányolit*, and he even established in the Istanbuli Synagogue a choir for singing and liturgical music (of the type of the Salonika "Agudat Ha-Paytanim") that gave pleasure through their singing to the attendees of the synagogues in the Old City.<sup>151</sup> Sarah Ginio, who attained, as a result of her energetic nature, a respected position in her family and community, had been educated by her father and knew the Five Scrolls by heart and even *Pirke Avot* in Ladino translation.<sup>152</sup> It is no wonder that her daughter, Flor, studied, became educated and loved to read books.

In the Yemin Moshe neighborhood, the women used to gather on the night of the Ninth of Av, after the evening prayer service, in private homes, in order to hear the lamentations ["*endechas*"] recited in Jewish Spanish.<sup>153</sup> On *Rosh Ha-Shanah* and on *Yom Ha-Kippurim* the women followed the liturgical poems *U-Netaneh Tokef* and *Et Sha'arei Ratzon* and *'Akedat Yitzḥak* in Ladino translation;<sup>154</sup> it was also customary with the Passover Haggadah, when *Seder* leaders used to repeat the Hebrew and Aramaic sections in their Ladino translation.<sup>155</sup> There were women's prayers recited in Jewish Spanish.<sup>156</sup>

149 Cf. above n. 96.

150 Yehoshua, *Neighborhoods in Old Jerusalem*, 136, 184.

151 Yehoshua, *Between Tradition and Atmosphere*, 52; Y. Yehoshua, *Childhood in Old Jerusalem*, 98.

152 Ibid. Yehoshua, *Between Tradition and Atmosphere*, 62.

153 Ibid., 56

154 Included among the Flor Pisanti's books was the text of "*Akedat Yitzḥak Avinu, Alav Ha-Shalom, Be-La'az*." It was printed alongside *Divrei Musar* on pages 41–44. See above n. 8.

155 Yehoshua, *Sephardi Home in the Jewish Quarter*, 150. Cf. Introduction above n. 58.

156 In her book, *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book*, Aliza Lavie includes a number of prayers in Ladino (in Hebrew translation by Shmuel Refael). The prayers she chose originated in Turkey, particularly in Izmir. See A. Lavie, *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book* (New York: Random House, 2008). Originally published in Hebrew: *Tefilat Nashim* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Aḥaronot, 2005). See also H.N. Bialik, "Al Ha-Teḥina Ha-Ivrit Ha-Ammamit, Bitah Ha-Tiv'it

Bound in one of the Flor Pisanti's books – along with romantic novels – was *Ha-Ma'ase de Benei Moshe*, which concerns the Ten Lost Tribes and was told by a Jerusalem ḥakham who had been sent on a community mission to the cities of Mede and Persia [*sheliḥut de mitzvah a cidades de Madai u-Paras*] and “ethical exhortations (in *la'az*)” in the name of Aharon Refael Ḥaim ben Yitzḥak Moshe Pereyra, which had been translated into Ladino by his grandson, three prayers, too, the first two of which were in Ladino and the third in Hebrew, *Tefilah lifnei Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi* [“Prayer to Be Recited at the Western Wall and at the gravesites of *Tzadikkim* and *Ḥasidim*”]; *Tefilah shel hadlakat ner shel Shabbat ve-yom tov* [“A Prayer for Candle Lighting for the Sabbath and Festivals”]; and *Bakashah nora'a* [“An Awesome Plea”]. It was customary to bind a number of books together into one volume, including religious as well as secular works.<sup>157</sup> Expressed in the women's prayers was their intimate, personal attitude to prayer.<sup>158</sup> This is particularly salient in the opening of “A Prayer for Candle Lighting for the Sabbath and Festivals” [*Tefilah dela insindidora de la candela de Shabbat i de Yom Tov*], with the praying woman addressing the almighty God in an almost personal formulation and saying that she is about to light the candle for the holy Sabbath or Holiday so as to fulfill the commandment of the Lord willingly, devotedly, and joyously as God has commanded her.<sup>159</sup> “Prayer to be Recited at the Western Wall and at the gravesites of *Tzadikkim* and *Ḥasidim*” begins with a plea to the ministering angels, Refael, Michael, and Gabriel, that they act as advocates for the praying woman, and ends with a plea that they should accompany her day and night, wherever she may go: the angel Michael to her right; the angel Raphael to her left; the angel Gabriel behind her; and the *Shekhinah* above her head.<sup>160</sup> The Hebrew-language “Awe-

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Shel Ha-Tefilah Ha-Le'ummit Ha-Kadmonit Ve-Aḥotah Ha-Peshutah Ve-Ha-Bri'ah Shel Ha-“Seliḥah” Ve-“Ha-Kerovah Ha-Paytanit”, “Shirateinu Ha-Tze'irah,” in *Kol Kitvei Bialik* (Tel Aviv: Dvir: 1933), 393–94.

- 157 In the Makhon Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem are a number of examples of such volumes.
- 158 Tamar Rotem, ‘I stand before thee, O Lord, to open my pain-filled heart’, *Ha'aretz*, 18 April 2006 [Hebrew]. The author quotes Prof. Avigdor Shinan.
- 159 “Patron del mundo deskuvierto i savido delante de sea de tu onra, ke yo vine a ensender kandela de *shabat kodesh* i *yom tov* para afirmar la *mitzva* de el kreador kon amistad i kon gozo i alegria demi korason asigun mi enkomendates.”
- 160 “Kon *malakhim* [angels] buenos ke me akompanyen el dia i la noche onde vo i onde vengo. *Malakh* Michael de mi derecha. *Malakh* Refael de mi siedra. *Malakh* Gavriel de mi espalda i la *shekhinah* sovre mi kavesa. I por tu nombre el grande. Es por la ley santa i bendicha. Es para ke se agozen mis amigos i salva tu derecha. Ke mos arispondas siempre para bien amen amen sela sela sela.”

some Plea” is not necessarily a woman’s prayer but rather “this appeal, whoever recites it daily purely, will not be harmed, neither by day nor by night.”

The literary scholar Ian Watt states that the modern novella is a creation of the eighteenth century. At the close of that century, the reading public in England expanded: the prices of books began to decline, and were, therefore, affordable for many more readers. The proportion of women among the readers was large. They had more free time than the women of earlier generations: one could buy in the market, ready-made, many needs of the home, such as bread, textiles, candles, and soap. The women of the upper classes, unlike their husbands, were not involved in politics, managing estates, hunting and drinking or in commerce, so they had spare time for reading. The female reading public left a deep mark on novellas: most of the protagonists were women with whom the women readers – who in many instances were emotionally alienated from their husbands whom they had married through pre-arranged matches – could identify.<sup>161</sup> We must not forget that living conditions in the Orient in general and in the Jerusalem Sephardi community in particular, were completely different; yet, at the end of nineteenth century, there was created, in this community as well, a public – as small as it might be – of reading women. The circumstances that Flor Pisanti, the main figure of the current discussion, lived in, resulted in only two of her daughters living more than a year. Both were given talisman names – Merkada [bought] and Vida [life] so that the evil eye would not overtake them. Despite all the tragedies in the life of a woman, who was familiar with miscarriages and infant mortality, she naturally had more free time than her neighbors with many children. If she wished, she could devote time to reading, and so she did. Among the books she kept in her possession was also the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe (1660–1731, adapted and translated into Ladino. This novel, which expresses modern individualism from the economic perspective of homo economicus, was one the most famous works of the eighteenth century.<sup>162</sup> I cannot imagine what Flor Pisanti thought when she read it. For our purposes, it sufficient for us to know that she kept the book – tattered and missing the beginning pages – in her cupboard, so we may certainly presume that she also read and appreciated it.

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161 Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970). Of note is that books were still an expensive product: for the price paid for a novella, at the end of the eighteenth century, one could support an average family for a week. *Ibid.*, 43.

162 *Ibid.*, 65.

### Old Readers and New Readers

The literature researcher Iris Parush has examined the reading habits of Jewish woman in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. She determined that precisely because of the marginality that typified the status of women in Eastern European society at that time, “a window of opportunity” opened up for them, enabling them to take an active role in the processes of change that society underwent with the passage to the modern era. In Eastern Europe the literature available for reading was varied and consisted of different levels: “It included mediocre literature in Hebrew; popular literature in Yiddish, Jewish literature in foreign languages, and masterpieces from the canon of European literature. The different types of literature that existed in the literary array were differentiated by their character, their language, their prestige, and their level.”<sup>163</sup> Parush states that “Precisely the marginal status of women in traditional society turned into an advantage: women’s marginality is what paradoxically enabled the creation of a community of literate women that underwent change and brought about change.”<sup>164</sup> The exclusion of the woman from Torah study denied her a standing in the intellectual and religious life of Jewish society. Yet, there came into being a “liberated, liberating space” in which woman could learn foreign languages and read secular literature at will, to the extent that they had access to this material. In contrast to the Sephardi woman in the Orient, who was cloistered in the confines of her home, in the Ashkenazi community in Eastern Europe, in many instances, the burden of a livelihood was borne by the women, and they therefore were involved in the non-Jewish environment and capable of conversing in foreign languages. Iris Parush determines that Jewish society in Eastern Europe was diglottic: bilingual and, at times, multilingual.<sup>165</sup> Undoubtedly, Sephardi society – speakers of Jewish Spanish and readers of Ladino – was likewise. To the extent that girls learned to read, they read Ladino, or Yiddish, as relevant. The reference, then, regards the ability to read a language in which they were fluent and competent. In this way, the conditions of their literacy changed for the better compared to the men, who learned to read Hebrew but did not always understand what they were reading.<sup>166</sup> Parush declares that despite the contempt for “inferior

163 Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women. Marginality and Modernization in Nineteen-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 1–96.

164 Ibid.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid. Parush quotes the writer Buki Ben Yogli (Yehudah Leib Benyamin Katzenelson) who told that he managed to fill in what he had been taught in *Heder* thanks to the *Tseina Ur'eina* that his grandmother read. In that manner he came to know beautiful and

women's literature," the men did not abandon it and used to read it when they had the chance. This literature offered convoluted plots and the women who were its protagonists – they were countesses or chambermaids – were divided into good women and sinful ones, when, at the end of the complicated, twisting story, the former received their reward and the latter, their punishment, as accepted in the genre of the romantic novel.<sup>167</sup> The same applies in the case of the readers of books in Ladino, like those printed and published by ShaYi"Sh in Jerusalem. Parush states that one can distinguish, among the women Yiddish readers, between the "old readers," who read traditional, rabbinic literature intended for women and the "new readers," "who began to appear in the second half of the [nineteenth] century and moved gradually from reading traditional literature to enthusiastic reading of novels and popular, Enlightenment literature in Yiddish."<sup>168</sup>

I would like to adopt Iris Parush's definitions, to shift and apply them to the protagonist of our current discussion: Flor Pisanti was a "new reader" of novels in Ladino, while her mother, Sarah Ginio, was an "old reader" of traditional rabbinic literature. As a "new reader," Flor Pisanti was placed at the intergenerational node of passage: between her mother's generation, when those who knew how to read and write in Ladino read liturgical and rabbinic literature, and the generation of her daughter, when students of the Alliance Israélite Universelle shifted to reading and writing in French. Most – but not all – of the novels Flor Pisanti read belonged to the genre called romantic novels. Furthermore, these were not provided to Ladino readers in their original form, in the language in which they were written, but rather were adapted to Ladino and adjusted to be absorbed by male and female members of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem. This is expressed by the author or the editor turning directly to the readers as well as through the explanations given to various words, phrases, and terms, in the language most likely to be understood by the readers. The language of these novels was poor, just as their external appearance was shabby. They were printed in Rashi script, on cheap paper, booklet by booklet, and bound by their owners. Yet and despite their meager value as fine literature, these novels could expand the world of the Sephardi Jewish women such as Flor Pisanti, who (except for one trip to Egypt<sup>169</sup>), never left the borders of her city, Jerusalem of the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of

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wonderful legends. *Ibid.*, 56–137. Parush is citing Buki ben Yogli, *What My Eyes Saw and What My Ears Heard* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1957), 17 [Hebrew].

167 Parush, *Reading Women*, 57–132.

168 *Ibid.*, 133–71.

169 As attested to by Flora Ben Amram.

the twentieth. The novels she read brought the “new reader” the enchantment of medieval Latin Europe, alongside the palaces of counts and barons in nineteenth-century Paris; Russian generals in the Tsar’s court and a terrifying Turkish pasha of the same century; the papal palace in Rome, and robbers in the Wild West in the United States alongside European classics of the type of Robinson Crusoe; and beyond all of these, a woman belonging to the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* could learn, from the pages of *Lulu*, written by Hēmdah Ben-Yehudah, about the *moshavot* that the members of the First *Aliyah* had established in The Land of Israel. From the testimony of Flora Ben Amram, Flor Pisanti’s granddaughter, in her novel, *Nona Flor*, and from finding the five volumes that Flor Pisanti kept in her cupboard, we definitely learn that she knew how to read Ladino, that she loved to read novels in that language and that she read and kept for herself a number of books in Ladino. Flor Pisanti internalized the stories that she read and adapted them internally – together with the romances that were traditionally handed down orally, from mother to daughter, throughout the eastern Sephardi dispersal located in the Mediterranean Basin, in Jewish Spanish – into stories and legends she used to tell her children, her grandchildren, and neighbour women. Through these stories and legends, she sought to pass on to her listeners a message of the behavioral code that befit proper sons and daughters.

### Conclusion

As a result of reading books and newspapers in Ladino, the spiritual world of the women of the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem was not as narrow and isolated, as we – members of the New *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel and graduates of the Zionist educational system – tend to think, in light of the fact that women of the Old *Yishuv*, who did not know Hebrew, were not exposed to the media in Hebrew: they did not read a Hebrew newspaper; they did not listen to Hebrew radio programs;<sup>170</sup> they could not follow the Hebrew translation presented in the margins of the films screened in movie houses in Jerusalem; and they certainly could not read a Hebrew book. Thanks to literature and press in Ladino, they could know about the world outside the limited borders of their neighborhood, more than people usually think.

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170 The Mandatory radio station, Kol Yerushalayim, began broadcasting in Hebrew on 30 March 1936.

## The Spanish Senator Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández and the “Spaniards without a Homeland”, Speakers of Jewish Spanish

### Un Castellano incorrecto\*

An incorrect Castilian [language]

ÁNGEL PULIDO FERNÁNDEZ, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*, edición fac-símil (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993), 2.

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”אנטיס די אינטראר די מואיב'ו אין לאס אוניאס דיל פ'אנאטיסמו איספאניול, לוס ז'ודיוס אריאן מיז'ור די לאב'וראר אה סוס פרוגריסו אין לוס פאאזיס קי לוס פירמיטין די ביב'יר באשו לה פרוטקסיון די לייס ג'וסטאס אי די סוב'יראנוס קלימינטוס.“  
איל טיימפו. פריודיקו איסראאליטה. אפאריסי איל לונים אי איל ג'ואב'יס די קאדה סימאנה. דירקטור דוד פ'ריסקו. 21 די פיברירו

\* GALATA, Constantinople. 1905

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Before they once again put [themselves] between the nails of Spanish zealotry, the Jews would do better to work for their advancement in the countries that permit them to live under the protection of just laws and compassionate and merciful rulers.

*EL TIEMPO* [THE TIME], a Jewish newspaper. Appearing on Mondays and Thursdays weekly. Editor: David Fresco. Galata, Constantinople.

Article from 21 February 1905.

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### Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández and the Sephardim

In the introduction to this volume, I mentioned the book by the Spanish senator and physician Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Espanoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pulido's saga has a continuation on the soil of the State of Israel.

In 1927, an entry was registered in the Golden Book<sup>2</sup> of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in honor of Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852–1932), who – so the entry states – “worked for the Jewish people and especially for the Spanish exiles”. The ornate certificate has been kept in an honorable place, in the home of Dr. Pulido's two granddaughters, doña Ana and doña Carmen de la Escosura, whom I met in Madrid, in 2004, during a sabbatical year I spent in Spain. At that time, I did research on Dr. Pulido and his relations with Jews originating from Spain, a topic I mentioned in the introduction to this book.<sup>3</sup> The donator, who wished to perpetuate the name of Ángel Pulido by inscribing him in the JNF Golden Book, remains anonymous as does the country in which he lived. Yet, under the rubric “country of origin” in the JNF registrations appears: “Morocco.” This leads to the conclusion that the initiative to register Dr. Ángel Pulido in the JNF Golden Book came from among Jews of Tetuán or Tánger (Tangiers), with whom he had strong ties. The 26 May 1905, an issue of the newspaper *El Anunciador* [The informer] announced that during the eighteen-day stay of Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández in Gibraltar, he discovered Sephardi Jews “like a new Vasco da Gama”.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis, therefore, is on the discovery. Dr. Pulido visited the cities of northern Morocco again in April 1921 and was received royally by the members of the Jewish communities there.<sup>5</sup> Yet, it turns

1 See above Introduction n. 1.

2 The JNF – Jewish National Fund [Hebrew: *Keren Kayemet Le-Israel* – כקל] – Golden Book, vol. 4, no. 4/527, 5687. The entry was made on 2 June 1927.

3 Cf. above Introduction, n. 1 and chap. 2 n. 1. I met Dr. Pulido's two granddaughters in their home in Madrid, first on 25 March 2004. Joining us at this meeting were two nieces of my hosts – great-granddaughters of Dr. Pulido. A second meeting was held, in the same place, on 14 June 2004. I thank the family members for their warm welcome and the graciousness with which they treated me. At the time of the writing of these lines, both of Ángel Pulido's granddaughters, I am sorry to say, are no longer with us.

4 “Como Nuevo Vasco da Gama”. See Dr. Pulido's albums (on the albums, see below n. 6): A selection from *El Anunciador*, 26 May 1905.

5 See Dr. Ángel Pulido's letter to the newspaper *El Porvenir* (The Future) of Tangiers [Tánger], on Monday, 18 April 1921, in which the writer describes his happiness at the large number of supporters for his project, especially when he remembers how lonely he was when he started out. Pulido said similar things when he visited Tetuán, according to the report in the Tetuán newspaper *El Norte de África* on Tuesday, 12 April 1921.

out from the text inscribed in the JNF Golden Book that this initiative was a local one and not a gesture by any official Jewish organization toward Senator Pulido. In any event, it is doubtful whether he was aware of this expression of gratitude by the “Jewish people and especially from the exiles from Spain”, graphically represented by inscription in the JNF Golden Book. On 7 May 1926, after suffering a stroke, he was rushed to the hospital, from where he was returned home, never to regain consciousness until his death in 1932.

Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández was a physician and a politician.<sup>6</sup> We cannot cover in detail all the endeavor of this man, who during his lifetime published some one hundred books and about 2,000 articles: an incontrovertibly tremendous yield. He published scientific studies on medicine, particularly social medicine; alongside speeches, law proposals, and parliamentary activity; in addition to translations, letters, and books intended to advance the social struggles he initiated and to which he devoted his strength and time. Throughout his entire life, he conducted, at different times, battles for goals in which he believed. He was a one-man lobby. Thus, he fought for humanizing the death penalty and for the presence of a doctor at legal hearings concerning the mentally unbalanced. Ángel Pulido sought to reform the prison conditions and spoke, on this issue, before the Senate on 4 March 1909. He strove on behalf of laborers receiving unfair wages and encouraged the development of a vaccine against tuberculosis. He was the chairman of an association for the blind, which wished to help them enter the labor field.<sup>7</sup> As a district representative

6 On him, see A. Meyuhas Ginio, “Reencuentro y despedida. Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández y la diáspora sefardí”, in R. Rein (ed.), *España e Israel. Veinte años después* (Madrid: Tres culturas Dyknsón S.L., 2007), 57–60; Idem, “El encuentro del senador español Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández con los judíos del Norte de Marruecos”, *El Prezente. Estudios sobre la cultura sefardí*. 2: La cultura Judeo-Española del Norte de Marruecos (2008): 111–25 and the bibliography. See also Martine Lemoine, “Retrato de un ilustre madrileño: El Doctor Pulido 1852–1932”, *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, 20 (1966): 1–10; Jacobo Israel Garzón, Introducción, edición y notas, *Ángel Pulido. El sefardismo en España. La Academia de la Lengua Española y los sefardíes* (Madrid: Hebraica Ediciones, 2006), 20, n. 10. Ángel Pulido Fernández’s list of publications, from the years 1869–1927, which is kept in the library of the Madrid Royal Academy of Medicine, is eight pages long. That library also holds two albums containing newspaper clippings about Ángel Pulido Fernández and his activity, which were cut out and glued in the albums by his wife and his granddaughters. The latter told me how they prepared the homemade glue: a paste of flour and water. In time, Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández’s son, handed the albums over to the library of the Royal Academy of Medicine for safekeeping. I have the pleasant task of thanking the librarians there for their help.

7 See in the Pulido albums, the report in the newspaper *El Liberal* of 2 March 1909, about the speech Pulido gave in the Spanish Senate on this matter. On Thursday, March 4, 1909,

[deputado] of Murcia, in southeastern Spain, in the Spanish Cortes, Pulido took part in the debate on the production and sale of olive oil: whether pepper should be added to it, which extended its shelf life, while putting power in the hands of the industrialists who produced the oil mixed with pepper and who set its price as they saw fit, without considering the interests of the olive growers in Murcia.

Ángel Pulido, born in the middle of the nineteenth century, was ahead of his time, when he recognized children's rights and created a lobby for their defense and for protection of these rights.<sup>8</sup> For that the residents of Madrid set up a memorial in Retiro Park in the heart of the Spanish capital.<sup>9</sup> In a letter from 4 November 1955, which was sent by S.D. Lévy, president of the JNF office in Casablanca,<sup>10</sup> is a report to Mr. Theodor Hatalgui, of the JNF board, about his visit to Madrid as the head of a delegation of Jewish representatives from the cities of Tetuán, Tánger, Casablanca, and Almería.

Of note is that the four cities were mentioned in one go, since the last one is located on the Iberian Peninsula, while the first three were within the bounds of the Spanish protectorate of Morocco (1912–1956). During the visit, the delegation members – together with Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, the son of the late Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández – gathered in Retiro Park in Madrid and stood in front of the statue standing there, bowing their heads in respect. On the same occasion, speeches were given by the writer, Mr. Lévy, and by Ms Rahma Toledano, a journalist from Tangiers, who cooperated with Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández during his lifetime.<sup>11</sup>

Some fifty years later, in 2004, when I met with Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández's granddaughters, they showed me the statue of their grandfather in Retiro Park. It should be noted that half of the sum needed for erecting the statue was contributed by Jews from Morocco and other countries. The Madrid Sephardi

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Pulido spoke in the Spanish Senate about the situation of the prisons in Spain. These activities were reported also in the newspapers: *El Mundo*, *El Heraldo*, *El País*, *La correspondencia de España*, *La época*. See the Pulido albums.

8 Ángel Pulido Martín, *El Doctor Pulido y su época, por su hijo: Ángel Pulido Martín* (Madrid: Imprenta D. Domenech, A.A., 1945), 22–82.

9 Á. Pulido Martín, "Recuerdo del Doctor Pulido", *Actas del Simposio de Estudios Sefardíes*, 1-6 de junio de 1964, Edición a cargo de Iacob M. Hassán con la colaboración de María Teresa Rubiato y Elena Romero, CSIC, 1964 (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1970): 73–79, esp. 76; *Boletín del consejo general de colegios médicos de España*, 18, 84 (Nov. 1954).

10 The office was located at 7, Rue Lusitania, Casablanca. This letter was kept in the Ángel Pulido file in the JNF Archives, Jerusalem. I thank my colleague, Dr. Michal Held of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for her help in locating the material.

11 On her see below nn. 26 and 74.

community was involved in the memorial ceremonies in honor of the senator Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández.<sup>12</sup> The Jews of Morocco also initiated the planting of trees in Israel, in a grove named for Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández in the Ḥaruvit Forest in the Judean Mountains.<sup>13</sup> Participating in the tree planting ceremony for the grove, which was held in Israel, on 1 June 1956, was the senator's son, Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, as a guest of the government of Israel.<sup>14</sup> At the ceremony, Ambassador Moshe Tov called upon the attendees to well remember "that this was the first time in which the national flag of Spain was

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12 On 5 December 1953, a memorial ceremony was held in Madrid for Ángel Pulido Fernández. The lectures given on that occasion were published in the anthology *Acto de homenaje a la memoria del Doctor Ángel Pulido Fernández tributado por la comunidad sefardí de Madrid* (Madrid: C. Bermejo, impresor, 1954). Extracto de las conferencias pronunciadas por el Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín (hijo) y el Prof. Federico Pérez Castro, con una introducción por Don Daniel François Barouch, Presidente de la Comunidad sefardí de Madrid. Daniel François Barouch was the son of a Jerusalem Sephardi family: an interview with Mrs. Ruth Barouch Senderov on 4 August 2002. Prof. Federico Pérez Castro was the head of the Chair in Post-Biblical Hebrew Language and Literature at the University of Madrid and served as the secretary of the Arias Montano Institute for Jewish Studies of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) there.

13 In the letter noted (above n.10), Mr. Lévy told about his meeting in Madrid with Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín to whom he gave a document attesting to the intention to plant a grove in Israel in the name of his late father. Initially the Biriya Forest in Galilee was discussed; then, its site was determined in the Ḥaruvit Forset near Lakhish. For the purpose of planting the grove, Jews in Morocco donated over one million francs, which was sufficient for the planting of 3,500 trees in JNF forests. See the letter by Mr. Lévy, JNF president in Morocco, from 23 November 1956 to Mr. Theodor Hatalgui. The latter replied by letter to Mr. Lévy on 16 February 1956 and detailed the arrangements that had been made, in cooperation with the Israel Foreign Ministry, to conduct a distinguished ceremony for planting the grove in the name of Dr. Pulido. The ceremony was held in the Ḥaruvit Forest on 1 June 1956. In response to an explicit request by Mr. Lévy, in a letter to Mr. Hatalgui on 5 June 1956, JNF personnel sent Mr. Lévy, during June 1956, pictures and articles, which were published in Israel about Dr. Ángel Pulido and his deeds. Photos from the ceremony were also sent to Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín in Madrid; see Theodor Hatalgui's letter from 26 June 1956 in the Ángel Pulido file, JNF Archives. On behalf of the Israel Foreign Ministry, the person dealing with the issue of planting the Pulido grove was Ambassador Moshe Tov, director of the Latin American Department; this stemmed from there being no diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Spain. A new sign was placed on the site on 12 November 1992 by the JNF's Division of Memorialization and Projects.

14 On him, see above nn. 8,9 and n. 29 below.

flown in this country [Israel] and that this was done in honor of Dr. Pulido.”<sup>15</sup> At the request of the Israel Foreign Ministry, the JNF people also invited to the event guests from Spain, who had participated in the international congress on citrus fruit that had been held in Israel at that time. Owing to the lack of diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Spain, the Israel Foreign Ministry asked to include these visitors, apparently, as a sign of good will on the part of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Important for the topic we are dealing with – the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire in general and in the city of Jerusalem in particular – was the activity of Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández for what he called, “españoles sin patria,” meaning Sephardim, speakers of Jewish Spanish, descendants of the Jews exiled by royal decree from the lands of the Iberian Peninsula (1492). Pulido strove for reconciliation and renewed links between the Kingdom of Spain and the descendants of the exiles from Spain. The motives for his activity were related foremost to the benefit of his homeland, Spain, which in the nineteenth century suffered a great, serious defeat with the loss of its colonies. The Kingdom of Spain lost the last among them – Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines – in the Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 December 1898. That year constitutes the focal point and symbol of a deep crisis – the crisis of 1898 – which beset Spanish society and negatively affected every sphere of life.<sup>17</sup> Ángel Pulido sought to acquire for his homeland a new target audience and new spheres of influence for its activity, in place of those that it had lost. He considered the Jewish Spanish language to be the bridge and link between the Kingdom of Spain and speakers of this language – the Sephardim; he wished to build upon this bridge both the cultural hegemony of the Spanish language among the Sephardim as well as the reconciliation between his Spanish brothers and the Sephardim, descendants of the exiles from Spain. It is no wonder, then, that Ángel Pulido’s first book, on the Sephardim, bears the title of *Los israelitas españoles y el idio-*

15 See A. Meyuhas Ginio, “El encuentro del senador español Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández con los judíos del Norte de Marruecos”, *El Presente. Estudios sobre la cultura sefardí*. La cultura Judeo-Española del Norte de Marruecos, 2 (2008): 111–25.

16 Letter by Mr. Theodor Hatalgui to Mr. P. Janowitz, on the board of the International Citrus Fruit Congress. Tel Aviv, 11 May 1956. Ángel Pulido File in the JNF Archive.

17 M. Martínez Cuadrado, *Restauración y la crisis de la monarquía (1874–1931)*, *Historia de España* dirigida por Miguel Artola (Madrid: Alianza, 2001), 6. See also Isidro González García, “La cuestión judía y la crisis del 98”, in *Los judíos en La España contemporánea. Historia y visiones, 1898–1998*, coordinadores Ricardo Izquierdo, Uriel Macías, Yolanda Moreno Koch, Colección Humanidades (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000), 25–44.

*ma castellano*.<sup>18</sup> Of note, as an aside, is that the term “israelitas” in Castillian is the biblical word, for the children of Israel. Quite possibly, discernable here is the influence of French, in which Dr. Pulido was fluent, which employs the noun and adjective “israélites” for Hebrews, members of the Jewish religion. The Spanish term “israelitas” does not bear the negative religious connotation that might be inherent in the term “judíos”. Only in his next book, published in 1905, did Pulido employ the noun and adjective “sefardí”, which is the common name among Sephardim for themselves. All the same, Ángel Pulido Fernández was impressed by the way the descendants of the exiles from Spain have kept their Jewish Spanish language during four hundred years of exile.<sup>19</sup> Pulido was pleased to present exchanges of correspondence in which Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim, from the Mediterranean eastern dispersal, express their admiration for Spain and their joy from the Pulido’s own activity:<sup>20</sup> Graduates of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Adrianople (Edirne) wrote that “the long-standing French culture could not uproot the nature and spirit of Spanish heritage from our hearts.”<sup>21</sup> Further, “We can say that we now recognize and love Spain as a dear country.”<sup>22</sup>

Both Christians and Jews called Pulido “el Apóstol de los sefardíes” (the apostle of the Sephardim), and indeed this so very Christian title befits Ángel Pulido, who was a devout Catholic. Pulido himself expressed in writing “su apostolado” (his mission). The Jewish journalist, Sam [Shmuel] Levy in Argentina, saw in Pulido “un segundo Herzl” (a second Herzl).<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly, Ángel

18 A. Pulido Fernández, *Intereses nacionales: Los israelitas españoles y el idioma castellano*. Cf. Introduction, n. 14 above.

19 “el pueblo judío, ...con su idioma castellano, mantenido á través de cuatro siglos de destierro” Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin Patria y la raza sefardí*, 4.

20 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Desarrollo, esplendor y soberanía de la Lengua española*. Mensaje dirigida al Excmo. Sr. D. Antonio Maura, Presidente de la Real Academia de la Lengua y los Sres. Académicos de la misma (Madrid: Imprenta del sucesor de Enrique Teodoro, 1921). Of note is that this was written sixteen years after the publication of *Españoles sin patria*.

21 Pulido, *Desarrollo, esplendor*, 147.

22 “Podemos decir que hoy conocemos y amamos a España como tierra querida; conocemos y veneramos al gran español que se llama Dr. Pulido.” Ibid, 124.

23 Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the father of political Zionism, the “prophet of the Jewish state,” and founder of the World Zionist Organization. Shmuel A. Levy, editor of the Buenos Aires paper *Israel*, wrote on Friday, 5 Iyyar 5681 [1921]: “el apostolado de nuestro ilustre colaborador, el senador español Dr. Ángel Pulido”; see also M. Ortega, *Figuras ibéricas*, Biblioteca Hispano-Sefardi (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-Americana, 1922), c. 10: Pulido, apóstol sefardí, 247–377; Cf. *El Liberal*, 15 October 1922; Martine Lemoine, “El doctor Pulido, apóstol de los sefarditas,” *Historia*, 16 (1985) X, 105. On Shmuel Levy, see *Españoles sin patria*, 643–644. See also Dr. Pulido’s albums of newspaper clippings from *La*

Pulido, who sought to promote the issues of the “Sephardim without a homeland,” had to take upon himself the role of advocate of the children of Israel and to expand defense of the Jews, since in his generation, the image of the Jews and Judaism in the Spanish world was negative, inspiring hate alongside primal fear – and this was the case despite the fact that since 1492 no Jews had lived openly on Spanish soil.<sup>24</sup> Ángel Pulido was forced to grapple with the image of God-killing Jews in the Christian Holy Scriptures and of the avaricious medieval moneylender. Moreover, the image of the Jewish woman – the beautiful Jewish maiden – in literature, song, and art, aroused much less revulsion than that of the Jewish man. One of Ángel Pulido’s book was devoted to the Hebrew woman, *Mica: Homenaje a la mujer hebrea*.<sup>25</sup> This was a gesture of gratitude towards notable Jewish women, who helped Pulido with the public campaign that he waged on behalf of the Sephardim: Ms. Rahma Toledano<sup>26</sup> of Tangiers and Ms. Marietta (Mica) Gross née Alcalay, a resident of Trieste, then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, daughter of a mother born in Serbia and a father born in Bosnia: both of them Sephardim. Ángel Pulido mentioned that the origin of Mrs. Gross Alcalay’s father was in the Castilian city Alcalá de Henares, and he stressed, thereby, the link between the protagonist of his book – whom he compared to the biblical figures Ruth and Esther – and pre-Expulsion Spain. In Pulido’s eyes, she appeared as a Spanish beauty from the eastern regions of the Iberian Peninsula: Valencia or Murcia.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Gross Alcalay wrote to Pulido in 1904, following the publication of his first book on the Jews

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*Correspondencia Militar*, 21 April 1905: “[L]a idea iniciada por el sabio ilustre, apóstol de la raza hebrea, el Exco. Sr. D. Ángel Pulido,” *El Mediterráneo* of Ceuta, from 10 May 1923: “Ángel Pulido, apóstol de los sefardíes, católico, apostólico, romano y español....” See also, *ibid.*, *Diario del Pueblo*, 25 August 1929: “For us, the Jews of Spanish origin (israelitas de origen español), Don Ángel Pulido was, is, and will always be the apostle (el apóstol) of the Sephardi cause (causa sefardí), the great protector of our race (nuestra raza).” It is interesting to examine the use the writer of the article makes of the nouns *israelitas*, *español*, and *raza*, all of which refer the reader to the work by Ángel Pulido Fernández: *Espanoles sin Patria y la raza sefardí*.

24 See G. Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España: La imagen del judío 1812–2002* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2002), 268–69; Nitai Shinan, *Victims or Culprits: The History of the Jews as Reflected in Modern and Contemporary Spanish Historiography (1759–1898)* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 2011) [Hebrew].

25 A. Pulido Fernández, *Mica: Homenaje a la mujer hebrea* (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-africano-americana, 1923), 29.

26 Her picture and warm words, which Dr. Pulido devoted to her, appear on page 188 of his book *Espanoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*, see above n. 1.

27 See Pulido, *Mica*, 44–60. See also Paloma Díaz-Mas, “Corresponsales de Ángel Pulido e informantes de Menéndez Pidal: dos mundos sefardíes”, in *Los trigos ya van en flores*.

and the Castilian language, and in the correspondence gave him much information on the Balkan Jewish communities, which served as the basis for his next book on the same subject, *Españoles sin patria*. Mica Gross Alcalay, to whom Pulido dedicated his book on the Jewish woman, was an enthusiastic reader of Modern Spanish literature: this is mentioned explicitly in Pulido's book *Españoles sin patria*.<sup>28</sup>

Ángel Pulido Fernández was born in Madrid in 1852.<sup>29</sup> His parents came to the Spanish capital from the northern Asturias region and were the owners of a wine shop in the city. His son, Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, who was also a physician, wrote about his father in a biography he devoted to him in 1945, that "he was born in a humble home, lacking sunshine, but never lacking in religious faith".<sup>30</sup> His entire life, Pulido did not deny his modest origin and even though he advanced well in social status, as a result of the education he acquired and the fact that his wife came from a wealthy home, he was also attentive, alert, and compassionate towards those suffering of an unfortunate lot. Dr. Pulido practiced medicine until he entered politics. He was also a talented artist, and when he started out, he was uncertain about which road to take: whether to devote himself to painting or to medicine as a career. Ángel Pulido, who had an altruistic nature, chose medicine, and he felt that dealing in this profession was as a kind of religion.<sup>31</sup>

He worked diligently on his medical studies from 1868 to 1874, which were years of revolution in the history of nineteenth-century Spain. Undoubtedly, Ángel Pulido was a member of the generation of the 1868–69 revolution, and this liberal revolution, which resulted in the deposition of Queen Isabel II (1833–1868) and the establishment of a republic, fashioned his world view. He

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*Studia in honorem Michelle Débax*, coord. Jean Alsina and Vincent Ozanam (CNRS, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2001), 103–15, esp. 112.

28 See *Españoles sin patria*, 321–23. This book was written in one thrust from November 1903 until 21 March 1905. See Ángel Pulido, *Mica: Homenaje a la mujer hebrea* (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-africano-americana, 1923), 29. Cf. also above n. 26. On Mrs. Gross Alcalay as an enthusiastic reader of the writing of Emilio Castelar, see Pulido, *Mica*, 93: "Mica era lectora y entusiasta de Castelar."

29 "Nació el 29 de febrero en la llamada Taberna de la rinconada en la calle de las Infantas, que se abría sobre una plazuela ocupada actualmente por una magnífica edificación que tiene el n' 28." A. Pulido Martín, *El Doctor Pulido y su época, por su hijo Ángel Pulido Martín* (Madrid: Imprenta F. Domenech, 1945), 14.

30 *Ibid.*, 72. Chap. 26 in the book was devoted to the Pulido's struggle on behalf of the Sephardim. See also the selection from the newspaper *El siglo XIX. Revista Ilustrada*, Madrid, 15 November 1881: "nacido en humilde cuna."

31 *Ibid.*, 69.

was a family doctor, who dealt with general medicine and specialized in social medicine. He was also an epidemiologist, and in 1899, conducted, with his son, then a medical student, a survey in the border areas between Spain and Portugal on the development of the plague that broke out at that time in the kingdom neighboring Spain. As a person, Ángel Pulido was a handsome man and an imposing figure. In the biography published in 1945, Pulido's son wrote that his father seemed similar "with his black hair and black beard as well as with his masculine beauty to an Arab from Damascus or Baghdad."<sup>32</sup> Noticeable here is an Orientalistic approach, a descendant of nineteenth-century romanticism, which sought to find in the Orient beauty and exotic splendor. It is sufficient to bring to mind the paintings of Eugène Delacroix. Ángel Pulido had a Spartan nature, abstained from wine, and did not participate in sports, his whole being invested in his work.<sup>33</sup>

His wife knew to tell his granddaughters – and I heard this from them – that Grandfather was rigid and difficult at home, but tender and considerate towards the other in public. She added that her husband was more interested in his patients than in his children. Ángel Pulido Fernández and his wife had a son – Ángel Pulido Martín – and three daughters. One daughter died in childhood; another, Emilia, married but died while still young and her widower married his young sister-in-law, Elena. The Pulido family attested that their father was a serious person, who never allowed himself to indulge in frivolities, except for his passion for travel, and he did, indeed, travel widely in Europe, Turkey, and North Africa. He described what he saw in the letters, newspaper articles, and books that he wrote.<sup>34</sup> In Ángel Pulido's life there were many sharp transitions from euphoria to depression,<sup>35</sup> and at the end of his life he suffered from acute depression and lost contact with his surroundings. Thus, we see that when calls were heard in Spain for help, in view of the Great Salonika (Thessaloniki) Fire of 1917, which broke out in the afternoon of 18 August 1917, Pulido's voice was lacking among those seeking aid for the desperate Jews of Salonika. In the paper *El Diario Universal* of 25 August 1917, six days after the fire, which destroyed the port quarters of Salonika, in which most of the Jewish community lived and which left thousands of them homeless, ap-

32 See *ibid.*, 145, "con su pelo negro y su barba negra también con una belleza varonal de árabe de Damasco o de Bagdad".

33 *Ibid.*, 62.

34 In the Pulido albums are the statements published in the newspaper *El Liberal*, Madrid, 13 September 1893. Ángel Pulido related that "in order to gain the most possible from journeys, it is not enough for [the traveler] to have an artistic sense but he should know how to adapt his body and soul to the conditions and places the traveler will reach".

35 Á. Pulido Martín, *El doctor Pulido*, 86.

peared an appeal for the intervention of the Spanish authorities for the aid and defense of the Jews “who are again homeless.” The writers stressed that a treacherous disease prevents our “great friend” Pulido from raising his voice publicly, for if not he would certainly have done so.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, severe depression paralyzed Pulido’s ability to act.

While still young, in his thirties, Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández was elected to the Royal Academy of Medicine, being the youngest member to be so honored.<sup>37</sup> He served in the Academy of Medicine for fifty years and was a member of its most important committees. Pulido worked in medicine until he entered politics. Ángel Pulido Martín wrote that his father had gone into politics because he was ambitious and longed to be a government minister, but his rigid, strict personality made it impossible for him to compromise, an imperative characteristic for a politician: consequently, he did not attain his goal. Pulido was elected four times to serve as the representative [deputado] of Murcia. In 1893–98 he was the representative of Madrid in the Cortes.<sup>38</sup> In 1901, he was a senator on behalf of the Royal Academy of Medicine, and in years 1903 to 1909, he was elected senator on behalf of the University of Salamanca.<sup>39</sup> In 1910, José Canalejas Méndez appointed him senator for life [senador vitalicio]. In addition, he was deputy chairman of the Senate. Over the years, Ángel Pulido held a few functions in public service: he was president of the Spanish Health Council [Consejo de Sanidad], Supervisor of Public Health and Supervisor of the Post. Ángel Pulido Fernández was an erudite person well-versed in literature and history. He wrote easily, and the Catholic-liberal press served him as a sympathetic platform for disseminating his ideas. He was an excellent, sought-after speaker, and his lectures in the Athenæum [Ateneo] – the center for cultural heritage – in Madrid attracted a very large audience.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Pulido

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36 See the albums of Dr. Pulido.

37 See in the Pulido albums, a report in the newspaper *La Higiene*, Madrid, 28 June 1884, on the ceremony and on the lecture then given by Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández on the historical development of pathology.

38 See *El Manzanares*, 12 de abril de 1891: “siluetas madrilenas”: D. Ángel Pulido. Diputado provincial de Madrid. Albums of Dr. Pulido.

39 See Dr. Pulido’s albums, a newspaper selection from 18 May 1903 including a report on the elections.

40 In the albums of Dr. Pulido appears a small clipping from the newspaper *El Liberal*, 2 May 1903, which tells of a memorial evening held in the Athenæum of Madrid, for Emilio Castelar, at which Pulido spoke. See also clippings from the newspapers *El Imparcial*, *Heraldo de Madrid*, *El Globo*, and *El País* on the same matter. See also the albums of Dr. Pulido, clippings from the papers *ABC*, *El Figaro*, and *Diario Universal*, which report on lectures Dr. Ángel Pulido gave at the Athenæum in Madrid.

published these lectures in the daily press, and thereby brought his positions to the knowledge of an even wider readership than the audience attending his lectures.

Ángel Pulido belonged to the Catholic liberals of his generation. The terms *liberal* and *liberalismo* originated in Spanish and were taken into other languages from it. *Liberal*, free, is the opposite of *servil*, enslaved. These terms were born in the circles of the Cortes, the legislature, which met in Cádiz in 1808–12, in the throes of the Spanish War of Independence against the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte. The liberals were those who wished to free – liberar – their homeland from the yoke of foreign occupation. Marching hand in hand with the political liberals was Romanticism – a cluster of trends in art, literature, music, and historiography that cherished the medieval historical past. Romanticism presented a fresh view of nature, landscapes, and historical sites. Even the foreigners – tourists, travelers, and writers – who, throughout the eighteenth century made their way from north of the Pyrénées toward the Iberian Peninsula, discovered and described Spain as a romantic country. Examples are Washington Irving (1783–1859), author of *Tales of Alhambra* (*Cuentos de la Alhambra*, 1832), or Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), the creator of *Carmen* (1845).

In Spain, Liberalism was a phenomenon inseparable from Romanticism. Yet, we must distinguish between Romanticism, which drew its spirit from the Middle Ages – the Altar [El Altar] and the Crown [La Corona] – and Revolutionary Romanticism, which sought to overturn the conventional and to displace L’Ancien Régime. With the Bourbon Restoration and the return of Ferdinand VII to Spain (1814), many liberals were exiled and did not return to the Kingdom of Spain until after the death of the king, who held high the flag of absolutism and L’Ancien Régime. In proof we note that only after the death of Ferdinand in 1837 were the laws of purity of blood [limpieza de sangre]<sup>41</sup> abolished in Spain. Through Romanticism, Spain became acquainted with its past and sought to inculcate its values for future generations. Within this interest in the historical past of Medieval Spain, a key role was earmarked for the Jews and the Muslims, who had been a thoroughly integral part of this past but had been erased from the Spanish collective memory in the following centuries, when the Kingdom of Spain was mired in the conquest of the New World, religious wars, its War of Independence, and the loss of its colonies. Very gradually, there began, in nineteenth-century Spain, public discussion on the fate of the Jews and the results of the general expulsion of 1492. Historians began to

41 See Albert A. Sicoff, *Les Controverses des statuts de 'pureté du sang' en Espagne du xv au xvii siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1960).

study the history of the Jews in Spain and to delve into the role of the Inquisition in the Spanish world.<sup>42</sup> We must remember that the liberals consider the Spanish Inquisition, which was ultimately annulled and passed from the world by royal decree in 1834 – and was the progenitor of intolerance [intolerancia] – the primary reason for all the historical ills of Spain. The liberals' call for tolerance [tolerancia] was foremost a call for revamping the visage of the Spanish public, with the aim of acquiring for Spain a position of honor among the family of nations, a place it had held in its medieval past but had completely lost in the nineteenth century, when Europe, which had already successfully passed through the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the French Revolution – left Spain far behind. Spanish history was tested by the attitude of the Spaniards to the “Other” [el Otro] and the Jewish question relating to the status of the “Other” in Spain. Furthermore, since the mid nineteenth century, the Jewish question had become the touchstone in the debate waged among the public between the liberals and the conservatives. The liberals argued against intolerance [intolerancia], which was, in their opinion, the reason for all the ills of Spain in the modern era. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Spanish historians came out against the “Black Legend” [leyenda negra], which identified Spain with the Inquisition, and believed that granting freedom of worship in the kingdom to non-Catholics, including Jews, would be beneficial and clarify the picture. The expulsion of the Jews, as historians such as these thought, resulted in a brain-drain and a decline of spiritual activity in Spain.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, there was no consensus on this point among the Spanish thinkers, such that the Spanish historian Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912) came out, for the first time, in a book published in 1880–82,<sup>44</sup> against the explanation noted, which he considered too superficial, in that it ignored the eight-hundred-year struggle against Islam. In any event, at the end of the nineteenth century, in light of the Crisis of 1898, Spain realized just how backward it was and how miserable its general situation was in comparison to

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42 Shinan, *Victims or Culprits*, 1–154.

43 See the introductory remarks of María Antonia Bel Bravo to Ángel Pulido Fernández's book: *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*, Estudio Preliminar, xv–xix; C.C. Aronsfeld, *The Ghosts of 1492: Jewish Aspects of the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Spain 1848–1976* (New York: Columbia University, 1978); Shinan, *Victims or Culprits*, 279–88. Statements in a similar spirit were written by the Jewish leader, Rabbi Menashe ben Yisra'el (1604–1657), who lived and was active in Holland.

44 M. Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, VII (Madrid: Librería Católica de San José, 1880–1882). See also Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España*, 152–59.

the other European states, and once again the issue of historical intolerance was raised as the main reason for the national decline and underdevelopment.

Coming out against the liberals were the orthodox Catholics, who believed in Absolutism. They saw a direct link that passed like a scarlet thread between the New Christians (cristianos nuevos; judeo-conversos; conversos), descendants of Jews – namely, the Jews who converted to Christianity at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era – who were perceived by the Old Christians [cristianos viejos] as heretics, enemies of Christianity and Christians and against whom the Inquisition was established in Spain (1478)<sup>45</sup> – and the liberals of the nineteenth century, who were also suspected of their hatred for the altar and the crown. The conservative Catholics, especially the Carlists – a branch of the Bourbon Royal family in Spain, which rebelled against the rulers in Madrid, in the name of Catholic extremism and separatism<sup>46</sup> – indicated the identification as it were between revolutionary liberalism and the Jews and anti-Catholicism, and they warned of what they considered the tendency of the Jews to turn public order into anarchy.

These intellectual struggles were given expression in the constitutions [constituciones] adopted throughout the nineteenth century, some of them liberal, others conservative.

The first of them was the liberal constitution of Cádiz, 1812 [El código democrático de 1812], which in time became known as the “religion of liberty” [la religion de la libertad]. The constitution of 1837, however, which was established after the death of Ferdinand VII and the rise of Isabel II, emphasized the need to preserve the exclusivity of Catholic religious rites on the Spanish soil, in such a manner that there was no legal possibility for maintaining a non-Catholic community or worship anywhere in the Kingdom of Spain. The revolution of 1868, which deposed Queen Isabel II and established the republic, ended after a year, in 1869, with the victory of the royalists. The victorious royalists were forced to act in the face of opposition from the republicans on one side and the Carlists on the other, and the Constitution of 1869 had to consider these constraints. On the issue of freedom of worship, that Constitution permitted the Spaniards, in its Par. 21, freedom of worship [libertad de cultos]:

45 See A. Meyuhas Ginio, “‘Sword of Faith’: The Inquisition in Spanish and Jewish Modern Historiography”, in *Together Yet Apart: Studies on Issues Between Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain*, 209–21 [Hebrew].

46 The Carlists [Carlistas] originated with the activity of the prince (infante) Carlos María Isidro de Borbón (1788–1855), son of King Carlos IV. They did not recognize the legitimacy of Isabel II as the queen of Spain and were active from 1833, the year in which she was crowned.

the residents of Spain could hold any form of worship they wanted, but yet, only privately. This meant that the Jews could not erect a synagogue, they could not build cemeteries, and to put it succinctly: they were incapable of openly maintaining a Jewish community, so at that time there were no Jews in Spain, at least not as members of a Jewish community. Flesh and blood Jews were absent from Spanish soil but they did exist in the Church tradition, on Christian holidays, and in literature, the romantic type that dealt with the Middle Ages as well as the realistic, which adopted a stance in the debate between the liberals and the conservatives on the Jewish question.

When, in 1860, towards the close of the period of the rule of Queen Isabel II, the Spanish army captured Tetuán<sup>47</sup> and ruled over it until 1862, the Tetuán Jews received the Spanish conquerors with open arms, and they hurried to speak with them in North African Jewish Spanish, *Ḥaketiya*.<sup>48</sup> The impressions of the Spanish invaders were not unequivocal. Some were impressed by the preservation of Spanish as spoken by the Jews. Such was the writer Benito Pérez Galdós (1842–1920), who between 1873 and 1912 wrote the historical cycle *Episodios nacionales*, forty-two historical novellas. One of them, *Aita Tetauen* [Tetawen], tells of the war and the conquest of Tetuán.<sup>49</sup> Yet, there were others who were disgusted by the poverty and misery of the Jews there and were more impressed by their Muslim Berber neighbors, in the manner of the writer

47 Tittāwin in Berber. In 1913–56 it was the capital of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco. See also U. Macías, “Los cronistas de la Guerra de África y el primer reencuentro con los sefardíes”, in *Los judíos en la España Contemporánea. Historia y visiones, 1898–1918*, coord. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito; Uriel Macías, Yolanda Moreno Koch, Colección Humanidades (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla–La Mancha, 2000), 45–60.

48 On *Ḥaketiya* [Jaketía; Jaquetía], see J.M. Hassán, “Testimonios antiguos de la Jaquetía”, in *La lengua y la literatura españolas en África*, ed. Celia Casado Frenedillo (Melilla: Sociedad Pública V Centenario de Melilla, 1998), 147–69; P. Díaz-Mas, *Los Sefardíes. Historia, Lengua y cultura* (4th rev. ed; Barcelona: Riopiedras, 2006), 132–39; A. Quintana, “Variación diatópica en judeoespañol”, *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana*, 4/7–8 (2006): 77–97; Y. Bentolila, “La lengua común (coine) judeo-española entre el Este y el Oeste”, *El Prezente. Estudios sobre la cultura sefardí. Cultura Judeo-Española del Norte de Marruecos*, 2 (2008): 159–76; D. Bunis, “The Differential Impact of Arabic on Haketia and Turkish on Judezmo”, *El Prezente, Estudios sobre la cultura sefardí. cultura Judeo-Española del Norte de Marruecos* 2 (2008): 177–207; C. Aslanov, “La haketía entre la hispanidad y el aloglotismo: divergencia y convergencia”, *El Prezente, Estudios sobre la cultura sefardí. Cultura Judeo-Española del Norte de Marruecos* 2 (2008): 209–22.

49 B. Pérez Galdós, *Aita Tetauen* [Tettawen], *Episodios nacionales*, 36, Fourth Series, 1905, Modern edition – Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2010. Another of his novels (*Gloria*, 1877) describes the conflict between the Catholic Spanish family of the protagonist, Gloria Lantigua, and the Sephardi family of her lover, Daniel Morton.

Pedro Antonio de Alarcón (1833–1891),<sup>50</sup> known especially as the author of the novella *El sombrero de tres picos* [*The Three-Cornered Hat*]. The connections of the Kingdom of Spain with the Jews of North Africa continued throughout the twentieth century, at the time of the war against the terrifying Rif. The ambivalent attitude toward the Jews also persisted.<sup>51</sup>

Against the backdrop of the 1868 revolution, far-reaching social changes occurred in the Kingdom of Spain. We see an accelerated movement of migration from village to city throughout the Iberian Peninsula as well as emigration to beyond the borders of the Spanish kingdom, especially to America. In the cities of Spain – which until then had been essentially an agricultural country, with the rhythm of life determined by the local, landed nobility – there developed a new lifestyle: urban life, expropriation of the lands of the monasteries (*Desamortización*), which was linked to the name of Juan Álvarez y Méndez-Mendizábal (1790–1853), who was, apparently, of Jewish origin,<sup>52</sup> enabled the paving of roads and constructing of plazas. The urban home was revamped: no longer the palace of the nobleman but the apartment of the bourgeois. The trains began to run, bringing along geographic and social mobility.<sup>53</sup> The Romantic Movement in literature and art made way for literary realism. Censorship left the scene and the public importance of the press rose, turning it into the main means of communication and constituting a support for political views. In 1869 there were two million newspaper readers in Spain.<sup>54</sup> The press was connected to the cities and to the developing urban society, whose influence was continuously increasing in those days. The mouthpieces of the liberals were the newspapers *El Liberal* (founded 1879), *El Imparcial*, *El Correo*; *La*

50 I.M. Hassán and R. Izquierdo Benito (coord.), *Judíos en la Literatura española* (Cuenca: Colección Humanidades, 2001), 317.

51 In December 1922, Ángel Pulido Fernández published an article in the *Revista de la Raza* (Madrid, Editorial Ibero-Africano-Americana), whose editor was Manuel L. Ortega, in which he refers to 1919–21, during which there were difficulties in Morocco and the Spanish consul in Tetuán referred insultingly to the Jews. Pulido's remarks were directed to General D. Ricardo Burguete, the high commissioner of Spain in Morocco (alto comisario de España en Marruecos). In the end, that consul was transferred to another city. See *ibid.*, 17–20: The protest of the Larache community about the utterance of a physician, a member of the Spanish military health service, about the Jews, that they “are different, smell bad, do not bathe, and are only interested in Spain's money”.

52 José Luis Abellán, *Historia crítica del pensamiento español* (Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1989), 343.

53 *Ibid.*, 337–97.

54 See M. Artola, *La burguesía revolucionaria 1808–1874, Historia de España*. Dirigida por Miguel Artola (Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2001), t. 5.

*Ilustración Española y Americana, Iberia, Herald, El Diario Universal, El Siglo Médico, España*, and the like. In all of them were traces of Ángel Pulido Fernández: articles, letters to the editor he wrote, and articles about him. In contrast, we find the conservative, sometimes Carlist press, in papers whose names attest to their world view: *La Cruz* [The Cross]; *La Fe* [The Faith], and *El Siglo Futuro* [The Future Century].<sup>55</sup>

Ángel Pulido believed in positivist philosophy, in progress, and advancement. Yet, he was a religious man, who defined the borders of science in the rational world and religion in the world of faith. His son wrote about him, that in his father's generation people could believe in progress. Today – 1945, when the biography of his father that he wrote appeared – there is room to doubt the advancement of science and those responsible for it. Influenced by philosophers who have studied in Germany, there came to Spain, beginning with the early nineteenth century, Krausism (el krausismo) as taught by Karl Christian Krause (1781–1832), an idealist Christian philosopher, who stressed that the positive in human acts had the nature of a mission. Krausism became well known in Spain owing to his student, Julián Sanz del Río. In 1876, the latter's students established the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which took in professors dismissed from the conservative universities.<sup>56</sup>

The 1876 Constitution, which was written under the impression of the civil war between the Carlists and their opponents, the bourgeois of Madrid, during the rule of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, instituted tolerance toward non-apostolic Roman-Catholic religious rites [tolerancia de cultos] – but not freedom. By that time, there was already a presence of Jewish capital in the industrialization and banking of the Kingdom of Spain. The Rothschild Bank, through its representative, Ignacio Bauer, began its activity. The Jews, however, could pray

55 See A. Meyuhas Ginio, "Defender of Israel: The Spanish Senator Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852–1932) and the Sephardi Dispersal", *El Prezente*, 1 (2007), 193–208 and the bibliography there.

56 Isidro González García, "La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la cuestión judía en la historia de España", *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, 11 Época, abril 1991, no. 11, 73–87. This institution was established in 1876. At the time, Pulido cooperated with the Centro de Estudios Históricos (C.E.H.), which published a journal (revista) whose readers included Sephardim from the Balkans. From the ranks of this institution came the outstanding Hebraists (hebraístas) of the last century: Francisco Cantera Burgos and José María Millás Vallicrosa, both of whom were the founders and first editors of the periodical *Sefarad*, devoted, to this day, to the history of the culture and language of the Jews of Spain. See also P. Díaz-Mas, "Corresponsales de Ángel Pulido e informantes de Menéndez Pidal: dos mundos sefardíes", in *Los trigos ya van en flores. Studia in honorem Michelle Débax*, coord. J. Alsina y V. Ozanam (Toulouse: Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2001), 103–15.

under their own roofs – in the case of Madrid, this was the home of Ignacio Bauer<sup>57</sup> – but not in public, and they were still prohibited from building a synagogue and establishing a cemetery or other public institutions. Only the republic that was founded on 9 December 1931, with the deposition of King Alfonso XIII, implemented complete separation of public law from private law.<sup>58</sup>

A key figure, who left an indelible mark on the revolution of 1869, was Emilio Castelar (1832–1899), author, statesman, and eloquent speaker.<sup>59</sup> Ángel Pulido was a close friend of Castelar and was also his personal physician, who succored him on his deathbed. Castelar's influence on Pulido was tremendous on many, different matters, including the attitude toward Sephardim. Castelar was the message bearer of the liberal Catholics in Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century. Within the context of the Jewish question, Castelar demanded, in the name of tolerance [tolerancia], granting rights to the Jews, and in particular freedom of worship.<sup>60</sup> On 12 April 1869, Castelar, in a debate

57 See the Alliance Israélite Universelle Archives in Paris: 9912. In 1857, Solomon Rothschild visited Tetuán. He was personally confronted there with the poverty and miserable living conditions of the Jews. Rothschild sent them a physician, Dr. Philip Hauzer, a Hungarian Jew. Dr. Hauzer accompanied the Jewish refugees from Tetuán who came to Tangiers in 1860. On the Bauer family, see also n. 23 in the edition of the essay by Ángel Pulido, *El sefardismo en España*, published by Israel Garzón, 44.

58 In 1936, the Civil War broke out in Spain and during it and at its conclusion in 1939, the overwhelming majority of the Jews in Spain left the country. At that time, a new dimension was added to anti-Semitism in Spain: the Jews – together with the Freemasons and the Communists – were perceived as the enemies of the Christian Spanish people. See Isidro González García, *Los judíos y la Guerra civil española* (Madrid: Hebraica Ediciones, 2009). In any event, this period exceeds the period of Ángel Pulido's life. Though still alive in 1931, he was cut off from his surroundings, hospitalized in the building of the Royal Academy of Medicine and under constant care. Dedicated in 1951 was the first synagogue since the Expulsion from Spain. In the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* of 2 October 1951, it was reported that the synagogue, built for 132 worshipers, would be dedicated on *Rosh Ha-Shanah* eve. "The synagogue will be opened on the second story of a building purchased for this purpose, after receiving proper authorization from the government". Only in 1992 was freedom of conscience and freedom of religion declared.

59 On Emilio Castelar, see *Obras escogidas de D. Emilio Castelar*, I Autobiografía y algunos discursos inéditos. Prólogo del excm. Sr. D. Ángel Pulido, senador del Reino (Madrid: Ángel de San Martín, junio 1922); E. Castelar, *Discursos y ensayos*, Selección, prólogo y notas por J. García Mercadel (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961). See also Pulido, *Espanoles sin patria*, 596–603, as well as Isidro González García, "Emilio Castelar y los judíos", *Raíces, Revista Judía de Cultura*, 40 (1999): 21–28.

60 On Emilio Castelar's stance on religious freedom: statements he made on 5 May 1869, see E. Castelar, *Discursos y ensayos*, 81–82: ¿Podéis expulsar a los disidentes como expulsasteis

in the Spanish Cortes with a representative of the Catholic integrists named Vicente Manterola, defended Judaism and the Jews.<sup>61</sup> On that same occasion, Castelar presented – one alongside the other – the God of Sinai and the God of Golgotha, both of which have justification and existence in the Christian world,<sup>62</sup> and spoke of the disgrace of the general expulsion of 1492; had it not been for the Expulsion, so Castelar said, there would have been living in Spain Benedict Spinoza and Benjamin Disraeli. In his remarks, Castelar pointed out indispensable need for reconciliation with Spain. As noted, this was also to be the view of his friend and disciple – Ángel Pulido.

As a result of a visit he made to Italy (1866), Emilio Castelar, who was the distinct spokesman for the Latin group of nations [La raza Latina], published a book entitled *Recuerdos de Italia* [Recollections of Italy; 1872–76], in which there is also a chapter on the Jews in Spain and Italy.<sup>63</sup> In that book, Castelar described the history of the Jews of Spain before the Expulsion as well as the Jews of Rome in his time. He did not ignore their poverty and backwardness, and he described the Jews of the Rome ghetto without embellishment: miserable, filthy, money-grubbers, and selfish; he did not, however, refrain from criticizing the Eternal City itself, which he also saw drowning in dirt and garbage. He used these descriptions to censure the Church, which, in his opinion, had caused the Jews to reach the depths to which they had sunk. Particularly interesting is Castelar's description of his meeting with a beautiful Sephardi Jewish woman, "hermosísimo tipo oriental," from Florence. He heard her speaking Spanish, so he turned to her with a question – that was to turn into a kind of topos of encounters between Spaniards and Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardim at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth: "Are you a Spanish woman? [¿es usted española?]. The link was the language, and the reason for the question was that the woman spoke in Spanish. The women replied to Castelar that she was Jewish, born in Livorno (Leghorn), married to a Greek and living in Damascus. Castelar wrote that at that

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a los judíos y a los moriscos? Castelar stated that rights cannot be given according to one's Catholic faith. As a result of the prevailing situation, there is migration beyond the borders of Spain, to America.

- 61 See *Obras escogidas de Don Emilio Castelar*, X *Discursos parlamentarios en la Asamblea Constituyente*, 1, Madrid, 1923: *Rectificación al Sr. Manterola sobre la libertad religiosa y la separación entre la iglesia y el estado*, pronunciada el 12 de abril de 1869, 262–68.
- 62 See Jacobo Israel Garzón, "Dios en el Sinaí: Los judíos en la dialéctica parlamentaria de la jornada del 12/4/1869"; Isidro González, "Emilio Castelar y los judíos", *Raíces. Revista Judía de Cultura*, 40 (1999), 21–28.
- 63 Emilio Castelar, *Recuerdos de Italia* (Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet, 1872), 317–29.

moment he swore that if he would obtain political power, he would fight to uproot and eradicate intolerance from the soil of his homeland.<sup>64</sup>

Ángel Pulido described a number of his meetings with Sephardim. When his son, Ángel Pulido Martín, was studying medicine in Vienna, Austria, his parents and sister came to visit him. The family took a trip sailing on the Danube, and while on it, the daughter Elena heard an elderly couple conversing in Jewish Spanish. Pulido approached them, listened, introduced himself and made acquaintance with Mr. Henri (Enrique) Ḥaim Bedjarano (Bejarano), principal of the school of the Sephardi community of Bucharest (*escuela israelita española en Bucarest*).<sup>65</sup> Ángel Pulido attests about himself that that was how he found out about the existence of Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardim, descendants of the exiles from Spain and Portugal, who had preserved this language for – then – four hundred years.<sup>66</sup> Warm words about Henri Ḥaim Bedjarano were also written by Ángel Pulido's son, Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, in his *Cartas Médicas* and published in the newspaper *El siglo médico*.<sup>67</sup> Mr. Bedjarano was described as a “Sephardi from the Orient” (*español de Oriente*) “whose eyes shone when he mentioned the name of Spain. He quoted to his listeners

64 Ibid., 328–29.

65 Pulido, *Plumazos de un viajero*, 12–13; on Henri Ḥaim Bedjarano, see also Ángel Pulido, *El sefardismo en España*, 38–39; Marie-Christine Bornes-Varol, “Un erudito entre dos lenguas: el ‘castellano’ de Ḥayim Bejerano en el prólogo a su refranero glosado (1913)”, in Paloma Díaz-Mas and María Sánchez Pérez, *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo*, 113–27.

66 On the history of the Sephardim, see H. Méchoulan, *Los Judíos de España. Historia de una diáspora 1492–1992* (Valladolid: Simancas Ediciones, 1993); J.S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); E. Benbassa and A. Rodrigue, *Histoire des Juifs sépharades. De Tolède á Salonique* (Paris: Éditiones du Seuil, 2002; English edition: *The Jews of the Balkans. The Jewish Spanish Community 15th to 20th Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); R. Ayoun and H.V. Séphiha, *Los sefardíes de ayer y de hoy. 71 retratos* (Madrid: Editorial EDAF, 2002); A. Levy (ed.), *Jews, Turks and Ottomans: A Shared History Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002); Iacob M. Hassán, “Los sefardíes como tópicos”, *Raíces, Revista Judía de Cultura*, 67 (2006). See also Isidro González, *El retorno de los judíos* (Madrid: Edición Nerea, 1991), c. 9: Las campañas del doctor Pulido, 175–225. While the Israeli narrative begins with the Spanish Expulsion, Norman Stillman of the United States starts his discussion with the beginning of Islam. See N.A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 1–2 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979–1991).

67 See *El Siglo médico*, 24 May 1903. See also Garzón, above n. 6, 13–14.

poems, axioms, legends, an entire treasure of oriental Castilian literature” [“literatura castellana oriental”].<sup>68</sup>

When the family returned home, Ángel Pulido appealed, on 13 November 1903, in the Senate to the Spanish Minister of State, Conde de San Bernardo, and called for the protection of the Spanish language in the Orient. On 8 February 1904, Ángel Pulido published a series of six articles on this issue in the newspaper *La Ilustración Española y Americana* and by 29 April that year the first volumes of his work *Los israelitas españoles y el idioma castellano* had appeared.

Ángel Pulido also told of an earlier conversation that had taken place in 1883 with Jewish merchants in the marketplace of Belgrade, Serbia. In response to Pulido’s question as to whether he was a Spaniard, his Sephardi interlocutor said to him, “Yes, sir. But I am not a Spaniard from there [i.e., Spain]; I am a Spaniard from the Orient” [Si señor. Pero no soy español de allá, soy español pero de oriente]. Pulido published his impressions in his book, *Plumazos de un viajero* [Impressions from a Journey] and in a number of newspapers.<sup>69</sup> He presented the information while using his Modern Spanish and its rules of orthography. Of particular interest is Ángel Pulido’s description of the Jewish Spanish language, as he had heard it: the language is rather clear, although it has sounds and suffixes reminiscent of Portuguese. Undoubtedly, this is defi-

68 See A. Pulido Martín, *Cartas médicas* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de E. Teodoro, 1906), 114.

69 See Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Plumazos de un viajero* (Madrid: Establecimiento tipográfico de Enrique Teodoro, 1893). Collected in this book, which was dedicated to the author’s mother-in-law, were letters to various newspapers: *El Liberal*, Jueves [Thursday], 29 de mayo de 1893; *El Globo*, Miércoles [Wednesday], 3 de mayo de 1905, in which he presents impressions from his trip to Paris, Brussels, Holland, Germany, Austria, and Hungary. The author, Ángel Pulido, termed the city of Leyden (Leiden) as the “Salamanca of the Low Countries” [Salamanca de los Países Bajos], but also as “Athens of the north” [Atenas de Norte]. During this journey, Ángel Pulido met Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardim, who defined themselves as Spaniards (españoles). One of them said that he was “a Spaniard of the Orient” [“español de oriente”], while the other said “I am a Spaniard, but from Serbia” [“También soy español, pero de Servia”]. *Ibid.*, 235–36. Pulido summed up by saying “that in the Orient live hundreds of thousands of people who speak our language and who are called Spaniards (españoles).” The speakers told Ángel Pulido that they possess ancient books, from before the Expulsion. However, these were businessmen who were not enthusiastic about conducting business in Spain, since it was far away, even though they were offered to come to it during the time of the anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia. *Ibid.*, 238–39. See also below n. 79, on Count Rascón and his activity for the Jews, victims of the pogroms in Russia. See also the albums of Dr. Pulido, newspaper clipping from *El Liberal*, 29 de mayo 1893.

nately clear Castilian, wrote Pulido, even if this is not pure language but a language that reminds one of that spoken among the simple folk in our country [Spain]. Thus, for example, the pronunciation of the personal pronoun ‘we’ in the plural is *mosotros* and not *nosotros*. Elsewhere Pulido notes how he came to realize, during his many journeys, the extent to which the Spanish language is common and welcome throughout both Europe and Turkey. He expressed his confidence that it would be possible to promote and develop these data, by relying upon the speakers of that language in those countries.<sup>70</sup>

For purposes of comparison, it is worthwhile mentioning, that Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández quoted Max Nordau (1849–1923), a native of Hungary, who claimed that the origin of his forefathers, before the Expulsion from Spain, had been in the city of Segovia. Pulido had connections with Nordau, who as an Austro-Hungarian subject, was forced to leave Paris during World War I and moved to Madrid. But Nordau supported the Zionist movement, while Pulido thought that Zionism would divert the Jewish people from the track history intended for it – this is a blunt expression of Ángel Pulido’s Christian *weltanschauung*.<sup>71</sup> Pulido mentioned in *Españoles sin patria*<sup>72</sup> a meeting of Max Nordau with Jewish Spanish speakers in Belgrade. These were a husband and wife. In response to Nordau’s question, “Do you speak Spanish?” The woman replied in astonishment, “Spanish? No, sir, I speak judezmo” [¿Español? No señor, yo hablo chudeo”].<sup>73</sup> The woman’s husband immediately said that his wife was uneducated. He, on his part, could indeed identify the Spanish language. Nordau stressed that the lower levels in the social fabric of the Sephardim neither knew nor recognized Spain and its cultural heritage.

Especially salient in all the stories of the meeting presented here, are the Sephardim, descendants of the exiles from the Iberian Peninsula, as those who preserved spoken Jewish Spanish and wrote in Ladino for hundreds of years. This was Ángel Pulido Fernández’s main motive behind his interest in their fate. He returned home, and under the impression of the meeting with speakers of Jewish Spanish, published, in 1904, his book *Los israelitas españoles y el idioma castellano*, and after it, in 1905, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí*. In these books he raised and introduced the existence of the Sephardim to the awareness and knowledge of his peers and his country: the Spaniards in the Kingdom of Spain.

70 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Desarrollo, esplendor y soberanía de la Lengua Española*, 133–35.

71 See below, n. 130.

72 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *Españoles sin patria*, 46–47.

73 On Judezmo, see David M. Bunis, *Judezmo: An Introduction to the Language of the Ottoman Sephardim*, 17–52.

At the time of the publication of these works, Ángel Pulido already had a standing in Spanish public affairs and politics. He entered politics in 1888, when he joined the Liberal Party of Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1825–1903). Pulido met Sagasta during a visit to a health resort and from then on they forged excellent social relations, so that Pulido's way into politics was paved for him.

In his *Españoles sin patria*, which deals with the issue of the Sephardim, Ángel Pulido cites the correspondence, conducted at his initiative, between him and the leaders of the Sephardi communities in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Pulido presented to his correspondents a questionnaire covering twelve topics to which they were asked to reply and respond. His entire life he maintained connections with Jewish men and women: with Henri Ḥaim Bedjarano of Bucharest; with the journalist Rahma Toledano of Tangiers,<sup>74</sup> and with the jeweler Ḥaim Rozanes [Rosanes] in Paris.<sup>75</sup> In Spain he was in contact with Max Nordau and with Prof. Abraham S. Yahuda (1877–1951), a Jerusalem-born Orientalist, member of a family originating in Iraq, which, through the intercession of various factors, was appointed to the chair of Hebrew and Semitic languages at the University of Madrid, a position he held from 1915 to 1920.<sup>76</sup> In order to award the chair, at that time, to someone who was not a Spanish subject – Yahuda was a British subject – it had to be proven that Hebrew was a living language. This was demonstrated by presenting the translation that had been made (in 1912) by Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616).

Ángel Pulido's approach toward Sephardim was a romantic one; he was impressed by the Sephardi family. He stressed the cleanliness he saw in Sephardi home. He considered all the Sephardim, particularly the women, as beautiful, noble, and wealthy. Again we find an expression of European Orientalism; but we must not forget that Ángel Pulido came in contact mainly with the Sephardi elite, in North Africa and in the European Balkan countries. He did not know nor was he familiar with the masses among their Middle Eastern dispersal, which at this time were materially and spiritually poor. Pulido wrote that his aim in reaching out to Sephardim was first of all Spanish-nationalist. He thought that some two million Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardim would

74 On Ms. Rahma Toledano, see above nn. 11 and 26. On M. Bedjarano, see above n. 65.

75 On him, see Ángel Pulido, *El sefardismo en España*, Garzón's edition, 31 n. 15.

76 Jacobo Israel Garzón, "El primer catedrático judío de la España contemporánea: Abraham Yahuda", *Raíces. Revista Judía de Cultura*, 19 (verano 1993): 28–39. Prof. Yahuda was active in the organization of Jewish religious life in Madrid. The Jewish residents of Madrid met in a private apartment located in the Calle del Príncipe, 5; it was the property of Ignacio Bauer, the representative of the Rothschild Bank in Spain. See also A.S. Yahuda, "Mis recuerdos de España", *Raíces*, 19 (1993): 40–51.

promote the interests and standing of Spain in the world, interests and status that had been severely harmed by the Crisis of 1898. On 11 December 1905, Pulido wrote in the paper *El Liberal* about “two million Sephardim who continue to speak, albeit at times on a low level, our language; that despite the Expulsion order, they still love us and crave books, theater, friendship, and material and intellectual reciprocity with Spaniards.”<sup>77</sup> One is given to think, that as a Spanish patriot, Pulido thought about the advancement of his homeland, even more than he was concerned about the welfare of the Sephardim. He noted as an example the activity of the French Alliance Israélite Universelle (founded in 1860), of the Italian Dante Alighieri Society, and the English Anglo-Jewish Association (founded in 1871), and he wished to believe that through the Sephardim it would be possible to promote the state of Spain in the world. He also believed in the Jews’ wealth and economic capabilities. He directed his remarks to the minister of state, the Spanish Language Academy, chambers of commerce and associations of writers and artists in Spain. For him these were the elements that had to display renewed interest in the connections between Spain and the Sephardim.<sup>78</sup> Pulido’s appeal to the Spanish chambers of commerce, in particular, attests to a certain naiveté on his part; like many others of his generation, he believed that the Jews controlled world trade and from this position of power it would be possible to gain benefits for Spain.

Pulido had only partial success: of course, he did succeed in obtaining for his friend Henri Haim Bedjarano of Bucharest the status of a referee in the Spanish Language Academy, which was headed at that time by Antonio Maura (1853–1925). A similar status was awarded to Avraham Danon of Istanbul-Kushta. Ángel Pulido received copies of works from a number of important writers in order to send them to Sephardim in the Levant; however, the interest of the chambers of commerce and the Spanish Foreign Ministry was definitely limited. As far as the ministry was concerned, of note is that Pulido was not the first to take an interest in Sephardim. He had been preceded by Count Rascón, who had been the Spanish ambassador to Bucharest and Istanbul, in the 1890s. At that time the Jewish issue in public discourse in Spain took on a new aspect:

77 *El Liberal*, 11 de diciembre de 1905: “dos millones de *sefardim* que siguen hablando, aunque cada vez peor, nuestra lengua, que a despecho del edicto de expulsión todavía nos aman, y que apetece los libros, el teatro, la amistad y el comercio moral e intelectual de los españoles”. See the albums of Dr. Pulido.

78 Ángel Pulido Fernández, *La Reconciliación Hispano Hebrea* (Madrid: La Casa Universal de los Sefarditas. Federación de las Asociaciones Hispánohebreas de Marruecos en Madrid, 1920); Idem, *Desarrollo, esplendor y soberanía de la Lengua española*. Mensaje dirigido al Excmo. Sr. D. Antonio Maura, Presidente de la Real Academia de la Lengua y los Sres. Académicos de la misma (Madrid: Imprenta del sucesor de Enrique Teodoro, 1921).

not only the influence of the past on the fate of Spain, but also the attitude of Spain to the Jews in the present against the backdrop of the agonizing past.

Count Rascón tried to have the regime of Praxedes Mateo Sagasta, head of the Liberal Party in Spain, which acceded to power in 1881, provide a refuge for Jews persecuted in the Russian pogroms in the 1880s, which are called in Hebrew sources “Storms in the Negev [South].”<sup>79</sup> In his day, Count Rascón was witness to Jewish refugees appearing on Turkish soil. He was horrified at hearing their testimonies and turned to the minister in charge of him with a request to allow immigration of Jews to Spain. This occurred in 1881–82. The minister of state, el Marqués de Vega de Armijo, took an interest in this episode. Public debate began on the issue of approaching the Jews. Rascón’s critics argued against him that the issue involved Slavic Jews (judíos eslavos) – Ashkenazim, who had never lived in Spain so, of course, had never been exiled from it.<sup>80</sup> Rascón, who had also served in the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, argued that the exiles of 1492 had also reached the lands of the Holy Roman Empire and Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, some Jews of Odessa appealed to the Spanish consul with a request for help. The response – as in World War II – depended upon the consul’s personal views. At times, he was receptive to the appeals, and at others, was not. In total, fifty-one Jews reached Spain via Marseilles, with financing obtained by the government of Spain thanks to Rascón’s efforts, and they settled in Barcelona. In any event, Rascón’s actions struck no chord in Spanish public affairs and were quickly forgotten.<sup>81</sup> In 1891, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1828–1897) acceded to power, and his policy toward the Jews was more severe. The public campaign, led by Pulido, brought his ideas once again to the awareness of Spanish public opinion.

The book *Espanoles sin patria* was dedicated by its author to the city of Salamanca to its acclaimed university, “a la ciudad de Salamanca y a su gloriosa Universidad”; to its glorious residents; to its rector, Don Miguel de Unamuno – and the four deans of the faculties of Law, Philosophy and Literature,

79 Jewish refugees fled to the countries beyond the borders of Tsarist Russia: the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Romania. Sagasta’s government and King Alfonso XII supported opening the gates of the Kingdom of Spain to the exiles. The conservatives opposed this. See the article published on 22 June 1881, in *El siglo Futuro*, “Judíos y liberales”. See also Isidro González García, “La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la cuestión Judía en la Historia de España”, *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, 11, Época (abril 1991), no. 11: 73–87.

80 See *La Época*, 3, vi, 1881: “La venida de los judíos”. The selection is quoted in González García, *La cuestión judía*, 213 n. 4

81 See Mónica Manrique Escudero, “¿1868? Retorno a Sefarad”, *Liburna*, 1 (2008): 109–121.

Medicine, and Sciences in that university.<sup>82</sup> One of the professors at the university, Joaquín Girón y Arcas, from Galicia and a professor of canon law, made an all-out attack against Pulido. The controversy was conducted on the pages of the press.<sup>83</sup> Girón claimed that the return of the Jews would be a tragedy for Spain, since they were immoral, exploiters, and selfish. We were rid of this pest in 1492, wrote Girón, and we must not endanger ourselves again with a re-encounter with the Jews. Girón stressed that the number of Jews would grow and increase and become mighty, as had happened to Pharaoh in Egypt. Moreover, according to Girón, what would be with the property the exiled Jews had left behind in Spain? Could it be that it would be necessary to return it to them? Girón went on to write that if the Jews had maintained the Spanish language for 400 years, it was not out of their love for Spanish heritage but because they used it as a secret language. He termed the Spanish as spoken by the Jews as “Jewish Spanish jargon” [*jerga judeo-española*] and remarked that its vocabulary was sparse and poor.<sup>84</sup>

Ángel Pulido responded to these statements on 26 September 1905 on the pages of the newspaper *El Castellano* of Salamanca.<sup>85</sup> In his reply, Girón y Arcas expressed his fear that Pulido was a descendant of Jews, or conversos. He was not the only one to think that. Even the king's sister, the infanta doña Paz de Baviera, thought Senator Pulido was from Jewish stock. And not only was Pulido the target of such talk: also Prime Minister Antonio Maura, a native of Majorca, was said to be of Jewish blood. As we know, in Majorca lived and live descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity, from the decrees of 1391 onward, who are called by the derogatory name: *chuetas*. Ángel Pulido, in any event, was not impressed by this attribution of his lineage. He hastened to reply that he is not a descendant of Jews but rather an Apostolic Roman Catholic

82 See Pulido, *Españoles sin patria*, viii.

83 Dr. Joaquín Girón y Arcas, *La cuestión judaica en la España actual y en la Universidad de Salamanca* (Salamanca: Andrés Iglesias, 1906). On page 19, Girón y Arcas calls the Sephardim “pseudo españoles” and warns that the return of the Christ killers from Golgotha [deicidas del Calvario] would be a tragedy for Spain. On pages 84–107, he mentions at one go, “Jews, Masons, Protestants, and other enemies of the Church” [“los judíos, masones, protestantes y demás enemigos de la Iglesia”]; in this context, he refers also to the Dreyfus Affair. On page 125, Girón y Arcas mentions the medieval blood libels: Santo Dominguito del Val, El Santo Niño de La Guardia, while criticizing Pulido's position on the Expulsion of 1492 and its aftermath. See pages 59–60. As to how far this affected the Crisis of 1898, Girón y Arcas argued that Spain lost its empire at the time of the government of the liberals and progressives. *Ibid.* 121.

84 *Ibid.* 117–18.

85 Cf. below n. 88.

and follows the laws of his faith to the letter. "I am a scion of Old Christians whose blood – as far as I can know – is free of any impurity or blot, and I am scrupulously passing on to my children the religion of my forefathers."<sup>86</sup>

In a letter to the newspaper *La Tribuna*, on 12 February 1912, Ángel Pulido noted, "I have written about the blind, those condemned to death, and plagues, but can one learn from this that I live in almshouses, prisons, or hospitals?"<sup>87</sup> Pulido and even more, after him, his son, emphasized that the senator was in no way a Jew. Certainly, first of all, we have the facts presented, but we must not ignore the medieval lexicon that Pulido uses: "Old Christians", "impurities and blot". It turns out that we can learn, even in this instance, about the negative image of the Jews as we have already noted. Yet, with all this, one can say that Ángel Pulido was a liberal-Catholic: he stressed that not all Jews were guilty of killing Jesus. Those who killed Jesus, wrote Pulido, were not all the Jews but rather intolerant zealots.<sup>88</sup> Here we see the use of the term "intolerance" [intolerancia] from the liberal school of thought in the revolution of 1868–1869. Only at the Second Vatican Council<sup>89</sup> did the Pope adopt this stance. Girón's response was that rights should not be given to heretics [herejes]. One must keep in mind that Girón's remarks were written against the backdrop of the Dreyfus Affair<sup>90</sup> in France, when the Jewish question was painted with modern anti-Semitism. Toward the close of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth, added to historical anti-Semitism as produced by the Christian Church, was a new aspect: hatred of modern Jewry on a national and socio-economical background, as it was expressed through the Dreyfus Affair and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. As early as 1919 there appeared in the widely circulated

86 "Tengo 53 años; soy católico apostólico romano y practico mi culto. Desciendo de cristianos viejos cuya sangre, se halla libre de toda mezcla y mancha y transmito a mis hijos escrupulosamente la religión de mis antepasados". This was published in the paper *El Castellano* in Salamanca on 26 September 1905. See also Á. Pulido, *El Sefardismo en España*, 36.

87 *La Tribuna*, 12 February 1912.

88 Ángel Pulido wrote, "Not all the Jews but the zealots and the intolerant of the [land] of Judea; those who had such a moral façade were no different than the zealots among all nations, the generations, and the religions of humanity". See the letter by Pulido to the paper *El Castellano* of Salamanca, in reply to the statements of Prof. Joaquin Girón y Arcas.

89 Concilium Vaticanum Secundum, 1962–1965.

90 Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), a Jewish army officer accused and convicted at his trial of espionage in favor of Germany (1894). This trial stirred a tempest of anti-Semitism in France and all of Europe, on the one hand, and protests, such as that of Émile Zola in 1898 and of Theodor Herzl on the other. In 1906, Dreyfus was ultimately vindicated and restored to the ranks of the French Army.

Spanish paper *ABC* a series of articles on these protocols that originated in Tsarist Russia.

Returning to Ángel Pulido: he courageously waged the public campaign in favor of the Sephardim. He spoke in the Senate<sup>91</sup> and was even received by King Alfonso XIII.<sup>92</sup> But results in the field were meager. There was the case of a Spanish Catholic, a writer, playwright, and poet, Rafael Cansinos-Asséns,<sup>93</sup> who – under the influence of the public campaign led by Ángel Pulido – decided to return to Judaism, which his forefathers had long ago abandoned. But this was a single, isolated instance.<sup>94</sup> Yet, with all of that, Pulido created in the Spanish public forum an awareness of the existence and standing of Jewish Spanish-speaking Sephardim. In 1941, the Instituto Arias Montano, was founded in Madrid. This institute deals with Sephardim wherever they may be, with their culture and their language.

In 1945, Pulido's son, Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín, wrote, in a biography of his father that he published, about "the miracle of the book" [el milagro del libro]: how the expulsion of Jews from Portugal during World War I was prevented

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- 91 Ángel Pulido spoke in the Spanish Senate for the first time about the Sephardim on 13 November 1903. See *Diario de las sesiones de Cortes*. Senado. Sesión del Viernes, 13 de noviembre de 1903, Número 73, 1265–69. Senator Pulido asked for permission to speak and devoted his comments to the distribution of the Spanish language among Spanish-speaking Jews. He realized this during a trip he made to the Balkans in the direction of Constantinople. Thus, for example, one of the physicians of the Ottoman sultan, Dr. Elias Pachá, knew how to speak Spanish. For all that, this doctor's children did not speak Spanish but English and French. *Ibid.*, 1266. The conclusion of Senator Pulido was that without encouragement and support, the Spanish language would be lost by its speakers in his time, unless measures would be taken to promote it. See also, A. Pulido, *El Sefardismo en España*, 40. See as well H. Avni, *Contemporary Spain and the Jewish People* (Jerusalem: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuḥad, 1975).
- 92 This interview took place on 25 March 1920. During the interview, Ángel Pulido stressed the preservation of Spanish in the speech of Sephardim. Pulido noted that "I am not a Jew. I am a Christian from old stock, a Catholic, an Apostolic Roman" ["Yo no soy judío; soy cristiano, de estirpe vieja, católico, apostólico romano"]. The king replied that he knew this and thanked Pulido for coming to inform him of the topic discussed in their conversation. See Ángel Pulido Fernández, *La reconciliación hispano-hebrea, Las asociaciones de Marruecos en Madrid* (Madrid: Imp. Sáez Hnos, 1920), 29–33. Pulido wrote that the king said to him, during that interview, "Pulido, you must be tenacious in this campaign, which is important". See Pulido, *Desarrollo, esplendor y soberanía de la Lengua Española*, 110.
- 93 His picture appears in Pulido's book, *Españoles sin patria*, 620. On the members of the Cansino family who were exiled to Fez, Morocco, see above chap. 1, n. 39.
- 94 Jacobo Israel Garzón, "Y sintió que era suya ese destino". Rafael Cansino-Assens y el Judaísmo", *Raíces*, Año 15, No. 48 (otoño 2001): 45–57.

thanks to Pulido's book, which proved to the Portuguese authorities that the Jews had been living in Portugal since ancient times.<sup>95</sup> In particular, the son emphasized that as a result of his father's activity, thousands of Jews were saved, having received Spanish passports by virtue of a law enacted by Miguel Primo de Rivera (1870–1930), who led the military dictatorship in Spain in 1923–1930. The 1924 law determined a period of six years, until 1930, in which Jews, who were recognized as protected by the Kingdom of Spain, through the capitulations arrangements of the Ottoman Empire, were eligible to ask for Spanish citizenship for themselves. As a number of Spanish historians<sup>96</sup> have proved, however, it is doubtful that this law was the result of Ángel Pulido's public campaign. It was, rather, more of Spain's following in the footsteps of French policy, namely, that when the capitulations in the Ottoman Empire elapsed, it was suggested to whomever could prove holding the status of protected people, to accept French citizenship. Only a few among the Sephardim in the Balkan countries took advantage of this window of opportunity. Those who did were, indeed, saved during the Holocaust thanks to the Spanish passports they possessed. Ultimately, on 30 June 1982, the Kingdom of Spain passed a law by which Jews who had Spanish forefathers were eligible to obtain Spanish nationality, if they would live two consecutive years in Spain.

To return to Senator Pulido, we must remember that he never at all considered the possibility of the return of the Jews to Spain.<sup>97</sup> Quite the contrary, he wanted them to remain in their dispersal, so as to enhance and glorify the name of Spain among them. Even if he thought about the return of a limited number of Jews, he meant only the wealthy and skilled. He wrote about rich people and those with initiative [*gente rica y emprendedora*].<sup>98</sup> Certainly, he

95 See A. Meyuhas Ginio, "The Defender of Israel", *El Prezente*, 1 (2007): 205. The statements by Dr. Ángel Pulido Martín were also published in the *Actas del Simposio de Estudios Sefardíes*, Ángel Pulido Martín, "Recuerdos del Doctor Pulido", 73–79.

96 See I. González, *Los judíos y la Segunda República (1931–1939)* (Madrid: Alianza, 2004), 66–69; U. Macías, "La España del siglo XIX y los judíos: algunos aspectos", in *Los Judíos en la España contemporánea. Historia y visiones, 1898–1998*, 137–51.

97 See the Pulido albums, clippings from the paper *El País Vasco* of San Sebastian, 29 August 1924: "the Sephardim", wrote Pulido, "do not know contemporary Spain other than through my works. It is only natural that I present them the Spain of Castelar; modern Spain; the new; that which basks in the light of enlightenment, progress, tolerance .... We are not speaking at all, nor did I ever think that the Spanish Jews (*sefardíes*) would come to Spain, creating waves of mass immigration. That is absurd. We do not want it, and they are not asking for it". The Sephardim have functioning, flourishing communities "and what would they gain from coming here?" [*¿Qué ganarian con venir aquí?*].

98 See I. García González, *La cuestión judía*, 208.

did not think of the small peddlers and the artisans eking out a livelihood in the markets of the Levant.

The policy of tolerance adopted by the Spanish government, at the turn of the nineteenth century to the twentieth, improved immeasurably the standing of Spain in Europe. This was noticeable, for example, during the visit of King Alfonso XIII to London, in the 1920s. The Jewish press there stressed the role of Senator Pulido in improving relations between Spain and the Sephardim. Ángel Pulido himself did not boast of his power and had a realistic view of his standing: I am the most humble man in my homeland, a lone person who has no power other than his ideas.<sup>99</sup>

### How Did the Sephardim React to Pulido's Ideas?

So far we have dealt with a survey of Ángel Pulido Fernández, his ideas and activities regarding the Sephardim. What was the reaction of the Sephardim to his statements, his articles, and his books? We learn of this response first from Pulido's book *Españoles sin patria*, in which he brings precise, detailed reports – for he was, after all, a scientist in his academic training – about the situation of the Sephardim, according to what their community leaders wrote to him, with whom he had discussions and to whom he turned with a request for information on their community members. For example, regarding The Land of Israel, he wrote to Mr. Albert Antébi,<sup>100</sup> one of the leaders of the *Yishuv*, a representative of the Jewish Colonization Association, the Palestine [Land of Israel] office of the Zionist movement, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle, who submitted important demographic data about Sephardim in the Land of Israel. In general, the attitude of those reporting to Pulido toward Ashkenazim was one of contempt: they are virulent zealots in contrast to the Sephardim

99 “Yo soy una persona modestísima en mi patria, un solitario que no tiene más poder que el de sus ideas”. See also Ángel Pulido, *El sefardismo español*, edición de Jacobo Israel Garzón, 75.

100 On him, see above chap. 3, n. 2. On pages 460-61 of Pulido's book *Españoles sin patria*, the author notes that “Mr. Antébi is the great-grandson of the Chief Rabbi Ya'akov Antébi of Damascus, martyred as a result of the abominable accusation of ritual murder instigated by Father Tomás in 1840, and because of which [the rabbi], despite his advanced age, was jailed for six months and underwent torture so as to squeeze from him a confession to a crime he did not commit. The intervention of Montefiore and Cremieux in Constantinople and Cairo saved the rabbi from prison and shame”. As mentioned, the harsh impression that the Damascus Blood Libel made among the French Jews was the main motive for establishing Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris in 1860. Cf. above chap. 3, nn. 54-90.

who are enlightened and broadminded. This approach was decidedly acceptable to Pulido, who was especially interested in Sephardim.

In *Españoles sin patria*, Pulido quoted the Salonika Ladino press, with firm statements denigrating renewal of connections with the Kingdom of Spain and the Spanish language, their tongue: “We are not a Spanish people spread the world over; we are Jews and as such, we must not allow ourselves to turn into the possession of any nation ... most of us are Ottoman subjects, and in that guise we do not have to think sympathetically about developing the commercial, literary, or linguistic interests of another nation no matter which ...”. The response in the Ladino press in Salonika was aimed directly at the appeal by Senator Pulido. The writer, a resident of Salonika, declares that

We are first of all Jews, and that demands from us in-depth acquaintance with our language, Hebrew, our history, and our literature. We are Ottoman subjects and must work for the general interests of the country that gives us shelter and grants us so many kindnesses ... we must learn for ourselves and our children the French, Italian, German languages ... and after all these, there will be no time left over for Spanish. To the extent that things related to the purifying of Jewish Spanish [Djudeo-español] to the point of turning it into Castilian, that is, modern Spanish (castellano), this is no easier than learning a new language. Spanish [el español] and Jewish Spanish are now very different from each other ....<sup>101</sup>

Harsh words indeed. No less important is the emphasis that the Sephardim put on their being Ottoman subjects. The gratitude of the Jews toward the Ottoman Empire and its rulers for granting the exiles a safe harbor for hundreds of years passes like a scarlet thread through their words. In contrast, they are called upon to remember the tortured Jewish past on the Spanish soil.

No one can deny that the Sephardim in their oriental dispersal, in the Mediterranean Basin, spoke Jewish Spanish and wrote in Ladino – until Ángel Pulido’s generation – for four hundred years. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that the Jewish Spanish language was maintained among the exiles from Spain, who lived in the Ottoman Empire, since most of them lived in their own social bubbles. Their contacts with the Ottoman Empire government were focused

101 See A. Pulido, *Españoles sin patria*, 113. The quotation was taken from the Salonikan newspaper *El Avenir*, 22 June 1904. See also Paloma Díaz-Mas, “Repercusión de la campaña de Ángel Pulido en la opinión pública de su época: la respuesta sefardí”, in *España y la cultura hispánica en el sureste europeo*, ed. Juan González-Barba and Gregorz Pilared (Athens: Ahona, 2000), 326–37.

on paying taxes on time and were made through the community leaders. The average Sephardi did not know Turkish at all and persisted in speaking Jewish Spanish as his daily spoken language, alongside Ladino as a written language and Hebrew as the holy tongue. In other words, one cannot see yearnings and love of Spain as the exclusive factor for maintaining Jewish Spanish among the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, for even more, the clinging to Jewish Spanish was the result of circumstances of the lives of the Jews there. This was how things stood until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Starting in the second half of that century, however, the living conditions of many of the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Middle East in general, and of the Jews in particular changed, under the influence of a number of factors operating simultaneously that lead to the change noted: the reforms [*tanzimat*] – a series of reforms that improved the standing of the *dhimmi*, non-Muslim protected people, and enabled the geographic and social mobility of the Jews;<sup>102</sup> the activity of the AIU – the Alliance Israélite Universelle – founded in Paris in 1860, which established a widespread network of schools among Jewish communities from Persia to Morocco, with the aim of bringing them out of the social, economic, and cultural backwardness, into which they had sunk over the generations that had passed since the Expulsion from Spain, and to advance them into the modern world through learning French in addition to gaining a profession from which they could earn a livelihood.<sup>103</sup> As mentioned, Ángel Pulido was aware and attentive to the AIU's activity, and even presented it as a model for imitation by the Spain authorities. He maintained correspondence with the AIU administration<sup>104</sup> in Paris, and even met its members when visiting the city. Pulido understood well that the French language had acquired for itself – during more than a generation of vigorous activity – a clear advantage the likes of which would be difficult for the Spanish language to achieve.

Another factor regarding the status of Jewish Spanish that calls for attention is the appearance of new nation states throughout the Balkans over the nineteenth century. The latter demanded of all their citizens, cultural and social integration into the ruling nationality. From now on, the Sephardim had to

102 See above chap. 1.

103 See above chap 3, nn. 54-90.

104 Preserved in the file Espagne in the AIU Archives in Paris is Dr. Pulido's exchange of correspondence with M.M. J. Bigart and N. Leven. On them, see above chap. 3, n. 41. The documents are numbered 7731, 7783, 7823, 7857, 8128, 9649, and 9682, and refer to the years 1904-1905 and 1920. Some were written in French, others in Spanish. A few of them were written on official stationery of the Spanish Senate, while others were sent from Hotel Rongeray in Paris, 1920.

learn the languages of the countries in which they resided. To sum up, at the close of the nineteenth century Jewish Spanish was demoted to second place in the world of the Jews originating in Spain.<sup>105</sup>

What was the attitude of the Sephardim to the idea of reconciliation with Spain? It was an ambivalent one: on one hand, they had maintained in their being the historical fear of a scuffle with the Spanish Inquisition. There were some who asked: "And what if a new Torquemada should arise?" Or, they spoke of the need "to block the killer snake of intolerance and zealotry."<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, the memory of the Golden Age of Spain was maintained, along with pride in the achievements of the Jews there in the past.

When we examine the attitude of the Sephardim to Ángel Pulido Fernández's ideas, we must differentiate between Sephardim who lived in the eastern Mediterranean Basin and their brethren who lived in North Africa, in the western Mediterranean. As for the latter, there was no doubt: the Jews of North Africa, who lived in the Spanish protectorate of Morocco, which lasted from 1912 to 1956, readily adopted the Spanish language and culture, and focused on their heritage as people who had come from Spain. Ángel Pulido could see in this a reward for his endeavor but the factors that led to this process were political and not necessarily cultural.

As for the attitude of the Sephardim – the overwhelming majority of whom, for generations, had lived on Ottoman Empire soil, in the eastern Mediterranean Basin – to Ángel Pulido's initiative, one must pay attention to the economic situation in the Kingdom of Spain on the cusp of the twentieth century. The economy of Spain was not developed nor advanced in comparison to western European states such as France, Germany, the Lowlands, or England. In the Kingdom of Spain urbanization was only in the early stages of development; no sophisticated industry had been built up and international commerce was of limited scope. The Sephardim resident in the Ottoman Empire,

105 Moshe Azriel wrote to Ángel Pulido that: "El Judeo Espanol no se enseña en ninguna escuela, que solamente ella es la lingua familiar que se habla en casa y en la plaza como lingua viva i hermosa" ["Jewish Spanish is not taught in schools and it is the homely language of the family home and the public square where it is spoken as a vivid and beautiful language"]. See *Espanoles sin patria*, 467.

106 "Impedir la culebra malhechora de la intolerancia y del fanatismo". On page 467 of *Espanoles sin patria*, Ángel Pulido quotes the question of Moshe Azriel, a Jerusalem publisher, "¿Quien sabe si no sé levantara un segundo Tomás Torquemada y ara nuevos suplicios y crueldades?" [who knows if there does not arise a second Tomas Torquemada and performs new punishments and cruelties?]. The dominican friar Tomás de Torquemada (1420–1498) was appointed chief inquisitor of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1483.

who at the time Ángel Pulido published his books, were already in the midst of a modernization process and strove to improve and better their cultural and socioeconomic standing, often by emigrating abroad to western Europe or to the American continent, asked themselves, what they would do in the Kingdom of Spain. Conversely, Ottoman Turkey had granted them a refuge at the time, and they were grateful to the sultans and the Ottomans for their kindness and their defense.<sup>107</sup> Only a few Sephardim, mainly those from Izmir, immigrated to Barcelona, beginning from the mid-nineteenth century, and settled there. In short, Spain was perceived by the Sephardim as a default option, which was good only in case of life or death.

Henri Haim Bedjarano of Bucharest wrote to Ángel Pulido, "How sad and bitter it is to love someone who detests you undeservedly".<sup>108</sup> To be sure, one should not cast doubt on Bedjarano's admiration for Spain and its cultural heritage; yet, one must note that until his meeting with Ángel Pulido, he had done so unrealistically, with no connection to the actuality of his time. Of course, he did have connections with cultural institutions in Spain,<sup>109</sup> but he was not familiar with the country and never visited it. Precisely in the case of Henri Haim Bedjarano, we are witness to Ángel Pulido's influence on him and on his attitudes toward Spain: in 1912, Bedjarano declared that "the Sephardim of Turkey, never wanted to be Turks while Spaniards [españoles] they always [wanted to be]!"<sup>110</sup> In my opinion, salient was the use of the term *españoles* and not *sefardíes*. It is reasonable to assume that the speaker was thinking of the Pulido's book *Españoles sin patria*. At the same time, we must not forget that Henri Haim Bedjarano lived in Bucharest, the capital of the independent Kingdom of Romania (Rumania) at least from the acceptance of the decisions of the Congress of Berlin (1878), so he was not obligated to any type of loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. Quite the contrary, his loyalty had to be given to the new nation state upon whose soil he lived and worked: the Kingdom of Romania.

Ángel Pulido Fernández himself divided the Sephardim into four groups, according to their responses to his initiative at placation: The first was those who hated Spain, the Hispanophobes, who did not want any contact with it. The second group comprised the autonomists, who wanted autonomy for the Jewish Spanish language, with no connection to the mother tongue of Modern Spanish. Group three, as enumerated by Pulido, consisted of the opportunists,

107 See also above chap. 1, nn. 53 and 58.

108 "Pero qué triste y amargo es de amar a quien te ahorresce sin arte y sin parte".

109 See Bedjarano's letter of 30 April 1883, published as H. Bedjarano, "Los judíos españoles de Oriente." *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, 149 (1883), 114–16.

110 "Los españoles de Turquía jamás quisieron ser turcos i Españoles siempre!"

who thought that Modern Spanish should be learned the same way one learns any foreign language, English, German, or French, for the benefit of modern life. There were also Hispanophils – lovers of Spain, who sought to turn the Spanish language into their prime language.<sup>111</sup> We see that the sorting and cataloguing of the social group of Sephardim, made by Ángel Pulido, was made only on the basis of their attitude to the Spanish language. This language is what formed the focus of Pulido's interest in Sephardim, for the reasons we have already discussed. To be sure, Senator Pulido was the defender of the Jews and even sought to repair the historical injustice done to them, but his reasons and explanations were foremost for the benefit of his homeland, Spain: building a Spanish cultural hegemony, among two million Jewish Spanish speakers, relying upon the Jewish Spanish language and improving the image of the Kingdom of Spain among the European family of nations.

One must keep in mind, however, that more than a few foes and opponents challenged Pulido. At the time of the debate waged in the Spanish Senate on 13 November 1903, when Ángel Pulido spoke in favor of renewing connections with the Sephardim and dealt with the issue of the Sephardim and their language, he urged the authorities to open Spanish schools throughout the Sephardi dispersal. In the response, made by the Conde de Casa Valencia, who argued against Pulido, the former claimed that indeed the Sephardim speak Spanish and they even have press that uses this language in Hebrew letters (en caracteres hebreas) but that this was the Spanish from the period of the Expulsion. A previous discussion on this matter had been held on 24 August 1903.

One may learn of the response of the Jews living on Ottoman soil by reading issue no. 48 of the paper *El Tiempo* [The Time], which appeared in Istanbul (Kushta), edited by David Fresco, on Thursdays [Jueves], 25 Adar I, 2 March [marzo] 1905, the thirty-third year of the paper that appeared from 1872–1936.<sup>112</sup> In that issue appears an article on Spain [“Espanya”], in the Jewish World section [“del mundo israelita”].<sup>113</sup> The article concerns the study of Jewish Spanish [Judeo-espanyol]. The writer considers reading about and studying the history of a nation as the best verified means for educating that nation and developing

111 A. Pulido, *Españoles sin patria*, 143–58.

112 David Moshe Gaon, *Ladino Press: Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 1965), 5, no. 110 [Hebrew]. According to Gaon, editors of the paper who preceded Fresco were Yitzhak H. Carmona, Mercado Fresco, and Sami Alkabez. Fresco's name began to appear in the twenty-first year, from issue no. 84. The paper's name appeared in Latin letters, *El Tiempo*, and from its fifty-seventh year, as *El Tyempo*, spelling that was more fitting for the then accepted orthography for Turkish.

113 The article is signed with the letter X and dated 21 di Febrero (February), in Esmyrna, that is Izmir.

its genius. In this context the writer remarks that works dealing with the history of the Jews are unavailable to the Jewish Spanish-speaking public, and because of that this public is in a constant state of ignorance [*“keda siempre en la ignoransa”*].<sup>114</sup> There was a time, so writes the author of the article, when the press showed interest in the study of the language among the Sephardim and differences of opinion among the debaters came to the fore. The writer addresses this issue, since the Jewish Spanish language “suffers from the defect that it always preserves in its memory, as living, the memory of the chapters of our lives in Spain. This memory is the tool they have been using, for some time now, in order to revive in the hearts of the Oriental Jews the ancient feelings of fondness of our community for this country.”<sup>115</sup> Yet, the author of the *El Tiempo* column is dissatisfied with this approach, and he goes on to demand from his readers: “I ask you not to forget, dear readers, that today Spain is the most deteriorated, the most backward, the most Catholic state in civilized Europe. A number of learned people from there, from among the Spaniards, who despair from the situation in their land, who are seeking to correct this situation ...”<sup>116</sup> In other words, the writer of the article in *El Tiempo* under discussion begins with the premise that Spain is the most backward country in Europe. Because of that, Spanish intellectuals want to improve the homeland’s standing among the nations, to create links between Spain and the South American countries – former colonies – on the one hand; and with the Turkish Jews [*“los djudios de Turkiya”*], descendants of those exiled from Spain by royal decree in 1492, on the other. The appeal to South American countries was made on the basis of the existing connection between the latter and the Spanish metropolis. This

114 The newspaper *El Tiempo* was published in Ladino in the Hebrew letters known as the Rashi script. On the phonology and orthography of Ladino, see Bunis, *Judezmo*, 51–75. Of note is that Ángel Pulido Fernández cited, in his book *Españoles sin patria*, 93, statements that Shmuel S. Levy, editor of the paper *La Época* of Salonika, wrote to him on 3 July 1904: the Sephardim use a special script that is called Rashi [Rachi] script. This script has twenty-four letters that can express all the consonants, but the vowels [vocales] – are not applicable for the expression of all the letters in the Spanish language, and therefore, the accent of the Sephardim is imperfect.

115 “[El Judeo-Espanyol] tiene el inkonveniente de konservar siempre vivo en nuestra memoria, el rekuerdo de nuestra estansia en Espanya. Este rekuerdo es el instrumento del kual se sirven desde un sierto tiempo, para azer revivir en los korasones israelitas de Oriente, las antiguas simpatías de nuestra raza por este pays”, *El Tiempo*, 48. Cf. n. 126 below.

116 “Vos rogo de no olvidar, keridos lektores, ke la Espanya es oy el estado el mas deskuidado, el mas atrazado, el mas katoliko, de la sivilizada Europa. Algunos espiritos akларados de ayi, despanyoles ke se duelen dela situasion de su payis, ke bushkan los remedios a este efecto”. See the continuation of this article in n. 117 below.

link is the Spanish language, which is “also the basis for our Jewish Spanish language.”<sup>117</sup> The author continues, “Whether it is because of the language, or whether it is because they recognize the virtues of the Jew, that he is active, intelligent, and clever in issues of finance, those who lead the movement that wishes to produce the rejuvenation of Spain, direct their glances toward us,”<sup>118</sup> and propose to the Jews of the world, and especially to those in the Orient, the opportunity to immigrate, or at least, in any event, to cooperate in the success of the Iberian Peninsula [“la prosperidad dela peninsula iberica”] and in parentheses: Spain [“Espanya”]. The explanation in parentheses is particularly interesting, it seems that the writer was not certain that his readers would understand the expression “Iberian Peninsula.”<sup>119</sup>

Even though the writer reminded his readers of the cruel attitude of Spain to the Jews in the past, he noted that now it recognizes the historical error it had made and sees in it the reason for the decline of its glory in the world. It is seeking to correct that which it had distorted and promises to change its ways in the future: “and if Spain was the most cruel, this is no reason to abhor the country, especially now that it admits the mistake it made, the injustice of past times, considers our expulsion a reason for its declines and is striving to repair the evil it did to us on its soil by promising to be more humane in the future.”<sup>120</sup> Yet, the writer of these columns in *El Tiempo* is not convinced. He reminds his readers that Catholic Spain did not write in its book of laws, laws for equality and tolerance,<sup>121</sup> laws that exist even in the smallest countries of Europe. Moreover, the writer stresses to his audience that the world is large “and well before they once again put [themselves] between the nails of Spanish zealotry, the Jews would do better to work for their advancement in the countries that permit them to live under the protection of just laws and compassionate and merciful rulers.”<sup>122</sup>

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117 “Es tambien el fondo de nuestro idioma judeo-espanyol”, *ibid.*

118 “Sea a kausa de la lingua, sea porke rekonosen las kualidades del djudio ke es aktivo, inteligente i ekonomo, los ke se topan ala kavesa del nuevo movimiento en favor del relevamiento de la Espanya, dirijen sus miradas sovre mozotros”, *El Tiempo*, 48.

119 *Ibid.*

120 “I si en Espanya el fue mas kruel, esto no es una razon para aborreser este payis, a demas ke el rekonose oy su yerro, su injustisia delos tiempos pasados en prometiendo de ser mas umano enel avenir”.

121 “Leyes de igualdad i toleransia”.

122 “Antes de entrar de nuevo en los unyas del fanatismo espanyol, los djudios arian mejor de lavorar a sus progreso en los payises ke los permiten de vivir basho la proteksion de leyes djustas i de soberanos elementos”. Cf. the motto of this chapter.

As I see it, the vocabulary employed by the author of the item in *El Tiempo* attests to his familiarity with the political discourse in the Kingdom of Spain and the attitudes of the Spaniards to reconciliation with the Sephardim. The writer's response, bearing in mind that he did not wish to represent anyone other than himself, presents the moods that demonstrated undisguised suspicion of Spain and its motives, in light of the difficult, tortured past. This past could be known to only a definitely limited number of erudite people – and it should be emphasized that only they were concerned – among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire. The traditionalists among them could look at the work *Shevet Yehudah* by Shlomo Ibn Verga, or the work by Rabbi Yosef Hakohen, *Emek Ha-Bakha* (Vale of Tears), or that of Samuel Usque, *Consolação ás Tribulações de Israel* (Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel). The modern *maskilim* could study *History of the Jews* by Heinrich Tzvi Graetz (1817–1891), a work translated into many languages. And over all, readers of the Ladino press were exposed to novels, original or translated into Ladino, that appeared either as series in the newspapers or were produced by various publishers throughout the Empire.<sup>123</sup> Readers of the Ladino press from towards the end of the nineteenth century on could also read and receive information from newspapers regarding the Kingdom of Spain in general and on the situation of the few Jews who lived there in particular. Thus, we find in the issue of *El Tiempo* of 7 October 1904, in the Jewish World section [*del mundo israelita*], that “There are an estimated 2,500 Jews living in Spain. In Madrid, Huelva, and Barcelona there are no more than a number of families who meet to pray on the high holidays.” In an issue of the same paper on 6 January 1905, written in that section was “Spain. From all the cities of Spain, Seville is the one with the largest number of Jews: 300 families. In Madrid are a tiny number of families that gather together only for a few hours, during Yom Ha-Kippurim, to perform a religious rite. In Barcelona live French, German, and American Jews. There are also Jews in Huelva and in Cádiz. In Portugal, the Lisbon community numbers some 400 individuals.” That same section has news about Germany, Italy, Russia, America, Austria-Hungary, Palestine, France, and Egypt.<sup>124</sup> The information about Spain is, relatively, definitely limited. Most of the news in the issue under discussion deals with the Russo-Japanese War and the Dreyfus trial.

Jewish Spanish was written about in another issue of the same paper:<sup>125</sup> “Jewish Spanish has taken no step, neither backwards nor forwards. This is an archaic language that cannot play a distinguished role or lacks importance for

123 See above chapter 4.

124 *El Tiempo*, Friday (viernes), 29 Tevet 5665, 6 January 1905.

125 *Ibid.*, Thursday (jueves), 25 Adar I, 2 March 1905, no. 48.

our present, and even less for our future.”<sup>126</sup> This is a clear proof that the writer disparages Jewish Spanish and is not impressed by Ángel Pulido’s attitude toward this language and the connection between its speakers and his Spanish brothers, residents of the Kingdom of Spain.

The conclusion is that among Ladino readers toward the close of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth, there was identification between Spain and the Inquisition. This is the background to the reaction of the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire to the ideas of reconciliation put out by Ángel Pulido. One sees that the writer, a resident of Izmir, whose statements we reviewed, was not convinced that a change had taken place in Spain, and as proof, the lack of fitting laws in the Spanish statute book – or the Constitution. Owing to that, the writer advises his readers to put their trust in the countries that allow them “to live under the protection of just laws.” Undoubtedly he is referring foremost to France, which was the first to inscribe on its flag equality (*igualdad*) for all. Certainly noticeable here is the influence of the AIU, which founded a widespread network of schools throughout the Sephardi dispersal, from Persia to Morocco, in which they taught in French and studied it, too.<sup>127</sup> It is not, however, only the influence of the AIU with which we are dealing. When Ángel Pulido’s book *Españoles sin patria* appeared in print in Spain (1905), the influence of the Zionist movement was already noticeable in the field. Pulido was aware of Zionism stepping onto the stage of history. Henri Haim Bedjerano of Bucharest wrote, in 1883, about Sephardi Jews in Romania, who had established colonies in Palestine. As mentioned, the *moshavah* Zikhron Ya’akov had been settled in 1882 by Jewish immigrants from Romania. Bedjerano wrote in favor of “the idea to return the Jews to Palestine, the land of our forefathers” [“la idea de restituir a los judíos La Palestina tierra de nuestros padres”].<sup>128</sup> Pulido was aware of the influence of the Zionist movement: his son, Ángel Pulido Martín, became acquainted, when he studied medicine in Vienna, with the Society of Jewish Students Esperanza (Hope: Esperanza – sociedad académica, compuesta de jóvenes judíos-españoles), which was founded in 1897, with one of its goals being to maintain and foster the Spanish language among

126 Ibid.: “El djudeo-espanyol no izo ningun paso atras ni delante. Es un lenguaje arkáiko ke no puede djugar ningun rolo favoravle o desfavoravle por nuestro presente i aínda menos para nuestro avenir”. In the ensuing, the writer goes on to point out the inconvenience of having the language preserve, as living, the memory of the life of the Jews on Spanish soil. Cf. n. 115 above.

127 See above chap. 3. See also Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Juifs des Balkans, Espaces judéo-ibériques, XIV<sup>e</sup> - XX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993), 125–63.

128 See Isidro González García, *La cuestión*, 354.

its members.<sup>129</sup> But within a few years, the society changed its mind and chose Zionism as the channel for its activity.<sup>130</sup> Ángel Pulido wrote with undisguised sadness of this change and pointed out that Zionism is causing the Jewish people to deviate from the path fate had chosen for it. This is a clearly Christian approach: the Jewish people was intended for a role in human history and it should not change it. And Pulido wrote the following in the epilogue to his book *Españoles sin patria*: “Israel should have no doubt, the era of its rehabilitation has already begun. We do not know if its Zionist expectations will be fulfilled. Moreover, we do not know whether concentrating its life in a small state will be good for mankind and for the people of Moses.”<sup>131</sup>

### Conclusion

Senator Ángel Pulido Fernández’s activity had meager results in the daily life of the Jewish people. We can state that he missed the boat: forty years after the

129 See *Españoles sin patria*, 157–58. The by-laws of the Esperanza [Hope] Society, of 24 July 1904, were written in two parallel columns: in Jewish Spanish and in German. See also a letter by Dr. Pulido to the society, which was published in the paper *El Liberal* on Thursday, 21 April 1904 and is found in the Dr. Pulido albums. The Esperanza Society in Vienna replied in a letter, signed by its president, Moritz Levy, who turned to Dr. Ángel Pulido on 5 April 1904 in reply to Dr. Pulido’s letter to the paper *El Liberal* on 17 February 1904. The official address of the society was “Esperanza”, Sociedad Académica de los Israelitas Españoles en Viena. ix, Türkenstrasse, 8. Of note is the use of the two terms ‘Israelitas’ alongside ‘Españoles’. See also Paloma Díaz-Mas, “Repercusión de la campaña de Ángel Pulido en la opinión pública de su época: la respuesta sefardí”, in *España y la cultura hispánica en el sureste europeo*, 326–37, and see the bibliography there.

130 In the letter of Moritz Levy, a philosophy student and president of the Esperanza Society in Vienna, which is quoted in Ángel Pulido Fernández’s *Españoles sin patria*, 123, explicitly mentioned are Theodor Herzl and his book, *Judenstaat*. The writer reviews the historical development of the Jews since the Expulsion from Spain and pays attention to their spoken language, as he calls it jargon, “which they consider, astonishingly, the language of their nation, in a way that when one of them would be asked, what language he speaks, he would reply: in Jewish (“en Judío”). See *Españoles sin patria*, 156: “La Esperanza se ha convertido en una sociedad sionista más y ha renunciado á su primitivo ideal por la lengua madre”. On the Jewish problem and the beginning of the Zionist movement, see Isidro González García, *La cuestión judía y los orígenes del sionismo (1881–1905)* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1984. Colección Tesis doctorales 452/88).

131 “No lo dude Israel. La era de su rehabilitación ha comenzado ya. No sabemos si se cumplirán sus esperanzas sionistas. Es más, no sabemos si esta concentración de su vida en un estado pequeño será un bien para la humanidad y para el pueblo mosaico”, *Españoles sin patria*, Epílogo, 656.

establishment of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and thirty years after the Berlin Treaty, there was hardly a place for Jewish Spanish as a bridge between Spain and the Sephardim. The Sephardim in the Orient, who strove to fashion their social and personal status in the spirit of the *moderna – laborar a sus progresos* was written in the paper *El Tiempo* – consciously relinquished the Spanish option as the path for their advancement in the twentieth century.

Today, when over one hundred years have passed since Ángel Pulido Fernández came out with his initiative to promote links between his homeland, Spain, and the Sephardim, descendants of the exiles of Spain in 1492, we know that the Zionist hopes have been realized. In 1986, diplomatic relations were established between the Kingdom of Spain and the State of Israel. In Tel Aviv, the Cervantes Institute functions magnificently. This is not the reconciliation Ángel Pulido Fernández has sought in his time, but this is certainly reconciliation.

# The Lost Identity of the Sephardim in The Land of Israel and the State of Israel

Language is the man.

Turkish proverb quoted by MOŞE [MOSHE] GROSMAN in his article entitled: “*Komo se yama loke avlamos,*” *El Amaneser*, 4, 27 July 2008



## The Weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah* and its Readers

In previous chapters of this work, we dealt with the history of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem and paid attention to the dramatic change that its sons and daughters underwent with the modernization processes that operated in their city of birth as they did in the entire Ottoman Empire. This sweeping process of modernization was accelerated by the advent of the British Mandate over Palestine\ Eretz Ysrael – The Land of Israel – (1917/1920–1948) and the establishment of leadership institutions of the Zionist *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel and in the Diaspora: *Ha-Va'ad Ha-Le'umi* [the National Committee] – the executive arm of the Elected Assembly of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel in 1920–1948; and the Jewish Agency: the administrative and representative body of the World Zionist Organization – which operated throughout the Jewish world. We examined and found how the Sephardim turned from the dominant group in the Old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem to a minority group, and how they lost the position of leadership they had held until close to the end of the nineteenth century, in effect experiencing a process of immigration even though they did not leave their birthplace.

In the current chapter\*, I wish to discuss the reaction of the Sephardim in The Land of Israel to the Holocaust that struck their Jewish Spanish speaking brothers in the Balkans and especially in Salonika, that was known as a “city and mother in Israel” and as “Jerusalem of the Balkans” – which had been the capital of Ladino culture since the Expulsion from Spain (1492) and where the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population had been annihilated in the

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\* The initial version of this chapter first appeared in the annual *El Ladinar*, 5 (2009): 19–66. The chapter below is printed with the permission of the editor of *El Ladinar*.

Holocaust. In my opinion, one must examine the response of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim in The Land of Israel to the Holocaust and its terrors against the backdrop of their conscious and willing relinquishing of the basis of their socio-cultural identity: their Jewish Spanish language, and adopting or, at least, coming closer to Hebrew as their regular language, over the course of the twentieth century. Our discussion deals with the information that the Sephardim – and we must emphasize, Hebrew readers – in The Land of Israel could receive from the pages of the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, from its founding in 1942 until 1949, right after the establishment of the State of Israel; with the processes of memory and perpetuation, as expressed in memorial books that were published, in Hebrew, by people in Israel coming from Salonika, about twenty years after the end of World War II;<sup>1</sup> the testimony survivors gave in the anthology *Be-Netivei She'ol*;<sup>2</sup> and on an examination of a sampling from two literary works: poetry<sup>3</sup> and prose,<sup>4</sup> written in Hebrew by natives of The Land of Israel stemming from Sephardi families.<sup>5</sup>

- 1 *Saloniki, Ir Va-Em Be-Yisrael* [Salonika, City and Mother in Israel] (Various authors, Tel Aviv: Ha-Makhon Le-Ḥeker Yahadut Saloniki, 1967); David A. Recanati (ed.), *Zikhron Saloniki [In Memoriam of Salonika: The Greatness and Destruction of The Jerusalem of The Balkans]* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Va'ad Le-Hotza'at Sefer Kehilat Saloniki, 1972) [Hebrew]; S. Refael et al. (eds.), *Lo Nishkack [We Shall Not Forget]* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Greek Extermination Camp Survivors in Israel, The Next Generation Division, 1986–2005) [Hebrew].
- 2 S. Refael (editor and interviewer), *Be-Netivei Sh'eol [The Roads to Hell: Greek Jews in the Holocaust. Testimonies]* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Greek Extermination Camp Survivors in Israel, 1988) [Hebrew]. This collection contains sixty-two survivor testimonies that were published in Hebrew. I have chosen to focus on the testimonies of three of them, who, in time, published their life stories as books: Ya'akov Handeli (ibid., 182); Jacques Stroumsa (ibid., 378), and Ḥaim Refael (ibid., 467).
- 3 A. Perez, *Siniza i fumo*. Siklo de poemas dedikado a la memoria de Saloniko, Edision bilingue (Jerusalem: "Sefarad" Publishing, 1986) [Ladino and Hebrew].
- 4 S. Refael, *Golgotha*, Holocaust monodrama, Sh. Refael, G. Yefet-Atar, V. Atar, First performed at the Tzavta Theater, Tel Aviv, 2003. English version performed in New York, 2008 [Ladino and Hebrew].
- 5 In the course of the current discussion I concentrated on Hebrew-language publications. My colleague Shmuel Refael has already discussed poetry in Ladino written by Jewish Spanish speakers. See S. Refael, *Un grito en el silencio: La poesía judeoespañola sobre el Holocausto en lengua sefardí: Estudio y Antología* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2008), in which the author makes himself the mouthpiece for the scream of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim who were annihilated in the Holocaust, in the face of the silence and the lack of a sense of sympathy for suffering brethren, which was their lot and which Sephardi Holocaust survivors encountered in The Land of Israel and in the State of Israel. Similar notions were expressed by the Turkey born Selim Salti, founder and president of the

The first issue of the Hebrew weekly *Ha-Mizrah* (in time, *Hed Ha-Mizrah*) appeared in Jerusalem on 10 June 1942. The declared purpose of the weekly, as expressed in the editorial “Our Platform,” written by the owner and editor of the paper, Eliyahu [Elie] Eliachar (1891–1981),<sup>6</sup> was to provide “Sephardi Jewry in The Land of Israel with its own organ that will give voice to its opinions, reflect its life, present its requests clearly, and vociferously defend its demands.”<sup>7</sup> Until the founding of *Ha-Mizrah*, Sephardi Jewry in The Land of Israel did not have – as the article states – “its own special journal that would voice its opinions and express its wishes”, except for a few attempts made before the previous war [World War I] with the establishment of the daily paper, *Ha-Ḥerut*. “This Jewry,” the writer of the article “Our Platform” goes on to say, “which today makes up one-third of the Hebrew *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel, which undoubtedly has its own original opinions, its own needs, and own ways of expression concerning phenomena of life in the country from kindergarten to university, from the unskilled laborer to the craftsman, from the worker to the merchant and banker. All have needs, duties, and demands. And whosoever ignores these facts, as they have done thus far – is ignoring routine reality.”<sup>8</sup>

The writer stresses “we are not aiming for divisiveness but for unification, not for destruction but for construction. The ambition of our public since our forefathers gained a foothold in the country has always been: the complete unity and cohesion of all the tribes of Israel, its communities and its parties, for one single purpose: building of the people and the land. But it cannot be and there will be no unity before all parts of the *Yishuv* attain full equality ...”<sup>9</sup>. These, therefore, were the topics on the agenda of the Sephardi public in The Land of Israel at that time. Eliyahu Eliachar wrote about “the street urchins in the country,” and Meir Ḥai Ginio wrote about “the role of the Sephardim in the consolidation of the *Yishuv*” and considered the issue of the first Elected Assembly for the Jews of the The Land of Israel, the Chief Rabbinate, and the elections for Kneset Israel.

In his autobiographical book *Living with Jews*, Eliachar tells how, in 1942, he acquired the weekly *Ha-Mizrah* that he wished to turn into a “free, independent organ of the Sephardim”. The weekly was published for twelve consecutive

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Sentro Naime i Yeoshua Salti de Estudio del Ladino, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, in his article entitled: “La tragedia de los Djudios Sefaradis en los Balkanes”, *El Amaneser*, 108 (5 February, 2014): 14-16; *El Amaneser*, 109 (5 March, 2014: 14-15 [Ladino].

6 On him, see above the Introduction chapter, nn. 95–96.

7 *Ha-Mizrah*, *A Journal for the Sephardi Jew*, no. 1, Wednesday, 25 Sivan 5702 (10 June 1942). Cf. also Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 490–91.

8 *Ha-Mizrah*, 10 June 1942. On the paper, *Ha-Ḥerut*, see above chap. 3, nn. 3 and 20.

9 *Ha-Mizrah*, 10 June 1942.

years. In what he wrote in his memoirs, forty years later, Eliachar stressed that “We are not aiming for divisiveness but for unification, for building the nation and the land in total equality – for there cannot be and will not be unity without incorporating all parts of the *Yishuv* that will bear the responsibility weighing on all of Judaism – and there cannot be and will not be unity if full rights will not be given to all those who fulfill their national and public obligations”. Eliachar goes on to write, “I considered education *the* issue of the existence of the *Yishuv* on its way to independence and no less the search for ways that will lead us to peace with our neighbors, the Arabs. To these two fateful issues, I dedicated my weekly that became officially mine through my editing and my responsibility.<sup>10</sup> Its new name appeared on the issue of 15 January 1943: *Hed Ha-Mizrah*.”<sup>11</sup> These statements were written in 1981.

The target audience addressed by the editors of *Ha-Mizrah* was quite heterogeneous socioeconomically: from the unskilled laborer to the banker as indicated in the editorial “Our Platform.” Moreover, for political reasons, mainly for electoral considerations, the leaders of the Sephardim in The Land of Israel, and the editors of *Ha-Mizrah* among them, wanted to include in their target audience not only speakers of Jewish Spanish but also members of Oriental Jewry and Maghrebim, coming from North Africa, only a few of whom considered that tongue their language of culture.<sup>12</sup> But the owners, the editors, the

10 In the issue published on 12 November 1948, appear the names of the chief editor, Eliyahu Eliachar; the editor, David Sitton; with the regular participation of Avraham Elmaleh, Moshe Warman, Dr. Yosef Rivlin, and Shalom Schwartz.

11 Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 490–91.

12 A. Haim, *Unity and Integration*, 148–49. The historian Haim determines that such policy was taken in light of the decline in the status of the Sephardi community, which – until the close of the nineteenth century – constituted the majority of the *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel under Ottoman rule and which was the representative body of the *Yishuv* to the Ottoman authorities. The greatness of the Sephardi Jewry waned the more it lost its numerical advantage, when – over the course of the nineteenth century – Jews from the Maghreb, the Orient, and Europe immigrated to The Land of Israel. At the start of this process, these Jews were assimilated into the Sephardi community and accepted the authority of its leaders. But quickly – the first were the Ashkenazim who as early as the 1830s acquired the status of an independent *ta'ifa*: community – the leaders of the Sephardi community were forced to allot a place among the community leadership also to those who were not Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim. With the emergence of the Zionist movement and the *aliyot* of European Jews – the greater majority of whom were Ashkenazim – who came to the Land of Israel in order “to build and be built in it” – to settle the land and work it – the Sephardi community lost its leadership status that passed into the hands of the chiefs of the Zionist movement. From then on, understanding the considerations in the elections for the institutions of Zionist leadership, the Sephardi

writers, and most of the subscribers to the weekly were bilingual Sephardim: speakers of Hebrew and Jewish Spanish, which was known in Jerusalem as: *Spanyolit*. Most of them were Jerusalemites, who until 1917 were Ottoman subjects and their social and cultural identity was built on their Jewish Spanish or *Spanyolit* language.<sup>13</sup> While the mother tongue of this group – born toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth – was Jewish Spanish, during the 1940s, when the weekly *Ha-Mizrah* was first published, Hebrew was already their usual language for speaking, reading, and writing, alongside different European languages, foremost among them French.<sup>14</sup>

The choice of Hebrew was made, consciously and deliberately, by the educated elite among the Sephardi Old *Yishuv*, with the aim of adopting for themselves a new identity that would befit the social changes that had taken place in the world of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel, under the influence of the Zionist movement, which inscribed its banner with the slogan: “Hebrew [person]! Speak Hebrew [language]!” We must not forget that the reviver of the Hebrew language, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1858–1922), lived and worked in Jerusalem and from Jerusalem. The educated elite noted included the upper class of the Sephardi sector as to social prestige and economic ease. The Jerusalem *maskilim* who adopted Hebrew while turning their backs on Jewish Spanish, drew distant from French as well and took care to send their children to Zionist schools that taught in Hebrew and not to the AIU schools, in which they had been educated. To be sure, the educated elite were those who chose to switch to Hebrew, but this firm stance influenced the other levels of the community members as well, including anyone who continued to speak Jewish Spanish as their daily language. As a result, among the Sephardim, mainly the Jerusalemites, opting to adopt Hebrew as the language for speaking, reading, and writing – the linguistic link was broken in their families, between the generation of the grandparents, mainly with the grandmothers, who did not speak Hebrew as their language of basic communication, and the generation of the

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community attempted to improve its standing through a political covenant between Sephardim and members of the Oriental communities. See also N. Efrati, *Sephardi Community in Jerusalem*. Cf. also: the Introduction, n. 49 above.

- 13 From the time of the conquest of the country by the Ottoman Turks in 1517, there was a persistent stream of Sephardi *aliyah* from Ottoman Empire territories to The Land of Israel. The immigrants settled in the four Holy Cities: Tiberias, Safed, Jerusalem, and Hebron; but owing to various circumstances the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel in the nineteenth century was concentrated in Jerusalem. Cf. above chap. 1, nn. 89, 98.
- 14 In this context, one must remember the vigorous activity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU). See above chap. 3, nn. 54–90. On the Hebrew Language and its status among the members of the Sephardi elite in Jerusalem, see above, Introduction, n. 13.

grandchildren, who did not speak Jewish Spanish, because of their parents' decision to speak only Hebrew with them. The reason for this decision was, as mentioned, the desire to become an integral part of the new Zionist society, which arose on the soil of The Land of Israel and whose cultural language and one of the supreme social codes in its world was the Hebrew language.<sup>15</sup>

To be sure, we are not speaking of a general, sweeping social phenomenon: in families in which the grandmother lived, under the same roof, with the grandchildren, the latter continued to speak Jewish Spanish, in addition to Hebrew, and they had the privilege of hearing from the nona [grandmother], or tia [aunt], the stories and songs she knew: the Jewish Spanish tradition was maintained mainly by the women in the family. Undoubtedly, those belonging to the generation of the educated elite among the Sephardi Old *Yishuv* did realize their heart's desire: the next generation, that of the grandchildren, did indeed acquire for itself a Hebrew-Zionist identity and integrated into the Hebrew-speaking Zionist society. Yet, this decision demanded a heavy price: the generation of the grandchildren, native born in The Land of Israel from the mid-1920s on, lost not only the linguistic connection with their grandparents in particular, but also the identity and social network of the Sephardim, which rested on language in general; their link with the heritage of their Sephardi forefathers; with Jewish Spanish; with their literature – the romansas and kuentos; with the halakhic rulings of their rabbis, covering many generations; with their folklore; with their ways of life, which were abandoned for modern modes of life, and with their entire worldview. To sum up: the members of the grandchildren's generation grew up with the Zionist heritage, on the poems of Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik (1873–1934), Shaul Tchernikowsky (1857–1943), David Shimoni (1886–1956), and Ya'akov Fichman (1881–1958), and they were more familiar with the shtetls Kasrilevke and Yehupetz of Shalom Aleichem (1859–1916) than with the Jewish Quarter of the Old City or with the Ohel Moshe neighborhood where their parents had been born and raised.<sup>16</sup>

I believe that this loss of identity prevented special consideration by The Land of Israel native-born Sephardim of the Holocaust of the Jews of Greece and the Balkans, Jewish Spanish speakers, as though it were their own unique

15 See A. Meyuḥas Ginio, "Los Sefardíes de Jerusalén," *Anuario de Filología*, 21/8 (1998–1999): 231–45.

16 In this context, one must keep in mind the vigorous activity, from the 1970s on, and mainly during the incumbency of the fifth president of Israel, Mr. Yitzḥak Navon, as minister of education, when the Center for the Heritage of Oriental Jewry was founded, contributing greatly to the inculcating of the heritage of Oriental Jewry, including that of the Sephardim. Yet, it must be said, together with Oriental Jewry and not as a community in its own right.

tragedy: a tragedy as a result of which their cultural backing, upon which their fathers had based themselves and relied for many generations, was taken away from them, and moreover: they lost forever the human reserves which, under certain conditions, could have made productive and promoted the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi sector in the entire world and in The Land of Israel in particular. No wonder then that was the way the native-born Sephardim of The Land of Israel related to the Holocaust of the Jewish Spanish speaking Balkan Jews; for they had been educated to consider themselves part and parcel of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel, to distance themselves from any divisiveness and to support unity.<sup>17</sup> With the lack of that internal connection that exists and remains firm between speakers of the same language, the Holocaust of the Greek and Balkan Jews was perceived by the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim in The Land of Israel as part of the Holocaust of European Jews – the greatest and most horrendous tragedy to ever have occurred in the history of the Jewish people. No one disagrees that this is so; but we must consider and remember, at the same time, the unique tragedy of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi Jewry, which lost its historical standing and the cultural essence it had had since the Expulsion from Spain (1492). With no reserve of Jewish Spanish speakers, this tribe lost, during the twentieth century, its unique identity and became assimilated to other cultural and social groups among the Jewish people. It is sufficient to examine the contribution of the Sephardim stemming from Turkey and Bulgaria, who survived the Holocaust that fell upon their brethren in the Balkans and who immigrated to Israel in the early 1950s, to the revival of Ladino culture in the state, especially in the past two decades – so that we might be able to imagine what the situation of Sephardi Jewry and of the Ladino culture in Israel might have been, if today we had with us the Jewish Spanish speaking Jews of Salonika, Macedonia, Western Thrace, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Dalmatia. Yet, we must note here that the Turkish Jews were closer to the use of Jewish Spanish as a mother tongue by about a generation than their brethren Jews of Bulgaria. We can learn of this, for example, from an interview I conducted with Mrs. Shelly Benveniste, a native of Ruse, Bulgaria.<sup>18</sup> In the home of Mrs. Benveniste's father, they spoke Jewish Spanish and Bulgarian, and both her parents, knew in addition Turkish and German too. Mrs. Benveniste told me that her grandmother, who lived with them, knew

17 Cf. above n. 6.

18 On 7 September 2008, I conducted an interview with Mrs. Shelly Benveniste, a senior librarian living in Jerusalem, who immigrated with her family from Ruse, Bulgaria, in 1948. I thank Mrs. Benveniste for her assistance. On the city of Ruse (Rustchuk), see Y. Covo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria: Between East and West* (Kibbutz Dalia: Ma'arekhet, 2002).

Jewish Spanish and Bulgarian well and spoke Turkish and German. In other words, the members of the Benveniste family – including the grandmother – spoke Jewish Spanish alongside the language of the country, Bulgarian. That being the case, this Sephardi grandmother differed from the women of her generation in the Middle East – for example, my paternal grandmother, who lived all her life in Jerusalem – who did not speak the language of the country they lived in but rather only Jewish Spanish.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Sephardi *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel grew as the result of the immigration of Sephardim from ancient Sephardi communities in the Balkans: Salonika, Ioanina, and Monastir. We are informed of the immigration to Jerusalem of Sephardim from Monastir (today, Bitola, Macedonia<sup>19</sup>), from Salonika, and from Rhodes from the following four testimonies.

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19 On the Jews of Monastir, see Shlomo Alboher, *Identification, Adaptation and Reservation. The Sephardi Jews in The Land of Israel and the Zionist Movement during the "Bayit Leumi" (National Home), 1918–1948* (Jerusalem: Hasifriyah Hatzionit, 2002 [Hebrew], 11–62. On the Sephardi community in Monastir during its last one hundred years of existence, see Mark Cohen, *The Last Century of Sephardic Community. The Jews of Monastir, 1839–1943* (New York: Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, 2003). Cohen examined the emigration process from Monastir, after the fire that broke out in the city in 1863 and, in effect, abolished the Jewish Quarter and whose survivors suffered from poverty, turning then for aid to Sir Moses Montefiore. *Ibid.*, 43–53. In 1864–1880, the Jewish community of Monastir underwent a gradual process of distancing itself from tradition and absorbing definite traits of modernization, under the influence of Christian missions, the opening of the ATU school in the city, and the construction of a railroad that brought the train to Monastir (1895). *Ibid.*, 53. In 1903–1912, until the outbreak of the First Balkan War, the flow of emigration abroad of Monastir Jews increased to Chile, to the United States, and to The Land of Israel. *Ibid.*, 69. In 1936 there were some one thousand Jews from Monastir living in The Land of Israel. *Ibid.*, 191. Mark Cohen stresses that the Monastir Jews maintained their unique dialect in spoken Jewish Spanish. World War I rendered a destructive blow to the city, including its Jewish community. Yet, as early as 1927 the scholar Max Lurie visited the city, as did the scholar Cynthia M. Crews in 1930; they came to Monastir with the aim of collecting Sephardi folklore material: the accent, vocabulary, grammar, and examples of folktales. *Ibid.*, 251. Regarding the Jewish emigration from Monastir to Chile, see Moisés Hasson, *Morada de mis antepasados. Una historia sefardí: De Monastir a Temuco* (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2009). The final destruction of the community occurred in the Holocaust: the first transport was expelled to Treblinka in March 1943. Mark Cohen's book contains a list of the names of those sent to their death. See also: U. Oren, *Ir U-shemah Monastir [A Town named Monastir]* (Tel Aviv: Naor Edition, 1972) [Hebrew].

In an interview I conducted with Mrs. Rachel Molho née Calderon and her husband, Mr. Refael Molho, in their home in Jerusalem,<sup>20</sup> Mrs. Molho told me that her father, Ya'akov Calderon, immigrated to Jerusalem from Monastir in 1903. Her mother, Reina, was born in Priština, Kosovo and immigrated to The Land of Israel in 1914. Rachel's parents married that year and lived in the Old City in a house the grandmother had bought known as El koriyo de la estamparía [the Courtyard of the Printing Press] after the printing house that had previously been located there. Part of the building had been destroyed in the earthquake that hit The Land of Israel in 1927. The language spoken in the Calderon home was Jewish Spanish. It was the parents' and grandmother's only language:<sup>21</sup> in which the parents spoke between themselves and with their children. The girls in the family, including the child Rachel, were sent to study in the Christ Church Mission School, whose principal was Miss Clark. It was located near the Turkish Qishle [Citadel], next to the Jaffa Gate. Studying in the school were Jewish and Armenian girls, but the majority of pupils were Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi girls, some from the Yemin Moshe neighborhood and others residents of the Old City. The British Miss Clark learned to speak Jewish Spanish so as to be able to communicate with her pupils and their families. After she finished eight years at the Primary School, Mrs. Molho completed her education with four years of study at the Jerusalem Girls College in which the language of instruction was English. The student body was made up of Jewish, Arab, and British girls, mainly of families intermarried with Arabs or Jews. From the description we have, we learn of the desire of Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim to promote their children and to have them acquire, to that end, a European language, in this case English, even at the price of having them study in an institution of the mission.<sup>22</sup> We have already remarked that it was the educated elite among the Sephardim that adopted for itself the Hebrew language as the tongue of culture and daily life. Alongside them were others belonging to the Jerusalem Sephardi *Yishuv* who continued to send their children to the Jewish schools of the AIU as well as to the institution bearing the name of Evelina de Rothschild, where instruction was in Eng-

20 On 1 September 2008. I thank Mr. and Mrs. Molho for their assistance.

21 See Mark Cohen, *Last Century*, 25–29. This scholar emphasized that Sephardi women in Monastir knew only Jewish Spanish. On page 36 of his book, Cohen states that the Monastir community was composed entirely of Sephardim and that there were no Romaniote Jews in that community.

22 One must keep in mind, however, that there were young women and men who insisted on studying in Hebrew Zionist schools. This is what the younger daughter in the Calderon family, Dr. Tamar Avner née Calderon, did. She finished her secondary school studies at the Beit Ha-Kerem Hebrew High School in Jerusalem.

lish, or the school of the Ezra association, where teaching was in German. Boys were also sent to study at the schools of the Franciscan Friars, for example, the Terra Sancta School. The consideration here was mainly economic: knowledge of foreign languages opened the way to more prestigious places of employment.

The language spoken in Mr. Refael Molho's parental home was Jewish Spanish, along with Hebrew. Mr. Molho's mother was born in Jerusalem to the Yitzhak Cohen family, and she studied in the Jewish school named for Evelina de Rothschild, where they taught in English. His father, Mr. Yitzhak Molho, a scholar of the history of Salonikan Jewry and its culture, was born in Salonika and immigrated to Jerusalem. When the grandmother, who emigrated from Salonika, came to live with her son in Jerusalem, the influence of the Jewish Spanish in the Molho home increased. Mr. Refael Molho already studied at a Hebrew, Zionist school: the Beit Ha-Kerem High School. With their two sons, Mr. and Mrs. Molho speak Hebrew.

About the immigrants from Monastir, who arrived in Jerusalem about one generation later – in 1931 – we learn from an interview the scholar of Jewish Spanish language and literature, Samuel Armistead, conducted, in 1978, with Mrs. Esther Ḥasson, then eighty-years old. Mrs. Ḥasson told the interviewer that she had come to Jerusalem from Monastir forty-seven years before the interview. When Samuel Armistead asked if her children spoke Jewish Spanish, she replied, “No todos. Sólo los dos grandes. Y los otros, ivrit. Y yo no quería hablar español con eyos para ambezar yo ivrit.”<sup>23</sup> These statements speak for themselves and inform us of the desire of the new immigrants coming from Monastir to integrate into the Hebrew speaking society they met in Jerusalem: to do so they had to distance themselves from their mother-tongue – Jewish Spanish – and to learn Hebrew.

One may learn of the Jewish Spanish speaking community on the island of Rhodes and its links with the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim of Jerusalem from the interview I conducted with Mrs. Yehudit Taragan and her husband, Mr. Shlomo Taragan, in their home in Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Taragan née Vitali, a

23 The interview conducted by Prof. Samuel Armistead in 1978 was quoted by Dr. Nikola Vujtich of the University of Zadar, Croatia, in his lecture “La mujer y la lengua”, which he gave on 20 August 2008, at the seventh international convention in the series: The Cultural and Social History of the Jews on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, held at the Center for Mediterranean Studies of Zagreb University, in Dubrovnik, Croatia. I thank Dr. Vujtich who permitted me to quote from that lecture.

24 On 8 September 2008. I thank Mr. and Mrs. Taragan for their assistance. Mrs. Taragan relied upon her personal memories – she was an eleven-year-old girl when she immigrated to The Land of Israel – and on the memoirs of her father, Mr. Moshe Vitali.

native of Rhodes, told me that on the eve of World War II, there were three communities on the island: Greek, Turkish, and Jewish. Among the Greeks there were a great many peddlers and artisans; the Turks were involved in agriculture; and the Jews eked out a living from petty trade, and many of them emigrated elsewhere – Egypt, Rhodesia, and the Belgian Congo – from where they sent money to support their family members who had remained behind. The Rhodes Jews spoke only Jewish Spanish. The language of the Italian government was studied at school. Mrs. Taragan's father, Mr. Moise (Moshe) Vitali, was born in Izmir and emigrated from there to Rhodes in 1919. His marriage to a native of Rhodes, Alegra Franco, did not gain him Greek nationality and his Turkish nationality remained valid; hence, he was a candidate for expulsion together with 480 other Jews in 1938, when the racial laws went into force in Italy, which since 1912 had ruled over the island; the decree was enforced there by the Italian governor Mario de Vecchi. The Vitali family, the daughter said, was ready to leave but did not know where to turn. Information about the plan to expel the Jews had reached Mr. Yitzhak Molho thanks to his good relations with the Italian consul in Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup> On the basis of the information provided by Mr. Molho, *Ha-Va'ad Ha-Leumi* of the Jews in The Land of Israel organized a delegation composed of dignitaries from the Sephardi community that went to Rhodes on a rescue mission for the Jews who were candidates for expulsion. Among the delegation members were the lawyer David Abulafia, president of the *Va'ad Ha-Edah Ha-Sefaradit*; Mr. Avraham Elmaleh, the representative of the Sephardim on *Ha-Va'ad Ha-Leumi*;<sup>26</sup> Mr. Avraham Franco, in time secretary of the Jerusalem municipality; and the lawyer Meir Laniado, an activist in the *Histadrut Ḥalutzei Ha-Mizraḥi*, who translated the Ottoman legal code – *Mecelle-i Akam-i Adliyye* – into Hebrew. Undoubtedly the common language – Jewish Spanish – served as the link between the Jerusalem Sephardim and the Sephardim of Rhodes. Of note is that less than ten years later representatives of the Sephardi community were complaining that there were no Jewish Spanish speaking representatives among the emissaries of the Jews from The Land of Israel, who went to work among the Jews in the Balkan countries and, therefore, did not succeed in creating a good bond with the local Jews.<sup>27</sup> Yet, the said delegation members had a mere three certificates at their disposal and those were awarded by lottery to the candidates for expulsion.<sup>28</sup> During

25 Interview with Mr. Refael Molho, above n. 20.

26 See also above n. 10.

27 See below n. 65.

28 Mrs. Taragan remembers that beside her father, mother, and their children: three boys and a girl, certificates were granted to an eighteen-year-old youth and a ninety-year-old

the war, communications were broken with the Jews of Rhodes, and the Vitali family knew nothing of their fate. Only toward the end of the war did information come about the devastation.<sup>29</sup>

On the whole, the Sephardim from the Balkan Sephardi communities differed from their Jerusalem brethren in the extent of their knowledge of Hebrew and their link to the social codes of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel.<sup>30</sup> The dissolution and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, since the nineteenth century, resulted in the rise of Balkan nation states, and the Sephardim were forced to undergo an accelerated, rigid process of adopting the national language – Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, or Greek (in Salonika, after 1912), and from 1928, also Turkish. The national language replaced the Jewish Spanish as the language of education and public career.<sup>31</sup> Jewish Spanish lost its social preeminence and maintained its position mainly within the four walls of the home and the framework of the family nucleus.

The overwhelming majority of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim in The Land of Israel lived in the three large cities: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa. Only a few of them belonged to the Jewish agricultural sector. With the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the establishment of the British Mandate over Palestine (1920), waves of immigration of European Jews increased, and this process resulted in a change in the demographic structure of the Jewish community in The Land of Israel.<sup>32</sup> The Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim became a minority among the total Jewish population in the country; the Greek speakers among them became the most minute section. The Israeli writer and journalist Avirama Golan describes well, in a novel published in 2008, *Simanei Haim* [Vi-

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woman. Moise Vitali had to leave his mother and sister behind. In the Hebrew University's Phonotheque are many recordings of selections of cantorial music as sung by Moshe [Moise] Vitali.

29 See below n. 101.

30 M. Rozen, *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808–1945*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2005), chap. 9: 223–332. See especially page 264: the letter from the *Va'ad Ha-Qehila Ha-Ivrit Shel Yafu Ve-Tel Aviv* to the Palestine Office in Salonika, in which the writers rebuke the Salonikan Jews for writing to them in French, “We do not understand French nor do we want to know it, as long as we are fighting for every kind of correction for the mishaps of the Diaspora”.

31 *Ibid.*, chaps. 6–7, 131–221.

32 Y. Ben-Arieh, *A City in the Mirror of Its Period: At the Outset of New Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1977), 630–31 [Hebrew]; A. Haim, *Unity and Integration*, 31–49; S. Alboher, *Identification*, 34–35. This author quotes the statistical table published by the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sepharadim* in 1933.

tal Signs],<sup>33</sup> the cultural vacuum and crude alienation which the Greek émigrés – in this case coming from the cities Komotini and Xanthi in Thrace, who immigrated to The Land of Israel before the outbreak of World War II<sup>34</sup> – who did not know Hebrew suffered in the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel. Golan wrote a fictional novel, not a historical work or a sociological study, but apparently based on her familiarity with the social sector noted, she succeeded in expressing their sense of alienation.<sup>35</sup> Many of the Sephardim coming from the Balkan countries had family ties in their cities of origin, which were disrupted when the war began. It is perfectly clear that in those instances in which the ties were maintained, or personal acquaintanceship was forged as a result of family visits, the attitude of the Sephardi relatives living in The Land of Israel to the Holocaust of their brothers in the Balkans was consciously personal: the Holocaust victims were men, women, and children, whose names they recalled, whose photos they looked at in family albums, and whom they often knew personally.<sup>36</sup>

The information that Sephardi readers in The Land of Israel could obtain from the pages of the Hebrew weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah* – the only organ they had and which took upon itself the representation of their issues – prided itself on its national approach of unity and cohesiveness, while seeking to distance itself from the tribal approach of divisiveness and factionalism.<sup>37</sup> Apparently,

33 Avirama Golan, *Vital Signs* (Tel Aviv: Hasifriya Ha-Hadashah, 2008) [Hebrew]. See also a review on the book by S. Refael, “To Awaken from the Coma” (*Ha’aretz*, Books, 23 April 2008), 6 [Hebrew]. Refael describes the novel as “a journey to the Sephardi soul, which remained hidden from the center of Israeli cultural activity as if it were in a lengthy coma and everyone was waiting for it to come out of it”.

34 “And one day, when Mother had already transferred from the Greek school for little children to the class of Mademoiselle Janet in the Alliance, he [Nono Israel, the father of the protagonist, Gracia] read in the Ladino paper, which was sent to him by mail from Salonika, that in Europe very bad things were happening, and he did not like this. So he said to Nona, who was still young and pretty and had only two small children, Mother and Uncle Daniel – he said to her, ‘Ayde, we are moving from here to Palestina – The Land of Israel’”, *Vital Signs*, 210.

35 *Ibid.*, 252, “And when they moved to Jerusalem, it was good for the whole family, for many people in Jerusalem spoke *Spanyolit*, not like on the *moshavah*, where the fat storekeeper asked what language it was that she [the protagonist of the novel, Gracia] and Daniel were speaking, what, aren’t they Jews? Their ears were burning from the great embarrassment over Greek ....”

36 See, for example, A. Meyuhas Ginio, “‘Yo so el amigo del rey’: Portrait of Albert (Alberto) Tchenyo (1890–1943),” *Ladinar: Studies in the Literature, Music and History of Ladino Speakers*, 3 (2004): 31–63. [Hebrew and Ladino].

37 Cf. above nn. 8–9.

this stance influenced the attitude of the weekly's readers to the Holocaust of the Jews of Greece and the Balkans.

### The Second World War in Greece: The Extermination of the Jews

The Kingdom of Greece had been caught in the grips of World War II since the Italian attack on it on 28 October 1940. The Greek Jews declared their support for the Greek government, and most of them fought in the ranks of the Greek Army. In the spring of 1941, after a heavy German offensive in the Balkans and the conquest of Yugoslavia, the Greek kingdom was divided among Italy, Germany, and Bulgaria. German soldiers entered Salonika on 9 April 1941 and the decrees against the Jews were spread among the public.<sup>38</sup> There is no mention of all this in the pages of *Hed Ha-Mizrah* in particular and in the Hebrew press in The Land of Israel in general. In an interview published in the daily newspaper *Yediot Aḥaronot* [Latest News] on the occasion of Yom *Ha-Shoah* [Day of the Holocaust] 2008, the historian Dina Porat of Tel Aviv University noted that “Occupied Europe was cut off. The newspapers had no correspondents there. They received information from the news agencies that had no interest in the Holocaust. Until the end of 1942, notices about the Holocaust were found only in the inside pages, at the bottom of the page”,<sup>39</sup> and these, too, concerned Eastern Europe. In November 1942, there arrived in Israel a few dozen women and children with The Land of Israel citizenship, who had been exchanged for German women and children, inhabitants of The Land of Israel, who had been arrested by the British: the former knew to tell of what had happened in Poland. On 22 November, the Jewish Agency directorate published an official announcement on the acts of murder and slaughter carried out against the Jews of Poland and Jews who had been expelled to it from other countries.<sup>40</sup> Toward

38 I. Dublon-Knebel, *German Foreign Office Documents on the Holocaust in Greece (1937–1944)* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Chair for the History and Culture of the Jews of Salonika and Greece and The Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 176, 2007), Introduction, 18–39. Y. Handeli, *From the White Tower to the Gates of Auschwitz: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor from Salonika, Greece* (2nd ed., Jerusalem; Published by the author, 1997), especially 39–57 [Hebrew]; A.M. Cuneo-Amarilio, *The Story of Erika, a Survivor from Salonika*, translated from the Greek by Dr. Rikki Amarilio (Tel Aviv: Eked, 1999), 31–52 [Hebrew]; M. Matsas, *The Illusion of Safety. The Story of the Greek Jews during the Second World War* (New York: Pella Publishing Co., 1997), 29–74; 129–65.

39 Moshe Ronen, “*Hoser Yediah*” [Lack of Information], *Yediot Aḥaronot*, 24 Hours, Thursday, 26 Nisan 5768 (11 May 2008), 4–5 [Hebrew].

40 Ibid.

the end of January 1943, SS officers Dieter Visliceny and Alois Brunner arrived in Salonika, at the head of a small group of SS men, with the aim of putting into effect a plan for expelling the Salonikan Jews. On 15 March 1943, the first transport of Jews left the city for Auschwitz. Prior to that, the Jews had been concentrated within the confines of a neighborhood named for Baron Hirsch, near the city's train station. Unceasingly, for six months, flowed eighteen other transports. By August 1943 there were no Jews in Salonika. A 2500-year-old community had been annihilated in the course of six months. In September 1943, when the Italians surrendered to the Allies, Germany took over the Italian region of Greece and strove to apply the same expulsion decrees in it.<sup>41</sup>

Only from the May 1943 issue, when the transports from Salonika were in full swing, did there appear in *Hed Ha-Mizrah* fragmented, partial pieces of information about the fate of the Salonika Jews. As far as this relates to those Greek and Jewish Spanish speakers living in The Land of Israel and originating from Salonika, who did not know Hebrew, this cultural alienation distanced them from even the modicum of information that the readers of the Hebrew press could extract from publications in that language. Avirama Golan describes the fears of the protagonists of her novel, Jews coming from Thrace – that in the division of Greece among the Axis countries in 1941 fell to the lot of Bulgaria – in light of the disjointed information that reached them about the Holocaust of the Jews of Greece: “They received no information from the family. The Nona went crazy with worry. In the paper nothing was written about what was happening there, and the Hebrew spoken on the radio was hard for her. The Nono could not help her at all, since he was not prepared to learn Hebrew. He remained steadfast to his Greek, and whoever could not understand him, so he couldn't understand. To speak with the neighbors and at work, he got along with *Spanyolit* too ...” “He asked his neighbor Russo to translate for him the latest telegrams about the war from the Hebrew newspaper. ‘From Istanbul we are informed that more than 8,000 people in Greece have been arrested,’ read Russo in Hebrew, immediately translating into *Spanyolit*, ‘and the

41 See M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (N.Y., Hill and Wang, 2000); D. Carpi, “A New Approach to Some Episodes in the History of the Jews of Salonika during the Holocaust – Memory, Myth, Documentation”, in M. Rozen, ed., *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808–1945* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Chair for the History and Culture of the Jews of Salonika and Greece and The Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 2005), 259–89. See also Mark Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004).

German radio announced on Wednesday Hitler received Boris, King of Bulgaria, for a meeting ...".<sup>42</sup>

On the whole, undoubtedly only with the end of the war, when the Jews in The Land of Israel were exposed to the testimony of Holocaust survivors, were they able to try to comprehend what had happened to their brethren in Europe.

The overwhelming majority of Greek Jews in particular and the Jews of the Balkans in general – except for those who were living within the historical boundaries of the kingdoms of Bulgaria and Romania, prior to World War II – were murdered in the Holocaust. The few survivors who reached Israel fought for their absorption into the young state. It must be kept in mind that the large *aliyah* of Jews from Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania took place after the establishment of the State of Israel.

In 1960, Adolf Eichmann was caught and brought to trial in Israel. At the conclusion of the legal processes, he was executed by hanging in 1962. A most important educational function was attributed to the testimony given at the trial for imparting information about the Holocaust to citizens of Israel of all ages. Testimony on the Holocaust of the Jews of Greece was given in only one out of some one hundred testimonies given. Only twenty years after the Holocaust and a few years after the Eichmann Trial did the documentation project about the Greek Jews begin, at the initiative of *Ha-Makhon Le-Heker Yahdut Salonika* [The Institute for the Study of Salonikan Jewry]<sup>43</sup> Among the founders of the institute were activists stemming from Salonika who were already veterans in Israel: Yosef Uziel, Barukh Uziel, David Benveniste, Shlomo Reuven, Shlomo Venezia, Aharon H. Russo, Yitzhak Florentin, and Yitzhak Di Bouton. They were assisted by the Association of Greek Immigrants in Israel and the Alshekh Foundation for Cultural Projects. An important role was played by the annual *Lo Nishkah* [We Shall Not Forget], which appeared for twenty years, 1986–2005, in Hebrew, at the initiative of the second generation of Holocaust survivors among the Balkan Jews and its founder, Shmuel Refael. I believe that one may ascribe to the documentation and memorialization project of Greek Jews and by them, which I will discuss in the ensuing, great significance in the process of renewal of the links of the Sephardim in Israel with the historical heritage of their Jewish Spanish speaking forefathers. By means of this endeavor, Sephardim in Israel, who had already estranged themselves from the Jewish

42 *Vital Signs*, above n. 33, 206. In the novel *Vital Signs*, the author, Avirama Golan, used *Spanyolit* for the name of the language as was common usage in Jerusalem.

43 See above n. 1. See also Refael, *The Road to Hell*, above n. 2, Cf. also S. Refael, *Grito en el silencio*, 103. In this context, the author quotes the historian Hannah Jablonka.

Spanish language, could learn, in Hebrew, about the tragedy that had afflicted their Jewish Spanish speaking brothers in the Balkans.

In issue 1 of *Hamizrah*, *Bitā'on La-Yahadut Ha-Sefaradit*,<sup>44</sup> the editors presented their credo on the issue of the standing of this Jewry in the ranks of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel. They called for increasing the war effort and devoted an article to Rabbi Se'adiah Gaon (882-942) in honor of one thousand years to his passing. Discussed, inter alia, in issue 2 of 30 June 1942, was the problem of enlisting in the British Army, and the demand was raised to put an end to discrimination. Items were written in commemoration of Avraham Albert Antébi (1873-1919), one of the leaders of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel, representative of I.C.A. (the Jewish Colonization Association), the Palestine office of the Zionist movement, and Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU),<sup>45</sup> and in memory of David Florentin: the article "The Rock and the Wave" by Barukh Uziel, dedicated to the veteran Zionist activist of Greek origin in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. Noted in the section "Contemporary Issues" were statements about discrimination against Sephardim. In issue 4,<sup>46</sup> the "Contemporary Issues" contained an article about the Expulsion from Spain:

Today marks 450 years to the Expulsion from Spain. But precisely today, once again have come dark, nightmarish days reminding us of those sinister times, immersed in tribulations, of the exile from Spain. In Germany, so boastful of its superior moral and cultural values, arose the evil Hitlerite movement that set itself the dastardly goal of destroying and removing our people from the world, and what the bloodthirsty people of Spain did not dare to do is now being attempted by sinful, debased people in Hitler's Germany. After flooding their country with sweeping waves of blood of pure, defenseless Jews, they began acts of extermination against every assembly of Jews who fell under their control the more their conquests grew. All the countries of Europe turned into searing flamethrowers consuming every Jewish segme, and there is no rescuer nor savior, and if in the days of Spain there was still an opening for deliverance available to the exiles expelled from Spain, in the Nazi inferno every lock is sealed,

44 On 10 June 1942. See above n. 6. I read the copies kept in the Archives of the *Va'ad Adat Ha-Sefaradim U-Venei Adot Ha-Mizrah* in Jerusalem. I thank Mrs. Danya Haim for her help in locating the material.

45 On him, see above: Introduction, n. 3 and chap. 3, n. 2.

46 Of 31 July 1942.

and there is no possibility for the millions of Jews who are as if penned there to leave for the open air of the world.

These statements are general and contain no specific reference to Balkan Jewry. In the issue of 28 August 1942, however, we find an article by Dr. Gruenwald about “The Sephardi communities of the Balkans” that concerns the Jews of European Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania. This is an academic-type article dealing with the history of the Balkan Jews. The author focuses on “the Jews of Salonika – whose spiritual influence is noticeable even on Sephardi Jewry in Yugoslavia – who had become well known as expert dock workers. Yet in this city and mother in Israel, in which lived 70,000 Jews, the Jews were ousted from this economic position immediately upon the conquest of the city by the Greeks in 1913. Also swept away, after the Greeks had been transferred from Anatolia to Mainland Greece in 1920, were the roles in commerce of the Jews of Salonika.” Only in the summary remarks of the article was contemporary information given: “Since the Nazis invaded the Balkans, the dire fate has also been visited upon these groups, and they have become submissive slaves of the bloodthirsty tyrants. Wherever they entered, the Nazis imposed anti-Semitic laws, put the Jews in ghettos, and use them for any back-breaking work. Only in Turkey does the Jewish collective continue to live in serenity, and we hope that the reach of these sinister people will not stretch to them.”

Issue 7–11<sup>47</sup> announces that “tidings of Job are coming to The Land of Israel from all parts of the suffering Diaspora” and tells about the Biltmore Plan and the goals to organize the Sephardi community. In issue 8–15 of the paper, which had changed its name to *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>48</sup> a complaint is lodged about the composition of the Rescue Committee established at that time, in light of the information trickling in about the Holocaust: “No less astonishing is the fact that on the Rescue Committee founded alongside the institutions, in which even *Agudat Israel* is a member, no representatives of the Sephardi public were included. And now, can it be that even on the Rescue Committee our public will not be given a chance to express its opinion and voice its concerns?” Issue 11–28<sup>49</sup> makes a comparison, in the “Contemporary Issues” section, between Haman and Hitler “in the days of Adar and Purim” and deals, in the same division, with Tel Hai day; the eightieth anniversary of the appearance of *Ha-Levanon*; a murder in Herzliya; and the late Dr. Yitzhak Epstein, remembered for his

47 Of 6 November 1942.

48 Of 29 January 1943. The name change appears in issue 7–14.

49 Of 12 March 1943.

work as the principal of the AIU school in Salonika. The issue also deals with the cave-dwelling Jews of Tripolitania; a mission to Yemen; and problems of the Jewish youth in Aleppo. In the section “In the Oriental Diaspora,” the weekly tells its readers about forced labor owing to arrears in paying property taxes. This is referring to the *varluk vergisi*<sup>50</sup> imposed by the Turkish authorities on the Jews and other non-Muslims there. In issue 15–20<sup>51</sup> items were devoted to the coming invasion of Europe and mentioned were Turkish, Balkan, and The Land of Israel *Yishuv* Jewry. We read that “this Jewry of Turkey and the Balkans, which was the glory of Sephardi Jewry in the Diaspora, has been trampled upon by the hobnail Nazis, and it is incumbent upon us that the rescue effort should also remembered and care for this important part of our nation, before its fate will be like that of the Jews of Poland and northern Europe whose rescue opportunity we missed. Especially the Jews of Salonika, this city and mother is Israel, a cradle of Torah and Jewish culture for many generations, are calling to us for help. They are hovering between life and death and if we do not hasten to save them – we will have lost the most important, distinguished center of Near Eastern Jewry.” Harsh words, to be sure – but the Jews of The Land of Israel in general and especially the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim among them were unable to save their brothers, who were already on their way in sealed cattle cars toward Auschwitz. Issue 17–24<sup>52</sup> underscores the heroism of the Warsaw Ghetto Jews and also treats the Jews of Egypt and The Land of Israel, the decrees against the Jews of Bulgaria, and Hebron, city of the Patriarchs.

In Issue 18–25<sup>53</sup> a detailed item appeared entitled, “Greece. On the Fate of the Jews of Greece.” The article related that “the Information Center of the Greek government, concentrated all the information from various sources about the situation of the Greek Jews since the occupation of Greece by the Axis. Even though the information did not come from official sources, the fact that they came from different origins attests that the information is correct.<sup>54</sup> It turns out that during the first months of the occupation, the Axis took no

50 See: Tuvia Friling, “Between Friendly and Hostile Neutrality: Turkey and the Jews during World War II”, in Rozen (ed.), *Last Ottoman Century*, II, 309–423. Cf. above chap. 1, n. 138.

51 Of 7 May 1943.

52 Of 8 June 1943.

53 Of 9 July 1943.

54 Information on what had happened in Salonika and Athens reached British Headquarters in Cairo, the Greek government in exile in Cairo, and Istanbul (Kushta), too. See Y. Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust and the Resistance 1941–1944* (Tel Aviv: The Institute for the Research of Salonikan Jewry, 1985), 157–65 [Hebrew]. This author tells of the The Land of Israel Committee for the Rescue of Greek Jews, which invested great effort in mustering

measures against the Jews. No racial laws were declared and the attitude toward the Jews was the same as to all other residents of Greece. This approach led to various guesses. Some believed that it was as if the Nazis had decided to apply, as it were, different politics toward the Sephardi Jews, or in any event, not to pursue them furiously as they had done to the Jews of Eastern Europe and Germany.<sup>55</sup> It quickly became clear, however, that all this supposition was false. The Nazis initially refrained from pursuing the Jews on their own in the hope that they would succeed in influencing the Greeks to take this role upon themselves. But they were gravely mistaken ... so they finally decided to carry out the task of exterminating the Jews by themselves ... the persecutions that had begun on 12 July the previous year now took on the nature of direct oppression of the *Jewish* [emphasis in the source] people. That day, all the Jews of Salonika aged 18 to 45 were concentrated in Freedom Square ...” In the ensuing we read about this episode, a year after it occurred.<sup>56</sup> The article is replete with praise for the Greek public that expressed its “feelings of pain and sorrow” “for the cruel acts against the Jews in Greece” and makes special mention of the protest by the “Metropolitan, the head of the Church in Salonika.” These statements should be understood in light of the source of the information, which was “the Information Center of the Greek Government”; yet, the historian Mark Mazower, too, tells us of the sympathetic attitude of the Greek population toward the persecuted Jews.<sup>57</sup> “During the winter,” so the article states, “the Nazis continued to implement their plan for the annihilation of Greek Jews. At times, entire camps were sent to Poland. We have been told that from Salonika alone 45,000 Jews were expelled to Poland. It may be that these numbers are exaggerated since all the Jews of Salonika come to only 60,000 people.” It is difficult for the historian, who knows with hindsight, what actually did happen, to read these things. But we must understand, to what extent – in the lack of previous experience – it seemed unreasonable to people of those times to believe in the possibility of the acts that did actually take place on the soil of occupied Europe. The item goes on to say that

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public opinion and the institutions of the Hebrew *Yishuv* so that they should help. Ibid., 3, 101–7.

- 55 Cf. Dublon-Knebel, *German Foreign Office Documents*, 219–31, on the attempts by Sephardi leadership in Paris to attenuate the attitude toward them, by relying on the precedent – as it were – of Salonika.
- 56 On 11 July 1942: Freedom Square is Plateia Eleftherias. Cf. Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950*, 421–452; S. Refael, *Grito en el silencio*, 79, 92–93.
- 57 Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 438–42. Of particular note is the supportive attitude of the Patriarch Damaskinos in Athens. Ibid. 440, 455.

Harsh and bad is the situation of the Jews in Greece located in the Bulgarian occupation zone. The Bulgarian oppressors boast of implementing the plan for exterminating the Jews more cruelly than the Nazis. Entire Jewish communities were totally annihilated. Commerce and other professions were forbidden to Jews from ten A.M. In other words, the Bulgarians were forcing on the Jews laws of starvation. The expulsions complemented the work of destruction through hunger, and so it came to be that entire congregations were wiped off the face of God's earth. At the beginning of last April, 8,000 Jews were taken from Kaválla, Serres, and Komotini<sup>58</sup> and were sent to detention camps ... from which they were put on sealed trains and sent, as usual, to Poland.

### The Sephardim of The Land of Israel Facing the Holocaust

Sephardi Jews of Greek origin in The Land of Israel tried to draw the attention of the *Yishuv* leadership and public opinion: on 9 September 1943, Moshe Carasso and Avraham Alshekh, who were among the leaders of the Jews coming from Greece in The Land of Israel, turned in a letter to Moshe Shertok, director of the Political Department in the Jewish Agency, providing for the first time details about the destruction of the Salonikan community.<sup>59</sup> In issue 2 of volume 11 of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>60</sup> we read of a public assembly in Tel Aviv "that was called by the Committee for the Rescue of Greek Jews."<sup>61</sup> "Mr. Asher Malakh opened the gathering by appealing to the public to respond to the Committee for the Rescue of Greek Jews, this Jewish community, which until today has been among the requested and the givers, now demands the help of the public in rescuing its brethren in the Diaspora." Mr. David Ben-Gurion said, as presented in the article, "that Salonika, the hundreds of years old Jewish community, served to teach us a great Zionist lesson from its period of splendor and an even greater Zionist lesson from its destruction." Ben-Gurion told his listeners that "thirty-seven years ago the issue of Jewish labor in The Land of Israel was on the agenda and whether the Jew would succeed at hard labor

58 Cf. above n. 34.

59 Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 102.

60 Of 12 November 1943.

61 Cf. Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 104. On Saturday 20 October 1943 a large public assembly was held at the Ophir movie theater in Tel Aviv, in which participated and spoke David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive; Asher Malakh and Barukh Uziel, leading figures among the Salonikan Jews in The Land of Israel.

after hundreds of years of being weaned of physical labor. In 1911, when he traveled to Salonika to learn Turkish and Turkish law, he learned his greatest lesson in Zionism, when he realized that the Jew was capable of any type of work and where he saw something he had not seen anywhere else in the world. He saw a Hebrew city (Tel Aviv was not yet in existence [sic!]), the only Hebrew working city in the world. There he found the solution to the main problem they were deliberating about in The Land of Israel [Eretz Ysrael]. We learned a very important lesson from this: that the Jewish people will succeed in working at sea, a lesson that we have not properly learned to this day in The Land of Israel. The Salonika port was a Jewish port. The sailors were Jews and the stevedores were Jewish, so the port was idle on the Sabbath. From this small Sephardi tribe, we learned the blessing of the ocean and the way to the sea. Thanks to the Salonikans, we here in The Land of Israel, during the years of the riots, could maintain our contact with the outside world, a link that foreigners wanted to sever. Today we must rue the fact that so few of the Jews of Salonika are in The Land of Israel. For if there were more, then we would have conquered the sea through them.<sup>62</sup> Also from the tragedy of Salonika Jewry, as from the other Jewish communities, we have learned a great Zionist lesson. Even in tragedies we are discriminated against not only by our enemies but also by our friends ... the time has come for all of use to be one unit and march together toward an independent state.”

These statements by the Jewish Agency chairman, the leader of the *Yishuv* in The Land of Israel, speak for themselves. Ben-Gurion sees the tragedy of the Salonikan Jews solely through the prism of the Zionist endeavor. His words contain more than a pinch of criticism toward the Jews of Salonika who were “so few” in the Land of Israel. One may reasonably assume that the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive had information on the fate of the Salonikan Jews, since he explicitly mentions “its destruction.”<sup>63</sup> Perhaps armed with that information, Ben-Gurion thought that it was longer possible to do anything for the Jews of Salonika whose fate had been decreed and sealed, and therefore focus should be on the battle for independence and the establishment of a Jewish state after the war’s end. The item in *Hed Ha-Mizrah* goes on to show us that as the gathering continue, the lawyer Barukh Uziel spoke and a number of

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62 Of note is that David Ben-Gurion called, as early as the Nineteenth Zionist Congress, in 1935, “to open up the state – that will be established in the future – to the Mediterranean character”; see D. Oğana, *The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), and also the bibliographic references there.

63 See above n. 62.

decisions were taken. Chief among them: “This people’s assembly is shaken to the depths of its soul in light of the cruel abuse inflicted by the Nazi beasts of prey on the Jews of Greece and the mass expulsion of the Jews of Salonika – it calls for the Allies to use all means to save the surviving remnant of Greek Jews.” “Turkey and other neutral countries are asked to show great generosity and to open their gates to Greek Jewry.” “The British government is requested to encourage the neutral governments to take in the surviving Jews of Greece plucked from the fire.” The Spanish government is asked to take an interest in the fate of 380 Jews, subjects of Spain, to seek and find these citizens and to bring them into Spain.<sup>64</sup> “The Allied countries and especially the free governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia are asked to locate where those expelled from Salonika and Macedonia are and to provide them with their fullest help wherever they may be.”<sup>65</sup> “The assembly addresses a special call to the

64 On the fate of the Jews who held Spanish nationality, see Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 93–95. See also below n. 83.

65 On 16 December 1943 the Association of Greek Immigrants requested from Mr. Yitzhak Gruenbaum, chairman of the Rescue Committee, to hand over a letter to Mr. Barles, the Jewish Agency representative in Kushta, as well as to inquire if any information had been received from the Polish consul about the Greek Jews who has been expelled to Poland. Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 106. The writers are complaining that owing to the power struggles waging in the Zionist Organization, the Greek Jews were not represented among the rescue emissaries, and they say that “one of the reasons for the lack of interest in the situation of the Greek Jews prevailing in our highest institutions is that among the dozens of activists dealing with obtaining information about what is happening in the occupied countries and in providing aid for our brethren, *there is no one* [emphasis in the original] connected to the Jews in the Balkan countries, who is familiar with their living conditions and the means that should be employed in order to come in contact with the Jews there” (ibid., 102). “The reply we received was that selection of the emissaries of the Rescue Committee is based on the principle of the relative political forces operating in the Zionist Organization, without taking into consideration the countries from which we have to rescue Jews, we feel that is unfair ... of what are the unfortunate Greek Jews guilty if according to the party key no Zionist from Greece was chosen to work on their behalf?! Is this sufficiently justified to abandon them” (ibid., 103). Statements in a similar vein were written by the geographer David Benveniste, a native of Salonika, thirty-six years later. Benveniste was one of the most senior immigrants from Salonika. Together with Moshe Attias and Natan Shalem, Benveniste was also among the students chosen by the teacher Yitzhak Epstein (cf. n. 49 above), on the eve of the outbreak of WWI, to immigrate to the Land of Israel, to study at the Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem and to train to work as teachers. Benveniste wrote in his book *Kehilot Ha-Yehudim Be-Yavan: Rishmei Masa* (Jewish Communities in Greece, Notes from a Journey; Jerusalem: *Va’ad Adat Ha-Sephardim* in Jerusalem, in conjunction with the Department for Sephardi Communities in the Zionist Organization, 1979) that “This Jewry was steeped in its loneliness in the

International Red Cross to search for these expelled people and to ease their suffering.” It is crystal clear from these declarations, that those who formulated the said decisions did not for sure know neither what had happened to the Jews on Greek soil nor about the fate of the expellees who had been murdered in the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka.<sup>66</sup> The last section of the assembly’s decisions says that “the assembly demands the annulment of the White Paper seeking to paralyze our growth in this country and to prevent the rescue of our brothers desperately in need of salvation.” This was the Zionist agenda at its starkest; but at that time – 12 November 1943 – Salonika had already been cleared of Jews and the overwhelming majority of those expelled had been murdered in extermination camps. In the next issue, number 12, volume two of the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>67</sup> we read in an article by Barukh Uziel, entitled “The Jews in Salonika,” specifically, “From certified information that has come to us from Greek sources, not one remains alive from the 40,000 Jewish men expelled by the Nazis from Salonika to Poland. The expellees were murdered while still on the way (Palcor) [a London news agency].”

Uziel surveys the history of the Salonika community from the Expulsion from Spain, paying special attention to the uniqueness of “the city and mother in Israel,” and concludes as follows, “The bitter Nazi foe put an end to the glorious Salonika community. Some 53,000 of its members were dispatched to the

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mountain ranges and valleys and sea shores. Few visit them. The national-Zionist establishment skips over them. The chances of donating to the “Appeal” are slim. There are none among the emissaries and people with pull who know them and their language” (ibid., 9). This was written in 1979; how much more do they apply to the bygone 1940s.

66 On 9 September 1943 (14 Av 5703), a letter from the Jews of Athens reached Istanbul (Kushta). This was the first letter to come directly from Athens to Istanbul, and the Rescue Committee there sent it to Palestine-The Land of Israel: this was the official name of the country during the British Mandate times. The said letter contained details on the fate of the Salonikan Jews, “Now no Jew remains in Salonika. How does the city and mother in Israel sit solitary. Gone are the prayer halls, obliterated is our cemetery, destroyed are our libraries, our Torah scrolls, burnt are the community registers, and they have taken all our possessions.” Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 108–9. On 23–24 February 1944, Shaul Avigur, who had returned from Istanbul, handed in a report to the *Yishuv* institutions on the situation of the Jews of Greece. About the Salonika Jews there was almost no information. Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 83. The only existing testimony was that of a Jew from Sofia, who told about the long, sealed trains that carried the Salonika Jews to the north through Sofia; Ben, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust*, 84. Yosef Ben notes on page 271 n. 17 that this was a mistake and that the reference was to the trains of the Thrace Jews, who passed through Bulgaria to Treblinka and not the trains with Jews from Salonika who were expelled to Auschwitz.

67 Issue of 26 November 1943.

north and taken in cattle cars like lambs to slaughter. In Salonika not one Jew remains. Our hearts are with the fate of our lost brothers. We also sorely feel the loss of a beautiful chapter in Jewish history. The tragedy of the Salonika Jews proves once again, to our sorrow, that rights outside our homeland, are not durable, and that the very recipients of the rights cannot be sustainable outside the homeland. Still flickering in our hearts is the hope to find our brethren, to pluck a brand from the fire, to find them and return them to the homeland, for they need it and it will need them as a healthy element with lofty characteristics and accustomed to labor.” We see that the writer, Barukh Uziel, agrees completely with the statements heard from the president of the Jewish Agency Executive, two weeks earlier.<sup>68</sup> The rescue efforts from then on concentrated on locating survivors and bringing the “healthy element with lofty characteristics and accustomed to labor” from among them to the Land of Israel, the homeland.

In issue number 15, volume two,<sup>69</sup> we find an item – as presented by Raḥel Yanait Ben-Zvi – about refugees from Salonika in Aleppo, Syria, including former partisans, who had been confined to a detention camp and were not granted immigration certificates. The paper’s editors demanded that they be given the documents so they could immigrate to the Land of Israel.

In issue number 25, volume 2,<sup>70</sup> we find pieces of information in a section called “From the Horrendous Tempest in Europe,” written by the journalist S. Ben-Yitzḥak. From then on he was the one who dealt with the subject of the Balkan Jews. S. Ben-Yitzḥak was a pseudonym; his name was Shlomo Yitzḥaki. He was an Ashkenazi Jew who had grown up in Salonika from a young age and had studied in the Calamaria school. In his writings, he mentioned meetings with his friends and acquaintances from the past.<sup>71</sup> Ben-Yitzḥak described the wedding ceremony of the exiled king, Peter of Yugoslavia, and he told about his dead father, King Alexander, called by Ben-Yitzḥak: “Righteous Among the Nations”. Ben Yitzḥak provided information about “the heroic Patriarch”, the Metropolitan Gennadios and his warm attitude toward the Salonika Jews.<sup>72</sup>

68 Cf. above n. 61.

69 Of 14 January 1944.

70 Of 21 April 1944.

71 In issue no. 6 of 17 December 1948, his name appears as S. Yitzḥaki. According to information I received in a (telephone) interview I conducted with Mr. David Recanati, on 7 September 2008, the journalist’s name was Shlomo Yitzḥaki. He knew Hebrew well and for some time worked as a teacher. I have the pleasant task of thanking Mr. David Recanati for his assistance. S. Ben-Yitzḥak is thus a pen name.

72 Mazower is much more moderate in his praise of the Patriarch Gennadios. See Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 418–19; 440–41.

Similarly, Ben-Yitzhak told his readers about children who had immigrated to Israel at that time from Bulgaria and about the rescue of the Maimonides synagogue and the memorial plaque that had been affixed in 1935 in Córdoba, Spain, before the Civil War there.

In issue number 27, volume two,<sup>73</sup> Ben-Yitzhak told his readers of his meeting with survivors from Salonika and about the Jewish spiritual treasures that had gone up in smoke and were no more: synagogues that had been ransacked, books that had been confiscated and scattered in all directions. And Ben-Yitzhak writes, “We must pay attention to the spiritual needs of the bereft communities in the Balkans as well. The Jews of Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and so on in their dispersals. We must tend to the spiritual nourishment of their brothers who survived the inferno. None are as expert on this issue as the dentist Dr. Yitzhak Di Bouton or the person who was the director of the Alshekh school in Salonika, Mr. Avraham Alshekh. They had hundreds of books that could serve as important spiritual sustenance for our Sephardi brothers. Perhaps they will think about it? Is it befitting for *Hed Ha-Mizrah* to take this initiative upon itself?”<sup>74</sup> In the following issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>75</sup> S. Ben-Yitzhak wrote about the “returned letters,” referring to letters sent to Europe through the Red Cross and sent back with the stamp “traveled to unknown destination”, about the help of the Italians, and about the dream of Zion and Jerusalem in the hearts of the Jews who found a refuge among the partisans in the Greek mountains. In an article that appeared in issue number 3 of volume three,<sup>76</sup> entitled “In the Days of the Expulsion from Salonika,” S. Ben-Yitzhak tells, on the basis of “a conversation with Greek refugees who reached the Land of Israel this week”, about “the last days of the community”, about the sad role of Rabbi Dr. Koretz, about the “Christian and Jewish servants of the Nazis.” This was information from a first-hand source about the fate of the Salonika Jews: about the precise registration of the Jews; the setting up of three ghettos into which the Jews of the city<sup>77</sup> were driven until their final expulsion on trains to Poland. From then on the weekly would focus on the plea: “Save the surviving remnant in Greece. The way has been found – it is forbidden to wait any longer!”<sup>78</sup> The article-appeal by Ben-Yitzhak deals with Jews who were saved on the soil of Greece with the help of Greek-Christians. Important for us is the

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73 Of 5 May 1944.

74 Ibid.

75 No. 29, vol. 2, 19 May 1944.

76 Of 9 June 1944.

77 Cf. Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 421–42.

78 S. Ben-Yitzhak in his article in *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, issue no. 4 of 16 June 1944.

firm statement by Ben-Yitzhak, “It must be stressed that the Greek Jews were always faithful Zionists heart and soul and that the reputations of the Salonikan “sea dogs” – the hundreds and thousands who built and opened, with pioneering courageousness, the ports of Tel Aviv and Haifa – will forever not be overlooked in the history of Zionist “illegal immigration” and the building up of the homeland. Not only Jews will be saved in this case, but the sons-builders of the land of [our] heritage to which they turned their dreams even before Herzl and the Bilu”im.” This is a clear reverberation of Zionist historiography that etched the Holocaust into the Israeli national memory as horrifying evidence not only of how much the Zionist thinkers were correct in their ideology and their belief in the negation of the Diaspora but also as the historical reason for establishing the State of Israel. Within the context of emphasizing the decisive role of Salonika Jews in the construction of the Hebrew ports, it is interesting to note the article “A Middle Eastern Man,” which appeared in *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, four years later,<sup>79</sup> regarding the historian, writer, and archeologist Naḥum Slouschz (1871–1966), and his work *Sefer Ha-Yam* [Book of the Sea], published at that time by *Ha-Hevel Ha-Yami Le-Yisra’el*, which deals with the conquest of the sea by Zionist Jews.<sup>80</sup> Here too, we see the Zionist worldview and its agenda in action. In his section “From Gestapo Stories”, Ben-Yitzhak goes on to deal with the question of “How many are still alive?” The total he reaches estimates that “of 200,000 Jews – almost all of whom were Sephardim, who lived securely in the Balkans, which are the closest to a known neutral country as well as to the Land of Israel, the land of rescue and redemption – there now remain, according to the most optimistic testimony, no more than 50,000 people ...”<sup>81</sup> Ben-Yitzhak continues to tell of the tragedies of the Greek Jews in his article, “From the Horrendous Tempest in Europe”.<sup>82</sup> He pays attention to the episode of the rescue of the Salonika Jews who were Spanish subjects and permitted to

79 79 Issue no. 1, 12 November 1948. In that same issue, A. Michaeli wrote in memory of the late Shafiq Adas, who was hanged in Iraq.

80 The book by Naḥum Slouschz, *The Book of the Sea: Conquering the Seas in History; Aspects of the History of Civilization* [Hebrew], was published by *Ha-Hevel Ha-Yami Le-Yisra’el*, in Tel Aviv, in 1948, in the throes of the War of Independence and did not receive much attention at that time. Of interest is that the editors of the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah* chose to devote a discussion to it. I feel that this approach is related to the presentation of the Salonika immigrants as pioneers in taming the sea. See also E. Eliachar, *Living with Jews*, 201-4, on “Seamanship and Sailors”. On Naḥum Slouschz, see above: Introduction, nn. 20–23.

81 See n. 78 above.

82 *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, issue no. 7, of 7 July 1944.

enter Spain.<sup>83</sup> In the following issues of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, we find many items, written by S. Ben-Yitzhak, who reports about his meetings with Greek refugees;<sup>84</sup> about the liberation of Greece;<sup>85</sup> about “Liberation – without Jews ...”; about “The Fate of the Jews of Rhodes,” and on “What Happened in Rome.”<sup>86</sup> He wrote about Jewish communists in Salonika and about a Hebrew newspaper from Tel Aviv and the impression it made on a Jew who survived among the partisans in the Greek mountains, despite the fact that he could not read a Hebrew newspaper. Worth noting are the statements by S. Ben-Yitzhak, written in 1948, in his article “With the Remnants of the Jews in Greece.” He tells, on the one hand, of his daily contacts with “the *aliyah* officer on behalf of the government of Israel, Shlomo Bitti, a senior member of the Zionist movement in Salonika, one of its spokesmen and most publicly active figures. Miraculously, he was saved from the clutches of the Nazis and his main pride is his son, who has been in Israel for two years, now serving in the Israeli army.” On the other hand, he describes his meeting with Greek Jewish war invalids, “victims of the terrible frost in the Albanian mountains. Fine young men, from elite families, who walk on crutches and on prostheses. “I spoke with one of them,” wrote Ben-Yitzhak, “for some time. He was angry and irritated, relating that “they did not take care of the unfortunate handicapped and especially – the Jewish women refused to marry these young men.” As a result, “a few dozen of the young fellows converted and married Christian women.” And Ben-Yitzhak added, “one of them [of the war invalids] with a Zionist education *did not* [emphasis in the original] convert. With the help of Shlomo Bitti and Ya’akov Tchernowitz [later Tsur (1906–1990)], emissary of the Jewish Agency in Greece in 1945, he managed to sneak onto (precisely!) a British cargo ship, entered Palestine illegally, stayed in Tel Aviv about two years, and was assisted very little by his fellow former residents of Salonika. “One of the wealthy Salonikan public activists told me once” – Mr. Nahmias said<sup>87</sup> – “that there is no need for sick people in the Land of Israel – ... and I was not ill; just the opposite, I was strong and healthy, I only had wooden legs ... and I would still go up hundreds of steps every day and bring cigarettes to people. In short: I returned to Greece to obtain something from my parents remaining possessions and soon I shall return to the State of Israel.”<sup>88</sup> In the item “Journey among Superfluous

83 Cf. Dublon-Knebel, *German Foreign Office Documents*, 48–49.

84 See issue no. 11, vol. 3, of 14 August 1944.

85 Issue no. 25 of 10 October 1944: “To the Liberation of Greece and Yugoslavia”.

86 Issue no. 43, vol. 3, of 16 March 1945.

87 Issue no. 6 of 17 December 1948.

88 Issue no. 4, of 3 December 1948.

Jews,” published in the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah* two weeks later, signed as S. Yitzḥaki,<sup>89</sup> the writer names the witness explicitly: Freddy Naḥmias, who said bitterly: “Superfluous. No one wants us. No one has use for us.”<sup>90</sup> The handicapped soldier was fighting for his right to live in dignity. He bought cigarettes and began to climb to the upper floors of buildings to sell them. “The simple Salonikans” – so said Freddy Naḥmias – “the simple folk, they did indeed always help me, but not the ‘important’ ones among them [among the Salonikans].”<sup>91</sup> These statements inform us of the attitude we already mentioned above and which was common in the *Yishuv* before and after the establishment of the state, that the Zionist endeavor needed people who had the means to contribute to it,<sup>92</sup> and also about the frosty attitude even of people originating in Salonika, who had immigrated to the Land of Israel before World War II, toward survivors who had just arrived. This is not an isolated testimony: Ḥaim Refael, a Salonika native and an Auschwitz survivor, wrote in his memoirs, “I came here [to the Land of Israel] without any experience or any profession or education. We did not have a home. None of the veteran Salonikans who were here took care of us. We, too, were orphans. From my uncle [his mother’s brother] we received no real help and we had to cope by ourselves ...”<sup>93</sup> And if this was true about people coming from Salonika – what could be expected from the native-born Sephardim who had already voluntarily relinquished their socio-cultural identity, which was based on their Jewish Spanish language, in order to integrate into Zionist society, while adopting the Hebrew language? In general, no support system developed in Israel between the Salonikan immigrants from the 1930s and the Holocaust survivors.<sup>94</sup>

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89 Issue no. 6 of 17 December 1948.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Cf. above n. 88.

93 Ḥaim Refael, *Shirat Ḥayim: Salonika – Aushvits – Tel Aviv. Remembrances and Perpetuation* (Tel Aviv: Published by the author, 1997), 59. Ḥaim Refael mentions help from organizations abroad, especially the JDC. See also below nn.131, 134.

94 Cf. also S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 24–25. The author quotes demographic data from the book by the historian Ḥannah Jablonka, *Aḥim Zarim* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1994), citing the number of Holocaust survivors among the immigrants to Israel in 1948–1949, and comes to the conclusion that there were only a few hundred. See also H. Jablonka, *Off the Beaten Track – the Mizrahim and the Shoah* (Beersheba: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2008) [Hebrew] and a review of it by T. Segev, “What Adenauer Knew”, *Ha’aretz*, Books, 9 July 2008, 14 [Hebrew]. Tom Segev notes that the author, Ḥannah Jablonka, combines “What happened there – in North Africa, in Iraq, and for some reason also Greece, as if those from that country were included among the Mizrahim” (ibid., 14).

The first Salonikan Jews to come to the country were the Zionists; either owing to the aftermath of the drastic changes that occurred in Salonika and its district in the 1920s in the wake of forced exchanges of population and the arrival of many Greek refugees from Anatolia as well as the Campbell riot in the 1930, or because they were wise enough to read correctly the political map of Europe between the two World Wars and understand the dangers lurking for the Jews there.<sup>95</sup> Most of them lost their families and friends in the Holocaust and their attitude toward the survivors who had just arrived was not free of suspicion as to the circumstances under which precisely these people had survived the Holocaust. Thus, each of the survivors had to fend for social integration by him/herself. Yet, we must not ignore the voluntary activities of individuals among those originating from Salonika – coming mainly from the neighborhoods in south Tel Aviv – who did make the effort to help the Holocaust survivors. From testimony I received from Mr. Moshe Bakhar (1936–2011), a native of Tel Aviv, one gains the image of the righteous people who joined in the effort to provide housing for the brands plucked from the fire, “פואידוס די איל אורנו.”<sup>96</sup> This does not contradict the testimony from Freddy Naḥmias men-

95 See Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 410–16. On the Campbell riot, see also H. Refael, *Shirat Ḥaim*, 82.

96 Mr. Moshe Bakhar's testimony was given to me, at my request, in writing on 18 July 2008. On Moshe Bakhar and his public work to promote Ladino culture in Israel, see S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 185. Four poems by Moshe Bakhar appear there, 202–4, par. 7.1–7.4. In his above mentioned written testimony, Moshe Bakhar told me about his aunt, his mother's sister, Mrs. Flor Ashkenazi née Erera, a native of Salonika, who in coordination with a butcher known as Dario el-Kasav, whose store was located on Mizraḥi B. Street [today Yair Stern Street], helped a young man and a young woman, both orphans, who were about to marry, to squat in a laundry room on the rooftop of one of the buildings in the neighborhood. Moshe Bakhar, then a boy of 11, overheard a conversation between his aunt and Dario el-Kasav. His aunt asked: “*un ijiko i una ijika estan kasado. Tienes una oda? son fuidos de il horno*” [“Orphans, a young man and a young woman, are getting married. Do you have a room? They escaped from the oven”]. The butcher replied that in a certain place there was a laundry room on the roof; they would stage an “invasion”. The tia [aunt] Flor Ashkenazi herself took into her two-room apartment two sisters who were Holocaust survivors. With the survivors came Flor Ashkenazi's nephew, Moise-Moshe Ashkenazi. He and his wife, Rosa, a native of Hungary, were like Flor's own children. Since her daughter had died in 1942, Tia Flor had made a personal vow to dedicate her life to “*tzedaka* [charity] and good deeds”; so she collected money and clothing for the orphans of the “*Hallel Ve-Zimrah Le-Halbashat Yetomim*” choir of Beit Shaltiel on Levinsky Street. From among Flor Ashkenazi's Salonikan relatives – of the Erera and Cuneo families – sixty people perished in the Holocaust.

tioned above: he, too, remarks on the help of the “simple folk” versus the “important” ones.<sup>97</sup>

Of course, the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah* did not deal only with the Balkan Jews: it reported to its readers in the article “On the Fate of the Jews of Hungary” what was happening there.<sup>98</sup> In another issue it tells them that “Satan Is Dancing in Argentina.”<sup>99</sup> *Hed Ha-Mizrah* treated the issue of “Our Attitude toward Germany.”<sup>100</sup> M. Neistadt wrote about “The Warsaw Jews’ Revolt,” and in that same issue Moshe Vital writes about “What happened to the Jews of Rhodes? (Commemorating the Victims and Exiled).”<sup>101</sup>

In a supplement to issue number 19–20<sup>102</sup> is an item on “The Tragedy of the Jews of Greece (based on Official Documents of the Greek Government in Cairo).” In another issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>103</sup> we find a letter from Salonika that – according to the introduction of the editorial board – was sent by a well-known relative in Salonika, an under officer in the Greek army, who had fought in Libya and Italy and arrived in Greece a few days before the outbreak of the civil war there.” It is signed by David N.S. Ben-Israel, an emissary of the Jews of Egypt, “delivering his impressions of Athens,” and he writes about the “tragedy of Greek Jewry” and about the “important declarations about the Jews, Zionism, and the Arab League.”<sup>104</sup> An eyewitness account by “the soldier who saw the Jews of Salonika” is quoted as given by “the soldier Ben-Zion H., a native of the Romanian city Craiova,” who served in the British Army and managed to escape from German captivity, when the Red Army approached where he was being held. He had been taken prisoner in April 1941, in Kalamata, in southern Greece. At the start of his captivity he was taken to Salonika. Afterwards, he was sent to forced labor in the coal mines near the city of Beuthen, in eastern Silesia. Another prisoner of war, Salonikan-born, told the witness, Ben-Zion H., that in a near-by camp the Germans had imprisoned Jews expelled from Salonika. “They spoke *Hispanyolit*, but also a few words in Hebrew.” All of them were sent to the Auschwitz extermination camp.<sup>105</sup> Deserving of attention is the place of Jewish Spanish as the spoken language of the Greek Jews and the

97 Cf. Issue no. 4 of 3 December 1948: S. Ben Yitzhak.

98 Issue no. 4, of 30 June 1944.

99 Issue no. 8, vol. 3, of 28 July 1944.

100 Issue no. 38, vol. 3, of 9 February 1945.

101 Issue no. 50, of 11 May 1945. Of note is that the island of Rhodes was not under the rule of the Kingdom of Greece, but was – from 1912 – under Italian rule. Cf. also n. 29 above.

102 Issue no. 14, of 25 August 1944.

103 Issue no. 40–41, vol. 3, of 23 February 1945.

104 Issue no. 38, vol. 3, of 16 February 1945.

105 Issue no. 47, of 30 April 1945.

linguistic separation and barrier that speakers of this language encountered in the death camps.<sup>106</sup>

In another issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>107</sup> published after the victory over Nazi Germany, David Freiman, “a member of the welfare team that was sent on a mission to Greece,” reports about “the surviving remnant in Greece.” He calls on “all Eretz-Israel Jewry, to the Jews of Greece and Salonika, do not abandon the unfortunates who need our help today. Raise a cry, make the *Yishuv* stand up and be counted, and in particular, you should try, first of all, post haste, to send them sums of money, clothing, and shoes ... The entire body of Eretz-Israel Jews must not forget the tragedy of the European Jews, including the Jews of Greece, and must help alleviate the suffering and tears until they come on *aliyah* to The Land of Israel, which they so fervently wish to do.”<sup>108</sup>

In the same issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, the owner and editor of the weekly, Eliyahu Eliachar, president of the Committee of the Sephardi Community, writes about the problem of the Sephardim and the surviving remnant in Greece. In the next issue, an item is dedicated to “Sir Moses Montefiore, of blessed memory, 60 Years to His Death.”<sup>109</sup> In another issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>110</sup> “An Athens native” describes what was going on with “Greek Jewry”: “the sympathy of the government and the apathy of the population – returning from the inferno – the help from outside – what will be tomorrow?” and calls for saving especially the children and bringing them to The Land of Israel. This plea is repeated time and again in the following issues of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*. Leon Shaki writes that “Salonika Jews Are Waiting for Redemption “(special to *Hed Ha-Mizrah*)”, and describes the miserable situation of the survivors in light of the “anti-Semites, [who] are not loath to use any means intended to embitter the lives of the few Jews and to force them to leave the city entirely,” and

106 See S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 21–24. Cf. also the testimony by Mr. Ya’akov Handeli in the anthology *Road to Hell* edited by S. Refael, 186: “In my opinion”, so Handeli attests, “the Greek Jews suffered in the camps more than the Ashkenazi Jews for the simple reason that they did not speak Yiddish and did not understand the Germans. We spoke only Ladino, Spanish, and Greek. We simply did not comprehend what they wanted from us, and as I see it, this is one of the reasons most of the Greek Jews did not return from the camps.” This testimony is also cited in S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 23. This book is written in Modern Spanish into which the testimonies were translated. See also Refael, *Golgotha*, 27. See also K.E. Fleming, *A Jewish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 147–65.

107 Issue 15, vol. 4, of 24 August 1945.

108 Ibid.

109 Issue 19, vol. 4, of 7 September 1945.

110 Issue 20, vol. 4, of 14 September 1945.

this is against the background of robbery and theft of Jewish property.<sup>111</sup> The writer deliberately notes “the reverberations of the events in The Land of Israel: but all the bitter experiences, the disappointment and the deep pain, the suffering and the despair that has engulfed the surviving remnant in Salonika are nothing at all versus the terrible shock stirred in us by the sad news from The Land of Israel ...”. Placed at the top of the national agenda was The Land of Israel and the *Yishuv* fighting for its existence.

In another issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>112</sup> D. Shaki writes about “The Life of Poverty and Hopes in Salonika (special to *Hed Ha-Mizrah*).” The author reports about law “No. 808” for the return of Jewish property and the resistance of “the Christians, in possession of the stolen property” to returning it. He tells that “very slowly and despite all the tremendous difficulties, life is returning to normal. This applies to one thousand people at most. The other half – of those who came back from Poland – are incapable of working ... in recent months a few Jewish businesses have been opened, among them those who prefer to leave in the store or office the Christian ‘partner’, that is, the Greek person who ‘acquired’ the store or workshop, during the time of the expulsion to Poland ...” This was the agenda of the Jews of Salonika, which likely enough did not coincide with Zionist ideology. Yet, D. Shaki can state about something “new in the gray lives of the Salonika Jews: cultural and artistic life in the *zionist-national* [emphasis in the original] spirit as in past times.”

In December 1948, S. Ben-Yitzhak went to visit Greece, which in those days was in the throes of a brutal civil war.<sup>113</sup> In Athens, he met “a former acquaintance and friend: The son of the person who had been the leader of the Jewish subjects of Spain in Salonika” who “had miraculously remained alive ... he wants to know, what is going on is the State of Israel. No. He is not a Zionist; he was an associate of the assimilationist ‘theoretician’ of Salonika, Mr. Joseph Nehama, but – ‘everything is over and faded away and only now we see just how wrong was the calculation we made in the time before the flood,’ he says. The young man wonders if he may be able to adjust to the new life there [in The Land of Israel]. He says that he has been thinking of that ‘day and night. But I did not find an answer and have not yet decided.’” Many did decide and they “are all waiting for the opportunity: to immigrate to Israel, to leave the Vale of Tears.”<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Issue 37, vol. 4, of 25 January 1946.

<sup>112</sup> Issue 46, vol. 4, of 22 March 1946.

<sup>113</sup> See Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 443–75.

<sup>114</sup> Issue no. 4, of 3 December 1948.

In another issue of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>115</sup> Avraham Elmaleh (1876–1967), one of the leaders of the Sephardi community in The Land of Israel and a member of *Ha-Va'ad Ha-Leumi* and later a member of the First Knesset, representing the Sephardi Federation Party, wrote an article about “Greek Jewry Is Waiting for Its Redemption.” He recounts the history of the Salonika community, which “was completely destroyed during World War II”; the civil war raging there; and the Zionist movement whose “glory ... has increased in Greece.” “Most of the Greek Jews who have remained alive wish to immigrate to the State of Israel,” the writer states. In issue no. 39 of *Hed Ha-Mizrah*,<sup>116</sup> Moshe Rabi informs us of “a friendly gathering with immigrants from Salonika” in Haifa. “Every Sabbath,” writes Rabi, “they gathered in the synagogue in the afternoon and heard a sermon from the rabbi, who spoke in *Spanyolit*, and special songs were sung in *Spanyolit* during the prayers.” We need not belabor the place and function of Jewish Spanish, or as termed in the article “*Spanyolit*,” among the participants, the *olim* from Salonika: the language is their identifying trait, it creates and builds unique identity and a social network, it is the family and home irretrievably lost, it is the linking thread among them and between them and the communities annihilated in the Holocaust.<sup>117</sup>

Here we must pause to consider the choice of Sephardim in The Land of Israel to forgo the Jewish Spanish language in favor of Hebrew. Moreover, they found it hard to reweave the thread that had unraveled and to mend the net that had been torn: Jewish Spanish could no longer be a common identifying trait between them and the Holocaust survivors, and no complete, shared social network came into being. The Sephardim in The Land of Israel considered the tragedy of the Greek Jews as part of that of all European Jews<sup>118</sup> and their hope – *aliyah* to Israel. This is the Zionist solution. Interestingly, on the same page on which Moshe Rabi’s item appears, we find a section called “A Hand to the Fallen” about those who fell in the War of Independence: noticeable is that there are new things on the agenda of Israeli society. The young State of Israel, just born through a difficult, bloody struggle, faced existential problems and considered itself obligated to turn to facing the future, and not the past.

115 Issue 8, of 31 December 1948.

116 Of 5 August 1949.

117 See also above n. 105.

118 See also S. Refael, *Un grito en el Silencio*, 127. The author sees in focusing on Jewish fate in general, without distinguishing between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, proof of the desire of the Sephardim to constitute part of the Jewish-Israeli experience and the consensus on everything relating to the Holocaust. He feels that this situation derived especially from the fact that Israeli society does not include the Sephardim in the tragedy suffered by the Jews in WWII.

In the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, the voice of Sephardi Jewry weakened and was barely heard.<sup>119</sup> First testimony on the Holocaust of Greek Jewry from Dr. Albert Menashe was published in 1947, in English in the USA. Its translation into Hebrew appeared in the volume *Memorial to Salonika*.<sup>120</sup> One of the first accounts about the Holocaust of Greek Jewry, which was published in Hebrew, was that of Moshe Shmuel, “El Nono,” which appeared in the early 1960s.<sup>121</sup> Only in the mid-1960s, after the Eichmann Trial, did there appear memorial books published by Salonikan Jews.<sup>122</sup> The historian Aron Rodrigue explains the long silence of both the Greek Jews as well as the Holocaust scholars in that the Sephardim were a super-national group in the Balkans. The Holocaust scholars did their work for each country separately, and the Sephardim did not fit into this system of investigation.<sup>123</sup> In 1975, at the initiative of the engineer Aharon Haim Russo (Salonika, 1914–Tel Aviv, 2006), there was established at Tel Aviv University the Chair for the History and Culture of the Jews of Salonika and Greece. This was the first academic institution established at an Israeli university especially for this purpose. It had been preceded only by Makhon Ben-Zvi for the Study of Oriental Jewish Communities, which was founded at the initiative of the second president of Israel, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, on the eve of the establishment of the state. Mr. Russo and his friends, the contributors, asked to create – in Hebrew – a memorial for the Greek Jews, the overwhelming majority of whom had been annihilated in the Holocaust.

In the introduction to *Salonika, Ir Va-Em Be-Israel* [Salonika, City and Mother in Israel]<sup>124</sup> the editorial board writes, “The Salonika community was the model of a society of diverse classes, levels, and even countries of origin yet unified in its atmosphere ... and then a tempest swept over this deeply rooted Jewry and uprooted this glorious tree with its wide canopy. And soon its memory will, heaven forbid, disappear as if this community, which was a city and

119 Ibid., 128–29. Yet, in this context, one must remember the activity of the journal *El Tiempo*, published in Israel in Ladino, during the 1950s and 1960s. Ibid., 103, 120–21.

120 See above n. 1. See also, A. Menashe, *Greek Jewry in the Holocaust, Memoirs* (Tel Aviv: The Salonika Jewry Research Center, 1988) [Hebrew].

121 S. Refael, *Un grito en el Silencio*, 24, 78.

122 See above n. 1.

123 Cited by S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 24. Moreover, the rescue of the Jews of the Republic of Turkey and of the historical Kingdom of Bulgaria made people think that all Sephardim were saved in the Holocaust. Ibid., 27.

124 See above n. 1.

mother in Israel, had never been ... this anthology serves as a modest memorial monument ....”

Things in a similar vein were written by David A. Recanati, editor of the two-volumes of *Zikhron Salonika* [In Memoriam of Salonika], published in 1972 at the initiative of the Committee for the Publication Salonika Community Book:<sup>125</sup>

The bitter end of Salonika Jewry did not differ from the tragic fate visited upon the other Jewish communities in Europe. Almost all the Jews of the city were taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and except for a tiny number of them, met their deaths in the crematoria of the Germans. That was how two thousand years of history of a large Jewish city came to an end. The life of this ancient community – although it shared aspects with other Jewish communities – had much that was unique, original. This was a kind of independent state in a foreign country, a Jerusalem enclave in the Diaspora, in the words of the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg. This memoir is intended to stress this difference. It intends – to create a memorial for the Salonika community, its people and its personages, to all that vibrant, humming life, put to a cruel end by the German oppressor ....”<sup>126</sup>

These words speak for themselves, and their main point is integration at any price into the Israeli Holocaust narrative. In a conversation with him,<sup>127</sup> Mr. Recanati noted that people originating from Salonika in particular and Greece in general, were mostly people of action and dealing with history was not at the top of their agenda. The few Holocaust survivors from Greece had neither the emotional strength nor spare time to promote publication of their memoirs. These were the main reasons for the twenty mute years following the Holocaust.

Research into Sephardi Jewry, its history, and the Ladino culture it created gained significant impetus with the election of Mr. Yitzhak Navon, a Jerusalem-born (1921) Sephardi, as the fifth president of Israel.<sup>128</sup> In 1984, Aharon Russo turned to Shmuel Refael (born in Tel Aviv, 1960) and proposed that he head the project for registering the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. The collection of these statements was completed within five years, and they were

<sup>125</sup> *Zikhron Saloniki* [In Memoriam of of Salonika]. See above n. 1.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p. ix.

<sup>127</sup> See above n. 71.

<sup>128</sup> Mr. Navon was elected the fifth president of the State of Israel in 1978 and held the position until 1983. See above n. 16.

published in the book *Be-Netivei She'ol* [*The Road to Hell*].<sup>129</sup> I see two lines delineating the editing of this important collection of testimonies. The first is that all of them were presented in Hebrew in the book, which required translating them from the language in which they were given to the interviewer. Undoubtedly, this was a conscious decision coming from the clear intention to bring the Holocaust of Greek Jewry to the attention and awareness of Hebrew-reading Israelis. The interviewer and editor of the collection, Shmuel Refael, writes in the introduction, "*Be-Netivei She'ol* is not a history book since it is not based on historical research of the period, but rather relies foremost on the personal testimonies of those who experienced the Holocaust."<sup>130</sup> The second line of characterization of this collection is that the testimonies relate the experiences of the speaker during the Holocaust, on the road to Hell, and end with the survivor's reaching a safe haven: it should be reiterated that this safe haven, to which they came, is the State of Israel: we see Zionist ideology in action. Ya'akov Handeli concludes his testimony and says that on 14 August 1948 he arrived in Haifa port and enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces.<sup>131</sup> Jacques Stroumsa told that "three things helped me in the camps: playing the violin, the German language, and my higher education in engineering."<sup>132</sup> Even Mr. Stroumsa states at the end of his testimony that he had lived in France until 1967, and then immigrated to Israel out of Zionist motives and joined his son who had immigrated before him to study at the Hebrew University. Mr. Haim Refael, who was one of the twelve kindlers of the torches at the ceremony opening the Independence Day events in 1992, on the 500th anniversary of the Expulsion from Spain and who had been charged with representing the Jews of Greece and the Jewish Spanish speaking public that had perished in the Holocaust,<sup>133</sup> did not address his absorption process in Israel in his testimony for the collection *Be-Netivei She'ol*. His statement concludes with a description of his *aliyah* to Palestine on the "illegal" immigrant ship *Haviva Reik*.<sup>134</sup> Only in his memoirs, published twelve years later, does Mr. Refael devote attention to the harsh atmosphere prevailing in Salonika right after the liberation and the outbreak of the Civil War, the return all alone to his parent's home that had

129 See above n. 2. Also established at that time was the choir of Holocaust survivors coming from Greece. See S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 84.

130 See S. Refael, *Be-Netivei She'ol*, 14.

131 *Ibid.*, 189. Mr. Handeli's testimony was taken on 8 January 1986.

132 *Ibid.*, 379. Mr. Stroumsa's testimony was given on 19 June 1985; his book is: *Tu choisiras la vie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf Histoires-Judaïsmes, 1999).

133 H. Refael, *Shirat Hayim* [Song of Haim/Song of Life], 73–74.

134 S. Refael, *Be-Netivei She'ol*, 467. Mr. Haim Refael's testimony was taken on 25 June 1985.

been usurped by strangers, and finally the travails of absorption he underwent in Israel.<sup>135</sup>

From the beginning of the 1990s, we have been witness to tremendous development in the research field on Sephardi Jewry, which has been taking place, inter alia, thanks to the establishment of the National Authority for Ladino and Its Culture headed by the fifth president of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Navon (1997), and the founding of research institutes at Israeli universities: the Naime and Yehoshua Salti Center for Ladino Studies at Bar-Ilan University (2001) and the Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (2003). The National Authority for Ladino and Its Culture is leading a project of documentation and registration of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors whose language is – Jewish Spanish, commonly known nowadays in Israel as: Ladino. Alongside the endeavors in Israel, we find accelerated activity in research into Ladino in Spain<sup>136</sup> – in this regard one must mention the positive influence of the diplomatic relations established between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Spain (1986) – in Salonika, Germany, and France.<sup>137</sup>

Thus far we have discussed the loss of Sephardi identity that the Sephardim experienced in Israel, when, under the influence of the Zionist movement, they adopted the Hebrew language and voluntarily and consciously relinquished their Jewish Spanish language and with it the cultural heritage of their forefathers who spoke that language. On the basis of selections from the press written and published in *The Land of Israel*, in Hebrew, we examined the loss of Sephardi identity in light of the attitude of the Sephardim in *The Land of Israel* to the Holocaust, which destroyed the communities of their brethren, Jewish Spanish speakers, in the Balkans. In the ensuing, I wish to present the readers with a sample examination of two literary works – one of poetry and the other a play – written in Hebrew by natives of Israel from Sephardi families, Avner Peretz and Shmuel Refael, about the Holocaust of the Greek and Balkan Jews. I shall examine the two works with the aim of learning from them about the reaction of Sephardim in Israel to the Holocaust that annihilated the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi communities in the Balkans.

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135 See H. Refael, *Shirat Hayim*, 57–59.

136 Including the fate of the Sephardi Jews in the Holocaust. See, for example, A. Muñoz Ballesta, “Sobre el libro de los testimonios: los Sefardíes y el Holocausto de Salvador Santa Puche” (Barcelona: Sefardi Federation of Palm Beach, 2003), *El Catoblepas. Revista crítica del presente*, 32 (2004): 22.

137 S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 34.

Dr. Avner Peretz (born in Jerusalem, 1942) published his work *Ashan Va-Efer* [[Smoke and Ashes]<sup>138</sup> in 1986, when he was about 44 years old. His parents – Dr. Elie Peretz, a graduate of *Ha-Gimnasia Ha-Ivrit* in Jerusalem, a physician by profession and alumnus of a French university, and Rivka [Rebeka] Peretz née Ginio, a graduate of the French school St. Joseph and the British Girls College in Jerusalem<sup>139</sup> – both of whom were natives of Jerusalem and members of Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi families belonging to the Old *Yishuv*: the Peretz family originating from Turkey and the Ginio family that had lived for generations in Salonika and one of whose forefathers – Rabbi Ya’akov Ginio – had immigrated to Jerusalem in the nineteenth century.<sup>140</sup> Thus, Avner Peretz is a member of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi sector with which we are dealing in this current discussion. The mother tongue of each of his parents was Jewish Spanish, but in their home, with their three children, the parents spoke pure Hebrew. The children, of course, were exposed to Jewish Spanish as spoken by the older people in the family – the grandparents and the aunts. Certainly his mother, Rivka, who was a talented storyteller and knew how to sing romansas in Jewish Spanish, imbued her children with knowledge of this field; but when the eldest child, Avner, a mathematician by his academic training and an expert in computers by profession, decided to return to the tradition of his Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi forefathers, he studied the language, its history and its literature, completed his doctoral studies in Ladino literature<sup>141</sup> and acquired tremendous expertise in all these fields.

138 See above n. 3. This volume of poems appeared in a bilingual edition: Hebrew side by side with Jewish Spanish, or Ladino in its written version among Sephardi Jews.

139 On the Ginio family, see above chap. 1 n. 34.

140 A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “The Ginios of Salonika and Wine Production in Jerusalem”, in E. Horowitz and M. Orfali (eds) *The Mediterranean and the Jews*, vol. 2 (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 157–74.

141 Among Avner Peretz’s academic works are *Aquilana*, introduction (Ma’aleh Adumim: Institute for the Documentation of the Jewish Spanish Language and Culture, 2005); idem, *Avraham Toledo, Las coplas de Yoseph Ha-Tzaddik* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2006), 211–60; idem, *Mayim Esh Ve-Ahavah. Ghazalim Ve-Shirim Mistiyyim Aherim Shel Ha-Shabtayim* [Agua, Fuego i Amor. Gazeles i Kantes Mistikos de los Sabetaistas; Water Fire and Love. Ghazalim and Mystical Poems of the Sabbateans] (Ma’aleh Adumim: Institute for the Documentation of the Jewish Spanish Language and Culture, 2006); idem, *Ḥidot de Esopeto* [Aesop’s Riddles] (Ma’aleh Adumim: Institute for the Documentation of the Jewish Spanish Language and Culture, 2007). Peretz was the first to publish, in 1981 in the review *Etmol* [Yesterday], an academic article on the history of the Ginio family. In his introduction to the article, Peretz mentions that he was influenced from the stories of his uncle, Meir Ḥai Ginio. In his day, Meir Ḥai Ginio was a regular contributor to the weekly *Hed Ha-Mizrah*; cf. above n. 6. In 2007, Peretz published, together

I wish to present Avner Peretz as a person who went against the path that his parents and their contemporaries trod: they took leave of Jewish Spanish in favor of Hebrew; he speaks fine Hebrew and writes poetry in it and speaks to his wife and six children in it. But he has adopted for himself Jewish Spanish as a language of culture and in it and about it, he writes poetry, linguistic, historical, and literary studies. For him Jewish Spanish is a bridge that must be crossed to span the intergenerational gap and to join the social network of Sephardim, which was torn and unraveled with the leave-taking from the Jewish Spanish language, in the generation of those born in the early 1920s, including his parents. The language is also the thread that binds him to the Holocaust of the Greek and Balkan Jews, and among them many of his mother's relatives: the Salonikans whom he had never known but had certainly heard about from his mother – who, like her two older brothers, each in his own time – visited Salonika, together with her mother, Tamar Ginio née Yehoshua, a native of that city, and met her family members there, on the eve of WWII, before they perished in the Holocaust.<sup>142</sup>

In his poem *Ha-Arpilit Ha-Afelah* – “La galaksia eskuresia,” which appeared in his poetry volume *Ashan Va-Efer: A Cycle of Poems Dedicated to the Memory of the Salonikan Jewish Community*,<sup>143</sup> Peretz places Jewish Spanish as “this language of hardness and sweetness” – “esta lingua de dulzor i de dureza,” which only a few speak today, as a bridge he wishes to pass over on his way to identification and communication with the dead who perished in the Holocaust and for whom this was their language when alive, and it is possible that

It speaks / perhaps in another universe / in the dark galaxy /  
of the dead / the slain / the choked / the burned / who knows? /

Se avla puede ser \ Tambien en otro universo: \ En la galaksia eskuresida \  
De los muertos \ Los matados \ Los kemados \ I los afogados|”

and the poet states:

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with Gladys Pimienta, *Dikcionario Amplio Djudeo-espanyol-Ebreo. Lashon Me-Aspamia* (Ma'aleh Adumim: Sefarad – Association for the Preservation, Nurturing, and Distribution of Sephardi Culture/ Ma'aleh Adumim: Institute for the Documentation of the Jewish Spanish Language and Culture), and is now devoting his efforts to preparing a digital etymological dictionary of this language.

142 Cf. above n. 36.

143 *Ashan Va-Efer* [Smoke and Ashes] 36–37 in the bilingual edition; see above n. 3.

In the meantime, upon us / two and three in this universe / it is incumbent to arise alive and ongoing / as the last means to make contact with our dead / until the day comes

Entremientes, mozotros \ Dos i tres en este universo \ Devemos mantenerla biva i fluente \ Komo el uniko i ultimo medio \ De komunikasion \ Kon nuestros muertos \ Asta el dia \

The poet presents the language as “the last means”, “Komo el uniko i ultimo medio” [as the single and last medium]<sup>144</sup> for making contact with the dead. I wish to see in these lines support for my position that the estrangement from Jewish Spanish drew in its wake also alienation from the Sephardi world and its tradition and that the only way to again unite and weave the network that had been unraveled owing to the intergenerational separation, is to learn the Jewish Spanish language and to maintain it.

Shmuel Refael (born in Tel Aviv, 1960) did not need to learn Jewish Spanish. This language was spoken as the daily language in his parents' home: his father, Haim Refael,<sup>145</sup> a native of Salonika, and his mother, Esther Refael née Vivante,<sup>146</sup> a native of Corfu – both of whom were Holocaust survivors – along with Greek and in time, Hebrew. The same applies to the topic of the Holocaust: his life was bound up with and interwoven with the trauma of the Holocaust, from the time he was born to this day.<sup>147</sup> In the monodrama *Golgotha*,<sup>148</sup> which was written and first presented in Tel Aviv, in 2003, and was published in a Hebrew-English edition in 2008, powerfully impressive expression is given to the trauma of the Holocaust experience by the protagonist, Alberto Salvado, and no less than that, the cry of humiliation of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardi Holocaust survivors, who were not accepted as brothers in suffering, not by

144 Worthy noting is that in the Ladino version the adjective “uniko” [single] appears alongside ultimo” [the last], while in the Hebrew version only the term *aḥaron* [last] is used; I do not think, however, that this is of importance regarding the content but rather is dependent upon consideration of poetic meter.

145 See S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 189, 287; S. Refael, *Be-Netivei She'ol (The Road to Hell)*, 467.

146 See *ibid.*, 460. The testimony of Esther Refael née Vivante was given on 26 February 1986.

147 See S. Refael, *Un Grito en el Silencio*, 11.

148 See above n. 4. The play was written in Hebrew mixed with Jewish Spanish. Striking is the use of the Jewish Spanish plural form for Hebrew words: *terufotes*, *bedikotes*, *azkarotes*, *ganavimes*; alongside expressions in Jewish Spanish, such as, “ke maraviya, ke emozúra”, *ibid.*, 10, in addition to many others as well as stress on the form of expression of Salonika Jews, “Even if he is Polish, he is *konomi* [komo for the Hebrew: *kemo* meaning: like] me!”

those who shared their fate during the Holocaust or among the Holocaust survivors in Israel or by Israeli society in general.

The protagonist's name deserves special mention: Alberto Salvado; among Jewish Spanish speakers the name "Alberto" is parallel to "Abraham." "Salvado" in Jewish Spanish means "survivor". The association with the Patriarch Abraham, who was saved from the fiery furnace,<sup>149</sup> is quite clear to me. The monodrama describes one day, the last, in the central figure's life. On this day, passing before him is his whole life, which was etched with the stamp of the Holocaust. In view of the planned event of lighting a torch – "ner", as it is called by Alberto – at a ceremony in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust, at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the protagonist recalls, while addressing the image of his deceased wife and a monologue in which he speaks to her, as if in a dialogue, a mosaic of different moments in his life, all of which are overshadowed by the Holocaust.

Of the alienation of the Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim in the midst of the death camps, he tells that "Immediately, the first time he saw me, there, in a prisoners working unit of the camp, he [his friend, Daniel Schwartz, the "poloni", the Polish fellow; and in Salvado's terms, 'Danielko'], he did not believe I was a Jew. With my own ears I heard him say to his friend, "Iz der a yid?" [Is he a Jew?]. The reason for the question was that Alberto, just like his brothers, coming from Greece and the Balkans, did not speak Yiddish. Yet, Daniel "was my luck" and because of him Alberto survived: Daniel prevented his companion from committing suicide<sup>150</sup> and urged him to live, "To live, Alberto, to live! We must remain alive so that there will be someone to tell what happened here."<sup>151</sup> On the attitude of the Israeli establishment – such as Yad Vashem – to Sephardi Holocaust survivors, Alberto says, "All my life for sixty years has only been patience and more patience and more patience, until they let one of us light the torch at Yad Vashem ...."<sup>152</sup>

In his imaginary dialogue with the portrait of his dead wife, Alberto says inquiringly, that he wonders within himself whether he "deserves" the honor of lighting the torch. "Perhaps, if I light it, they will put a beautiful picture of Salonika at the entrance to Yad Vashem? Until now, there has not been even one picture of ours. Would you believe such a thing? For shame."<sup>153</sup> In Alberto's feverish imagination there also comes to mind the common past of the Sep-

149 *Tana Devei Elyahu* 6; Genesis Rabbah 38.

150 S. Refael, *Golgotha*, 16.

151 *Ibid.*, 10. See also *ibid.*, 27.

152 *Ibid.*, 9.

153 *Ibid.*, 17.

hardim on the Iberian Peninsula, “I, Alber Salvado, a native of Salonika, son of Reina and Mushon, whose forefathers escaped from the hands of the evil Isabella who expelled the Jews from Spain, and in the end they fell into the hands of Hitler ....” He goes on, “Even if we had wanted to flee, there was nowhere to go. To Spain? How could that be, that’s impossible. For generations, the great rabbis of Salonika did not agree that we should return to Spain. Only the Spanish language did they permit us to keep ....”<sup>154</sup> For me, there is no doubt that Sephardi Jews are the descendants of those who came from the Iberian Peninsula, speakers of Jewish Spanish.

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154 Ibid., p. 15. In this context, we must turn our attention to the ban attributed to Don Yitzḥak Abarbanel at the time of the Expulsion and to the attitude of the Sephardi rabbis throughout the generations, as reflected in their responsa, toward anyone who continued to live on the soil of the Iberian Peninsula. See A. Meyuḥas Ginio, “La actitud de los rabinos sefardíes del imperio otomano ante los conversos: el caso del *yavam mešummad*”, in Y. Moreno Koch (ed.), *La mujer judía* (Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 2007), 129–48, especially 132–45.

# Epilogue: History in the Eyes of the Beholder

When you are in Jerusalem you are in Tetuán, and when you are  
in Tetuán you are in Granada and when you are in Granada you are in  
Jerusalem

MICHAL HELD, "Puertas. She'arim", *Over the Face of the Waters* (Jerusalem:  
Reshimu Poetry Series, 2009), 19 [Hebrew and Ladino].



The historiography of the Jewish people in the modern period began with the members of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in nineteenth-century Germany: Leopold Yom Tov Lipman Zunz (1794–1886) and Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891). This endeavor was continued by Shimon Dubnow (1860–1941). In its day, the historiography of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* served as an instrument to promote the vision of emancipation of the Jews in Europe. The history of the Jews in Muslim Spain and in Christian Spain, in the period parallel to the European Middle Ages, over the course of the seventh to the fifteenth centuries, was an excellent model for presentation and imitation: Jews were involved in their economic and social environment, engaged in all possible professions. That was how the German Jews wanted to see themselves.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, there was idealization in such a description of the Golden Age in Spain: for the Jews, being non-Muslims and non-Christians, could not officially fill the roles of courtiers and their status was, on the whole, maintained on an individual basis, for example, as physicians to the ruler.

The Jews were a minority group that was permitted to live among the majority society – whether a Christian or Muslim majority – under limiting, humiliating conditions. Yet, under them, the Jews could integrate into most areas of life. The historical chapter of the Jewish chronicle on the Iberian Peninsula – that is Sepharad in Hebrew sources – was presented in Jewish historiography, from the close of the nineteenth century, as a glorious chapter in the history of the Jewish people. This epoch was characterized by a number of phenomena: Sepharad was the setting for the exceptional historical encounter of the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in which the intensiveness of the political, social, and culture relationships was underscored. The historical uniqueness of Sepharad resides in the existence of Jewish,

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1 See Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, "Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: The Iberian and the German Models", in *Leo Baeck Memorial Lectures* (1982), 3–38.

Christians, and Muslims side by side, during a long period of eight hundred years, in the course of which there was no single central government on the Iberian Peninsula. In the world of Islam, which consisted of a flourishing urban society, wealthy Jewish communities developed that fostered ramified links to non-Jewish society. Jewish court figures, foremost among them physicians, gained for themselves prestigious status in the courts of the Muslim rulers. This was the case of Rabbi Ḥisdai [Ḥasdai] Ibn Shaprut (918–970), who served at the court of Abd-al-Rahman III, the Caliph of Córdoba. At the latter's command, Rabbi Ḥisdai went on various diplomatic missions and even created a firm connection with the yeshivot of Babylonia and The Land of Israel and corresponded with Joseph, king of the Khazars. The Jews were first-rate scientists: among them were mathematicians, astronomers, and philosophers; they also served as intercessors and erudite translators, who transmitted the sciences of philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, which were based on the Greek-Arab cultural heritage and especially Aristotelian science, from the Muslim south to the Christian north, which was being built up by virtue of the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula. The Golden Age in Muslim Spain came to its end when the geopolitical achievements of the Christian Reconquista roused against the Peninsular Muslim rulers, from the end of the eleventh century, Muslim invasions from North Africa: the Almoravides first and the Almohades in their wake. From the close of the eleventh century, the important segment of Jewish existence in the Iberian Peninsula moved to the Christian kingdoms: this was the saga of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi (1075–1141), of also of Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1141). During the rule of Alfonso el Sabio, king of Castille (1221–1284), translators – including Jews – were at work in Toledo translating scientific works from Arabic to Romance, the language of the country, and to Latin. Ostensibly, the Jews and Christians peacefully lived together (*convivencia*). But as early as the second half of the thirteenth century, with the appearance of the mendicant orders (*Mendicantes*) throughout Europe and in the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, and even more intensely in the following centuries – the fourteenth and the fifteenth – the situation of the Jews in the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula deteriorated: in 1263, a religious polemical debate was held in Barcelona in which Nahmanides (Rabbi Moshe Ben Naḥman; Najmánides) vied against a Jewish convert to Christianity: Pablo Christiani. As known, Nahmanides was forced, as a result of this debate, to abandon his home in Girona [Gerona]. He immigrated to The Land of Israel and re-established the Jewish community in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Against the backdrop of the pan-European crisis of the fourteenth century, riots burst forth in 1391, throughout the Iberian Peninsula. *Convivencia* did a complete

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2 Cf. chap. 1, n. 87.

turnabout: the Jews were forced through polemics, or riots, to convert. On the stage of Jewish and Spanish history, there now appeared the problem of the *anusim*, or the “New Christians”. This issue became exacerbated in the fifteenth century, with the opening of a religious polemical debate, held in the palace of Pope Benedict XIII in Tortosa (1413–1414). The final hundred years of Jewish life on the Iberian Peninsula were a time of deterioration, recession, and mass conversions. In 1478, Isabel [Isabella] and Fernando [Ferdinand] rulers of Castille and Aragon, at the inspiration of Pope Sixtus IV, instituted the Spanish Inquisition with the aim of operating against the “New Christians”, who were suspected by the “Old Christians” of having only outwardly converted. In 1492, with the Edict of Expulsion, the curtain came down on Jewish life on the Iberian Peninsula.

After the Expulsion, in the span of time between the sixteenth century and the twentieth – until the Holocaust – most of the Jews lived in European countries. The Jews living in Muslim countries were fewer numerically and lacked political influence. The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* historians dealt with Jewish history in the east during the Geonic period (sixth to eleventh centuries); Spain from the seventh to the fifteenth century; the Shabbatean phenomenon of the seventeenth century; and the Cairo Genizah, discovered in the nineteenth century. As a rule, the oriental Sephardi dispersal after the time of Shabbetai Tzvi (1626–1676) was given no space in the books they and their disciples wrote, and silence reigned about them, until the Damascus Affair, 1840; even this episode was presented as proof of the backwardness of oriental Jewry and of its need for modernization. A similar approach also held sway about the Jews from Islamic countries who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s: they were perceived as lagging several generations behind the Jews of Poland. The Zionist narrative was Europocentric in its nature. The Zionist movement’s leaders were familiar with Jewish history from the writings of Graetz and Dubnow, and their views matched the positions of those historians. Even Zionist historiography, on which the textbooks in the State of Israel were based, stressed the decline of the Jews in the Muslim countries and the lack of progress and *moderna* among them in light of the situation prevailing, in the modern era, in their countries of residence. As most Israeli historians see it, in the generation of the establishment of the state and afterwards, the oriental Jews were perceived as backwards, just like the residents of the oriental countries in which they lived, foremost among them the Ottoman Empire: all of which were tagged as suffering decline and degeneration. This perception was in contrast to the progress of the West: the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, the French Revolution, liberalism, and the Spring of Nations.

The senior historians of Sephardi Jewry: Shlomo Rozanes (1862–1938), Avraham Galante (1873–1961), and Joseph Nehama (1880–1971) were all graduates of

Alliance Israélite Universelle schools and were influenced by the ideals of western *Haskalah*. They focused, however, on ethnic group community history and did not integrate general Jewry into their historical studies.

The leading historians in the early days of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and in the generation of the time of the establishment of the State of Israel – Ben Zion Dinur (1884–1973) and Yitzhak Baer (1888–1980), and the second generation of historians, Shmuel Ettinger (1919–1988) and Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson (1914–1977) – did not deal with the history of the exiles from Spain, after the 1492 Expulsion, in its oriental dispersal. The estrangement from oriental Jewry – and in this respect there is no difference between Sephardi Jews and oriental Jews [*mizrahim*] – was almost absolute. A historian working in our times, Jacob Barnai, wrote about the “research ghetto.”<sup>3</sup> Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963), the second president of the State of Israel, was an exception: he was interested in the oriental Jews and in the Samaritans, and in November 1947, he founded the Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities of the Orient, which since 1952, when he was elected the second president of the State of Israel, has borne his name. The Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities of the Orient. In 1963, Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi was established, and it deals with the study of The Land of Israel and its settlements. In the 1960s, the historian Haim Ze’ev Hirshberg (1903–1976) did research on the history of the Jews in North Africa<sup>4</sup> and began the research into oriental Jewry at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan.

In the 1970s, in light of the social ferment within Israel, the external decline of the political and cultural hegemony of the European countries, and as a result of the post-colonial perceptions in the west regarding the study of minorities, the ‘Other’, and multiculturalism, far-ranging changes also took place in the realm of historical research and the teaching of history in Israel: in contrast to the melting pot policy, which ruled with a heavy hand in the early years of the state, cultural pluralism came to the fore. In 1971, Yitzhak Navon was appointed minister of education of Israel, and a unit was established in the Ministry of Education for the heritage of oriental Jewry. In 1976, the Israeli Knesset debated about the heritage of oriental Jewry, and as a result, in 1977, the Center for the Integration of the Heritage of Sephardi and Oriental Jewry was founded. It was headed, from 1979, by Nissim Yosha.<sup>5</sup> At the initiative of the insti-

3 Jacob Barnai, “The Influence of the State of Israel on writing the history of the Jews in Muslim countries in the modern period. To remember as well as to forget. An Israeli Glance at the Jewish Past”, *Zion* 74, 197–217; especially 202 [Hebrew].

4 See Haim Zeev Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

5 See N. Yosha, “Theory and Practice in Integrating Eastern Jewry in Education and Culture”, *Shevet Ve-Am*, 3 (9) (1981), 340–48. On him, see above Introduction, n. 58.

tute's scholars, academic research began and was developed in fields of teaching that encompassed the Jews of the oriental countries and their heritage. Since 1979, there has regularly appeared an interdisciplinary quarterly on the study of Jewish communities in the orient: the journal *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry*. The historian Shmuel Ettinger changed his mind and agreed to be the chief editor of the series *History of the Jews in Muslim Countries*, which was written by the scholars Michel Abitbol, Shalom Bar Asher, Joseph Tobi, and Jacob Barnai. The history textbooks, too, written in the 1980s by Shmuel Ettinger, Michael Ziv, and Ya'akov M. Landau, presented oriental Jewry and its heritage.<sup>6</sup> At that time, the institution Misgav Yerushalayim – The Center for Research and Study of Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage – began its activity within the confines of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

From the second half of the twentieth century, a number of streams developed parallel to historical research in Israel: alongside the research institutes that had functioned in Spain as early as the beginning of the twentieth century and which we mentioned in chapter 5 of this volume, historians in France and the United States began to deal with writing the history of the Jews of the Balkans and the Orient. Some of their works were described in our introductory chapter. In recent years, the circle of those involved in the history of Sephardim and their culture expanded, and research centers were opened in France, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey, in addition to the centers operating in Bar-Ilan University and Ben-Gurion University. In all five universities in Israel Jewish Spanish is taught and texts in Ladino are read. From the 1980s, another aspect in the historical study of Sephardi Jews in Israel has developed: the study of Zionism in the oriental countries as well as research into the Holocaust in them in addition to alternative historiographical interpretation of the history of Zionism and the New *Yishuv*, as it was represented by Sephardim in The Land of Israel, beginning from the 1940s,<sup>7</sup> and by oriental intellectuals (most of whom were of Iraqi-Jewish origin) who came to Israel, starting with the 1950s. In the main, the former stress the activity of Sephardim in the Jewish settlement endeavor even prior to the First and Second Aliyot of the *Halutzim* from Europe. From then on, the historians also directed their attention to the activity of the non-Zionist Jewish institutions and individuals such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle. In 1984, on the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), a native of Livorno, Italy, and one hundred years to his death, his portrait appeared on Israeli currency and on a postage

6 Jacob Barnai, "Jews of Islamic Countries in the Modern Period and the 'Jerusalem School'", *Pe'amim*, 92 (2002): 83–117 (Hebrew).

7 See above chapter 6.

stamp. Yet, these developments encompassed all non-Ashkenazi Jews and made no effort to distinguish between Jewish Spanish speaking Sephardim and their brethren coming from oriental countries, who did not speak this language and did not nurture its speakers way of life. In the introductory chapter to this book, I offered the readers the definition of Sephardim as those who – or at least their forefathers – spoke the Jewish Spanish language – known by the names *Spanyolit*, Judezmo, or Ladino – and wrote in Ladino. Language, culture, and collective memory are what determine human group identity and they are responsible for the fostering of this identity. Collective memory – the pool of joint experiences, customs, ways of life, and philosophies of life – all these, as created and preserved on Spanish soil, are the unique heritage of the Jewish Spanish-speaking, Ladino-writing Sephardim.

Sepharad that was in Jerusalem no longer exists as a consolidated socioethnic group.<sup>8</sup> Few are they who speak Jewish Spanish as a mother tongue. In recent years, however, one can see a revival among the descendants of Sephardim in Israel and throughout the Jewish world. Academic research into the history of the Sephardim, their culture, and their language greatly influenced this awakening. They have developed active social networks on the internet, groups for studying the language, and periodic social gatherings of those who consider themselves Sephardim and seek to become familiar with and preserve the heritage of their forefathers: Sepharad is returning to Jerusalem.

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8 See chapter 6, nn. 15-17.



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