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This Volume is dedicated to the memory of
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A pioneer in the study of Ladino culture in Israel,
a historian, bibliographer, poet and author.

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Abstracts

Eli Shai

The Curse of Love – The Cancionero of the Sins and the Catastrophe of the Sirens: A new Reading in Abraham B. Yehoshua’s *Mr. Mani*

Mr. Mani is to be considered the highest literary achievement in the novels of A.B. Yehoshua and its last chapter is to be considered the dramatic climax of the book. This chapter is an expression of the wish of the author to reconnect with his long-forgotten ethnic family roots of the Sephardic community in old Jerusalem, which were so vividly portrayed in a series of books by his father Jacob Yehoshua.

However, beyond what might look, at first reading, as an emotional nostalgic yearning towards the roots of the family in the Ottoman period, there stands a constructed criminal code which hides the highly developed sinful mechanism of Abraham Mani, the main protagonist of this last chapter.

A detailed analysis of the Ladino poem, “The cansionero of Esterrika who’s eyes are so lovely,” shows that this poem, sung by Mani in the midst of his confession to his Rabbi Hananyah Hadaya, is to be seen and heard not only as a soft musical interval in his tense monologue. Rather, it is a constructed code that hides the singer’s four grave and deadly sins: his direct personal responsibility for the murder of his son Joseph, the incest he committed with Tamara, the widow of his son, his wish to tempt the wife of his Rabbi, Lady Flora and his attempt to end the life of the sick old Rabbi through the very power of his singing.

In a much wider perspective, one can see behind this episode four patterns of the dramatic narrative, so typical of the novels of Yehoshua; the compulsive guest who is totally possessed by his *idée fixe*; The guest who strives to get into the bed of his host; the devoted care giver who attempts to kill the

person he is treating; and the deadly singing, which is to be followed from the operatic odyssey of *Molko* in Berlin to the temptation of the troubadours in a *Journey to the End of the Millenium*. Thus, the literary creation of Yehoshua's novels reconnects with the ancient motif of the dangerous singing of the Sirens, which originated in Greek mythology and was later a source of inspiration for Kafka.

Strangely enough, although the works of Yehoshua have been analyzed in great detail, it seems that the most basic element in his main novels, represented by the four sins of Mr. Mani Abraham, have been totally ignored. This article tries to show that this repression is part of a much larger cultural censorship regarding the very essence of Jewish Sephardic poetic culture that hides provocative sexual content behind the traditional screen of the Romancero and the Cansionero.

Batya Shimony

Identity under Trial –Yehuda Burla between Sephardic Manners and Zionistic Being

The writer Yehuda Burla is mostly known as an authentic portrayer of Sephardi Jewish life in Jerusalem and the Near Eastern countries during the first half of the 20th century. But his extensive work also includes the story of his hybrid identity, moving between two poles: the rooted Sephardic manner of life and the new being of the Zionist *Aliyah*. This movement to and fro between two worlds is a main key to Burla's fiction. From his first novel *Luna*, his progress in Hebrew literature was marked with mixed feelings: the desire to be a part of the literary group that consisted of Ashkenazi and Zionist writers, and the fear of being rejected by this very group. In the article, I trace the development of Burla's fiction and how it reflects the problematic encounter between the cultural dominant and the other, the native who came from the marginal culture.

The first novels of Burla described in detailed way the life of the Sephardic groups in Jerusalem. The readers, both from

the old and the new Yeshuv, embraced his literature. The newcomers saw the world he wrote about as an exotic and fascinating world. The critics accepted his work and marked out his natural talent as a storyteller. In his next books Burla became critical about the manners of the society he described, his own society. The more accepted he was by the dominant group, he became more judicial towards the Sephardic beliefs, manners etc. Later on his work was changed radically, and he represented the “Old Yeshuv” as a negative and stagnate world, that should be replaced by the new idealistic world. But although the message was very clear on the overt level of the stories, a closer reading reveals a different meaning of them. The article suggests a new look on Burla’s relationship with the Zionist dominant group, and shows the literary ways by which he accepted the new ways of life and rejected them at the same time.

Eliezer Papo

The Life Story and the Literary Opus of Laura Papo, "Bohoreta", the First Female Dramatist who wrote in Judeo-Spanish

Laura Papo Bohoreta is one of the most active female figures in modern Sephardic history. She was the first female to enter many fields until then reserved for men. She was the first female autodidact field collector of Sephardic folklore, the first female dramatist to arise from within Sephardic community and one of the first Sephardic feminists. This last term, however, should be taken with certain reservation. Bohoreta was definitively a fighter for women’s right to learning and work – but, unlike many feminists, she did not see these objectives as a value *per se* – but, rather, as a mere commandment of the moment. Understanding Sephardic tradition as an ongoing struggle to keep up with the times, while conserving the old family and community traditions and values, she kept fighting on both fronts, advocating women’s emancipation and striving to preserve the language and the folklore of the community. From an early stage in her life,

she discovered that the best instrument through which to pass her message to the community would be theater. From then on, she wrote a variety of folklore and social plays. The article aims at reinstating Bohoreta's biography around her bibliography.

Michal Held

Between the River and the Sea – a Mutli-Layered Reading of a Judeo-Spanish Wedding Song from the Island of Rhodes

This paper suggests a multi-disciplinary approach to a Judeo-Spanish folk song, traditionally performed during the ceremony of the bride's purification bath before her wedding. The discussion focuses on the following issues:

A description and analysis of the traditional ceremony (based on field work with elderly women who were born in the island of Rhodes.)

A presentation and analysis of the fictional and real characters related to the folk song.

A description and analysis of the symbols that evolved in the folk song.

A description and analysis of the reflexive system created around the folk song.

An analysis of the status of the folk song in the context of the fact that the traditional Judeo-Spanish from which it sprung is disappearing at the point in time in which it was documented.

Tamar Alexander

Komo puede ser? – The Judeo- Spanish Riddle

The aim of this article is to examine the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) riddle, to classify its types and to analyze its charac-

teristics and its place and function in the group culture. This subject has hardly been researched.

The article is based on a corpus of 114 riddles from printed sources and the author's fieldwork. This is quite a small corpus, as riddles are hardly used anymore. Analyzing the riddles of one group can provide a key to understanding its culture and ethnic identity. On the one hand, it permits an understanding of the group norms, ideas, values and didactic aims. On the other, the uniqueness of the riddle is that it also expresses a disapproval, protest and reevaluation of those norms. Yet, by offering a solution at the end of the riddle, it reinforces the group norms.

The corpus of riddles represented in this article expresses these two contradictory directions. The riddles reflect the different levels of relationships in the family from different aspects: It can express erotic desires when riddles are posed among women, or their protest against the traditional obligations of women towards their husbands. They can express aggression and confrontation among husbands and wives or authority and teaching values among parents and children. Everyday life is reflected in the text of the riddle, by the description of objects, animals or human traits and looks as part of the Sephardic reality. But above all the ethnic identity is expressed by posing the riddles in Ladino, the unique language of the group. Performing a riddle and offering the solution requires a mastery of the language. The riddle uses rhymes, rhythm, and poetic devices such as puns, metaphors and similes.

Performing a riddle always requires at least two people, who are holding an unequal dialogue between the one who asks the question (and already knows the answer) and the one who tries to guess the answer though the question is deliberately confusing and ambiguous. Performing a riddle requires a special situation, almost like a ritual, when two or more people accept the role of the riddler and the active audience. The process of riddling needs a constant creativity to invent new riddles, as one that is already known is no longer usable. Coupled with the need for a broad knowledge

of the language, this might be the reason why Ladino riddles have almost disappeared as a live genre. It seems that among a group whose language is no longer alive, riddles have lost their place.

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald

The Study of Eastern Judeo-Spanish

This article focuses on the historical development of research relating to the language and culture of the eastern Judeo-Spanish communities that settled throughout the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain. Research into the linguistic, literary, musical, and folkloristic facets of the language began relatively late, compared with parallel research developments concerning other languages and communities. The study of canonical works preceded that of the folkloristic and oral ones. Hispanic interest in the language and its creativity began at the end of the 19th century and helped increase Jewish interest in the subject. Although it was initially the written documents that were catalogued, oral romances, *cantigas*, *coplas* (songs), and proverbs continue to be documented today.

Researchers distinguish between literatures based on Hispanic sources and those based on original or "adapted" literatures from other cultures. The most studied written genres are Ladino translations of liturgical Hebrew texts and *Me'am Lo'ez*. It is the romances that dominate the study of oral literature. A highly important theoretical issue pertains to the era in which Judeo-Spanish became an independent language. This may have occurred either before the expulsion or later in the Diaspora. Other issues focus on the originality of the texts, dialectal differences, loan components, textual themes, musical and folkloristic traditions, etc. Most research issues follow the researchers' individual interests. The study of Judeo-Spanish still lacks an interdisciplinary overview, but academic interest is increasing and several institutes teach and research both the language and its literature.

Yaakov Bentolila

The Study of Moroccan Judeo-Spanish (Haketia)

The Judeo-Spanish that was spoken in Morocco until two or three generations ago is known by the name “Haketia” This term (derived from Arabic) refers to the spoken language, the vernacular, which included an abundance of Arabic loanwords. Formal literary registers of the language avoid Arabic words and therefore attain a high degree of uniformity with the general Ladino *koine*. Unlike its oriental Judeo-Spanish counterpart, Haketia, due to geographical proximity, preserved strong links with Spanish and was heavily influenced by it, to the extent that eventually, it was almost entirely replaced by the latter. Among members of former Haketia speaking communities, dispersed nowadays all over the world, Haketia is no more than a source of household or cultural-religious expressions.

Academic research into Haketia began with a literary focus, at the beginning of the XXth century. In a series of articles by Jose Benoliel, we find the first systematic linguistic description of this dialect. Since then, our knowledge has greatly increased, due to the work of dedicated researchers, especially Spanish scholars in the literary domain. Some of them treated linguistic issues, but the spoken aspects were rarely dealt with and, in general, the study of the Hebrew and Arabic components of this dialect was quite limited.

In recent years, Haketia has begun to play an important role as a means of self-identification among Jews who emigrated from Spanish Morocco to other diasporas. Far from the former homeland, Haketia no longer represents a threat to successful cultural integration. Talented persons have now rejuvenated a kind of reconstructed Haketia, with a very salient humoristic character. Others are dedicating their efforts to the regathering of oral texts (such as proverbs), or to the sponsoring of academic work in this field.

Avraham Gross

Jewish, Christian, and Marrano Messianism in Iberia in the Turn of the Fifteenth Century – Common Atmosphere and Symbiotic Relationships

Messianism has been long recognized as a powerful motif in the history of the Jews of Spain prior to the Expulsion (1492) and in the following generations. Hopes for redemption and return to Judaism were also central to the life of the Marranos. However, the study of messianic thought, expectation and awakening did not consider Christian messianism in Spain during this period. This article attempts to show that Jewish and Marranic messianism cannot be fully understood outside of the context of parallel Iberian-Christian hopes.

Three issues are examined in order to illustrate the main thesis: Columbus' messianic thought and aspirations; a Jewish visionary from Spain who was arrested by the king of Portugal and wrote about his visions and experiences in Portugal in 1497; and the “Prophecies of the Child” [*Nevo'ut Ha-Yeled*]. All three, it is claimed, can only be properly understood against the backdrop of the Iberian-Christian messianism that flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Yaron Ben-Naeh

Leisure Time of Jewish Women in late Ottoman Jerusalem

Various sources reveal a hitherto unknown part of Jewish Sephardi women's daily life in late Ottoman Jerusalem. A special local feminine leisure culture existed, based on the Harem culture, typical of upper class Ottoman city denizens, whose main characteristics were female segregation and gender separation.

Many, mostly elderly women, lived in Jerusalem, but their

lives were ruled by men who wished to maintain the image of a holy community. Free of the constant care for their livelihood, Jewish women had much leisure time, which they spent amongst female relatives, neighbors and friends in domestic visits – chatting and singing, sipping coffee, eating sweets and smoking the nargileh. Less often, they ventured outdoors to the bathhouse and for short walks outside the city walls. Communal regulations attempted to regulate these habits.

Many of the women's concerns related to their fate in the next world, therefore they spent much time in prayer, walking to holy sites, and practicing charitable deeds for the poor and needy.

Alisa Meyuhas Ginio

In Defense of the People of Israel – The Spanish Senator, Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852-1932) and the Sephardic Diaspora

Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852-1932) studied medicine in Madrid during the revolutionary years, 1868-1874. He practiced medicine until going into politics in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Throughout his life, Pulido belonged to Liberal Catholic political parties and cherished the idea of tolerance for all. Like his liberal peers, Ángel Pulido blamed intolerance and lack of pluralism for the decay of Spain and firmly stood up for a change in the public agenda of his fatherland.

He was thoroughly impressed by the adherence of the Sephardic Jews, whose ancestors had been expelled from the Iberian Kingdoms in 1492, to their Judeo-Spanish language. Under the influence of Emilio Castelar (1832-1899), Pulido thought he could forward the interests of his fatherland, by promoting a reconciliation between Spain and the Sephardic Jews, using the Judeo-Spanish language as a bridge between them. Moreover, a reconciliation of this kind could be satisfactory evidence that Spain would adopt a new approach

of tolerating the other; of pluralism and freedom of cult and conscience for all. This, in turn, could bring about a major change in the world image of Spain and the Spaniards, which would improve the position of Spain among the nations of the world; thus bringing about revival and progress for the country and its inhabitants.

Such a crucial change was all the more necessary, in face of the devastating effects of the crisis of 1898, when Spain lost its last remaining colonies to the USA and became aware of its decline. Spaniards became concerned about the decadence of their country. There were more and more people who believed that intolerance and lack of pluralism had changed the course of Spanish history and had led to the decline of the once omnipotent ruling power of the world.

In 1893, Pulido launched a campaign for reestablishing relations, both cultural and commercial, with the Sephardic Jews, especially in their Mediterranean Diaspora. He carried on this campaign as long as his failing health allowed him to.

The results of this fervent campaign were not very impressive; yet, at home, Ángel Pulido did manage to create some public opinion in favor of the Judeo-Spanish speaking Sephardic Jews. Neither was the response of latter considerable either. Mediterranean Sephardic Jews, who wished to advance and better their standards of living, took other ways and the option of adopting a Spanish cultural hegemony was not their choice.

Gila Hadar

Marriage as Survival Strategy among the Sephardic Jews of Saloniki, 1900-1943: Continuity and Change

Marriage is the most ancient and important social strategy in Judaism. Its objective, apart from procreation and the production of offspring within a family framework, is to preserve the social order and a value system that sanctifies lineage

and possession – the choice of bride and groom, the age of marriage, and the preparations for the marriage ceremony. Every word, color, sound, delicacy, custom and song, had symbolic meaning. These processes took place according to Jewish law and custom and the Iberian tradition, but were influenced by the constraints of everyday life within and alongside the surrounding society, Moslem or Greek. For centuries, marriage served as a means of protecting Jewish society from outside influences that threatened its existence. In this article, we shall discuss marriage and mass marriage during the Second World War and on the eve of the deportation to the extermination camps, practices that circumvented the conventions customary in peacetime, with survival as their primary goal.

Paloma Díaz-Mas

The Judeo-Spanish Literature*

This contribution is a comprehensive survey of the literature produced in Ladino by Sephardic Jews from the 16th to the 20th centuries, with special attention to the period between 18th and the first decades of 20th centuries, both in North Africa and in the Eastern Mediterranean communities of the lands that once belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

Sections are devoted to translations of the Bible to Ladino, other religious works, including *Me`am Lo`ez*, the main Rabbinic commentary of the Bible in Judeo-Spanish, the genre of learned poetry called *coplas*, the folk sephardic literature (proverbs, folktales, balladry), and the so-called *adopted genres*. These are the modern literature that follows occidental literary patterns, produced from the 19th century onward – journalism, novels, theatre, and modern poetry. At the end of each section, useful bibliographical references are provided.

* Paloma Díaz-Mas, "La Literatura," in: *Los Sefardíes, historia, lengua y cultura*, Barcelona, 1986, 1993, 1997, pp. 131-182

Winfried Busse

Rashi: Transliteration, Transcription and Adaptation of Ladino Texts written in Hebrew Letters

An *Aljamiado* text, written in Rashí, can be transformed into Latin script in various ways. A *transliteration* could cling to the manner in which the original text was actually written. For example, if a *gimel* with *rafé* stands for either *tch* or *dzh*, a transliteration could respect this unique form and Latinize the text by use of a *g*, with something like a *rafé*.

A *transcription*, on the other hand, has to show how the text is pronounced and should choose two different signs for *tch* and *dzh*. Also, certain aspects of the *Aljamiado* text require adaptation, as for example, the way sentence signs are used (virgula, point, two points etc.).

An *orthography* is the normalized form of writing a text and often obeys historical conservatism like the French *beau* for [bo].

The Rashí text to be transformed into Latin script presents itself as an orthography, so [j] is normally given by *lamed+yod+yod* <ljj>, but sometimes by <jj>.

A usual transcription would present a normalized notation of phonetic values and could itself be a *phonetic/phonologic* symbolization, but could also be a conventional orthography, like that of Aki Yerushalayim. The choice of adequate symbols evidently depends on the addressees of the Latinized text and their customs of reading.

The system presented by I. Hassán in order to Latinize Rashí texts adopts a Hispanization of the basic form of the words, indicating the special Sephardic aspects of pronunciation by means of diacritica. The writing of words unknown to Spanish can only be conventional.

An anthology of Latinized Rashí texts planned by Michael (Studemund) Halévy – should be made in a way that allows

the different graphic devices in the original text to be reconstructed, see above the case of [j], so that it would be possible to reconstruct a history of writing *aljamiado* texts in Rashí.

Mordechai Arbell

The Ladino and its Culture in Vienna

A small sign on a modern building in the center of Vienna testifies that on that spot had stood a glorious synagogue that had been completely destroyed in the “Crystal Night”. This sign is the only memory left of the Sephardic community of Vienna.

In 1736, a Jewish group led by Moshe Lopes Pereira, the Baron Diego d’Aguilar, who had come from Spain and Avraham Camondo, from a Jewish family in Istanbul, decided to establish the “Comunidad Israelit Espanyola en Viena,”

In 1713, due to the Pazarovitch agreement (between Austria and the Ottoman Empire) free passage was granted from one country to the other. This enabled Jews from the Ottoman Empire and Amsterdam to come to Vienna. In 1824, the first synagogue was established. The community and the synagogue were under the protection of the Ottoman embassy. The language of the community was Ladino.

In 1814, the Bible was translated into Ladino by Israel Behar Haim and Yom-Tov Behar Ezra, while in 1860; the prayers books for the high holidays were translated by Reuven Baruch. The Selihot and the prayers “Kol- Peh” were translated into Ladino by the Alsech family. The first Romances in Ladino (words and notes) were published in Vienna. Newspapers by Shemtov Semo and Yosef Calvo, among them, *El Correo de Viena*, *El Nasional* and other journals were also published, first in Rashi letters and later in Latin letters. They were distributed all over the Ottoman Empire and northern Italy.

In 1898, the association “Esperansa” was established by the Sephardic faculty and students of Vienna University. Its goal was to preserve the Ladino language and its culture all over the world. Their activity was successful, culminating in the gathering of the “World Sephardic Congress” in Vienna 1911. At this congress, the Central World central Association for Sephardim was founded. When Austria was united with Germany, however, the Sephardic community was depleted and in the Holocaust, it was almost totally eliminated.

Shmuel Refael

E. Romero, *The Prodigy of Ben Sirá in Ladino Literature*

A review of the book written by Elena Romero: *Andanzas y Prodigios de Ben-Sirá: Editing of the Ladino text and translation of the Hebrew text*, Madrid 2001, 280 pp.

In this article, Shmuel Refael analyzes the new book by Elena Romero, which deals with the various editions in Ladino of Ben Sirá’s book. With this work, Romero joins a number of scholars who have presented important studies dedicated to the same book. The *Cuentos de Ben-Sirá* (Tales of Ben-Sira) were extensively distributed and well integrated into Ladino literary tradition. Elena Romero presents a meticulous and comprehensive study focused on the written traditions and she has placed at its center the Ladino language editions of *Tales of Ben-Sira*, while investigating the different manners in which tales were usually transmitted amongst the Sephardic communities. In this study, Romero presents her findings in relation to the *Tales of Ben-Sira* and leaves some room for a careful criticism of previous investigative works.