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Sepharad as Imagined Community

Language, History and Religion
from the Early Modern Period
to the 21st Century

EDITED BY Mahir Şaul
AND José Ignacio Hualde



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CHAPTER ONE**Sepharad As Imagined
Translocal Mediterranean
Community****Introduction**

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1. SEPHARAD IMAGINED AS COMMUNITY

In mid-1970s, when she was almost forty, award-winning French novelist Clarisse Nicoïdski, née Abinun, started writing poetry. It was not composed in French, which was the language of her novels, but in the language of her parents, who hailed from Yugoslavia and called this language “spagnol muestru.” She gave a copy of her compositions to the linguist Haïm Vidal Sephiha, who in a brief article was the first person to publish a sampling, which included seven numbered sections making up what we now know as her first poem, “Lus Ojus.” This poem was followed by a prose text, “La Vyeja,” a heartbreaking short story set in World War II Yugoslavia, with Jewish protagonists under the reign of terror of Free Croatia’s Ustashi before liberation by the Partisan army. Sephiha applauded her as “la dernière poétesse judéo-espagnole” (Sephiha 1977).¹ The following year, Nicoïdski produced a small book of her Judeo-Spanish poetry in a run of 300 copies, including an English translation of each poem by Kevin Power (Nicoïdski 1978). Three years later a new garland of nineteen short poems appeared: “Caminus di palavras”.² In her short but prolific life Nicoïdski published over twenty titles—novels, plays, historical pieces—all in French, which brought her added accolades. However, she did not publish any more Judeo-Spanish poetry.

This already peculiar story assumes uncanny proportion after the exceptional responses that the little poetic sideline stirred. Perhaps Nicoïdski did not need to bother with an English translation of her poems, because the refinement of her

verse and the images limned in her sparse style produce an extraordinary effect on modern Spanish readers, and her poetry has received a great share of critical attention. At the turn of the new century, four leading poets of Spain and Latin America were asked to prepare a landmark anthology of the second half of the twentieth century (Milán, Robayna, Valente, Varela 2002). In their selection of 100 laurels of Spanish language poetry, they included Nicoïdski.³ Forced to make hard choices, and setting aesthetic merit above balance, as the publisher explains, the anthology's selectors had resigned themselves to not representing certain Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, a decision that reviews following publication contested. No one objected, though, that Nicoïdski, the only one among those sharing the honor who was not from a Spanish-speaking country (her country listed as *Francia*) had been allotted five pages for nine poems, an amazing ratio considering her concise poetic output. Acknowledgment by a poet like José Ángel Valente, arguably Spain's greatest poet in the postwar period, was not all. The Argentine poet Juan Gelman, one of South America's most significant writers and also Nicoïdski's senior, went one step further. He created his own corpus of twenty-nine poems in Nicoïdski's Bosnian Judeo-Spanish, emulated by studying her compositions, an unprecedented tribute paid by one poet to another (Balbuena 2009).

Nicoïdski was not to be "the last" Judeo-Spanish poet, female or male, nor the last one to write in this language with a literary talent and contemporary sensibility that brought transnational recognition. Two more recent poets writing in Judeo-Spanish, Margalit Matitiahu and Avner Perez, both of Salonikan ancestry and bilingual Israeli authors, along with other celebrated Judeo-Spanish poets of their cohort, are the subject of August-Zarebska's contribution to our volume. Their first verse collections, published in the 1980s, generated enthusiasm and their success was confirmed in subsequent publications.⁴ A good deal of prose work is also being created in Judeo-Spanish (ranging from the writings of the versatile veteran Matilda Koen-Sarano to the recent contributions of memoirist Roz Kohen). Along with these, we may mention the less noticeable but critical supportive, editorial, and lexicographic work of people such as Gad Nassi, Moshe Shaul and others serving on the editorial boards of *Aki Yerushalayim* or *El Amaneser*, as well as the website *LadinoKomunita*, which is discussed here by Rey Romero.⁵ At the same time we observe a modest recovery of the use of Judeo-Spanish in academic articles and essays, hosted mostly in Spanish university publications, by both senior authors and those belonging to the younger generation.

Why would recognized authors who can reach wide audiences in national languages with a great number of speakers choose to create and publish works in a language that has long been declared severely endangered, due to its low number of adult speakers and its absence in the home environment where children can learn it? We leave the assessment of their personal motivations to literary critics

specialized in these authors. Instead, we are interested in addressing the social and historical factors that illuminate such choices. If writing in Judeo-Spanish—against unreasonable odds from the perspective of an author's natural desire to gain readership—can be conceived as a "journey home" (Piser 2012), the writers who undertake this journey come from two generations of geographical and metaphorical displacement, while being dispersed in different countries and continents, and absorbed in different tongues of national and international currency. It may be a rewarding exercise to explore the nature of this "home."

This home seems to be located first of all in the language. We find evidence for this also in works of a very different nature. The memoirs and autobiographic novels of Sephardic authors from Western Europe or South America, who hail from families that had immigrated to those places in recent times, often include Judeo-Spanish words and expressions inserted as quotations. Romeu Ferré and Díaz-Mas, who make this observation, remark that such examples suggest a strong identification with the Sephardic Jewish world of remote Iberian origin as well as a shared collective past in the Eastern Mediterranean (2011: 129). This identification with the language is present, even if in somewhat contradictory fashion, in the life and work of Bulgarian-born Elias Canetti, who came to terms with his heritage in his memoirs and once defined himself as "a Spanish poet in the German language" (Ascher 1990, Esformes 2000).

Romeu Ferré and Díaz-Mas refer to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century dispersal of the Hispanic Sephardim out of the Ottoman world as a "second diaspora." Yet considering the historical Septuagint roots of the term, in the longer stretch of Jewish history it can be called at least a "third diaspora," since the fanning out of the Sephardim into the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds after their expulsion from Spain was already a second diaspora, following the first, original diaspora out of the Holy Land. This realization prompts further reflection. Western European and American authors of Sephardic origin are not the only ones to reveal attachment to Judeo-Spanish in their work. As we have seen, a number of second-generation Israeli authors also do so and with even greater commitment. The closing of the first diaspora does not seem to bring an end to the second or third Diasporas. The vaunted ingathering from one sort of exile still leaves Sephardim attached to and longing for the image of a "home" remembered as language.

The title of our volume invokes Benedict Anderson's influential analysis, which has a great deal to say on language (Anderson 1983). Anderson's book-length essay presents a reflection on the emergence of the nation as political vessel for the formation of the modern state, and following the gradual collapse or transformation of amalgamated empires, of the international system of states. The Sephardic diaspora, as the use of the term already intimates, is not a nation in that modern sense (although it was in an earlier sense, not irrelevant for the process Anderson delineates—as the rubric *nación* or *nação* applied to New Christian

communities of Spanish and Portuguese origin in western Europe and *millet* later in the Ottoman administrative system attest). The analogy of Anderson's story for our case is, therefore, only partial, and the contrast itself is worth pursuing.

Anderson notes at the start that all communities are imagined, except for very small ones allowing members to have face-to-face contact. What needs to be distinguished is the different ways in which they are imagined, which may suggest where their boundaries are likely to be laid. This idea of imagined community is useful for understanding sub-political cultural ensembles that exhibit centripetal force and cultural continuity across changing times, even if they do not ripen into modern nations. Anderson identifies two developments that paved the way for the modern nation: The loss of identification with dynastic realms associated with the decline of sacral monarchies, and a radically new way of apprehending time, including the replacement of religious parable as prefiguration of present and future with time as a flow that transforms and remains irreversible.

Only the first of these two has a correlate in the formation of a Sephardic diasporic identity. For the Iberian Jews, the Edict of Expulsion of 1492 was a fatal blow to any identification with the dynastic realm. This identification was already weak to begin with, because of suspect religious minority status and the test of periodic mass violence. Thus, for instance, whereas Sem Tob de Carrión (Sem Tob ben Ishaq ibn Arduziel, b. Carrión de los Condes, 1290–c. 1369), one of the most prominent poets in the Castilian language of his time, addresses his *Moral Proverbs* to the King of Castile, Don Pedro I, at the same time he stresses his Jewish identity: *Señor rey, noble, alto, oí este sermón/que viene dezir Santo, judío de Carrion* ["Lord King, noble and high, hear this discourse which Santob, the Jew from Carrión, comes forward to speak"];⁶ and, in what are perhaps the best-known lines from the book, he feels the need to remind the imagined reader (the King) not to disregard the wisdom contained in the book because of the author's religious identity: *Non val el açor menos por nacer de mal nido, nin los exemplos buenos por los dezir judío* ["Nor is the hawk worth less, if born in a poor nest; nor are good proverbs [of less value] if spoken by a Jew"]. Allegiance to the monarch is accompanied by a clear sense of distinctiveness.

The post-expulsion period was not more favorable for the settlers' reinsertion in other dynastic worlds, as during those two hundred years significant proportions of the Sephardic community moved in and out of apostasy in peripatetic existence in search of new homelands between the North African coast, Italian cities, the Ottoman Balkans and Near East, the Atlantic harbors, and Protestant enclaves in northern Europe. There were powerful motivations for a sense of distinction and singular destiny even when the immigrants demonstrated loyalty to the monarchs or to the cities that welcomed them. Since medieval times, for example, the Sabbath services included an official prayer for the king.⁷ Beyond this custom, after the expulsion the refugees and their descendants expressed abundant gratitude

without practical motivation toward rulers who gave them safe haven. A sense of autonomy persisted regardless. In almost every Hebrew book printed in Constantinople after the Jews established a press there in 1493, the title pages or the colophon included lengthy formulas of blessings and praises for the sultan, even though these books were not dedicated to the monarchs. The Ottoman authorities were completely indifferent to these publications, and no one other than a few Jewish students of law could have been expected to see and understand these inscriptions (Rozen 2010: 43; Lehmann 2005: 17). In contrast, during the same period books printed in the republic of Venice do not contain similar statements of praise to the city or to the doge. One can conclude, therefore, that these inscriptions expressed genuine gratitude. They are also consonant with the open appreciation of Ottoman rulers in the writings of sixteenth century scholars of Iberian origin, such as the Rabbis Samuel de Medina and Moshe Almosnino. Nonetheless, the "we" and "they" distinction, a sense of collective risk and vulnerability in an alien environment, and commitment to Jewish and often more narrowly Sephardic wellbeing first, are also present in these writings (Rozen 2010: 40–41, 305). This may be one of the ways in which the Sephardic subject of early modern times anticipates aspects of fully modern political awareness.

When it came to the approach to religious myth and time, however, the Mediterranean Sephardic world remained attached to the earlier conception. Even when during early eighteenth century the colloquial register of Spanish of the Sephardim of the eastern Mediterranean blossomed as the medium of written literature, the new Judeo-Spanish style was born as a religious product of rabbinic pedagogy, linked to the weekly readings of the Torah and to Talmudic images as guidance for righteous life. In the nineteenth century this written language was relatively secularized by shedding, in the hands of a new intelligentsia, the rabbinic habit of code switching to scriptural Hebrew. A greater proportion of spoken vernacular in writing resulted in increased Romance content. The trend towards secularization of the language was strengthened in the abundant journalistic publications of the twentieth century, even if at times it meant clumsily following French and Italian models. These developments, however, never shook the ties to a religious worldview and an ecumenical understanding of worldwide Judaic community as a dispersed (and fractious) tribe.

Sephardic awareness sprang, therefore, from a hybrid nature: a sense of distinctive identity, but one attached to a religion that imparts a sense of kinship group, whose boundaries lay beyond the Sephardic world; and a proper ideographic sacred language, the elements of which suffuse the vernacular that became literary Judeo-Spanish. The sense of being Hispanic Sephardic did not produce a political vessel, which is Anderson's concern to explain, but an enduring feeling of distinctiveness within a larger religious entity, itself explicitly likened to a descent construct. The language, the vernacular that provided the medium of writing and

printing, did not become the basis for a political grouping, but was consolidated as the very backbone of Hispanic Sephardic distinctiveness, taking on the roles that geography and shared history play in other contexts.

The Iberian Sephardic “imagined community” was forged during the first two centuries after the expulsion of 1492, under trying circumstances: The protracted period of migrations and relocations put a stamp on several generations after 1492 as it caused traumatizing losses to life and property; many migrants and their descendants went from one distant location to another because they could not find the safety of a country of permanent settlement; migrants belonging to successive waves intermingled, starting with the first refugees who left Castile and Aragon following the first expulsion to maintain their religion, all the way to the seventeenth century New Christians who, often after several peregrinations and a few generations of religious secrecy, openly embraced Judaism in the Ottoman Empire or in the cities of the Low Countries. The migrants originating in Spain and Portugal were already plural in their make up, as they had been formed in the diverse cultural worlds of the different kingdoms and cities of Iberia, and were also stratified by status and class. The drawn out period of exodus added new elements of heterogeneity among them. Yet the experience produced a convoluted process of self-fashioning and the formation of a singular Hispanic Sephardic identity, along with a concomitant process of linguistic shift and re-identification.

The first Iberian exiles to arrive in the large Ottoman cities founded congregations based in their city of origin and their narrow cultural affinities. In Constantinople, for example, the first Gerush Sepharad (Expulsion from Spain) congregation split quickly into several, and then witnessed the founding of yet other congregations by newer arrivals: Cordova, Aragon, Messina, Sicilia, and Portugal. By mid-sixteenth century there were ten congregations of Iberian origin in the city (Rozen 2010: 78–81). In Salonika the Jews who arrived from Spain established Gerush Sepharad, Castilia, Aragon, Catalan, Majorca; and those who arrived from Portugal: Portugal, Lisbon, and Evora (Goodblatt 1952: 12). As Ibn Abi Zimra, a leading rabbinic scholar among the first generation of exiles from Spain, wrote: “And it is the custom throughout the Jewish Diaspora that Jews who are of the same city of origin or language make a community for themselves, and do not mix with men of different city or language” (quoted by Ray 2013: 80; see Goldman 1970: 86). In the second and third generations, the sharp boundaries between these congregations softened. Their original names survived, but their membership started mixing, with intermarriages and transfers among them for pragmatic reasons. Eventually, newer Jewish arrivals of Iberian origin to Istanbul and Salonika were allotted to the existing congregations with an eye to maintaining balance between the groups and no longer on the basis of the newcomers’ languages or originating cities, evidence of the blurring of cultural boundaries

between them (Ray 2013: 86). Divisions among Jews of Castilian, Aragonese, Valencian, Catalan, Leonese, and eventually Portuguese heritage faded, giving way to new communities, which were seen by others and also self-understood as “Espanyol.”

A number of factors, concerning both trans-Mediterranean connections and the circumstances of the places of settlement, can be invoked to perceive how this happened. The itinerant nature of the early Sephardic Diaspora and the need for the exiled Jews and *conversos* to rely on one another helped foster mercantile networks (Ray 2013: 112). These networks encompassed artisans such as dyers, weavers, and embroiderers, as well as bankers.⁸ While the poor, who formed the majority everywhere, remained outside of these expanded translocal communities, the wealthy assumed local leadership. The economic élites were the founders of new congregations or their administrators and set the tone for the rest. They became emulated models for a pan-Mediterranean Hispanic identity in the sixteenth century. Their social role was thus similar to their counterparts in the late nineteenth century in Westernization and modernization (and later on even in Turkification, Hellenization, etc.).

The rabbis provided a different kind of leadership, forming another network stretching throughout the Mediterranean. They led Jewish courts with jurisdiction over pecuniary matters, religious questions, marriage and divorce, and cases involving Jewish ordinances. The *responsa* literature made available in contemporary scholarship provides abundant testimony showing that in these matters their reach as well as the resources they mobilized extended to far-flung localities. Whereas the *Halakha*, the formulated statutes of Jewish law and norms relating to religious sanctity, has no boundaries and does not recognize a delimited Sephardic sphere within it, next to it is *Minhag*, the notion of prevailing custom. The large influx of exiled migrants, each group bringing with it its own *Minhagim*, together with those of native Jews of Egypt, Palestine, Ottoman Anatolia and the Balkans necessitated creative yet, legal responses to meet the demands of everyday life (Goldman 1970: 45). The leaders of the Sephardi congregations surmounted their own perspectives through compromise. They formed supra-congregational institutions soon after settlement. In Constantinople this behavior prevented the founding of joint voluntary societies with the native Jewish community of the Romaniyot (Rozen 2013: 85). Extra-locally too, rabbis of the Iberian communities often conferred with each other regarding mutual concerns (Benaim 2012: 24). Affective bonds to relatives, teachers, and disciples in distant lands transformed the Sephardic rabbis’ conception of the pale of Judaism in unexpected ways toward pan-Hispanism.

This is illustrated by rabbinical decisions regarding the status of widows, which was one of the recurrent difficulties of the era of exile and dangerous travel. One decision taken by first generation immigrant rabbinic scholar Yaakov Ibn

Haviv of Salonika, who was born in the Leonese city of Zamora, involved a difficult case in which the brother of the deceased householder was a *converso* who had stayed in Spain. According to the *Halakha*, when a married man dies without the issue of a son, his brother has the obligation to marry the widow in leviratic union to produce a descendant for the deceased. If he was not so inclined, the brother had to liberate the widow with the equivalent of a divorce. The question in this case was whether the widow was bound by this rule. The case hung on whether the surviving brother was considered Jewish, and therefore in possession of his leviratic rights. Rabbi Ibn Haviv ruled that the missing *converso* brother was a Jew and the leviratic principle was in effect. Thus he asserted that the Jewish people encompassed those who had been compelled to stay in the Iberian Peninsula after the expulsion, because “tomorrow they will come here, and how can we oust them now by judging them to be utter apostates” (Rozen 2010: 93–95). For Ibn Haviv and all other Iberian Jews, the nation meant the Jewish-Iberian Nation, including both the immigrants and the New Christians who did not emigrate. Other eminent rabbinic authorities that were not of Iberian origin, such as Constantinople’s Moshe Capsali and Eliyahu Mizrahi, differed and took contrasting decisions in their rulings, but Ibn Haviv’s principle was upheld and ratified five decades later by the second-generation Iberian immigrant rabbis of mid-sixteenth century; this view persisted for generations.

Local circumstances reinforced the trend toward pan-Mediterranean Iberian Jewish reconfiguration. The Iberian exiles settled among Italian, Ashkenazi, and, in the Ottoman Empire, Greek-speaking Byzantine Romaniyot Jewish communities. Their affinities in religious and social custom brought the Iberian congregations closer together, despite all their differences and rivalries, against these native communities. In the case of Constantinople there was a further political distinction that contrasted the Iberian settlers with the local Romaniyot community, and undermined the latter. Joseph Hacker’s writings brought to scholarly attention the fact that the Romaniyot Jewish communities of Constantinople had formed after the conquest of the city, when Ottoman authorities relocated the existing Jewish communities of the provinces and force-settled them in the new capital, alongside others, according to a well-known demographic policy known as *sürgün*, in order to repopulate the destroyed city. This origin gave the Romaniyot Jewish community a sort of serf status curtailing their right to travel, a restriction that paralyzed their economic and social activities until the seventeenth century (Hacker 1992a). The newly arriving Iberian refugees reached an altogether different position. They constituted a new category of Jews, free of such restrictions, because the Ottoman rulers considered them as having the legal status of willingly submitted rather than vanquished in war (*kendi gelen*). Accordingly, the local Greek-speaking Romaniyot Jews and the Iberian immigrants differed in their sentiments toward the authority. The Romaniyot bitterness about their coerced displacement lasted,

and they saw no difference between their erstwhile Byzantine overlords and the current Ottoman ones, whereas the Iberians felt grateful and blessed, their chroniclers eventually producing the myth that the Ottomans had invited the Spanish expellees (Rozen 2010: 44).

There were practical consequences to this history. In many towns and cities of Anatolia, Thrace, and Macedonia the previous Jewish inhabitants had been removed and the Iberian expellees who settled in those places found no obstacle to establishing Sephardic custom as supreme. In Constantinople, where the Iberian Jews did encounter Romaniyot, they avoided intermarriage with them, which could jeopardize the civil status of children of such marriages, and group endogamy hardened the boundaries between these two social categories. As the Iberians overcame their differences and consolidated and centralized into Spanish Sephardim, the status difference facilitated their prevailing over the Greek-speaking group. The pluralism of customs in Ottoman Jewish Mediterranean evolved into Sephardi-Castilian tradition (Hacker 1992b: 115).

For the second and third generation of exiles of 1492 the pain of expulsion began to fade. New collective memories were developed. Memory of exact origins and the importance of an identity attached to a particular place in Iberia were overshadowed by an invented shared and homogeneous Sephardic group identity (Ben Naeh 2008: 418). The rabbinic Sephardic chroniclers helped replace painful personal memories with accounts of the glory of the pre-exilic past. The Sepharad that was invoked was a land and a community born of nostalgia, a longing for a better time (Ray 2013: 126, 161). New Christian arrivals later in the sixteenth and during the seventeenth century reinforced connections with Iberia and the hold of the Castilian language, which had in the meantime developed into an inter-community medium (although a fraction of them chose not to associate with the first wave of immigrants and developed an alternative identity as “Portuguese”). The Balkan and Middle Eastern Sephardim of Ottoman lands emphasized their heritage in Christian Spain and Portugal over their distant roots in Muslim Al-Andalus. Cultural traits such as knowledge of new weaving techniques, firearms, printing, and Romance languages helped them bring vitality to the economies of the places where they settled, and to foster mercantile ties to Europe through the ports of Venice, Ancona, Ragusa, and Livorno, making them also valuable subjects for the Ottoman rulers.

The social development outlined here has a linguistic concomitant and counterpart, to which we now turn. Expressions such as “langue Espagnolle,” “en Español,” “lingua spagnuola,” or “spagnoli ebrei” emerge in historical documents concerning Iberian Jews in various languages from all over the Mediterranean; they are mirrored in *Taife-i Espanya* ‘community of Spain,’ which is the way Salonika’s earliest sixteenth century Ottoman register labeled the city’s growing Iberian migrant Jewish population (Lowry 1994: 207).

1.2 The Language

The late fifteenth century Jewish exiles from Iberia were linguistically heterogeneous and spoke *different* Ibero-Romance languages (see Lleal 1992, Penny 2000), a crucial point that until recently has rarely been fully taken into account in socio-historic accounts, even though it is at the heart of the issue of how the Sephardic community came to be imagined.

For three of the Romance languages that the Jews spoke in Iberia, a relatively large number of examples written in Hebrew script have come down to us (Castilian, Aragonese, and Navarrese). For the other languages, such as Leonese, Galician, Catalan, or Portuguese, we resort to other sorts of evidence. When Jews wrote Romance languages in Hebrew script, and perhaps when they spoke them as well, they incorporated a good quantity of Hebrew vocabulary in them—mostly but not exclusively pertaining to the religious domain. An example is the word *alhad*, a borrowing from Arabic used by Jews and Muslims to replace *domingo* ‘Sunday’ (Quintana 2014b: 40), from Latin *dominicus dies*, whose original Christian meaning of ‘day of the Lord’ must have been evident. When it came to phonology, morphology, and syntax, however, these languages were no different than the varieties that their non-Jewish fellow countrymen spoke and wrote at the time (Lleal 1992, Minervini 2006a: 18, Benaim 2012). Familiarity with Hebrew may nevertheless have resulted in the incorporation in the speech of Iberian Jews of a back fricative, perhaps a uvular /χ/ (a phoneme that did not exist in any Ibero-Romance language at the time) not only in Hebrew words, but also in borrowings from Arabic such as *alhad*, *hazino* ‘sick’ and *haragan* ‘lazy’. It appears that a trait of Jewish Castilian pronunciation must have been a contrast between /h/ (which was later lost or replaced by non-Castilian /f/ in Judeo-Spanish) in *harina* /harína/ ‘flour’ (< Lat *farīna*), *horno* /hórno/ ‘oven’ (< Lat *furnu-*), etc., and /χ/ (which was preserved) in /alχád/, /χazino/, etc. A second minor point of pronunciation is that although word-final /-m/ was not possible in Castilian Spanish or in most other Ibero-Romance varieties, Jewish speakers of these languages may have learned to pronounce it in Hebrew words, including plurals in /-im/. Although these are minor details of pronunciation, they may have served as sociolinguistic markers.

We need to bear in mind also a point to which contemporary sociolinguistic research alerts us: various registers, idiolects, and sociolects existed in each one of these languages and the Jews presumably participated in them.

The expellees who left Castile and Aragon, and later Navarre and Portugal throughout the sixteenth century, brought this plurality of Romance languages to the places where they settled. Different Romance languages and dialects (Castilian, Aragonese, Catalan, Portuguese, etc.) *co-existed* for some generations and the immigrant Iberian Jews used them in private communication (Penny 1992;

Minervini 2006b: 148). As the process of Sephardization we have just delineated set off, these languages competed with each other (Quintana 2002, 2014a). Although the genetic closeness of these languages made them mutually intelligible and a degree of hybridization took place, the outcome was the disappearance of Romance multilingualism and the triumph of one language for the Jews of Iberian heritage in the Mediterranean. Révah, for example, noted that among the sixteenth century Jews who arrived in Salonika, the ones originating in Castile were only a small minority compared to those of Aragonese, Catalan, or Portuguese background; yet, “all the Judeo-Spanish speech forms of the Balkans, without exception, derive essentially from the speech forms that New Castile and Andalusia had in 1492” (Révah 1965: 1354). Due to the absence of politically enforced normative pressure, a colloquial form of this language became dominant, which, following its own course of evolution, came down to the twentieth century as Judeo-Spanish.

It should be noted that at the time of the expulsion, Castilian Spanish was already perceived as more prestigious than other Ibero-Romance varieties. Castilian was progressively replacing other Romance varieties in urban areas in much of the Iberian Peninsula. In the case of the most closely related languages with a very high degree of mutual intelligibility with Castilian, such as Leonese, Navarrese and Aragonese, this replacement took place by a gradual process of adoption of Castilian forms instead of local forms. Let’s consider an example from the phonological domain. Among the Ibero-Romance languages, only Castilian transformed Latin /kt/ into /tʃ/ as in *noche* ‘night’ (< Lat *NOCTE*), *leche* (< *LACTE*), *ocho* ‘eight’ (< *OCTO*) and *hecho* ‘fact, made’ (< *FACTU*), among many other examples. All other Ibero-Romance languages preserved a pronunciation /tʃ/ (cf. Port *noite*, *leite*, *oito*, *feito*; Cat *nit*, *llet*, *vuit*, *fet*). At a certain point, however, Castilian forms with *ch* started intruding in Aragonese and Navarrese texts. A good example is found in the fourteenth century Navarro-Aragonese *siddur* transcribed and studied in Quintana and Révah (2004), where together with *nueyti* (*de alhad*) ‘night (of Sunday)’ we also find *lechuga* ‘lettuce’, instead of the expected Navarro-Aragonese form *leituga*, as the authors point out (see also Lleal 1992: 9). With time, non-Castilian forms become residual and eventually completely disappear from documents written in Navarre and Aragon, reflecting trends in the speech of the urban classes of these kingdoms.

The first generation of Jewish immigrants undoubtedly brought with them to the new communities the sociolinguistic dynamics that existed in the Iberian Peninsula at the time. This would have as a consequence a tendency to give preference to Castilian variants, not only on the part of speakers of Castilian, but also by speakers of other varieties. Thus, to return to the example just considered in the previous paragraph, Castilian forms like *noche*, *ocho*, etc., are universally found in Judeo-Spanish. To give another telling example, Judeo-Spanish forms like *ojo*

(< Lat OCULU) ‘eye’, *mujer* (< MULIERE) ‘woman’, *oreja* (< AURICULA) ‘ear’ etc., with /z/ from Latin κ’L, LY, are exclusively Castilian, cf. Port. *olho*, *mulher*, *orelha*, Leon. *güeyu*, *muyer*, *oreya*, Arag. *güello*, *muller*, *orella*; Cat. *ull*, *muller*, *orella*. An exception, however, is found in the choice among /f-/ ~ /h-/ ~ 0. Among the Ibero-Romance languages, Castilian is also unique in having undergone a sound change whereby Latin /f-/ was aspirated to /h/ before a vowel. This aspiration was subsequently lost, starting from the area around Burgos, in Old Castile. Interestingly, Judeo-Spanish has preserved non-Castilian forms with /f-/ in a greater or smaller number of lexemes depending on the geographical area (see Quintana 2006: 93–100).

Recent advances in historical Judeo-Spanish linguistics provide now a better picture of how this process happened. Brief references in the earlier scholarly literature made it sound as if these various Romance languages simply amalgamated or merged together to result in Judeo-Spanish, overlooking the details of the historical evidence on the matter, or the analogies available in our own time. Languages have inherent structures and do not mix in this way. Consequently, the outcome of the historical process, Judeo-Spanish, is not simply a merger that is equidistant to all Romance language antecedents.

After the expulsion, the exiles went through a period of Romance multilingualism involving different Romance linguistic codes. In their new lands of settlement, some of the immigrants acquired—in addition to their pre-Expulsion language—new Romance varieties from fellow immigrants from Iberia, and local forms in the Italian peninsula and in Portugal. As the sixteenth century wore on, the use of the Castilian language spread in the diaspora and started displacing the other Romance varieties. Castilian Spanish, however, was not homogeneous. Like all languages at all times, fifteenth century Castilian had some internal variation. It consisted of various norms connected with social and cultural stratification as well as geographical location (Minervini 2006b: 148). Even restricting our scope to consonant phonology, this variation included, among other phenomena, (a) the conservation or deletion of /h/ (e.g. [hórno] ~ [órno] ‘oven’), (b) the devoicing of fricatives (e.g. [káza] ~ [kása] ‘house’, [ózo] ~ [ófo] ‘eye’), (c) the fronting of (post-)alveolar fricatives (e.g. [páso] ~ [páso] ‘step’) leading to their neutralization with the dental fricatives that had resulted from older affricates (e.g. [bráso] < [brátso] ‘arm’), (d) the weakening of /b/ in certain positions (e.g. [lóbo] ~ [lóbo] ‘wolf’), causing its neutralization with /β/ (e.g. [láβa] ‘s/he washes’) and the delateralization of the palatal lateral /ʎ/ (e.g. [éʎa] ~ [éja] ‘she’), known as *yeísmo* (see, e.g. Lloyd 1987: 322–348). The analysis of early Judeo-Spanish texts has shown that this variation was also found in the new communities of the Eastern Mediterranean at an initial stage (Minervini 1999, Quintana 2014). The fact that the ultimate outcome of this variation did not always favor the same solutions as in Spain or Latin America is not particularly surprising, but the particular circumstances of

language and dialect contact no doubt played a role (for lenition phenomena see Hualde 2014).

We may envision a number of situations among the Iberian-born immigrants. For native speakers of Galician-Portuguese and Catalan, Castilian must have been perceived as a different language, albeit intelligible to a certain degree, with which they may or may not have had familiarity before leaving the Iberian Peninsula, depending on personal circumstances. Speakers of Leonese and Navarro-Aragonese varieties, on the other hand, may have considered Castilian a prestigious version of their own native language, within a linguistic repertoire that allowed different choices depending on style and interlocutor.

Already by mid-sixteenth century spoken and written Castilian, which was a language of prestige, culture, and imperial power and dominant in the sea lines of the Mediterranean, had become the vehicular language of the Mediterranean Jewish world, used in business and everyday communication, marginalizing the other Ibero-Romance languages and dialects, which became family languages (Quintana 2002: 133–134, Minervini 2006a: 22).

This development is revealed, for example in the statement made in 1600 by Meir Lombroso, a person accused at the Inquisition tribunal of Pisa, to explain why he spoke Castilian even though he had not been born or brought up in Spain:

in Salonica tutti gl’Hebrei e la maggior parte de Turchi parlano spagnuolo et qui in Venetia et in tutto il Levante li nostri rabini non fanno le predichi in altra lingua que in lingua spagnuola e per questo l’intendo et anche la parlo.⁹

What makes this testimony even more pertinent in the present context is that Lombroso, trying to save his skin, was not being truthful, as he actually belonged to a family of New Christians from Lisbon.

In such instances, the linguistic transfer involved not only influence or modification, but in some cases actually language shift through the acquisition of Castilian outside of Castile and Aragon. The existence of a phase of Romance multilingualism in the diaspora is somewhat obscured, because the speakers did not always give a precise name to the Romance language that they spoke. Speakers of a language do not always need to designate it with a proper noun. Proper names for languages emerge and gain currency only in particular historical circumstances, and frequently it is outsiders who assign them, not the native speakers. In rabbinic writings the Romance varieties that the Iberian Jews spoke are referred to as *la’az*, which means “foreign” and could designate any language in contrast to the holy tongue. It could be Castilian, but it just as well could be Aragonese, Leonese, Catalan, or Portuguese. Expressions such as *ladino* or *franko* seem to have been used as Romance equivalents for *la’az*, in the sense of “vernacular”, “not-the-Sacred Language,” rather than as proper names. We can call these expressions *descriptors* (adopting a term from computer science) and contrast them with proper names.

For the Jews “sacred language” in itself was a descriptor, not a proper name, as it designated indiscriminately Hebrew or Aramaic. Nevertheless, the logic of language boundary operates because of the systemic properties of phonology, morphology, and syntax.

The description of a scene from the mid-sixteenth century may provide an illustration of the daily incidence of Sephardic Romance multilingualism, as it suggests at the same time the presence of language boundaries, ready to take over and regulate communication when possible. The event is reported in Ray (2013: 139). In 1565 the Portuguese friar Pantaleão de Aveiro and fellow monks who were in pilgrimage in the Holy Land encountered at the Shiloah pool outside of Jerusalem a group of Jewish women who were bathing in the public bath. One of the women, identifying the men as Europeans, addressed them, first using a language that De Aveiro describes as “a mix of Spanish and Italian.” But then she was delighted when she heard that the monk replied to her in Castilian and they quickly fell into friendly conversation. We see here that the initial “mix” was a fleeting and spontaneous product of lack of clarity at the moment of encounter, but the proper code was established once competence in it could be ascertained, although it was not the native language of at least one of the parties, and maybe of neither.

Castilian eventually replaced the other varieties of Romance not only in the Ottoman cities such as Salonika, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Cairo, but also in Venice, Ancona, Ferrara, and Pisa. Inquisition records indicate that in Pisa it was common practice for Jews of Iberian origin to hire tutors to teach their children to read and write Castilian in Hebrew characters (Ray 2013: 138). The large Jewish Portuguese community of Ancona spoke Castilian (Benaim 2012: 183). In Bucharest, too, Portuguese and Catalan Jews abandoned their language and adopted Castilian, although this history left linguistic traces in their speech as usages from these former languages (Sala 1971: 12–13).

Romance multilingualism is reflected in their sixteenth century publications of the Jews of Iberian origin. For example, it is well known that Abraham Usque of Ferrara (born in Portugal) and his son Abraham printed in their press back-to-back books in literary Portuguese or Castilian, some of which were dedicated to the same patron, Doña Gracia Nasi, who lived in Constantinople. They themselves authored works in various genres in Castilian, Portuguese, and Italian.

Literary creations in Castilian that were produced in the Ottoman cities, in turn, reveal a variety of linguistic norms. At the high end were the writings of Rabbi Moshe Almosnino of Salonika, who was born of Iberian immigrants in the Ottoman diaspora, but who published works that are close in language and style to the literary norms of Castilian prevailing in Spain at the time.¹⁰ These writings were addressed to a limited circle of Jews who carried or reproduced the standards of the educated in peninsular Spanish (In the case of *Crónica*, they have been described as the author’s acquaintances in Salonika and Constantinople, close to

the highest echelons of Ottoman administration, who wished to understand how the Ottoman state operated in order to better plan their next political steps [Rozen 2004: 41–42]). In the same category of language belongs a medical treatise, *Diálogo del Colorado*, published in 1601 in Salonika by the physician Daniel de Ávila Gallego, who was from a family of *conversos* and a student at the university of Salamanca, before moving to Amsterdam and eventually to Salonika (Romeu Ferré 2014). It is notable that Almosnino, and perhaps De Ávila Gallego as well, had family backgrounds of non-Castilian Romance heritage, but created works in Ottoman cities in the high register of educated Castilian.

At the other end of the scale of registers were a number of genres, which remained mostly unpublished, but occasionally made their way into manuscript collections or print as “texts lacking literary ambition” (Minervini 2006b: 149). Oral sermons and homiletics proliferated in the sixteenth century and, as they were usually delivered in the vernacular, may have influenced the speech habits of the population. When rabbis moved from one place or one congregation to another, they gave wider currency to local linguistic innovations and parochial traits, or to elements of rabbinic discourse, such as code switching to scriptural language or lexicalization of its elements for daily conversation. But such texts were generally later published in Hebrew. Another kind of text that has recently become more accessible for scholarly purposes are the occasional long Judeo-Spanish extracts lodged in the Hebrew documents of rabbinic *responsa*, which were given and reproduced as testimonies, or the contracts, letters, and other documentary evidence supplied for the case. Benaim provides 84 such extracts from the sixteenth century (Benaim 2012). Although redacted by a scribe or the scholar presenting the case, the passages provide evidence for a range of colloquial speech forms of the Castilian spoken by the eastern Mediterranean Iberian Jewish immigrants or their descendants, occasionally showing traces of other spoken varieties of Romance, such as Leonese, Aragonese, or Portuguese and Italian.

The people who produced these specimens or those who committed them to writing had little contact with the higher modalities of peninsular Spanish. Their discourse represented the popular Castilian norm that spread among the Jewish exiles, and then formed the basis of the new Judeo-Spanish common language of the Mediterranean diaspora (Minervini 2006b: 148). A prayer book printed in Salonika around 1565 affords a better window on this process. It was written in Spanish for women, who were normally not educated in Hebrew, and its author has only recently been identified as Rabbi Meir Benveniste (Quintana 2014). The main text of prayers and blessings shows the characteristics of the scriptural translations that Sephiha dubbed “calque language,” but in his instructions and explanations Benveniste’s language reveals northern colloquial Castilian with some Aragonese pronunciation influences. Its written models were not those of the peninsular literary language, but Hebrew, resulting at times in narrative incoherence or flaws

in expository logic or argumentation (Quintana 2014: 57). These very same features became characteristic of the prose that blossomed two hundred years later in the *Me'am Lo'ez* series initiated by Yaakov Huli. The difference is that the eighteenth century language of *Me'am Lo'ez* is more fluent and readily understandable (Benaïm 2012: 187)—when compared both to the Judeo-Spanish of *responsa* texts and to the explanations and expositions of Benveniste's prayer book—thanks to Huli's own gift and as befits a text published for a popular readership.

The classic rabbinical *Ladino* prose of the eighteenth century reveals no more contact with peninsular literary norms and emanates from colloquial speech forms, which may have survived in regional popular speech in Spain, but would not be encountered in writing. Throughout the sixteenth century, however, when the Mediterranean community of Sepharad was gaining shape in the imagination, contact with the Castilian language and the culture of Iberia had not ceased. It was maintained not only through orality, due to the flow of New Christian exiles which continued all the way into the seventeenth century, but also through print. Some of the Hispanic Sephardim of the eastern Mediterranean had access to publications from Spain and read the Latin script. Evidence for this exists in the Hebrew translation of Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's immensely popular 1508 chivalric novel *Amadís de Gaula*. This novel had led to a very profitable franchise in a series of sequels, which eventually inspired Cervantes's clever lampooning in *Don Quixote*. According to Wacks, Ottoman Sephardim also were avid readers of the adventures of *Amadís* and the similar novels of Palmerín de Olivia [Oliva]. In the early sixteenth century Rabbi Menahem di Lunzano chastised in verse his community in Jerusalem for reading such books on Shabbat instead of coming to the synagogue (Wacks 2011, 2012). The translation of *Amadís* was undertaken by Jacob Algaba in 1541, and seems to have been a commercial initiative meant for a wider readership among the non-Hispanophone Jews. Thus Iberian Jews' competence in Castilian Spanish, which was partly inherited and partly achieved through language shift after the Expulsion, served them not only in their historical self-fashioning as translocal community, in finding economic recovery, and in contributing to the vitality of the Ottoman realm, but also in interposing themselves as mediators of this culture for the Jews of other lands.

Benedict Anderson includes in his book a discussion of how newspapers shaped anonymous crowds of vernacular readers into an imagined community of fellow citizens. The nearly nine decades of Judeo-Spanish journalism developed in contrasting circumstances. Sephardic periodicals thrived from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and resulted in a bibliography of nearly four hundred periodical titles from two dozen cities in the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Europe, and also North America. This previously neglected topic is now a burgeoning field of study, as attested to by the contributions to Sánchez and Bornes Varol (2013). Mostly the work of small-scale printers or isolated visionaries in precarious living conditions,

the Judeo-Spanish press and the new genres it incubated—such as the novel, theatrical play, or modern poetry—produced the largest volume of published material in this language. It refashioned the language, reconnecting it with its Romance heritage, and provided a forum for expressing the joys and pains of the encounter with modernity. The difference from the situation described by Anderson, however, is once again evident. The early gazettes that shaped imperial provinces into nation-states reinforced a sense of common destiny in a bounded space: “*this marriage with that ship, this price with that bishop*” (Anderson 1983: 62). The Judeo-Spanish newspapers, in contrast, served a dispersed community spanning the length and breadth of a crumbling empire, from Cairo and Jerusalem to Vienna, surviving in successor states hostile to one another and suspicious of minorities, and encompassing new migrant communities in the far-off New World. They took on the mission of keeping this community connected by overcoming geographic distance; in fact, turning distance and travel into one of its distinguishing traits. To some extent the spirit of that press, its language, and perhaps even its cosmopolitan parochialism breathe today anew on the Internet of the Judeo-Spanish community.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The contributions to this book cover the whole range of the history sketched in the foregoing paragraphs, from the fifteenth century to contemporary times. They derive from a selection of papers that were originally presented at the symposium “Sepharad as Imagined Community,” which took place in September 2014 on the campus of the University of Illinois, Urbana. The three exceptions are the chapter by Eliezer Papo on *Ladino* parodies of the Passover Haggadah, and the two chapters by Rey Romero and by Stulic and Rouissi respectively, which examine different aspects of the presence of Judeo-Spanish on the Internet. The book's chapters are written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, but we have organized them in an approximate chronological order.

2.1. The Early Period: From the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century

The first chapter in our collection, John Zemke's “An overlooked fifteenth century *demand d'amor* in Hebrew *alxamía*,” concerns a poem in Castilian found in a manuscript written in Hebrew characters in the second half of the fifteenth century in Spain. The work predates the expulsion and belongs to our imagined Sepharad in terms of the presumed identity of its copyist and intended readership. What else can be said about its language and style, and the connections it reveals between the Jews and non-Jews at that time? Zemke, in his discussion of this rare find addresses its language and compositional features, locates the poem within what

is known of Castilian Spanish folk literature at that time, and comments on the relevance of its features for interpreting the participation of Jews in the non-Jewish culture of their surroundings.

Olga Borovaya's contribution "How old is Ladino literature?" focuses on continuity in the literature that the Sephardim created after they left Iberia and questions whether only formal characteristics of the language are sufficient to exclude the early centuries of this period as not yet belonging to Judeo-Spanish writing. She objects to considering literary works written outside of Spain in the centuries immediately after the expulsion and clearly intended for a Jewish readership simply as an extension of Spanish literature, instead of seeing them also as part of a distinct literary tradition. We understand this in the following manner: If the register of Castilian in which Rabbi Moshe Almosnino of Salonika wrote in the mid-sixteenth century, which was close to the standards valid at the time in Spain, became inaccessible to most Sephardic Jewish readers of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, this observation itself is highly pertinent to the history of Judeo-Spanish literature.

The two chapters that follow are more specifically on linguistic matters. Intense contact with other languages has no doubt had an important role in the formation of Judeo-Spanish as a linguistic code standing apart from the Spanish of Spain and Latin-America (emerging, as it were, of diverging evolutions that would be an expected outcome of languages of the same source spoken in different places with no communication between them). In the case of Judeo-Spanish, we find three rather different types of linguistic contact. The first is the influences of the other Romance languages on Castilian, which has been discussed in the preceding section. It may have started already in Iberia, during the bilingual phase which is referred to as "Castilianization," and accelerated during the multilingualism that developed in the new lands of settlement of the Jewish immigrants. Secondly, in the multilingual context of the Ottoman Empire, communication outside of the Jewish community required some mastery of Turkish and other languages. Finally, there was the continued use of Hebrew (and Aramaic) as the language of religion, liturgy, biblical study, and scholarly composition. This volume includes a chapter devoted to each of these three contexts of linguistic contact.

Aldina Quintana in "Historical overview and outcome of three Portuguese patterns in Judeo-Spanish: *quer(em)-se* + part. in active constructions, the *wh-* operator *o que*, and the inflected infinitive," offers a lucid analysis of three Judeo-Spanish structures, for which she proposes a Portuguese source. This chapter is an example of how detailed linguistic research can elucidate the origins and evolution of the Judeo-Spanish language.

A special register of Judeo-Spanish is the calque language used in liturgical translations, which closely follow the Hebrew original. This liturgical language, for which the term *Ladino* was originally proposed by Sephiha and largely adopted, is

the topic of Matthew Maddox's contribution "The syntactic structure of liturgical Ladino: Construct state nominals, multiple determiners and verbless sentences."

Pamela Dorn Sezgin's chapter "*Ke Haber/Ne Haber*: Linguistic interference, cross-meaning and lexical borrowing between Ottoman Turkish and Judeo-Spanish" examines the impact of Ottoman Turkish on Judeo-Spanish, by focusing on some specific cases of borrowing.

2.2. Fin de Siècle Judeo-Spanish Language, Literature and Culture

A very important development in the evolution of Judeo-Spanish writing outside of religious context was the printing of a relatively large number of newspapers in this language in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Matthias Lehmann's "Networks of patronage and the making of two Ladino newspapers" focuses on the biography of two important publishers of such newspapers and the reasons that led them to engage in these activities.

During the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, the flourishing secular writings in Judeo-Spanish also provide a record of debates between contrasting worldviews and the questioning of traditional mores. In "Itzhak Benveniste and Reina Hakohen: Narrative and essay for Sephardic youth," Elisa Martín Ortega analyzes a polemical exchange between two authors, carried out in different genres, but vying for the same audience and reflecting the tensions present in Ottoman Sephardic society at the time. The polemic addresses the role of religion and tradition in young women's life. Reina Hakohen, of Salonika, one of the first women to write in Judeo-Spanish, wrote in 1898 an essay she entitled "Las muchachas modernas" [Modern young women] in which she defended traditional values. A year later, Itzhak Benveniste, also of Salonika, responded with a novel, *Konfidensias de un amigo* [Confidences of a friend], which is directly framed as a response to Reina Hakohen's essay. Elisa Martín Ortega's chapter, which is based on her own transliteration and edition of the works she discusses, offers us an analysis of two works that, together, give us a glimpse of the profound transformations that Judeo-Spanish culture underwent in this period.

The use of Judeo-Spanish in journalistic and literary works required an adaptation of a language which, aside from its oral use, had been cultivated only in religious writing. This was often accomplished by seeking models in other prestigious Romance languages. In her chapter "The invention of Eastern Judeo-Spanish: The betrayals of Spanish in the re-Romanization process," Marie-Christine Bornes-Varol studies the effect of contact with other Romance languages such as French, Italian and, especially, Iberian Spanish, on the evolution of written Judeo-Spanish at the end of the 19th century. She points out that this contact had a major impact on the development of the written language. Whereas Judeo-Spanish writers' concern was with creating a written language valid for their purposes, the adoption

of foreign models often gave rise to interference and linguistic insecurity. Bornes-Varol focuses on verbal morphology. She shows how the impact of other Romance languages on a language that lacked a written norm resulted in a multiplicity of variants for many verbal forms.

The new usages to which the language was being put also required the production of dictionaries. Aitor García Moreno's chapter "Salomon Israel Cherezli's *Chico diccionario judeo-español-francés* (Jerusalem 1898–1899) as a Judeo-Spanish monolingual dictionary" studies the sources, genesis, features and significance of one such dictionary. He explores the intended readership and purpose of this work on the basis of its internal characteristics, as it was obviously intended for Judeo-Spanish speakers who could read French as a second language, and not the other way around, as the title might suggest.

In "The creation of the State of Israel and its impact on the self-image of the Sephardim, as reflected in Judeo-Spanish parodic war Haggadahs" Eliezer Papo provides an overview of the humorous parodic Haggadah genre, which flourished within the medium of newspapers in the final decades of the nineteenth century, as these works mostly appeared in the special holiday editions of the Judeo-Spanish weeklies. One set of humorous Haggadahs expresses debates in the larger Balkan Sephardic communities. Papo concludes with a discussion of the impact of the establishment of the State of Israel on Sephardic self-understanding as revealed in the last known example of such Haggadahs, which no longer shows the irony that had characterized the genre.

At the waning of the nineteenth century, at the time when the Ottoman Sephardic society came into contact with western modernity, there was a simultaneous rediscovery of the Judeo-Spanish language and tradition on the part of Spanish philologists and European Romanists. In turn, the encounter led some Sephardic intellectuals to develop an interest in their own Judeo-Spanish culture and in Spanish philology. Paloma Díaz-Mas in her chapter, "The Hispanic legacy and Sephardic culture: Sephardim and Hispanists in the first half of the twentieth century" discusses the contribution that several Sephardic intellectuals made to the development of Spanish philology, through their investigation of their own language and oral culture, and their interaction with Spanish scholars in labors such as the compilation of old Spanish ballads.

2.3. Judeo-Spanish Language and Culture Today

Although Judeo-Spanish is no longer a language that is used as a main means of communication in any physical location, as there are no Judeo-Spanish speaking towns or neighborhoods anywhere, the language continues to play a role for its speakers. We began this introduction by stressing the contemporary phenomenon of Judeo-Spanish becoming the language for the creation of significant bodies of

lyrical poetry. One chapter in the volume, Agnieszka August-Zarębska's "Contemporary Judeo-Spanish poetry in its rediscovery of the past" considers present-day Judeo-Spanish poetry, a topic that is still a rarity in the philologically and historically oriented Sephardic studies. The poets on whom she focuses created their work after 1980 and are second-generation descendants of the Turkish-Balkan diaspora. They live in cities such as Paris, Tel Aviv, or San Miguel de Tucumán (Argentina). The critical attention she devotes to these creations emphasizes the assertion that Judeo-Spanish continues to hold central symbolic space and to serve as emotional anchor for the people who identify with its heritage; her scholarship indeed demonstrates the aesthetic afterlife of Judeo-Spanish.

The last two chapters in the book address the important and current topic of Internet portals in and on Judeo-Spanish. The study of the presence of Judeo-Spanish on the Internet is a field that is still in its infancy and has only begun to receive the scholarly attention that it no doubt deserves. Today the Internet includes virtual communities where the Judeo-Spanish language lives and continues to evolve, giving vitality to the language. Studies on the make-up of the participants in these communities, and the philosophies, procedures, editorial policies, and content of the sites hosting them are thus essential for our understanding of Judeo-Spanish in the 21st century.

In "En tierras virtualas," Rey Romero provides a survey of current online communities, their language policies, their participants, and topics. He also discusses several ethical and methodological issues regarding research on online communities. Finally, he also presents his results regarding morphological (sub-junctive) variation and dialect accommodation in these web sites.

In "Judeo-Spanish on the Web," Ana Stulic and Soufiane Rouissi present a different kind of perspective on the presence of Judeo-Spanish on the Internet, by including sites that do not address specifically heritage users. They discuss the stakes in the presentation of the language to neutral third parties, in revitalization efforts on the Internet, providing insights into the constituencies and at times extreme perspectives of the content for these sites. Their examination also has a technological perspective, concerning the codification and recognition of Judeo-Spanish in the digital media, and a sociolinguistic dimension, including the measurement or evaluation of textual, oral and audiovisual content in Judeo-Spanish, as well as the observation of Judeo-Spanish spaces on the Web.

We hope this volume bears witness to the vibrancy of the field of Judeo-Spanish studies from so many novel and multidisciplinary perspectives.

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NOTES

1. Sephiha published these extracts once again after the poet's untimely death, with linguistic explanations and French translation (Sephiha 1999). Nicoïdski did not publish any other prose written in Judeo-Spanish. If she wrote more short stories, and from the quality of this single example one hopes she did, they await publication.
2. Nicoïdski's complete verse was later gathered in a slim volume under the title *La culor dil tiempu* (Nicoïdski 2014).
3. In this anthology Nicoïdski's poems are produced in her original spelling, not with facing normalized Castilian Spanish versions, as her work is frequently printed in Spanish editions.
4. Margalit Matitiahua and Avner Perez, along many others, are anthologized and commented upon in Refael 2008.
5. For a rare statement of policy adopted when facing the practical tasks of editing, see Shaul (1999).
6. We follow the edition by Díaz-Mas and Mota (Sem Tob de Carrión 1998) and Perry's (2014) English translation.
7. The earliest mention of this religious custom is found in a commentary on the liturgy composed in fourteenth century Spain (Rabbi David Abudraham's).
8. Benbassa and Rodrigue (1995) give a historical account of the commercial life of the sixteenth century Ottoman Jews.
9. "In Salonika all the Jews and the majority of the Muslims speak Spanish and in Venice and all over the East our rabbis do not preach in any language other than in the Spanish language and for this reason I understand it and also speak it." (Reproduced from Ioly Zorattini 1991 by Minervini 2006b: 153).
10. Almosnino's homiletic text *Regimiento de la Vida* and his treatise on dreams *Tratado de los sueños* were published together in Hebrew characters in Salonika in 1564 and had Latin character editions in Jewish presses in Amsterdam during the eighteenth century (Zemke 2004). His *La crónica de los reyes otomanos* circulated in manuscript form among Ottoman Jews of Iberian origin; a selection of chapters from it was published under the title *Extremos y grandezas de Constantinopla* in Madrid in 1638 at the expense of Jacob Cansino, a Jewish notable from Oran, who served as interpreter to the Spanish crown (Romeu Ferré 1998). Rabbi Almosnino wrote other books in Hebrew.

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