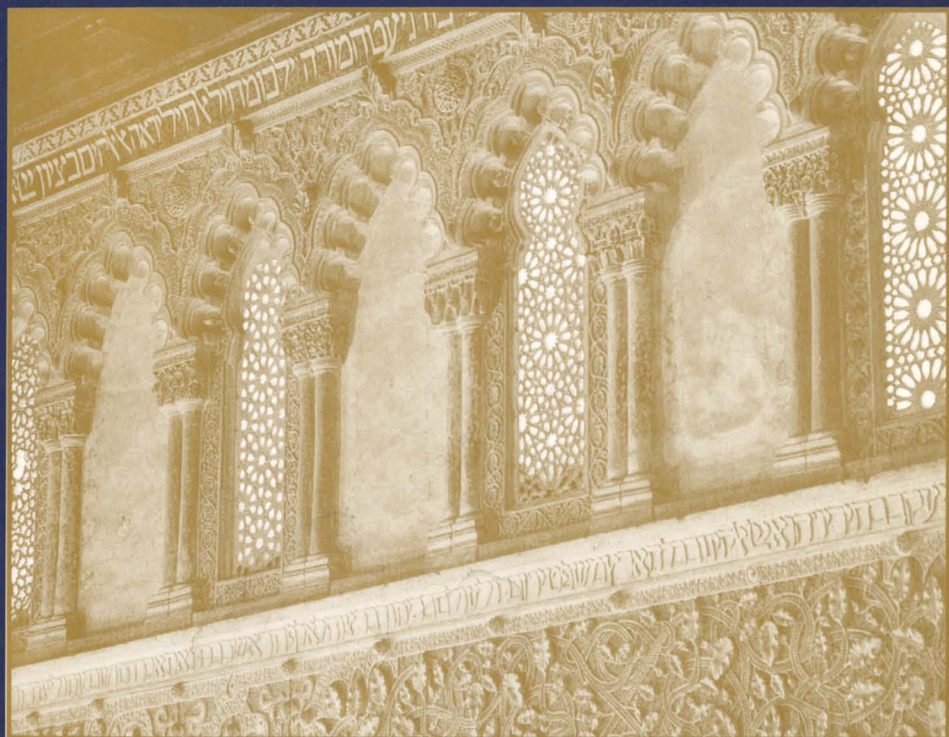


**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON
SEPHARDI JEWS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SOCIETY**



7 - 8 October 1998

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON
SEPHARDI JEWS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN SOCIETY**

In memory of my parents:

- ZIGMOND BANDNER, born in Bucharest, 1n 1908, burried in Haifa, 1992
- ELIZA BANDNER (Kreindler), born in Bucharest, in 1920, burried in Haifa, 1998

Robert Bandner,
prime vice-president of
Bank of Industrial and
Commercial Credit – S.A.

**THE FEDERATION OF THE JEWISH
COMMUNITIES IN ROMANIA**

**The Center for the Study
of the History of Jews
in Romania**

CRAIOVA UNIVERSITY

**The Center of studies and
researches of the history,
language, culture and the
civilization of Jews from
south-eastern Europe**

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7 – 8 October 1998

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Section 1
BUCHAREST



7 October 1998

A Complex Historical Tradition

Acad. Dan BERINDEI (moderator) -

member of the Romanian Academy

Holding an international symposium on the Sephardi Jews in southeastern Europe and especially putting out a volume of proceedings is a most valuable initiative which deserves to be hailed as much as the promoters and organizers deserve to be thanked for their efforts.

Jewish presence in the southeast of the continent is a complex historical fact and a major component of development processes in this region. After the Romanian Jews who lived in the Balkan area at about the middle of the first millennium CE, the Sephardim, who arrived in the region in the Middle Ages, constituted a second wave of Jewish influx. It is worth noting, however, that their interest for these lands dates back to several centuries earlier, that is prior to their tragic banishment from Spain in 1492, as is revealed in travel notes by 12th-century scholar Benjamin of Tudela.

Starting in the late 14th century, historical sources made rather frequent mentions of Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire and its vassal territories. Around the mid-16th century, some 160,000 Jews playing a most important role in Ottoman economy and finances, were reported in Constantinople and Thessaloniki. At about the same time, the Sephardim set up their first community in Bucharest, while they continued to keep active ties coreligionists south of the Danube where they themselves had come from. Their presence was also reported in Moldavia where a community was reported in the city of Iași in the second half of the same century.

The Romanian principalities were an area of contact and coexistence not just between the Sephardim and the Romanian majority, but also between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The latter flowed in from the north in several waves which became increasingly stronger in the 18th century and particularly the 19th century. The secular presence of the Sephardi Jews quite naturally led to their genuine integration in Romanian society as an active, dynamic community playing a key role especially in economic life.

When modern Romania was formed in the 19th century, the Sephardim took part in a board series of actions aimed at materializing the contemporary ideals of the emerging Romanian nation. It is important to note that in Walachia, where the Sephardi Jews were a significant presence, the manifesto of the 1848 Revolution, issued June 9, 1848, at Islaz, provided for the *full* integration of the Jews in modern Romanian society, whereas revolutionary programs in Moldavia only referred to *preparations* for their integration. In fact, the goal of integration was effectively being accomplished there and then as a many good Sephardim, like Davicion Bally who was remembered during thid symposium, played a significant role in the revolution.

Faithful to their own traditions, the Sephardim acted as a bridge between local Jewry and the modern Romanian state and society that were taking shape in the previous century. Their contribution to the overall, particularly economic and cultural, development of the Romanian state was indeed significant.

The half-millennium history of the Sephardi Jews amid the Romanian population can well be cited as a model coexistence, both through the Sephardim's constant responsiveness to Romanian needs and facts, and through their adoption and integration by Romanian society. An advanced study on their presence in Romania is therefore an important initiative. We cannot but express our hope that more advances will be made along this road since this information is relevant not just for Jewish history but also for the Romanian one and for the way Romanians have lived together with other nationalities for many centuries.

Opening address

Acad. Prof. Dr. Nicolae CAJAL

**Your Excellencies,
Distinguished foreign guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to welcome you to Bucharest today and open this symposium devoted to the beautiful, even glorious, history of the Sephardim in south-eastern Europe.

You all know history is not my profession. Yet I remember to this day how avidly I read as a youth Mayer Halevy's exciting booklet on "*Médecins juifs d'origine hispano-portugaise dans les pays roumains*", which revealed—something entirely new to me—the role a number of Sephardic physicians had played at the courts of various Walachian and Moldavian princes.

I later researched the subject in much more detail as I prepared an ample lecture on The First Jewish Doctors on the Romanian Territory

I then discovered one by one prominent figures such as Hillel Manoah, the Halfon brothers, Davicion Bally, Rabbi Djaen, and others, who had made a significant contribution to Romanian economy, society and culture. Readers of Dumitru Hincu's volume, *Testimonies. The Jewish Question*, put out by our Hasefer publishing house, have probably learned about the support the former two above offered to Ion Heliade Rădulescu in his systematic endeavor of publishing Romanian literature and translations of great foreign works. Also, everyone knows how relevant a role Davicion Bally played as C.A. Rosetti's close and valuable collaborator and as an active participant in the 1848 Revolution.

As for Menachem and Jacques Elias—the latter was the greatest single donor of the Romanian Academy—I could of course tell you a lot about them, in my capacity as president of the Elias Foundation. I will only mention that a remarkable exhibition, "*Die Juden aus Rumänien*", presenting many Sephardic personalities was hosted in early 1998 by the Romanian Cultural Center in Vienna, which is located in an Elias Foundation building.

Like many people my age, I built up my culture as a youth by drawing on the unforgettable brick-red-covered little books of the Library for All collection published by Alcalay, and on the hundreds of volumes and periodicals that Samitca used to publish in Craiova

Romania's medical life featured great names such as Max Marbé of Cantacuzino Institute, Leon Café, Ovidiu Alfandary, Moscuna, Almuly, Salvin Elias, Moisescu, Crispin, Hardew Askenazi, and lots of others that must not be forgotten

Some people in this hall may still remember the exquisite piano play of Clara Haskil, who left the country rising to worldwide fame. Some must have heard about Mauriciu Cohen-Lânaru, the composer and the music reviewer of not just Romanian newspapers, but also of "*Le Figaro*" in Paris. Other noted musicians such as Al. Delapergola, Alevi-Ivela, Lucian Nancu, and Claudiu Negulescu are also remembered by many, and so is Jules Pascin (an anagram for Pincas), whose paintings are on display at the Modern Art Museum in Paris and other such important institutions, and whose book illustrations are also rightly admired. Those listed above are only a few of the past prides of the Sephardic community. But today's Sephardim are by no means less worthy, and many of them are making significant contributions to southeastern European culture and civilization. Ezra Alhasid, composer Dan Mizrahi, doctor Sabetai are among those who are carrying out an intense activity in

Romania

My speech has clearly not been intended as an outline.

not even a very sketchy one, of a potential history of the Romanian Sephardim. This would take a lengthy, painstaking research. However, as I was jotting down these notes, I said to myself such effort would be worthwhile and should be made now that the people capable of making it are still around. Our symposium, the outcome of a joint initiative and cooperation of Dr. Alexander Cornescu-Coren and the Center for Romanian Jewish History Studies could be a first valuable step in this direction. I know a number of most commendable efforts have been made in Israel, but they need to be expanded and systematized into a comprehensive work of high scientific value.

Indeed, the Sephardim have a long, fertile history in Romania, which deserves better than just random mentions by foreign writers who have toured the country at one time or another. I happened to run across one such note in a volume published in London in 1938—Romanian Journey by Sachverell Sitwell. The British writer, author of many books, including *“La vie parisienne”*, *“Mozart”*, etc., was quite impressed by the Romanian Sephardim:

“And there is even living, in Bucharest, a rich colony of Sephardim, or Spanish Jews, the descendants of those driven out from Toledo and from Granada, still speaking Castilian, and forming part of that Sephardim population to be found in great numbers at Salonica, at Brusa in Asia Minor, and throughout the ancient Turkish Empire generally. The Sephardim, who are the aristocracy of the Jewish world, have families as ancient in origin as any of the noble families of Europe. Their history, which has never yet been written in detail, is a wonderful subject for the historian. That they should still be speaking Spanish, after an exile of some four hundred and fifty years, is astonishing in itself. Their family lore, with its extraordinary ramifications, can have no parallel in the traditions of any other race. It would be interesting to know what legends still persist among them of their ancestry in Spain. The strict education of the Sephardim Jews, their perpetual intermarriages which have fixed their physical type to so remarkable a degree, their rules of family, the history of their synagogues, these are some of the mysteries of the Sephardim. In Salonica, which is in some sense their capital, for they have even newspapers printed in Spanish, the Jewish women wore a particularly beautiful costume until the middle of last century. This will have been their costume as worn in the fifteenth century in Spain; and it is probable that the colony of Sephardim in Bucharest had also their distinctive dress.

Interesting, isn't it? Unfortunately, one cannot help thinking that many of the people Sitwell had depicted were later killed in the Holocaust.

However interesting he or any other author may have described Romanian Sephardim, I believe we can and must provide a much more comprehensive picture than such short remarks scattered in various volumes among lots of other subjects.

Therefore, allow me to regard this symposium as the beginning of a consistent effort to which everyone of us and others that are not here today will make our dedicated contributions.

A Multicentennial History— The Year 1930

Dr. Dumitru Hincu

Many will wonder about this title why, speaking of many centuries, I yet have chosen to refer to just one year. I think they have every reason to wonder just as I had my reasons to pick this particular year.

Indeed, in 1930, the Sephardic community in Bucharest marked two hundred years since its presence in town was first reported. It was in 1730 that the community was legally set up by a decree, or *zapis*, as they called it, that Prince Nicholas Mavrocordat handed to his advisers Daniel Fonseca and Mentés Bally, the great-grandfather of Davicion Bally, the 1848 revolutionary. The community endured uninterruptedly until 1948 when—under circumstances I will not discuss in this paper—it merged into the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities. Still, the chief rabbis of France and Italy came to Bucharest to mark its 250th anniversary in 1980.

The year 1930, I think, was a watershed in the history of this community for a good many reasons, some of which I will present below.

But first, a few things ought to be said about the Sephardic communities that were living in Romania at the time. There were in 1930 eleven Spanish communities around the country, namely in Bucharest, Craiova, Ploiești, Turnu Severin, Timișoara, Corabia, Calafat, Giurgiu, Constanța, Siliștră, and Bazargic, all of which were bound together in a union. How strong they were is hard to ascertain. However, it may give us a clue to know that when a census was ordered by the Antonescu regime in 1942, the Bucharest community, the largest of them all, barely numbered 2,500.

Romania's Sephardim kept constant relations with friends and relatives in the various countries they came from—Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria for the most part, but also, though in different periods, Bosnia, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany—until hard times, such as wars and authoritarian, dictatorial regimes, brutally interrupted them, or severed them for good. One excellent relation they especially cherished and preserved over the centuries bound them to their native country, Spain. It was precisely in 1930 that the Marquis d'Aycinera, the Spanish plenipotentiary to Bucharest, came to the Cahal Grande to address the congregants and express his satisfaction that the Romanian Sephardim fondly and faithfully preserved their old Castilian mother tongue. A year later, another Spanish envoy, Miguel Angel Muguero, made a step further by organizing a course of Spanish language and literature at the Sephardic Community, and even brought in a wonderful teacher: Indalecio Gile Reglero.

An essential feature of the Sephardic communities around Romania—and probably everywhere else, for that matter—was the splendid unity of their members, as illustrated by, among other things, the reports their various leaders delivered on the occasion of the bicentennial, which actually could not be celebrated in 1930, because of the serious worldwide economic crisis, but only at the end of 1931.

Back to the Bucharest Community, it should be noted that two temples were open at the time, both headed by a remarkable leader of undisputed stature, Great Rabbi Sabetay Djaen, who had succeeded the almost legendary Chief Rabbi Chaim Bejarano.

Aside from that, there were social assistance and educational institutions, which even in those hard times, were making constant progress thanks to the dedication of the community among whom were many a generous donor. Speaking of generosity, I would like to mention Prince Barbu Stirbey, a rather implausible donor, who yet

made a substantial gift of 35.000 lei to the community.

The community operated two primary schools: a boys' one with 134 pupils and a girls' one with 81; both were recognized by the Ministry of Education. There was also a kindergarten of 52 and a seaside summer camp at Techirghiol. Destitute children were regularly provided clothing and a special institution, the Sol.I. Halfon Canteen, offered them decent meals. Similarly, indigent Sephardic students found a shelter and allowances at the Rebecca and Moscu Russo Home.

Community charities such as the Sephardic Ladies' Union, Harmony, and Chesed Vaemeth tirelessly worked in all these areas. The 'Black' 2th District of Bucharest, run by Poenaru Bordea, a mayor that went down in the city's history, along with the enthusiastic welfare ladies—attorney Ella Negruzzi and Mrs. Colonel Voiculescu—and factories like Gagel and Herdan, all granted an invaluable support for this activity

Health care was ensured by Raphael Halpton Polyclinic, which not only provided medical treatment, but also handed out free medicine to the needy

All this, I think, proves quite convincingly the high sense of solidarity which was specific of the Spanish congregation and, along with their remarkable organizing skills, fully made up for their small number.

A strong commitment by some of its most prominent members to the culture, economy and social life not just of their community or city, but also of the country as a whole, was yet another distinctive feature of the Bucharest Sephardim. This was even acknowledged by Nicolae Iorga, the great historian who was no friend of Jews: "I would like to underscore how much I value those who have brought along from their old Latin homeland the bland inflexions of a splendid language, and have preserved lofty spiritual virtues which drew them close their Romanian neighbors to whom they have been of substantial help," he said in a message to a congress of the Spanish Communities' Union in 1928.

When the Bucharest Sephardim marked their bicentennial in 1931, Iorga, then a prime minister, dispatched Aurel Crăciunescu, a general secretary at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to deliver an ample message which concluded:

"On behalf of His Excellency, I present you our appreciation for what you have done for our common, beloved Homeland, and I assure you that you will continue to enjoy the same benevolent support from the state authorities as is afforded to every other citizen, and the more so as this Community have constantly sought in all circumstances over their two-century existence to accomplish the ideals of good and beauty within the borders of this country, which is their Homeland.

Conveying you our respectful, heartfelt greetings at this feast so solemn and so rare in the life of a people, I wish with all my heart that your Community may continue to prosper and I pray the Almighty to shed His boundless grace on the entire Community and on everyone of its faithful, diligent members

May your Community live, grow and flourish!"

Beautiful words that would have been unthinkable of a public official less than ten years on, which once again proves that no one is a prophet in his own country, not even a visionary such as Iorga, who was even unable to predict his own so close and tragic end

Ironically, too, the Sephardic congress was also greeted by an envoy of Patriarch Miron Cristea, who shortly afterwards would voice some less than tender feelings for the Jews, Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike.

General Mayor Dem Dobrescu, one of those great administrators to whom Bucharest owed much of its interwar glamour, attended the ceremony in person and made a remarkable speech which deserves to be even partly salvaged from the ashes of history:

“... Romanian civilisation stood to gain from receiving you in its midst. Let me tell you a little story about this. It says Satan once complained to God that he meant to do harm and instead of this, things always turned out right. That’s also the case of your spreading around the globe.

You’ve been through painful suffering, but your diaspora was profitable for mankind as your civilization made a bright contribution in the general darkness, so you are fully entitled to the gratitude of the entire world.

... As mayor of the capital, I pride myself on being the mayor of my Jewish fellow citizens as well.”

The bicentennial of the Bucharest Sephardim was accompanied by such glitter that we find it hard to imagine now that there’s so few of us left around, and voices of hate and intolerance that we figured would for ever be silenced after all that happened, are being heard again.

The ceremonies were prefaced by an audience with the king. On Friday, December 18, 1931, a community delegation, headed by Iosif G. Cohen was received by the monarch and handed him a beautiful ancient silver megillah, placed in a leather case bearing the royal coat. Napoleon B. Arie, chairman of the Jubilee Commission, made short eulogy, then at the end of the 30-minute audience, the king and crown prince signed in the Golden Book of the Community. Later in the day, a community delegation was received by Patriarch Miron Cristea, the prime minister and the general mayor.

Then, at 15.00, on December 20, the Council of Community Representatives laid a wreath at the Heroes Memorial at the Sephardic Cemetery, and another at the Unknown Soldier’s Memorial in King Carol Park.

At 18.30, a Te Deum was solemnly conducted at the Cahal Grande on Negru Vodă Street. The prefect of the Palace was there on behalf of the king. Also among the prominent guests were Marshal Averescu; Archimandrite Filaret Jacu; Justice Minister Constantin Hamangiu; Grigore Trancu-Iași; Grigore Iulian; C. Rădescu, chairman of the Court of Appeal; Grigore Filipescu; the Bucharest chief of police, Gavrilă Marinescu; Justice Gane, chairman of the Legislative Council; generals Nicoleanu and Florescu; G. Crețescu, for the Foreign Ministry; Colonel Pleniceanu for Defense, and many others. There were, too (oh how the wheels of politics spin fast!), some quite surprising figures for whoever is acquainted with interwar Romanian politics: Octavian Goga and his wife, Veturia, and Stelian Popescu!

Chief Rabbi Dr. Niemirower spoke on behalf of the Ashkenazi rite, and Dr. W. Filderman on behalf of the sister community

There is still a lot more to say about this anniversary, not without relevance, I think, to our present times, yet I would rather end my speech here, thanking you all for your kind forbearance.

A Social-Economic Status of Sepharad Jews from First World War till Nowadays

Dr. Sinto Mois Julzari

**A research
of Jews in the Rousse
community - Republic of Bulgaria**

This referate reflects the results of a research of Jews in a certain region of Bulgaria. Its subject is our compatriots' life—not that much their achievements, neither their artistic and scientific contributions, not their ethnical or universal virtues, which have been written and spoken worldwide, but precisely their life as a subjective and objective reality. Why have we chosen such a subject of our research?

The key word of the analysis of jewish life is "a survival". Whenever Jews are the subject of some kind of scientific, literary or universal discussion, they are mainly described with other key words—"God's elect", "wealth", "affluence", "banking", "intellect", "talent" and so on. Such terminological characteristics reflect the fact that Jews have always and constantly been in the elite of the mankind, bearers of progress and development. We have nothing in contrary to such a description. And yet the key word of this research is "a survival". Why?

Recently in Bulgaria a wonderful book, translated into bulgarian, was published. The book is called "Jews, Got and History"(Sofia, 1998) and it's prominent author is Max I. Dimont. In his introduction M. Dimont says: "The Jewish history can not be retold as a history only to Jews, because they have almost always lived together with other civilisations. The jewish destiny has been a parallel to other civilisations' destiny with one important exception. Somehow Jews have managed to avoid the cultural death of every civilization, they lived in. Somehow Jews have managed to survive after the death of one civilization and continue their cultural growth within another one, arising at that time

But how did they survive?" (p.8)

How did we really survive? This question also has many answers. And again, as a tradition, these answers are connected with the jewish wealth, talent and intellect. But is that all? Are this ethnical features the only factors for the survival of Jews? I am a Jew and I have nothing against being supposed welthy, talented and chosen of God, but I think there are other factors for our survival as a nation too. Every people in a certain moment of his existance has three main characteristics:

A historical approach

There are the varied ethnical features, handed down among generations, which every one generation aspires to preserve. The historical approach inevitably includes conservatism, because the conservatism reflects the instinct of selfpreservation of one people.

An actuality

That's the way one people exist, the way it copes with its daily life problems, its way of life—here and now.

A perspective approach

These are the material and spiritual achievements that determine the future of a people and the appearance of its existence after "here and now". The perspective approach can also be called "creation", because the creation is a way to carry something into the future.

It is a historical and cultural regularity for the actuality to be a medial link in the development of society. Neither the historical, nor the perspective approach can

do without actuality.

On my opinion in order to answer M. Diamont's question: "And how did they survive?", it is necessary to cast a glance at the actuality in the Jewish development. It is necessary because for Millennia the actuality and survival have been equal life problems for the Jewish nationality. The survival has been a daily problem for Jews out of Israel. The survival has determined their attitude toward the social and material surroundings. The survival has been a way of thinking and behaviour, in short—a way of life.

This research tries to analyze exactly the way Sephardic Jews in Rouse have lived. The general conclusions of its results can reveal the actuality and way of surviving of the Jewish people there. The logic of the research is as follows: investigating the way Sephardic Jews in Rouse lived during different periods, we make conclusions about the factors of their survival.

The research includes two main indicators:

Social—it means their way of behaviour, occupation, education, place of living, social surroundings and place in the hierarchy. This indicator is called "social status"

Economical— it means their property (living and business) and to what extent they have depended or not to other people. This indicator is called "economical or property status". In order to have a certain historical approach, the research includes three periods:

- the first one—between the First and Second World Wars;

- the second—between the Second World War and the beginning of the democracy in Bulgaria (1989)

- the third—nowadays—a democratic development.

The establishing of these three periods makes possible the comparison between the way of life of Sephardic Jews in Rouse and the important economical and political features in Bulgaria for each period

The interview is the basic method of our research. Its object are Jews at the age between 65 and 70. They have given information about themselves, their parents and children. In this way we have received information about the three periods of the research.

The analysis begins with the presentation of the professional status which is the part of the social status. Since the professional occupation has been an essential part of one's life, this status is a determining one in the social life of Sephardic Jews during the years. The analysis of the men's professions is divided from one of the women's professions. In this way we are looking for any sexual specificities in their professional jobs.

The results of the analysis of male Jews professions are as follows:

1. The opinion that Jews are for their most part tradesmen is not that true. During the first and the third periods this profession is in the first place but its practice is not a dominant. Before the Second World War the tradesmen were 36.4% of all professions and now they are 23.8% of all. Between the two wars these professions could hardly exist—they were 5.8% of all.

2. The well-known opinion that many Jews have also been bankers or financiers is disproved too. Such a profession didn't exist in Rouse during this three periods. The profession "economist" is similar to it but it was also not quite practiced before and after the Second World War—3.6% and 8.7% of all other professions. It's possible that after the Second World War the bankers emigrated from Rouse but no one who has been interviewed mentioned that. Such a profession does not exist now either

3. The profession "state employee" is wide-spread during the three periods. It's in the first place after the Second World War. The explanation of this fact is the political system in Bulgaria before 1989. The conclusion is that Jews took a great part in this system.

4. The profession "an engineer" has increased its practice during the periods. Before the Second World War it's not wide-spread at all—0%, but after the

war and now it's in the first place—24.6% and 23.8%. The improvement of the industry and the influence of the technical progress on it are typical features of the periods after the Second World War. By practising such engineer professions Jews prove their incorporation to these trends and their readiness to have actual professional realization.

5. The so called "intellectual occupations" surprisingly are not quite practiced. They take a small part before the Second World War and now the intellectuals are mostly teachers, lectures, lawyers, designers. This fact rejects the well-known opinion that Jews take a great part in the artistic and scientific elite of the society. It's obvious that their choice of a profession is a rational one, although they have native artistic and intellectual abilities.

6. Such conclusions can also be made from the information we have about the wide variety of professions, practiced by Jews during the three periods. Before the Second World War 55 working men practiced 22 professions, after the war 69 men had 20 professions and now 21 men have 10 different jobs. It's interesting to know that there are many professions that a lot of people can hardly connect with Jews. Such workers are tinmen (in second place before the Second World War), millers, plumbers, seamen, military men, policemen (in the third place after the Second World War), tobacco workers, dairymen and many others.

We can make a very important conclusion from the wide variety of professions, i.e. Jews are a very mobile, universal and adaptable people. We realise their readiness to work many different jobs, which have made them well adaptable to the actual social conditions in Bulgaria.

It's a well-known public opinion that Jews are mostly intellectuals, that they take a great part in the society elite. On our opinion such a routine in the public is a pernicious one for two main reasons—it gives a wrong idea of the way our compatriots have lived and it can't explain the way they have survived.

Fortunately Jews themselves have not been routine when they have chosen their professions. Exactly their adaptability and flexibility when choosing a profession are some of the most important factors of their survival. Here comes the general conclusion of the research:

Jews have had a chance to survive far away from their motherland, because of their creative, flexible and not conservative thinking on one hand, and due to their dynamical, universal and adaptable actions on the other.

This general conclusion is confirmed by the other information we have about the economical and social status of sepharad Jews in Rousse.

For example, before the Second World War, women were for their most part housekeepers, but after the war they have had a wide variety of professions, similar to the male professions and actual according to the professional structure in Bulgaria.

Similar conclusions of Jews' adaptability we can make from the information about their educational status. While the elementary and primary education was in the first place before the Second World War, after it the secondary and higher education has been a dominant. We also have some scholars with academic degrees after the. Such an educational development is equal to the society trend.

Next to no one from Jews was a state employee before the Second World War, there were many public servants after it and now their amount has dropped off. This trend is also equal to the society ones. Such an administrative status of sepharad Jews is a result of the role the state had before 1989 year in the form of government. When this role was a dominant our compatriots also took a great part in it. Now, when the private property is of a great significance, Jews also change their professions.

There is an interesting trend of choosing the social environment during the years. During the first two periods—before and after the Second World War—the greatest part of jews lived in jewish districts. Gradually, they have left this districts and

started living in other residential ones. There is a trend of free communications and integration within the social environment.

The economical status of Jews is also actual and dependant on the public life. It is characterized with the extent of dependence or independence of Jews' work and living conditions. Before the Second World War there was a balance between Jews who had their own business and those who were hired—laborers. After the war the greatest part of Jews were hired in state enterprises. Nowadays more and more Jews have their own business. It is a special feature of the business of Jews that their working premises have rented ones. A possible reason for this is the fact that many Jews—owners emigrated after the Second World War. For our research it is important to know that at the moment the jewish business in Rouse is developed "under someone else's shelter"

The problem of the dependence of Jews' dwellings is a different one. There is an underlying tendency toward having a private but not big house. It is an interesting fact that such a trend existed even after the Second World War, when the greatest part of dwellings belonged to the state. Nowadays 78% of Jews have their own houses or flats. This fact underlines the jewish aspiration for independence and normal living conditions and their attitude toward their social environment. Maybe by instinct the independent dwelling has been considered as means of survival.

That's how the social—economical status of sepharad Jews in Rouse has looked like. Living far away from their motherland, they managed and they still do, to overcome their daily living. Being adaptable and adjustable to objective social environment and at same time devoted to their Jewish view of life and their typical Jewish strong will to live, they have carried in the lifetime the age-old Jewish values and given their contribution to the immortality of Judaism.

Davicion Bally and his correspondence

with Ion Heliade Rădulescu

Lya Benjamin

The correspondence making the subject of this lecture has been brought to light before. It first appeared in a volume, Heliade Rădulescu: *Letters and Documents*, edited by Emil Vărtosu in 1928, then again in 1940, in Ioan Massof's biography of Davicion Bally. A long gap followed as communist historiography chose to ignore the relationship of Heliade and Bally, just as it generally ignored the Jews' role in Romanian history. So, George Potra, while reprinting plenty of documents from the Vărtosu edition in his own volume of Heliade correspondence (1972), completely overlooked the exchange with Bally.

In our current attempt at retracing Jewish history in Romania—Sephardic history in this case—we think it is our duty to retrieve evidence that has been brushed aside from the scientific circuit. This appears all the more necessary as the Bally-Heliade correspondence (incompletely published by Vărtosu, and implicitly by Massof) is of great relevance for anyone dealing with Jewish history in Romania: It conveys a different image of the 19th century Jewish population from the one researchers, even distinguished ones, often depict, namely that they, the Jews, "in their capacity as publicans, merchants and moneylenders, rapidly rose to an economic condition better than the natives'." By contrast, the Bally-Heliade letters, among other documents, clearly prove that from among those "publicans, merchants and moneylenders", a number of personalities stood out as Maecenas and philanthropists, who valued Romanian culture and helped to stimulate and spread it.

Gleaning through information appearing in *Curierul Românesc* newspaper, one finds for instance this report of 1845 that the Sephardic community bought six out of a total 100 shares issued by a national company which had been set up to subsidize the printing of Romanian books. As for Bally himself, he was among the first subscribers, paying 100 ducats, to a Universal Library collection which Heliade was planning to publish in 21 volumes.

Back to the correspondence, it consists of letters that were exchanged in the 1850s and 1860s, illustrating more than a mere financial relation between the two men. Indeed, they reveal more than the repeated, lavish loans Bally would grant Heliade in support of his publishing work, and the fact that Bally, as Vărtosu put it, was one of Heliade's most "obliging" creditors. These documents are also relevant for some particular areas of Romanian cultural history and publishing.

Heliade's letters to Bally are cold and formal as a rule, referring either to loan requests to publish various volumes, or to his efforts to pay back his debts. We will only quote one note, on the back of which Bally jotted "received in 1861." This time, Heliade told the Jewish "usurer" a little more than usual about his personal troubles and political concerns.

Said the former 1848 militant: "My situation is extremely painful; I am determined to leave a country that has stripped me of everything I had. I am broke and in despair of any help. I will after the holidays file a lawsuit against the government (over the suppression of *Curierul Românesc*). It is the only hope I and my friends had left."

By contrast, Bally wrote his letters in a pathetic tone and in an elegant and rich Romanian language, reflecting a man who took interest in Romanian and universal culture and was ready to spend substantial amounts to subsidize it, including in this case Heliade Rădulescu's publishing activity. A telling example in support of these assertions can be found in, among other Bally letters, one of June 8, 1859. In an indignant response to an offensive letter from Heliade, whom he had asked to repay a debt, Bally felt it necessary

to review the history of their relations. "My dear friend", he said, "I don't know if you still know or care to remember how our relation and friendship have developed; I do know, however, that my friendship for you did not arise from my seeking any personal advantage. I also know that I immediately confided in you more than any longstanding friendship would have warranted, and now I would like to confess how it all happened. You know dear friend, that I don't smoke, nor enjoy cigars, nor sleep long; so whenever I'm given a respite from the noise and fever of business I use it all for reading books and newspapers. As you can easily figure, I also used to read your works, and I confess I enjoyed reading them and was eager to meet the person who wrote so agreeably. The opportunity arose when you came to see me about the General History you wanted to publish. You appeared particularly anxious to enlighten your nation and said you needed 600 ducats to attain your goal. Then I, without waiting to hear your story twice or asking for any guarantee, met your desire and wished you all prosperity."

After this article of faith, Bally went on to tactfully remind Heliade about the loans he had been granted over the past 12 years, only a mite of which he had returned, and concluded: "You know, my dear friend, that I have only done so in good faith and out of friendship."

Bally himself was apparently under pressure when he wrote the letter, for in the end he said: "Dear friend, I am in a very said situation. With trouble looming, I have no choice but sternly underscore that, if you want me to continue to show you understanding, you must in turn make an effort and send me in these straits some amount of money of at least 100 ducats. PS. Dear friend, I must repeat that I am in dire straits these days, so please send me by my son as much as you can right now."

We quoted extensive fragments from this letter because we found it relevant for the nature of the Bally-Heliade relations, for Bally's character and humble bearing and for the way this 19th century enlightened Jew felt impelled to involve himself in the life of Romanian society.

Bally, as is widely known, was a leader of the Bucharest Sephardic community and a staunch defender of Jewish dignity. His decision to move in his old age to the Holy Land and end his days there clearly demonstrates the unaltered Judaic essence of his identity. We could not conclude this lecture without making a brief portrait of this "usurer" who embodied every virtue of the modern Jew.

Davicion Bally was born in Bucharest in 1809, in a Sephardic family that had settled in Walachia during the previous century. He did not attend academic studies, but taught himself the values of Judaic, Romanian and European culture. He was fluent not just in Hebrew and Romanian but also in Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish. He associated with the 1848 Revolution and with the Jews that took part in it. He granted his support to the Romanian revolutionaries during the revolution and their subsequent exile. He stood up for Jewish dignity and, among other things, obtained the suppression of an 1858 anti-Semitic pamphlet called *The Sling* (Prăștia). As he was being denied Romanian citizenship, he emigrated to Palestine in 1882 and died there on April 20, 1884.

Professeur Abraham Galante éducateur, journaliste, pédagogue, philologue et député... mais surtout historien!

Naim (Avigdor) Gülergüz

L'histoire des communautés juives en Asie Mineure est largement antérieure à l'émigration des juifs sépharades à l'Empire Ottoman. On a pu relever dans la région égéenne des traces d'habitations juives datant du 4^e siècle avant JC. Le célèbre historien Josephus Flavius relate pour sa part que "Aristote rencontra au cours de son voyage en Asie mineure des Juifs avec lesquels il conversa".

Des communautés juives se développèrent tout au long de l'ère byzantine, mais prospérèrent surtout après la conquête Ottomane. En 1324, lorsque les forces ottomanes conquérèrent Bursa et en firent leur capitale, le Sultan Orhan autorisa la construction de la synagogue "Etz ha-Hayim" (l'arbre de vie) synagogue qui resta en service jusqu'à l'incendie des années 1940.

Au cours des siècles suivants, lors de la conquête ottomane des Balkans, de nombreuses communautés juives se placèrent sous l'autorité ottomane, qui, en vertu des principes de l'Islam, reconnaissait les droits des autres religions monothéistes. Lorsqu'en 1453 Mehmet le Conquérant (Fatih Sultan Mehmed) prit Constantinople il y trouva une communauté juive romaine "les Romaniotes" conduite par le rabbin Moshé Capsali.

D'une manière générale le pouvoir ottoman se montra beaucoup plus ouvert et tolérant que son prédécesseur byzantin. Et de ce fait dès le début du 15^e siècle les autorités ottomanes encouragèrent activement l'immigration juive. Dans la première moitié de ce même siècle le rabbin Yitzhak Sarfati d'Edirne écrivait aux communautés juives d'Europe pour "encourager ses coreligionnaires à se soustraire aux tourments qu'ils subissaient dans la chrétienté en venant chercher sécurité et prospérité dans l'Empire Ottoman". (Bernard Lewis, Les Juifs et l'Islam)

Les juifs persécutés par l'Inquisition et chassés par le décret de Ferdinand et Isabelle reprirent espoir grâce au refuge que leur offrait le Sultan Bayazid II. En 1492 le Sultan ordonna aux gouverneurs des provinces ottomanes de "ne pas interdire l'entrée des juifs dans le pays, ni d'y faire obstacle, mais au contraire de leur réserver un accueil chaleureux". (Avram Danon, Yossef Daath, No.4) Et "non seulement on leur permit de s'installer sur les terres ottomanes mais on les encouragea." (Bernard Lewis)

Le long des siècles un nombre croissant de juifs européens, fuyant les persécutions dans leurs pays d'origine, vinrent s'établir dans l'Empire Ottoman.

Au cours de trois siècles qui suivirent l'expulsion, la prospérité et la créativité des Juifs Ottomans vinrent concurrencer les fastes de l'âge d'or espagnol. Istanbul, Izmir, Safed et Salonique devinrent les centres de la communauté juive sépharade.

La majorité des médecins de la cour étaient juifs: Hekim Yakoub, Joseph Hamon, Moshe Hamon, pour ne citer que les plus connus.

Les techniques encore récentes de l'imprimerie inventée en 1436, furent importées d'Europe dans l'Empire Ottoman par les Juifs. Déjà en 1493, rien qu'un an après leur expulsion d'Espagne, David et Samuel ibn Nahmias installèrent à Istanbul la première presse à imprimer en caractères hébraïques

Nombreux furent les juifs qui servirent leur pays dans les services diplomatiques. Joseph Nassi, nommé Duc de Naxos, était l'ancien marrano Joao Miques. Un autre marrano Alvaro Mandes fut nommé Duc de Mythylène en remerciement des

services diplomatiques rendus au Sultan. Salomon ben Nathan Eskenazi conclut les premiers accords entre les Empires Ottoman et Britanniques.

Le contexte libéral de l'Empire Ottoman favorisa aussi l'essor de la littérature juive. C'est ainsi que Joseph Caro publia le "*Shulhan Arouch*" tandis que Shlomo ha-Levi Alkabetz écrivait le "*Lekheh Dod*" – hymne pour l'ouverture du Sabbath –, Joseph Culi débuta la rédaction du fameux "*Me-Am Lo'az*". Le rabbin Abraham ben Isaac Assa sera reconnu comme père de la littérature judéo-espagnole.

D'après la tradition ottomane chaque communauté religieuse non musulmane avait la responsabilité de ses propres institutions, écoles comprises. Au début du 19^e siècle Abraham Camondo créa une école juive moderne qui provoqua un conflit sérieux entre rabbins séculiers et fanatiques. Sur quoi le Sultan Abdülaziz dut intervenir en 1864 en ordonnant la préparation de statuts à être ratifiés par lui-même: c'est ainsi que fut publié cette même année le "*Takkanot ha-Kehilla*" qui définissait l'organisation de la communauté juive.

La réforme de l'Empire Ottoman atteignit son apogée en 1856 avec la proclamation du "*Hatt- Hümayun*" qui reconnaissait tous les citoyens ottomans, musulmans comme non-musulmans, égaux devant la loi.

La première guerre mondiale entraîna la disparition de l'Empire Ottoman. La jeune République Turque fondée par Mustapha Kemal Atatürk lui succéda en 1923. Le califat fut aboli et une constitution laïque adoptée.

Durant la seconde guerre mondiale, la Turquie s'en tint à une attitude de neutralité. Déjà en 1935 Atatürk avait invité de nombreux éminents professeurs juifs allemands à fuir le nazisme et venir s'installer en Turquie. Ces érudits apportèrent une précieuse contribution au développement du système universitaire turc: médecine, droit, agriculture, philosophie, beaux-arts, musique, etc.

Tout le long de cette période d'horreur qu'a été la Seconde Guerre Mondiale les diplomates Turcs en fonction dans les pays occupés par les hordes nazis ont déployé tout leurs efforts pour sauver d'une mort certaine le plus grand nombre possible de Juifs que l'on pouvait formuler comme étant sujets Turcs. Et pour ne citer que l'un d'eux nommons Selahattin Ülkümen, Consul Général à Rhodes en 1943-44 qui a sauvé la vie de 42 de nos corréligionaires et qui a été honoré comme "*Hassid Umot ha'Olam*" par Yad Vashem en Juin 1960.

Le juif turc Mois Kohen alias Muris Tekinalp fut l'un des piliers de la doctrine économique du nouvel état Turc.

Aujourd'hui la communauté juive avec ses presque 26.000 âmes, reste une entité modeste au sein d'une population de plus de 65 millions d'habitants – à 99% de confession musulmane. Néanmoins plusieurs professeurs juifs enseignent dans les Universités d'Istanbul et d'Ankara. De même on retrouve beaucoup de juifs dans toutes les professions libérales et aux avantpostes de l'économie turque et dans l'industrie.

C'est l'une des brillantes figures du Judaïsme Turc, le Professeur **ABRAHAM (AVRAM) GALANTE** que je voudrais vous présenter aujourd'hui.

Né le 4 Janvier 1873 (10 Tevet 5633) à Bodrum (ancienne Halicarnasse), pays d'origine du célèbre historien Hérodote universalement connu comme "le père de l'Histoire". Galante a été un chercheur infatigable des documents et informations concernant la vie des Juifs dans l'Empire Ottoman jusqu'à 1923 et de la République de Turquie depuis lors.

Son but était "de sauver de l'oubli tout ce qu'on peut sauver", car disait-il "on ne peut fonder un futur sans connaître le passé".

Descendant d'une longue lignée de rabbins et érudits, Galante a débuté à 6 ans, à l'école juive de Bodrum où il reçut la base de son enseignement d'hébreu. Puis il suivit les cours alternativement à Rhodes et Bodrum jusqu'à être diplômé à l'âge de 21 ans du lycée d'Izmir où il enseigna les mathématiques par la suite.

Fondateur de l'école "Tiferet Israel" à Rhodes, avec l'appui de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle et la contribution de la communauté juive de cette île, professeur de mathématiques et de français à Izmir, collaborateur de la presse turque, judéo-espagnole, française et même grecque d'Izmir, avec ses nombreux articles il fut obligé en 1904 de se réfugier au Caire où il publia le journal "*La Vara*" et contribua à divers périodiques turcs et français... jusqu'à son retour d'exil en Turquie après la proclamation de la Constitution en 1908.

Adjoint du Prof. Bergstrasser, professeur de "grammaire comparée des langues sémitiques" à l'Université d'Istanbul, Galante fut nommé par la suite professeur à la chaire d'"Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient", fonction qu'il conserva jusqu'à 1933.

Affilié au parti "Ittihat ve Terakki" (Union et Progres) il participa à la politique dès son jeune âge, soit par ses écrits révolutionnaires soit par son activité en formant le "Comité Israélite d'Egypte" qui fut représenté au Congrès des Jeunes-Turcs à Paris en Décembre 1907. Galante fut dès la première heure un des membres actifs du "Congrès National" tenu à Istanbul pendant l'armistice.

Il collabora à différentes revues et quotidiens turcs ainsi qu'aux journaux judéo-espagnols "*El Tiempo*" et "*El Telegrafo*" et rédigea pendant neuf ans la revue "*Haménora*" organe de la B'nei Brith.

Abraham Galante n'est pas connu comme romancier, et pourtant déjà en 1900, il est l'auteur de deux romans en judéo-espagnol: "*Abandonada por mi padre*" et "*Rinyou, o el amor salvaje*" publiés en feuilletons dans la presse locale.

Galante montra aussi un grand intérêt au folklore judéo-espagnole, qu'il trouvait très riche quoique transmis verbalement de génération en génération. Il publia plusieurs essais dont "*Quatorze Romances Judéo-espagnoles*" (1903) et "*La Langue Espagnole en Orient et ses Déformations*" (1907). Avec sa riche collection de proverbes et romances judéo-espagnoles Galante constitua une riche source pour les philologues de la péninsule Ibérique, dont le célèbre Rodolfo Gil (Romancero Judéo-Espagnol-Madrid-1911).

Abraham Galante fut élu député de Nigde à la Grande Asssemblée Nationale de Turquie en 1943 ce qui lui donna l'occasion et la possibilité de passer de longues journées à la Bibliothèque Nationale où il puisa de tres précieuses données pour ses écrits

Educateur, journaliste, politicien, linguiste, ethnographe, turcologue et grand patriote turc Galante s'est surtout distingué et est honoré et immortalisé en tant qu'historien. Il a recueilli un monument de documentations historiques sur les communautés juives-turques et publié plus de 50 ouvrages en turc et en français qui, encore aujourd'hui, servent comme point de mire et de référence pour tous ceux qui sont intéressés à élaborer l'Histoire des Juifs de Turquie, et tout cela malgré le manque d'intérêt que lui témoignait les membres de sa communauté même. Et c'est en ces termes qu'il se plaisait à critiquer amèrement et satiriquement le cas: "Mes livres sont imprimés à Istanbul, mais lus à l'étranger".

Ses ouvrages "*Türkler ve Yahudiler*" (1928), "*Documents Officiels Turcs concernant les Juifs de Turquie*" (1931), "*Turcs et Juifs*" (1932) et "*Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul – depuis la prise de cette ville en 1453 par Fatih Mehmed II jusqu'à nos jours*" (en 2 volumes publiés respectivement en 1941 et 1942) ainsi que les divers "recueils" publiés par la suite, offrent des références d'une importance primordiale pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent à l'histoire des Juifs de Turquie.

De peur que la vie maritale ne le restreigne dans ses activités de recherches et de rédaction, Galante a vécu célibataire tout le long de sa vie. Il habitait Kinaliada, une des îles des Princes sur la Marmara, à 40 minutes du centre-ville d'Istanbul et passa ses dernières années à l'Hopital Or Ahayim.

Lorsqu'on lui proposa d'organiser son jubilé en 1954 il refusa en ces termes: "Un jubilé ne représente aucune valeur pour moi. Le meilleur jubilé est que mes oeuvres soient lues par la jeunesse." Malgré cela un jubilé fut organisé le 6 Janvier 1957,

auquel il n'a pu assister personnellement étant hospitalisé. Le discours des dirigeants locaux et les messages d'éloges et de félicitations adressées par de nombreuses personnalités (Cecil Roth – Oxford, Abraham Elmaleh-Jerusalem) et institutions (Alliance Israélite Universelle, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Hebrew University – Jerusalem) démontrent l'intérêt universel que les sphères académiques mondiales lui témoignaient.

C'est dans les termes suivants que le Professeur Abraham Elmaleh de Jerusalem le décrivait: *"Le Professeur Galante est une des grandes figures du Judaïsme Oriental, un de ces cerveaux éblouissants, historien imbu des disciplines vigoureuses, chercheur méthodique et infatigable, philologue distingué, polémiste fougueux, journaliste de grand plan, critique fin, écrivain de grande famille, homme politique et organisateur de grand talent, patriote convaincu et grand Juif."*

Galante qui connaissait, lisait et parlait 10 langues, dont le turc, l'arabe, l'hébreu, l'espagnol, le français, le grec, l'italien, le latin, l'anglais et l'allemand, avait direct accès aux sources et documents évitant ainsi la distorsion de traduction.

Le seul et unique historien juif-turc de notre époque pendant de longues années, "s'attachant à faire revivre dans ses ouvrages le passé étincelant du judaïsme Sepharadi" le professeur Abraham Galante décéda le 8 Août 1961 (24Av 5721) et fut enterré au cimetière d'Arnavutköy à Istanbul.

Sa contribution à l'histoire en général et celle du judaïsme turc en particulier reste sans pareille et permanente.

Que son âme repose en paix

Great Rabbi Chaim Bejarano*

Ezra Alhasid

A many-sided personality, a polyglot and a scholar as well as a prominent religious leader, Great Rabbi Chaim Bejarano was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding figures of Judaism at the turn of the century.

Son of a rabbi, he was born in 1850, in the small town of Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. There was just one primary school in town. As for religious education, children of all nationalities were sent either to the imam or to the rabbi. He went to both. His parents taught him Spanish, which he would passionately love to the end of his life. He was also quick to learn the main idioms spoken in the region—Turkish, Bulgarian and Greek. At the same time, he studied Hebrew thoroughly. At 18, he was regarded as a scholar, and rightly so. He later acquired good command of Persian, Arabic and several modern languages. As a young man he was already reputed as the 'scholar of Stara Zagora'.

When the Russian-Turkish war broke out in 1877, his family fled to Ruschuk where his mother and one of his children were killed in the shelling. Crossing the Danube, he then took refuge in Bucharest where the Spanish Community hired him as principal of the boys' school and preacher at the Great Temple, the Kahal Grande, where his extensive erudition shortly earned him great praise and respect.

Meanwhile, his tireless linguistic research attracted widespread interest among the Romanian scientific community. His solid command of Turkish turned out extremely useful in that period as General Vasile Nasturel called for his assistance to help prepare a History of the Independence War. Trophies the Romanians had conquered from the Turks made the subject of a special research. Bejarano was given charge of the Turkish flags inscribed with quotes from the Koran, which he not only translated, but also, commented at length thanks to his vast learning in the area.

His teaching career complemented his scientific and religious activity. In 1896, the Bucharest Faculty of Theology featured two future Orthodox metropolitans, Irineu and Visarion Puiu, among its students. Both of them alongside 13 others attended Bejarano's Hebrew course.

While a principal at the boys' school, he compiled an anthology of Sephardi folklore comprising hundreds of proverbs, maxims and fables he had gathered over many years. The manuscript of this work is preserved at the Academy of Sciences in Madrid. Bejarano's foreword, structured as a dialogue is a valuable piece of literature in its own right. His literary talent also showed in his poems, in Hebrew for the most part, which were published in European reviews. His indefatigable activity in so many areas could not fail to catch the attention of European scientists. The rabbinic seminary in Vienna would soon praise him as one of the greatest Talmudists of the day.

In 1910, the Sephardi Community of Adrianopolis elected him Great Rabbi and leader. Bejarano left Bucharest where his memory and works continued to be cherished and valued. As a fertile chapter of his life came to a close, another even more brilliant one began. A few years on, he was elected Great Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire with an authority equal to that of a Muslim caliph. In that high office, Bejarano proved the full force of his personality and his lofty spiritual and intellectual gifts. First of all, he organized the local Sephardim into a model community. He translated ancient manuscripts just as passionately as he translated into Hebrew the works of great European sages. He pursued a vast correspondence with con-

* Based on the works of I. Semo, Raul Siniol, and verbal communications by Ioan Massoff.

temporary personalities such as Anatole France, Georges Clemenceau, Miguel de Unamuno, Emil Ludwig, Claude Farrere, Pierre Loti, Great Rabbi Dr. Moses Gaster of the London Sephardi community, and Nahman Bialik.

A dedication by Bialik, this prince of poetry, read: "In exchange for the Sephardi poetry's gold, the Ashkenazi poetry offers its copper to a rabbi, scholar and poet, Great Rabbi Chaim Bejarano—from one that honors him to his full worth."

The rabbi's house in Constantinople became a gathering place for European scholars. Then the First World War brought down the Turkish Empire. Kemal Atatürk, who came to power in Turkey after the war, was on cordial terms with Bejarano.

In 1920, the rabbi was named a member of the Royal Spanish Academy and honorary president of Dante Alighieri Society. The Academy's Dictionary of the Spanish Language gave Enrique (Chaim) Bejarano full recognition as one of the world's most prominent Hispanists. Actually, his name itself indicated an evident Spanish descent, showing his ancestors must have been residents of Bejar, a town near Madrid.

In his old age, he seldom left his residence in Constantinople's Pera neighborhood, but would not give up scientific research. Piles of his manuscripts were written in this period. Familiar with so many idioms, he easily moved across a wide range of areas of cultures, and studied writings beyond reach to many other scholars.

His solitary study of ancient folios never kept him away from people. Quite the reverse, Bejarano had a deep love for people and an endless understanding for their needs and weaknesses. He had a special way with people, knew how to get across to them and speak to anyone in their mother tongues, which earned him their unalloyed respect.

Bejarano valued his rabbinic mission in service of the people above all honors. His one pride consisted in having penetrated the hearts of the masses and led them along the bright path of faith.

These lofty aspirations he never gave up. Sagacious and alert, he continued from his dying bed, to dispense comfort and wisdom to those who came to homage him.

August 1, 1921: the 3,500-seat temple on Buyuk-Handak Street proved too small for the thousands of Jews who had gathered there from all over Turkey, alongside high officials and diplomats, to pay him their last tribute. Through the huge crowd overflowing the streets, the convoy difficultly made its way to Arnautchoy Cemetery. The entire population of the city had come out to honor the Great Rabbi. Jewish, Muslim and Christian shopkeepers had closed their shops as on a day of public mourning.

A white marble monument in the Moorish-Sephardi style rises above his grave, watching the eternal rest of this so worthy descendant of the Sephardi cultural tradition.

Relations between the Sephardic Jewish Communities in the Balkans

Dr. Alexander Cornescu-Coren

A great deal of research has been written and printed about each individual Sephardic community in the Balkans: on the Jews of Greece separately, on Turkish Jewry separately, on Yugoslavian Jewry separately; but very little effort has been spent in research into the relations between the Sephardim of the Balkans. It is precisely to that subject that my lecture is directed.

The Sephardic Jews in the Balkans (Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Romania) lived for centuries under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. This is one common element. The vast majority of them were descended from the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, and this constitutes another common element. The majority belong to synagogues in which the prayers are recited in the Sephardic version, and this yet a third common element. To these may be added other common elements, such as the use of Ladino (a Sephardic form of Spanish), common culinary traditions and even similar dress among the Balkan Sephardim. Why then is there such a dearth of research material on what the Balkan Sephardim have in common? There are several possible explanations, but I shall confine myself at this stage to two of them, that appear to me to be of significance:

a) Strained relations - for example, between Greece and Turkey - led to reservations and fears, lest research into the features common to the Jews of those countries might exacerbate their already existing condition of being regarded as "foreigners" by the non-Jewish populace.

b) The perpetual political argument on the definition of the identity of "Macedonia", that raged between Greece and Yugoslavia, as well as the conflicts over Bulgarian territory, also gave rise to fears, lest emphasis on the "common" features of Jews in these regions may provide an excuse to increase anti-Semitism, which was not unknown in Balkan countries.

Why is it important just now to conduct an in-depth research on the "common" features among the Balkan Sephardim? I suggest at least three reasons:

a) In the second half of the 20th century, after the holocaust in the course of which 90% of the Jews of Salonika perished, and among the victims there were also Sephardic Jews from Yugoslavia and Romania, the number of Sephardim in the Balkans was gradually reduced, so that in the absence of any serious research, there would be missing a substantial number of chapters of Jewish history. Just as a great deal of money and resources are spent on researching Eastern European communities that have disappeared, there is a sacred duty to devote time to this subject, in order to put in their proper perspective both the contribution of Sephardic Jews in the Balkans to Jewish culture and their contribution to the non-Jewish society in which they had lived for centuries.

b) After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, thousands of Sephardim immigrated to Israel from the Balkan countries and these did not put sufficient stress on their "common features" - for instance, the "Bulgarian" synagogue in Jaffa and the "Greek" synagogue in Ben-Saruk Street in Tel-Aviv - without any effort to emphasise their common features. The younger generation also, the children of those immigrants from the Balkans, is unaware of their common roots; and I suggest using the term "Balkan Sephardim" rather than "Greek Jews" or "Bulgarian Jews", because it is not the country in which they lived which is relevant to their Jewishness, but rather their cultural and religious roots, and those are to be found in the period of the Ottoman Empire, during the time when the new national states of the 19th and 20th centuries had not yet come into existence

c) In order to demonstrate the fact, that the term "Sephardi" cannot be used for Iraqi and Egyptian Jews along with Sephardic Jews whose roots

are in Turkey, Bulgaria or Romania.

We can learn a great deal about the inter-community relations in the Balkan countries from the rabbis who served in those communities, no less than from the books they compiled and which constitute to this day an important source of information regarding the history of the Sephardic Jews in the Balkans. Thus one may note the name of Rabbi Moshe Bejarano, who for 32 years served as the principal of boys' school in Sephardic community in Bucharest, while at the same time preaching in the Great Synagogue of the Sephardic community, and in 1910, he was appointed rabbi of the city of Adrianople and later on, in 1920, achieved the highest distinction when he was appointed to the post of Haham Bashi, i.e. the Chief Rabbi of Turkey, residing in Istanbul¹ This gives us some idea of the close ties between the Sephardic community of Bucharest with that of Turkey and of the esteem in which the rabbis who served in those communities were held.

Another important personage is Rabbi Eliezer Pappo: born in Sarajevo in 1770, he moved to Bucharest in 1810 and was held in high esteem on account of his essays and books. Among the books printed after his death, mention should be made of "*Elef Hamaghen*", printed in Salonika in 1924, and the books "*Orach Hachayim*" and "*Beth Tephilla*", printed in Belgrade in 1860.² The fact of his having come from Sarajevo, and then having moved to Bucharest, where he served as rabbi, and his books being published in the communities of Salonika and Belgrade, tells us a great deal about the inter-communities ties among the Sephardim in the Balkans.

There were particularly close ties in religious matters between the communities in Yugoslavia and Salonika. The elders of Sarajevo wrote at the beginning of the 18th century, that city "tags along after Thessalonika authority and rules".³

The Balkan communities held pride of place in the Sabbetaian movement during the era of Sabbetai Zvi and others. After Sabbetai Zvi's conversion, his disciples and followers often remained in various communities in the Balkan area, since Sabbetai Zvi himself, after his expulsion from the centres in Turkey, stayed first in Gallipoli, then in Adrianople and finally in Ulcinj (Uzgun in Turkish) in South-West Yugoslavia; and according to the studies of Joseph Fenton, it may be assumed that Sabbetai Zvi's final resting place is in Ulcinj.⁴

Nathan of Gaza (who, as we know, did not convert) also travelled around the Jewish communities in the Balkans. Among the various places he visited were Castoria, Sofia, Berat and finally Skopje (Uskub in Turkish), where he died and was buried with great pomp. Nathan of Gaza's grave, like that of Sabbetai Zvi's was a centre of pilgrimage for generations.

In the 19th century, too, the concepts of "Jewish Nationalism", composed by Yehuda Bibas (1780-1852), and the celebrated ideas of Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai (1798-1879) - both of them described as "pre-Zionists" - greatly influenced the formation of what was to become, in later years, Zionist movement. Rabbi Alkalai's thoughts had a direct influence on Baruch Ben-Yitschak Mitterani of Edirne.

The activity of the Maccabi clubs constitute yet another illustration of inter-community co-operation in the Balkans. Thus, for example, in 1930, the Maccabi Association of Salonika approached the World Maccabi Federation in Berlin with a proposal to gather together in Salonika all the Maccabi delegations from the Balkans and Central Europe, that were due to travel to the first "Maccabiah" in Tel-Aviv in 1932. The Presidium of World Maccabi Federation replied that in 1930, its representative, dr. Rosenfeld, would be attending the great sports gathering of Maccabi in Bulgaria at Sofia and that it would be a good idea if Maccabi in Salonika also sent its representative to Sofia to discuss the proposal.⁵

¹ Raoul Siniol: "Momente Sefarde", p.44, Jerusalem, 1980

² R. Siniol, op.cit. p.p.130-131

³ Dr. Ya'acov Barna: "The Connections between the Communities in Turkey and Palestine during Ottoman Period", included in "The History of Yugoslavian Jewry", edited by Zvi Locker, vol.II, p.13, Jerusalem, 1991

⁴ Y. Fenton: "The Grave of the Ismaili Messiah", 1986 issue of "Pe'amim", p.p. 13-39

⁵ David Ramon: "Maccabi in the Balkans", 1945, p.121

Iuliu Barasch on Mid-19th Century Sephardim

Dr. Harry Kuller

A

file bearing the date "Buch., Feb. 1930," preserved at the archives of the Jewish Federation History Center, contains the following passage: "Romanianization [of the local Sephardim, of course] followed ... and was accomplished relatively soon owing to their near identity to the majority nation. Undistinguished in either appearance or attire from the majority, with whom they shared the same spiritual cast, mentality and inclinations, perfectly fluent in the people's vernacular, which they would readily use, they were easily integrated with the heart and soul of the nation and assimilated in the full sense of the word."

The file, which bears no signature (though it was probably prepared by Sephardi officials) went on to substantiate this assertion with authoritative quotes from several Romanian and foreign authors. Among the former are Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Mihai Eminescu, C.A. Rosetti, and up to Vaida Voevod, a politician who, on a propaganda tour to promote the newly formed Romanian Front party, made this remark in a Craiova speech that the Romanian Spanish Jews "have assimilated into the nation to the full." Ample excerpts from foreign authors, including some by notorious anti-Semites such as Edouard Drumond (see his *La France juive*, published in numerous editions), were selected on grounds that they praised Sephardi virtues in contrast with the "serious shortcomings" of the Ashkenazim. However, unbiased observers, such as Dutch author C.G. Rommenhoeller, were also cited. In his book on *La Grande Roumanie*, Rommenhoeller wrote: "Aujourd'hui encore ces deux classes de juifs se distinguent clairement en Roumanie... Par contre, les juifs espagnols se sont complètement assimilés. Ils se sont entièrement adaptés aux Roumains par leur langue, leurs moeurs, leurs costumes. Des grandes différences existent donc entre ces deux catégories de juifs."¹

In the hard times of the 1930s but also later on, a certain category of Spanish Jews were clearly keen on dissociating themselves from the Ashkenazim *in re* and especially *in mente*, by building a self-image, which was concomitantly a hetero-image. They were anxious to show the gentiles and persuade them that they, the Spanish Jews, stayed out of political militancy; were traditionally conservative; duly observed the laws and the establishment; were adverse to sedition and subversive trends; were never seen to associate, whether in the papers or elsewhere, with any action against the mainstream public spirit; proved their patriotic dedication in every circumstances, and had constantly involved themselves in the country's key historical events, including the 1848 Revolution, the War of Independence of 1877, the Balkanic War, and the Romanian Reunification War.

A similar rhetoric can be found in countless private documents (e.g., petitions, applications, etc.) that members of the Sephardi community used to submit to state officials in the early 1940s, in order to emphasize their unparalleled attachment to the country.

Needless to say, such policy implied a deliberate, sinful magnification of their specific difference from the Jewish mass, particularly from the Ashkenazim. Yet it also partly stemmed from a genuine, deeply ingrained belief among the Sephardim that they were different from all other Jews in every major respect, including in their character, ethnic features, culture, rites, and even... physical appearance.

¹ C.G. Rommenhoeller, "La Grande Roumanie", The Hague, 1926, p. 83: "To this day, these two kinds of Jews are clearly distinct from each other in Romania ... By contrast, Spanish Jews are completely assimilated. They have fully adapted to the Romanians in their language, customs and clothing. There are therefore great differences between these two categories of Jews."

As far as worship differences are concerned, the earlier mentioned document boasts the recognition in the interwar years of the Sephardi rite as a separate form of worship, which it says was the successful outcome of persistent efforts by the worshipers themselves. The Sephardim's mentality that they belong to a separate rite with its own, separate synagogue, has persisted to this day, when few Sephardim are left in Bucharest and fewer still are religious Jews.

That the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities in Romania differ from each another is an undeniable fact, originating in their relatively different historical backgrounds in the region, their specific ways of integrating into their local surroundings by their prominent figures and their works, their different community patterns, with the Sephardi one more closely-knit at times, and finally, their specific worship features witnessed by any faithful observer of their holiday and everyday rituals at home and at the synagogue.

Some very valuable observations in this respect are provided in Dr. Iuliu Barasch's *The Jews of Cracow, Galicia, Bukovina, Moldavia, and Walachia—Travel Impressions*, 1841-1842². In a chapter dedicated to Walachia, Barasch, a keen observer of social, cultural and ethnological facts, gave an ample, detailed description of the two 'congregations'—Sephardim and Ashkenazim—into which Walachian Jews, particularly Bucharest Jews, were generally divided. He closely examined the Spanish community, though always by comparison with the Ashkenazi one. Account is given in his work of how the Sephardim would dress (in terms of gender, age, condition, etc.); the language they spoke, and especially their rites, which Barasch lengthily described in their "peculiar and interesting" aspects (p. 162). First of all, he depicted synagogue rites, starting with the buildings themselves—their location, architectural design, wall inscriptions: "There are fewer inscriptions and prayers (*Yehi rutzen*) on the walls than in the Ashkenazi synagogues. Nor will you find in here the mythic bestiary of the latter (winged lions, tigers, ravens, four-foot birds, or any other ornaments or products of unrestrained fantasy, which absolutely clash with the Judaic faith and its concept of a unique, incorporeal, purely spiritual God" (p. 163).

Digressing slightly from our subject, we will note that as a dyed-in-the-wool Haskalah follower, Barasch believed Mosaic faith was unconceivable outside Yahwism—a conviction he shared with many orthodox Jews in the rabbinic tradition (such as Elijah of Vilna). Nevertheless, many Ashkenazim, both Hasidim and others, saw no clash between an ardent faith and a sort of pantheism or naturalism where mytho-magical elements got along all right with the kabalistic notion of merging oneself with the Unique. The history of Jewish religion is indeed the history of a struggle between the natural structure of the popular, mythic-monotheistic faith and the intellectual structure of the rabbinic rationalistic-monotheistic faith. Yet, as Martin Buber put it, monotheism and myth "are not mutually exclusive... but rather any viable monotheism is replete with mythical elements and lives only as long as it includes them." Consequently, a God that would be entirely cleansed of mythical contents is an abstract projection rather than the living fulfillment of a religious life drawing on the deep sap of the collective unconscious. This could be the reason why in Galicia, Moldavia, even Walachia, murals in many Ashkenazi synagogues in the Hasidic realm are an outright mytho-magical bestiary rich in naturalist significance, though not at all inferior thereby.

Back to our subject, namely the peculiarities of the Sephardi synagogues, we may list other features Barasch observed such as the simplicity of the holy arks and centrally-located bimahs (reader's platforms); the unpretentious arrangement of the benches running around the walls and without lecterns, not even for the hazzans; the women's galleries,

²In *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, in German; Romanian version by E. Schwarzfeld in *Anuarul pentru Israeliti*, Anno XVI, 1893-1895; separate pamphlet, Bucharest, 1894.

with bars that separated and concealed them wholly from the men's hall.

The service, Barasch pointed out, had its specific features too: the audience sat on the benches and listened perfectly silent as the hazzan intoned the Hebrew prayers in a Spanish cadence

There were differences in the rite and liturgy as well: verbal variations; suppressed prayer phrases; specific prayers the Ashkenazim did not use. By contrast, there was none of the *piyutim*, *pismones*, *selihoth*, *kinoth*, *salmonieth*, so frequent with the Ashkenazim; also, no *tefilloth* on feasts, which considerably shortened the liturgies on Rosh Hashanah and other holidays. The songs and prayers specific of the Sephardim were rather different from the Ashkenazim's, in which pantheistic and mytho-magical influences chimed with the frightening, monstrous bestiary on the walls. Hence, what Barasch regarded as a "more elevated concentration" of the Sephardi assemblies. Yet the observer did criticize a weakness of the Spanish rite: "the kabalistic frills, in other words, the risky permutations and combinations of indifferent letters in the most innocuous of phrases" (p. 166), so, here again, a mystical, though abstract, tinge whose muddled sources went back to "the heathen world of Persia" (*ibid.*).

Another distinctive feature of the Spanish rite was its mobility: unfettered by a rigid canon, it allowed the adoption of new prayers, composed by famous rabbis from the Oriental-Sephardic milieu.

Faced with the rituals of various Sephardi holidays, an Ashkenazi versed in synagogal lore was in for some surprises—pleasant as well as unpleasant.

The famous *Ekhoh* (Lamentations) were indeed very touchingly chanted on *Tishah b'Av*, and the wonderful *Shomron-kol-titen*, was murmured in very adequate tempo. The custom of the sudden burst of light after the darkness in which the rabbi read the tragic story of the destruction of the Temple, revealed an admirable "orchestration."

As a peculiar trait on *Yom Kippur*, the congregation, Torah scrolls in hand, circled the *bimah* seven times, and a fragment of the *Zohar* was read after the *Kol Nidre*. But many prayers such as the *yotzereth*, *piyutim*, *tefilloth*, were absent, and even the famous *Unetaneh-tokef* was virtually unknown. There were instead beautiful *selihoth* by the old Spanish classics, that the congregation used to read line by line the whole day long. In the evening, the *shofar* was blown as *tekiah*.

The Sephardim would not read from the Torah on *Simhat-Torah* day, and their seven *hakafot* were sequenced just as they were at *Shemini-Atzereth* after particular verses in the Psalms, which in turn intricately hinted at the seven *sefirot*-words of the *kabalah*: *Malkhut*, *Hod*, *Netzah*, *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Ihud*. Each *hakafah* ended with the congregants singing and dancing in front of the rabbi before they received the scrolls. The privilege of being the *Hatan Torah*, had been auctioned off beforehand on the evening of *Yom Kippur*. The winner of this *kevod* (honor) was supposed to go through a lengthy, costly training to make ready for this day when he was called to the Torah, seated under a canopy (*huppah*) and honored nearly like a lord. He then threw a party with songs and dances for the whole assembly.

But it was not just *Simhat Torah* that included peculiar, sometimes magnificent, traditions. Nearly all of the Sephardi holidays featured customs unfamiliar and often bewildering to the Ashkenazim: for example, the groups of teenagers walking about the synagogue during *Shabbath* morning service, with flower bunches which they offered out for sniffing to the adults, especially the older ones, who blessed them in return; or that other *Shabbath* custom: when a father was called to the Torah, all of his sons stood up and gazed at him all through the reading, and would not sit down until he was back in his seat. Younger brothers did the same for their elders, who on returning from the *bimah* gave every congregant the Oriental greeting laying two fingers on his lips.

One should not be surprised that a number of other Sephardi customs, particularly those of what is ethnographically known as the "transition cycle", revealed an Oriental influence—intra-Mosaic, or Islamic, or even secular. As Barasch found out in the mid-19th century, the Sephardi family life was "absolutely patriarchal" (p. 170), which materialized in the unchallenged authority of the paterfamilias ("everyone and everything revolved around him," id.), followed in the family hierarchy by the mother, the eldest son, and so forth. "The sons conduct their father's business for the collective benefit, so that the family is one, united household from the economic point of view as well." The family got together at meals and the father presided over them all as a king.

Marriage was honored and a divorce was an extremely rare occurrence although love was hardly ever the material on which couples were based: the partners, after the Oriental tradition, never even met before the wedding. Women, though revered, had no say in the males' businesses: "a striking contrast with the strange situation where Ashkenazi women fag out with hard work at the store or even in some market far from home" (p. 170).

In the old Sephardi fashion, women were "decorative" housewives, giving "family" parties, going to the Spanish bathhouse every week—a sort of "shwitz" where they had lunch and indulged in small talk. A band would sometimes play to entertain the ladies. Sephardi women almost never took any courses. They could not even read those few prayers that would be read at holidays. They went to the synagogue just for the sake of it, but took no part in what was going on there, not even to impress their husbands who could not see them anyway behind their shul screens

The same as Ashkenazi marriages, Sephardi marriages were brokered by shadchanim but the Sephardi ones were non-professionals who charged no money for their job. Brokering a marriage was just another social, communal occupation. The betrothed were usually very young, 16 to 18 years old. Engagement lasted for a year even though the partners never saw one another all this while.

The wedding and related ceremonies extended over several days: The week before the wedding, the bridegroom-to-be was called to the Torah. The same day he made a visit to the bride's house where the young girl waited for him together with her friends. Then on the last Tuesday prior to the wedding, the dowry was discussed in a protracted, Oriental-style ceremony. Once this had been completed, the ketubah was written down in which the amount of the dowry was duly entered. The style and contents of such contracts have turned them into valuable documents. Then the wedding itself took place on a Wednesday when the bride was a maid, or a Thursday when she was a widow. The guests called at the bridegroom's house where the bride's cortege arrived in splendor. A rabbi performed the ceremony at about 6p.m. The couple were covered with a tallith. The rabbi recited a blessing, then the bridegroom put the wedding ring on the girl's finger and smashed a glass under his foot in memory of the destruction of the Temple. Then the hazzan read the contract aloud and the seven blessings were recited. The bridegroom did not wear a kitel in the Sephardi tradition. Instead of the huppah, the couple used to be seated on a sort of throne shaded by a rich covering in the hall of the wedding. The wedding party with music and dancing was the first of a series of soirées that went on in the following evenings while the couple continued to sit on their thrones. Yet more parties were offered in turn by the bride's friends to celebrate her becoming a married woman. More could be said about the honeymoon week, which the Sephardim regarded as a time of initiation into the tasks of married life when the husband joined the business of his father-in-law under the latter's supervision, or started some other business on his own

The wedding ceremony appeared more brilliant than in the Ashkenazi tradition, which was probably partly due to the Sephardim's higher standing and also to an Oriental influence.

The "transition cycle" featured yet other differences between the two communities in terms of customs and rites marking births, bar mitzvahs, social life, and burial ceremonies. For lack of space, we will only focus on the latter.

The Sephardi mythology of death was somewhat less evident than with most Ashkenazim who fearful of various dybbukim would treat the dead according to elaborate mytho-magical rituals, similar to the pagan ones that are still common in the Romanian popular tradition (e.g., putting pottery shards on the body's lids, a fork in its hand, earth bags by its head, etc.).

After a person died, the Sephardim placed the body on the ground in the middle of the room, covered it with a white sheet and surrounded it with many candles larger than those commonly used by the Ashkenazim. The doors of the rooms were opened and relatives sat around the dead one and wailed. They did so in a quaint rhythmical fashion similar to a wailer choir's. In fact, professional wailers were sometimes hired to chant the customary Oriental dirges. The mourners dispersed later on, then the body was bathed, dressed in white garb and wrapped in a tallith as was also the custom with the Ashkenazim. A rabbi pronounced the funeral speech at the house of the deceased, not at the cemetery where the body was later carried in a coffin. As a distinct funeral feature, the dead was circled seven times before it was laid down into the grave, and the assembly joined hands around it in a magic circle to keep the spirits (kelipoth) away. After each hakafah, the circle drew closer to the body and the mourners threw silver coins on the coffin which would then be lowered into the ground.

Later on, a matsevah (a horizontal stone, instead of a vertical tzom, or both as in the Ashkenazi tradition) was placed on the grave. Sephardi tombstone inscriptions were in correct, elegant Hebrew style. Many of these epitaphs—such as those at Sevastopol Cemetery in Bucharest, which were deciphered by prominent medievalists—are of high documentary value to current researches on Jewish history in Romania. Close relatives did not usually attend the burial, as the sons of the deceased were only supposed to recite kaddish when the body was taken out of the house. After the funeral, a seven-day mourning, known as shiva, was observed when the family sat on the ground and friends and other, more distant relatives came to comfort them and bring them food. The full period of mourning lasted for 30 days and ended with a solemn gathering in the room of the deceased.

Since the purpose of this paper is confined to revealing some ethnological characteristics of the Sephardim, as Barasch reported them in the mid-19th century, we will not try to answer the sociological question of the extent to which the few Sephardim that are left in Romania are still faithful to, or even familiar with, this domestic, synagogal, sacrophane tradition. Probably, few of them are, if any. The intent of this paper is to recall an aspect of the past which had a direct impact at the time and a subsequent echo not just on the religious-sacral numinous realm, but also on human characters, on the community's way of life and thought, on their way of taking up and cultivating a tradition, *in re or in mente*, or at the very least preserving it as an inspiring memory.

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We started this paper with a reflection on how mid-20th century Sephardim were trying to create a particular self-image and a hetero-image of their congregation by contrast with the Ashkenazi one: high emphasis was placed on the capacity to assimilate into the local homeland and nation of the Sephardi group so close by their language, mentality, etc., to the Romanian Latinity. We will not question here whether the standard-bearers of this trend were prompted to it by mere opportunism, or

by a genuine divorce from the Mosaic faith, or even Jewishness as a whole.

Based on Iuliu Barasch's findings—and Barasch was an honest researcher—we think we are right to conclude that, back in the 1850s, the Sephardim he met were neither more assimilated with their surroundings, nor less faithfully Mosaic, than the Ashkenazim they were compared to. This goes for their Mosaic religiousness and related traditions. But neither do other indicators of Sephardi life reveal any high rate of assimilation expectancy.

Barasch criticized in his report the Sephardim's "neglect for child upbringing and the intellectual narrowness resulting thereby, as well as the poor state of many community activities (including education)" (p.177), which seems to indicate a low dynamism of the group. Their pedagogic system, said Barasch, was in a very sad condition: "Some miserable ignorant fellows from Smyrna and Adrianopolis and such like places move in and take up education of the children, establish private schools, or more exactly, hedarim, and start practising their magic art, that is widespread across the Orient, of turning young children into old oxen" (ibid.). These melamedim are one step behind their Ashkenazi colleagues who at least teach their pupils not just fragments of the Torah, but also some of Neviim and Ketuvim, and even of the Talmud on occasion. Moreover, they have been planning lately to teach foreign languages alongside Romanian in their private schools, something Sephardi melamedim will not even conceive of." There was not even a trace in the Spanish curricula of any secular training, Barasch said (ibid., p. 178), a situation which was unlikely to encourage progress, let alone assimilation. True, some young Sephardim did attend Romanian state schools, or foreign schools, but the general rule was to dismiss such studies as unnecessary, particularly for young girls who were kept aside from culture and even from religious knowledge.

Barasch's malevolent remarks in this area may have partly stemmed from a personal disappointment as his own educational program for the Sephardi youth—followed by another for the Ashkenazim—had been rejected "by some Sephardi blockheads over a few small money bags" (p. 179)

Having said this, he objectively concludes that, all in all, there were "more merits than drawbacks" (ibid.) in the Sephardi nature. They were "quiet, unquerulous, honorable, clean, exemplarily correct in business, patriarchally respectful in children-parents relations, and with a sound family life."

Not incidentally this relatively small human group has produced outstanding personalities, such as Manoah, Halfon, Bejarano, Pascin, Cohen-Linaru, Bally, Pappo, Ivela, some of whom, such as Elias, founded actual dynasties which eventually played a more important role in Romanian society than in their own ethnic group

If one considers, say, Jacques M.H. Elias, as a paradigm case of what the Sephardim meant to Romanian society, one must indeed conclude that no other minority group proved so perfectly integrated and assimilated with the interests of the country.

Some will undoubtedly question the point of reporting such differential traits. Of course, similarities in terms of Jewishness between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim can also be reported just as well.

Section 2

CRAIOVA



8 October 1998

Foreward

**Prof. Dr. Eng. Mirea Ivanescu,
Rector of the University Craiova**

To the University of Craiova, which last year celebrated 50 years of its existence, it was an honor to host the Symposium The Sephard Jews in the Development of the Modern Society in Southern-Eastern Europe (6-9 October 1998). For the preparation and successful progress of the Symposium we most fruitfully cooperated with the Center for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania, in Bucharest.

The simultaneous festivity of the inauguration of the Center for the Study and Research of the History, Culture and Civilisation of the Jews in Southern-Eastern Europe amplified the significance of this event. The Center was opened last year on the basis of a Decision of the Senate of our University. The Ministry of National Education, and the Minister of Education himself, Prof. Dr. Andrei Marga, the Embassy of Israel in Romania, and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania kindly supported the establishment of this Center.

Thus we could proceed to the implementation of this initiative we had been considering for several years already, and which we had methodically prepared, due to the great development of our University. By development I mean an increasing number of students, new faculties, centers of excellence, doctoral studies, scientific research, international cooperation, and material conditions.

On the other hand, at this moment there exist favorable conditions for the functioning of a Center of Jewish Studies in Craiova. Though the province of Oltenia has always had the lowest percentage of minorities of all the historic provinces of Romania, the Jewish communities of Craiova, Turnu Severin, Caracal, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Târgu Jiu and others. Even if they were not very numerous, these communities had an outstanding contribution to the economical, social, cultural and scientific development of these towns. During the last eight years, a group of intellectuals in our city have been consistently and actively preoccupied with the study of the past of these communities.

Every year there were symposiums, scientific sessions, and exhibitions in which prominent representatives of the Romanian culture and art—all belonging to the Jewish community—were evoked. A list of such personalities would include: Felix Aderca (writer), Filip Lazăr (composer and musician), I. Stăureanu (the unforgettable teacher of so many generations of Oltenian intellectuals), the members of the family of printers, publishers and booksellers Samitca, or Constantin Șeineanu, Andrei Bart, and I. Fântânaru (publishers). Mention should be made on a number of business people, important for the economic development of the area: the Eschenassy bankers, the industrialists Mendel, Beligrădeanu, and others. Some of these manifestations took place in our University, while our professors supported others. High quality contributions were presented, as is the case of the Symposium mentioned, where our associates contributed four papers.

As it has not been an institutionalized scientific activity, we faced a lack of funds for the development and thoroughgoing study of the themes presented, and the papers could not be published. We most sincerely hope that, by the opening of the Center for Jewish Studies in Craiova, such researches will be further developed. For the beginning, the Center will proceed to the study of all the towns in Oltenia where Jewish communities existed. A special stress will be placed upon the study of the funeral monuments in the Jewish cemeteries. Furthermore, an older project will be continued. It refers to the study of the evacuation, during the first months of the German-Soviet war, of

massive groups of Jewish inhabitants from Bucovina and Northern Moldavia and their deportation to different towns in Oltenia. Funds permitting, the Center will extend the investigations towards the border areas in the Balkans, where flourishing Sephard communities existed during the last centuries.

It is with a deep satisfaction that I mention the beginning of the teaching activity of the Center. Following the entrance examination in the fall of 1998, a group of students of History-Hebrew was formed within the Faculty of Letters and History. They have already started their classes of Jewish Culture and Civilization, Universal History of the Jewish People, as well as Modern Hebrew. We hope that these young people will later become academics and researchers in this Center. As a matter of fact, we hope that in the future we shall be able to form specialists in Jewish Studies for other areas of Romania and for the Neighboring countries as well.

The Symposium gave us a chance to meet Romanian researchers, but also specialists from Turkey, Bulgaria, and Israel with whom we intend to keep good relationships for the year to come.

We have suggested the signing up of a first convention for cooperation with the Center for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania. We also want to learn from the experience of the Institute of Hebrew and Jewish History Dr. Moshe Carmilly of the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. It is our intention to establish contacts with Universities from Israel, the U.S.A., Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croaia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Albania.

I most sincerely hope that, in the future, our University will be able to host such scientific manifestations, and also to facilitate debates, seminars, contacts among students from different universities, participation to conferences in other countries. etc. We hope to use the technology of the future centuries in order to shorten the distances, to develop the accessibility of the information, for mutual understanding.

The Sephards in Craiova, Romania

Prof. Al. Firescu

It is a well-known fact that after 1492 Castille and Aragon united, Granada was freed of the Moors, and America was discovered; yet, at the same time, a terrible thing happened: the Jews were expelled from Spain. This act remained a historical crime that neither the Spanish republican Prime Minister Jose Girá's appeals in 1939, nor the general dictator Franco Y Basamente's post-war insistences to determine the return of the Judeo-Hispanic refugees could ever alleviate. This huge exodus followed an itinerary determined by the favorable or unfavorable concourse of events and situations. Some of the Spanish Jews (the Sephards) stopped for a while in the Italic Peninsula, but the great majority took refuge in the Balkans. This explains, among other things, the symbiosis between the Latin-based patronymics (Arditti, Canetti, Denetti, Ben(e)venisti, Salom, Fayon, Samo, Fermo, Fernani, etc.) and others of Arabic or Spanish origin (Alagem, Almuli, Albahari, Calef, Covu, Lillu, Rosanio, Sabetay, Zamano, Parascu, Hoder, Mayo, Eliezer, Alafton, Arayo, etc.).

From the Balkan Peninsula, at that time ruled by the powerful Ottoman Empire, a great number of Spanish Jews (the Sephards) arrived in the province of Oltenia, and settled mostly along the Danube. They called themselves *Francus*, that is "Francs", an alteration of the correct form "Frances" under the influence of the Romanian pronunciation. The term meant "free" or "sincere" people. Only a few of them settled in the northern regions, close to the mountains; those areas were preferred by the Ashkenazy Jews, called *Tudescus*, a word derived from *Teutsch* — *Deutsch*, or *Poillish* (Polish). They arrived mostly after the Peace of Karlovitz (1699), when they were utterly oppressed by the Apostolic Austrian Empire. It is not difficult to demonstrate that, after the defeat of Hungary at Mohacs in 1520, the Jews in the Ottoman Empire assimilated many Jews from Hungary who thus became Sephards.

The Sephards (or *francus*) were the first Jews settling in Craiova. Some researchers have dated this settlement around the year 1792, that is three centuries after their banishment from Spain. They have based their statement upon one of the documents stating the purchase of a piece of land from the Horezu Monastery Inn by the young Sephardic community. Although the fire of 1884 destroyed many important documents, we have proofs that the first Sephards settled in Craiova in 1850. Even if generally considered that the first Sephardic community on the banks of the Danube was registered in the island of Adakaleh after 1739, this is all wrong. The Sephards — the first Jews settled in Craiova — were considered superior to the Ashkenazy as regards their cultural level, but never in numbers. As a matter of fact, the Judeo-Hispanic community of Craiova has known obvious demographic regresses: out of 250 heads of families in the beginning, there were only 170 in 1944, and their number has drastically decreased to only three Sephard families nowadays. On the other hand, the Ashkenazy — never called around here the Biblical name widely used somewhere else, the *Askovazy*, but only this unusual hispanized patronymic — usually enjoyed progressive demographic values. Nevertheless, they never reached the Sephards organizational, administrative and spiritual levels. Of course, we do not intend an unjust discrimination, but the demographic superiority was sometimes marked by haphazard economic factors. Thus, after the Treaty of Adrianopolis (1892) which liberalized the cereals trade, the great number of Ashkenazy Jews established here settled the ratio of 10-1 in their favor. As regards the cultural differences, we should conclude that mostly Sephardic books and oral religious productions in Ladino (or *djudzemo*) and Hebrew appeared in Craiova and Turnu Severin. Very few were in Yiddish. In reality, the Ashkenazy — descendants of the Gallitian (German) Jews according to some

sources, or of the old Azars, according to others, would prefer to speak a Nachdeutsch or Unterdeutsch dialect.

Ever since the first Sephardic nucleus in Oltenia (in Craiova, Turnu Severin, Caracal, Calafat, Corabia, Bechet) the Judeo-Hispanic population has had the best relations with the native Romanians (called *Lus Vlahus*) and with the Christians (*Lus Cristianus*) in general. As a matter of fact, the relations between the Sephards and the Ashkenazy have been fruitful most of the time. Nevertheless there has been a rivalry of vanities and even controversies without notable consequences. One example was the allotment of places in the community cemetery. This cemetery had been organized on the land presented to the Shepherds by the local boyar Lacunae, deeply impressed by the grief of a family living in the "Blindmen's Inn", *El han di-H Siegu* who had nowhere to bury their dead child. The conflicts inside the Ashkenazy community were even more serious. At a certain moment, for example, the "Tudescus" Jews possessed a temple for those embracing the conservatory traditional ideas of Malbim, and a different one for the innovative reformist believers, animated by the ideas of the venerable encyclopedic scholar *dr Iulius Barasch*—for a while chief physician in Craiova. His intention was to simplify the religious ritual, purge it of the primitive useless ornaments and reduce it to its essential moral teaching. Towards the end of the '30's the two communities manifested their tendency to unify. A leveling law imposed this desideratum after 1948. One synagogue only, the Ashkenazy one, survived the earthquake of 1977; it is now used in common by members of both cults.

In spite of the historical and social vicissitudes, the acute economical crises between the two wars and the unhappy consequences of the nationalistic and racist nazi campaigns, the Sephardic community resisted and played an important role in the history of the area. During the almost 35 decades of its existence, it has been led, administered and put into value by competent, devoted and generous leaders and prominent parishioners — spiritual personalities who have continuously increased their ancestors' inheritance. They have thus contributed to the material and moral progress of the Judaic population, of the other ethnic groups and of the native Romanian population as well.

Following the thread of tradition and history, we should mention that the Craiova Sephards had their own prayer house in the basement of the temple in Elca Street, in the former Horezu neighborhood. An adjacent room was once used as a school. The temple itself was built at the expense of the Judeo-Spanish community, at the initiative of *Tevi Eskenazi*, also known as "*Buhor al duru*". The architect *Birkental* with the direct contribution of the guardians *Haskiel Cohen*, *Iacob I. Benvenisti*, *Elias Sabetay*, and *Isac ben Iosif Beligrădeanu* rebuilt the temple in 1887. Another *Beligrădeanu* — *Samuel* — added new buildings to the interests and needs of the community.

The life of the Sephardic community in Craiova, its harmonious, pondered and energetic durability and vitality had as pillars and guides the guardians' councils devoted presidents, viable and democratic boards of directors, prominent religious, cultural and charitable societies. The first elections held in 1869 were presided by *Gheorghe Chițu* — the Mayor of Craiova, and former Minister of Education and Religions. The next elections, as well as the important events that followed, were also honored by outstanding figures of the public and cultural life of the area and of the country at large. We mention Mayor *Constantin Ciocăzan*, Mayor *Ulysse Boldescu*, Colonel *Fălcoianu*, the patriot boyar *Măldărescu*, *Constantin Anghelescu* and others. Their participation proved the care and respect of the local Romanian authorities for a harmonious, cooperative Jewish community, resonant to the major interests of its country of adoption. Over the decades, the Jewish community in Craiova has enjoyed the decisive contribution of such skilful presidents as: *Sintor Gabriel Semo*, *Haskiel Cohen*, *Isac Ben Iosef Beligrădeanu*, *Lazăr Eskenazy*, *Avram I. Beligrădeanu*, *Moise I. Panijel*, *Iacob I. Benvenisti*, *Israel Eskenazy*, *Samuel Beligrădeanu*, *Lazăr Galimir*, *Dr.*

Leon M. Eskenazy, and others. Besides all these active leaders, the boards of the representatives of the community, as well as councillors with special duties (guardians, treasurers, and cashiers) have considerably contributed to the progress and prosperous life of the community. Their contribution manifested itself in opportunities and fruitful decisions, a severe administration of the patrimony and budget, a clever organization and structuring, as well as a beneficial subsidizing of some works and religious institutions, social assistance and education

The Sephardic cult was served with abnegation and competence by perpetuating the traditions and mingling them with fruitful innovatory tendencies, by adapting the rituals to the new requirements for culture and spiritual progress. Rabbis — permanent or probationist (Hazan Seni, Mezamer) such as Avram Faion, Isac Menaşe, Isac Saltiel, Zechri Iacob Alevy, David Gobai, Reuben Israel, Daniel Eskenazy, Samuel Zonana, Yehude Sabetay Levy, Isac Cohen and others were all exceptional pastors, spiritual leaders. They have kept alive the sacred fire of the holy Jewish faith with charisma, devotion and dignity. Also, the capable curators and first curators Isaac Abr Benvenisti, Isac Ben Iosif Beligrădeanu, Moşe de Mayo, Iacob I. Benvenisti, Mirconec de Mayo, Israel Eskenazy, Max de Mayo, Dr. David M. Galano closely followed the initiatives and decisions of the lay and religious leaders of the community. Providing for all the needs of the cult and the supervision of all dogmatic rigors have been ensured by the clergy, together with Rosh a Babuali and Samas of an unusual devotion. It is our duty to mention the unforgettable David Semo, Ruben Levy, Favriel Penchas, David Levy, Marcel Semo, and others. In 1922, at the initiative of the first curator Max de Mayo, a valuable, religious mixed choir was set up. The choir was led by the organ-player Marchezani, helped by the cantor Rafael Leon, and brilliantly guided by the musician Ivel. Before their community gathered and their own temple was built, the Ashkenazy Jews would attend the religious service in the Judeo-Spanish synagogue. As stated by Dr. Leon M. Eschenasy in a Report delivered in 1940 — during troubled times — the Judeo-Spanish community in Craiova organized Te Deums and prayers for Romania and the King. Such ceremonies were always attended with the deepest respects by local state personalities. On the other hand, the community never failed to be invited by the same personalities to all the official ceremonies of the Romanian population.

The great amount of ritualistic texts, doctrinaire theological works and literary creations published in extremely valuable anthologies, even literary works written by some personalities of the Sephardic life conferred the temple and the religious life a special depth and fervor¹. Thus, the first book of poetry contains 30 Hebrew prayers in Hebrew script, and a unified Judeo-Spanish text in verse, using Latin script. Later on, the Craiova rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael became rabbi in Rhodos, Greece (!). It is also interesting to mention the booklet entitled "*The Sermon*" delivered by the same enlightened rabbi on the day of Rosh ha-Shana, and translated into Romanian by Lazăr M. Eskenasy. "*Traduction libera de Sierto textos de Nuestra Liturgia Santa*", redacta par lehuda Sabetay, Ithac Levi, rabbi de la Comunidad judeo-spaniol de Craiova — Tişri 5965, published in 1934, contained 47 prayers, some in verse. In his afterword, entitled "Mi reconsensis y mi ideal" the author confesses his most express wish that "God may give peace, harmony and blessings to the Romanian homeland in which we live". We should not forget *Orassion Compuieste de el defuntu Rabin Zechri Isakov Halevi per dezirse dis de Lom Akipurim en ora de Neila, and many others*. It is worth mentioning that the first Judeo-Spanish publication in the world printed in Latin script appeared in Turnu Severin: *Luero*

¹ It is worth mentioning the volume *Meghilat Ester* (bilingual edition) by A. S. Gold, preacher and teacher at the rabbinic seminary of Alsace-Lorraine. The author was a graduate of the Academy of Israelite Theology in Vienna, former principal of the "Luca Moise" School of Ploieşti, Romania, and of the newspapers *Eternitatea*, *Apărătorul* and *Vocea Sionului* (The Voice of Zion); he used to be a permanent guest of the Sephardic community in Craiova. Also, the first anthology of poetry *Traduksyon Livre de las Poezias Ebraikas de Rosh ha-Shana, Iom Kippur*, echa por Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael, Rabbino I Hazzan de la Komunidad Yisraelit-Sefaradit de Krayova en Romania, 5670.

de la Pasensia (The Illuminator of Patience) and also *Monte de Sinay*.

The peculiar vitality of this Sephardic community, its power to suffer and revive caused the somewhat spectacular transition from modest cultural settlements to institutions of comunitarian, national and even European fame, such as the "*Lumina*" ("The Light") School. The first Jewish school in Craiova was started in the very building of the Sephardic prayer house in Elca Street. There the Judeo-Spanish children enjoyed Hebrew schooling with their teacher Sentov Semo (a kind of a school principal at the time), helped by two other teachers: Iosef Levy, also named "Haham vieju" and Avram de Mayo, known as "Haham mausevu". There was also a kindergarten led by two teachers: Benjamin and Avram Papier. In the new building, rented in Libertatii Street by the Craiova rabbi Zehri A. Levy, the Jewish children started to learn Romanian as well. Their Romanian teachers were Iancu Georoceanu, Bezelli, Moraru, Frateş, Măinescu and Nicolae Vintilescu. The Romanian Sephardic school moved on Unirii Street, (on the property of Moscu Beligrădeanu), then — with the contribution of Karol Litarcek, school principal, and Mercadu Gaon and Avram Alkalay, teachers of Hebrew, on the very spot were the Palace of the Mihails was to be built. The indefatigable President of the community, Iacob I. Benvenisti succeeded in purchasing a new building for the school, in Madona Dudu Street. The Italian Institute was to function for a while in the same building (!). Many Romanian and Ashkenazy children studied in this coeducational school and prominent teachers of the Oltenian education (M. Stăureanu, Barbian, etc.) taught there.

The new requirements of learning and emancipation through culture called for a new, modern school. This time, the Ashkenazy community took the initiative, as the Sephards could not afford the necessary expenses. Dr. M. Cotter headed the committee for the initiative, energetically and fruitfully. Dr. Solo Hirsch followed him. The school year 1924-1925 started on the 7th of September in the new building in Calomfirescu Street, under the management of Alter Weismann. He was followed, chronologically, by Marta Stăncescu, A. Braunstein, Mibaşan, A. S. Luca, Alfred Hecter, Al. (Ticu) Cohen, Anna (Cohen) Zimmel. Due to financial difficulties, only 25 of the total of 120 pupils belonged to the Judeo-Spanish community. This undesired discrimination is partially corrected by creating new school committees of guardians, made up of members of both Judaic communities. Among the teachers working in this reputed community school — the second best Jewish school — we should mention the personality of Mihai Stăureanu, for fifty years a teacher and school principal, the dean of the Jewish teachers in Romania. He was a disciple of Gr. Tocilescu and B. P. Haşdeu, the author of practical handbooks and bilingual dictionaries (Latin-Romanian and Romanian-Latin). His efforts, and of the whole teaching staff, were seriously supported by important local Sephardic personalities. This model school functioned in its own building until December 1940, when the German occupants changed its destination into "Goebbels Haus". In September of the same year all the Jewish teachers had been driven away from school. Thus the school started its sad exodus in the adjacent rooms of the two synagogues. The secondary school functioned surreptitiously, tolerated with a brave understanding by D. Dănescu (!) — school inspector and renowned teacher of higher Mathematics. After 1944, the school returns to its place and superior destinies but, in 1948, the devastating Reform of Education required its unconditional elimination. Nowadays, in the place of so many spiritual victories, bold deeds and sacrifices fully assumed there is an anonymous constructions company and the present community — worthy, as a matter of fact — is delaying with no reason at all its claims upon this sanctified patrimony.

The Sephardic community honored and ennobled its existence not only on the field of education, but also in its institutions and social assistance works. In 1790 the religious society "Hevra Kedosha Sel Rechits" was founded; its assistance to the dying are worth mentioning. It also looked after the cemetery — Sephardic in the beginning, but later opened to the needs of the Askhenazy community as well. The surface of this

place of eternal rest was increased in 1902, by a new cemetery of 7.5 acres, but not as suitable as the former. By a deep respect to the cult of the dead and the history of the community, one can still see grave stones older than 150 years.

The social charity work of this society was continued by the praiseworthy institution of medical and pharmaceutical assistance "Bikur Holim", by the Judeo-Spanish society "Ezra Bezaroth" (founded in 1878), by the "Caritatea" (The Charity) society of the Israelite ladies, by the "Egalitatea" (The Equality) society, and so on. It must not be forgotten that "Egalitatea" was created at the initiative of the priest Dimitrie C. Gerota. This institution of Judeo-Christian mutual assistance had among its last presidents the well-known surgeon C. Gerota. A mention should be made on the activity of the intercommunity institutes: "Hevra Kedosha", the Asylum for senior citizens, the religious-social societies "Mecadese", "Sevi", and "Iehuda Sabetay", the first one in the country to mark, by an impressive Te Deum the opening of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem.

The above-mentioned societies offered medical and social assistance, and also money, clothing, firewood, mezatoh, as well as special scholarships for the deserving pupils. They also offered substantial support to the Asylum opened in Libertății Street. It was a model institution in which Mrs. Melkita Penchas carried out a brilliant, though anonymous activity. She was the true prototype of a Sephard woman, devoted to her lofty ideals. Worth mentioning was the work of the feminist activists Matilda H. Rothenstein, Otilia Teodoru, Lisette Foreanu, Erny Eskenasy, Sara Haiduska, Eva I. Benvenisti, Viza Hodor, and others.

The Sephardic leaders such as Dr. Solo Hirsch and Leon M. Penchas (both Deputy Mayors at the same time) laid a special stress on social assistance and charitable works. Besides his exceptional merits in the field of religious practice, the Great Rabbinate in Bucharest had in view the fruitful work of mutual assistance carried out by the first curator of the Craiova community, Dr. Moshe Galaon, investing him with the title of "Haham Amashguil". The same brilliant president fell victim of the anti-Semitic laws of 1939-1941, being removed from the Altar of the Temple because "he did not have a Romanian citizenship". Prevailing at the level of social mutual assistance was the activity of the "Circle of the Sephardic Youth" established in 1938 and ennobled by the wonderful initiatives of such young persons as Sabetay S. Sabetay, Salom Așer Eliezer, Iancu Hasnaș, and others.

The Judeo-Spanish community, as well as the Askhenazy one, by their innate and solidary organizations has carried out a huge work during the difficult years their Romanian land was facing. It all happened during the legionary rebellion and the anti-Soviet war, when it had to ensure relief aid to the families of the poor and the drafted. It actively and generously contributed to the Unification Loan and the Army Endowment Loan, to the support of the refugees from Basarabia and Bucovina, and to the great actions of the Red Cross too. The Jews of Craiova have been spiritually connected to the Romanian land, people, customs and ideals. Suffering an unimaginable ordeal themselves, the Jews in Craiova accommodated and fed about 800 Jews evacuated from the Siret and Dorohoi areas, as well as thousands of Jews from the Romanian territories across the Prut River and the Carpathian Mountains.

Once more, the Sephardic community conferred the adoptive city the aura of an ever-flourishing economical, cultural and social life, fully manifested at an international level. The expenditure delimitation should not (and must not) prevail in the emphasis and evaluation of these contributions: how much and what each of the Judaic communities contributed with. As a matter of fact, the mixed marriages between Romanian and Jews or between Jews belonging to different communities prevent any rigorous distinctions that can easily turn into genuine discriminations. Nevertheless, a certain emphasis as regards the Sephardic contribution is more than necessary...

No doubt, the economic fields in which the Sephards of Craiova mostly manifested themselves were trade, the milling and bakery industry, print-

ing, as well as finances and banking. Ever since 1839 Moisiu and Leopold Mendel distinguished themselves as reputed enterprising persons, as specialists in the fine metals processing. Later on they numbered among the great industrialists in the field of milling and bakery, closely rivaling the Ștefan Barbu Drugă Company. Another dynasty—"Samitca"—turned Craiova into one of the famous centers of the world printing industry and art. Their rivals and also partners were Benvenisti and Filip Lazăr, the famous Jewish printers. As regards the Romanian and world music, a prevalent position was occupied by Filip Lazăr. Laureate of the Enescu prize, and the Honorary President of the Triton Society and of the School of Contemporary Music, he was the most prolific Romanian composer of European notoriety besides George Enescu. Also, the musicians Samuel and Elly Roman, the lyric singer Iosif Silberman, composers Sandu Așer, Aurel Eskenasy, Isidor Weinberg, and the pianist Puiu Painer distinguished themselves under the same aegis of Euterpe. As regards the Romanian and world literature, the work of Felix (Zeiligi) Aderca is situated right at the top. The actors of the National Theatre of Craiova—a theatre company distinguished with the award of the Federation of the Romanian Language Writers Associations—performed his plays years ago. In the field of arts, we should mention the calligrapher Gerson Elefant and the cartoonist Eugen Taru, as well as the painter Barbu Iscovescu. In the field of the theatre, mention should be made of Al. Braun and Harry Eliad (stage directors), Dodi Caian, Hedda Hârjeu, Tantzî Romee, Cuny Haring, Theodor Danetti (actors). In the field of medicine, besides the "people in white" mentioned above, we should also mention the names of outstanding scientists and famous practitioners too: Lazăr Friendler, I. Rosenstein, Solo Hirsch, Rebeca Hirsch, J. Eskenasz, Laurian Segal, and others. They were the forerunners of the illustrious Jewish physicians of today: Nastingal, Sabetay, Singer, and many others.

The great number of Sephard founders in the field of printing favored the apparition of several important publications, some of them Jewish: *Magazinul cultural evreiesc*, *Emigrantul fix*, *Viața*—*Das Leben*, *Progresul*, and others.

The climate of harmonious interethnic togetherness proper to Craiova and the region of Oltenia in general, as well as the prestige the Jewish communities reached by the personalities and institutions offered to the city, mirrored and fed a luminous spirit of Romanian-Jewish tolerance and solidarity. A great many Sephard soldiers and officers shed their blood in the two world wars. Their names are inscribed on the commemorative plaques in Craiova, Calafat and Robănești. Elena Farago supported with self-sacrifice the affirmation of the playwright B. Luca-Bernstein, protecting him from the strains of local antisemitic pressures. Traian Demetrescu (Tradem) and G. D. Pencioiu maintained close relationships with the Samitca and Ashkenazy families. Tradem could temporarily be treated at the Solca Sanatorium due to the financial support of the Craiova Jews. The Jewish communities offered a special scholarship to the future scientist Victor Gomoiu so that he might continue his studies. The Romanian Petre Marcu-Balș (Pandrea) fiercely protested against the physical and dogmatic anti-Semitism. Vintil Horia sympathized with the Jewish culture from which he got his direct inspiration in writing some of his important reference works. The diplomat Nicolae Titulescu had close friendship and business relationships with the Craiova bankers Eskenasy. The military priest D. Lungulescu wrote a book devoted to the "*Jewish problem*" with a total esteem towards the human qualities of the Jewish community. "The Jews are the sons of God" stated this worthy Romanian Orthodox priest with the price of unmerciful sanctions. Virgil Potârcă often supported the abolishing of any obstacles to the affirmation of the Hebrew values.

Undoubtedly, in the years of the antisemite persecution (1939-1944) the Jewish population in Craiova was not exempted from the effects of this "witches hunting". Without trying to diminish or even explain categorically, subjectively the images of all the vexations and sacrifices the Jewish population was subject to, we must underline, on the basis of unquestionable evidences, that the city of Craiova and the whole province of Oltenia represented a haven of understanding and tolerance. The restrictive laws

determined the interdiction—temporarily only - of the religious services. The Great Rabbi Sabetay Djean was forbidden to carry out his pastoral visits to Craiova. Such measures as "numerus clausus" and "numerus nullus" were taken, some Jewish companies were closed and taken over by other (Romanian) owners, and the forced labor system was introduced. Former Jewish officers and soldiers were banned from the army, even though they had previously proved their loyalty to the Romanian motherland. The "Lumina" School was also closed for a short time

The brotherly solidarity and cooperation between the two Jewish communities in Craiova, sealed in all those years of common suffering, became a categorical imperative in diminishing many hardships and punitive measures imposed by rush laws advocating the Nazi racism. Even if the measure of opening county offices of the Head Office of the Jews in Romania diminished the autonomy of the communities, in case of impartial leaders the new social bodies determined a unity of thinking and profitable action, to the benefit of the Jewish community. These offices mobilized the Jewish population to a more active social role: to donate important quantities of winter clothing for the soldiers, to raise the exceptional war contribution tax (30.000.000 lei). Such sacrifices from a population persecuted by repressive measures determined the leaders of the city to manifest an attitude of understanding towards these pariahs of the society. Thus, the community archives were returned shortly after having been sealed up and confiscated. The temples resumed their daily prayers. It was systematically avoided the governmental order according to which all communities of less than 400 parishioners should be repealed. There were protests of the Romanian population against the anti-semitic persecutions, and a beneficent wave of Romanian sympathy imposed a gradual softening of the anti-Jewish measures. Only in very few cases the Romanian patrons who had taken over the Jewish businesses and companies oppressed the legitimate owners. Except for the harsh conditions in the labor camps in Deva and Transnistria, the forced labor assignments turned into bearable activities to the benefit of the community, devoid of the compulsion manifest in other parts of the country. Several Romanian Orthodox priests—some of them followers of the Legionary movement—understood to protect the Jewish population and to respect their faith. The most illustrating example is that of Father C. Cinciu who used the "legionary relief aid" to help the poor Jews in Craiova.

When the war was over and the ordeal of the Jewish population came to an end, the leaders of the two Jewish communities—mostly the Sephard Mișu I. Penches and the Ashkenazy Dr. B. Kasler—have cooperated in finding and solving the desiderata and needs of the people. The community life was rehabilitated, being given new significance and aims, in a perfect agreement, to a close Sephardic-Ashkenazy unification. This stronger and stronger unity of views—in no case haphazard—was also manifest in support of the Zionist activities and ideas. The local chapters of these movements—"Hašomer Hațair" and "Dror Hađas"—supported the idea that the solidarity of Judaism with the Jewish state channels the Judaic constructive energy towards "Eretz", promoting the work of Jewish unification and rebirth.

To conclude our presentation, we confess our being tempted by the rather bold thought of attempting a careful, detailed and objective analysis of the Jewish community life in the years of communist totalitarianism. It would be interesting to compare the consequences of the Holocaust with those of the partisan Judeo-Communist manifestations that struck again this people prone to sacrifice. It was a period with many question marks, and many shadow cones, but also with luminescent focuses in the existence of this ethnical group demographically diminished, aged perhaps, but which has proved—in spite of all the vicissitudes—an everlasting youth in their existence of almost 350 years.

Les Juifs Ottoman à l'époque de la deuxième Monarchie

Prof. Dr. İlber Ortaylı

Membre du corps enseignant de la Faculté des Sciences politiques de l'Université d'Ankara

L'un des éléments les plus importants de l'histoire politique et sociale de la Monarchie turque c'est le judaïsme ottoman. Quand on avait déclaré en Juillet 1908 la monarchie dans l'Empire ottoman, la nation juive se trouvait dans une position intéressante. Dans la communauté, il y avait à la fois des partisans actifs du régime monarchique et ceux qui avaient de la sympathie pour le régime hamidéen. Cette attitude présente un parallélisme avec celle des Turcs musulmans. Du reste, ce dualisme s'était reflété aussi dans les échelons administratifs de la communauté juive. L'événement qui est répété et connu depuis ce temps-là, c'est la démission du grand rabbin Moshe Levi, kaymakam (locum-tenens), sur la déposition d'Abdülhamid en 1909 après la révolte du 31 Mars. En vérité, il paraît que l'ancienne administration avait choisi de céder sa place, sans causer des problèmes, au groupe qui était partisan des Jeunes Turcs.

La situation générale des Juifs dans les années de la Deuxième Monarchie peut être résumée de la façon suivante: du point de vue géographique, les juifs constituent le groupe qui occupait le plus large terrain dans l'Empire. Ils vivaient en une importante communauté dans tous les départements arabes, au Maghreb et en Egypte qui étaient des anciennes régions de la souveraineté ottomane, à Tripoli-Ouest (Libye), en Mésopotamie et en Anatolie centrale en dehors du Yémen, de la Syrie, du Liban et de la Palestine, et presque dans tous les centres urbains de l'Anatolie occidentale et à Izmir. Il était possible de rencontrer la communauté juive également dans les départements européens sans compter les centres très peuplés comme Edirne (Adrianople), Salonique (la plus grande métropole juive où vivait également un groupe de sabbathaens assez nombreux) et Gallipoli, dans plusieurs villes de Bosnie, de la Bulgarie-Sud et de la Macédoine. La communauté juive ottomane était constituée en fait des Juifs du groupe Sefardi, c'est-à-dire de celui qui avait immigré de l'Espagne et de la Méditerranée. Mais, du fait de l'augmentation des émigrations à partir de l'Europe orientale et de la Russie, on remarquait partout des groupes Ashkenasi aussi. En fait, il n'y avait pas dans l'Empire ottoman un autre groupe qui parlât autant de langues différentes que les Juifs. C'était la langue Yiddish qui était parlée par les groupes épars d'immigrés venant de l'Europe orientale et de la Russie et qui était utilisée aussi pendant l'adoration. Auparavant, les synagogues d'Ashkenazim étaient distinctes, mais elles se sont fondues avec le temps pour s'unir à la communauté sefaradi métropolitaine. Aujourd'hui, les synagogues d'Ashkenazim continuent de servir au culte non en raison de la langue, mais bien en raison de la race et de la tradition. Dans la vaste géographie de l'Empire, on parlait l'arabe en Mésopotamie et dans les départements arabes et même l'araméen dans la Haute-Mésopotamie, sans compter le Judéo-Espagnol (ladino) qui était la langue de la communauté la plus nombreuse, venue de l'Espagne. Cette langue a continué d'être parlée dans cette région jusqu'à la fin des années 1940. Il y avait également des groupes juifs d'Italie qui avaient des synagogues séparées dans de grandes villes portuaires comme Istanbul, Izmir, Salonique¹. Les Juifs originaires d'Italie avaient commencé à s'installer dans l'Empire depuis longtemps. Mais leur fusion avec la communauté et leur naturalisation sont un fait propre au 19e siècle. A considérer ce que nous

¹ Naim Güleriyüz, "Istanbul İtalyan Musevi Cemaati" (Communauté juive italienne d'Istanbul), Şalom, 17 décembre 1986, No.1980, p.2.

avons rencontré dans les documents relatifs à ce sujet, la question de nationalité était apparue vers le milieu du 19^e siècle. Comme on le sait, il était possible, dans le droit ottoman, pour tout homme ottoman de toute religion d'épouser une femme de nationalité étrangère, mais, pour la femme, il n'était pas question de se marier à un homme de nationalité étrangère. De ce fait, l'Etat a dû intervenir quand, au milieu du 19^e siècle, on avait commencé à voir souvent les Juives ottomanes se marier aux Juifs portant le passeport de l'Etat de Toscane. Un firman du 2 Şaban 1266 (Juin 1850) indiquait que de tels événements avaient lieu surtout à Salonique et en ordonnaient l'interdiction ² On peut dire qu'à l'époque de la 2^e Monarchie, une polychromie idéologique s'est ajoutée à la polychromie linguistique des Juifs ottomans.

Après les écoles de l'"Alliance Israélite Universelle" qui préconisaient une éducation et une vision du monde laïques, les Juifs ottomans faisaient cette fois la connaissance d'une idéologie moderniste. En 1910, Anglo-Levantin Banking Comp. a ouvert une succursale à Istanbul. Les plus renommés des leaders sionistes ont commencé à exercer des fonctions à la tête de cette banque désormais dans cette ville et dans l'Empire comme représentants sionistes. Le fait que le représentant du mouvement sioniste se trouvait à la tête de cette banque a sans doute trait à sa position non officielle, mais les rapports écrits dans la capitale de l'Empire ottoman sont des documents intéressants non seulement du point de vue du mouvement sioniste, mais aussi du point de vue de l'administration ottomane de la dernière époque et de l'histoire de la diplomatie dans la capitale.

Pour comprendre l'attitude des Juifs ottomans vis-à-vis du sionisme, il faut d'abord comprendre leur attitude devant le nationalisme de l'âge moderne. En vérité, on ne remarque pas non plus une organisation effective du point de vue politique. Surtout quand on considère la structure de l'éducation, on voit que les Juifs sont loin de l'atmosphère des mouvements nationalistes dans l'Empire. Une éducation susceptible d'assurer la piété et l'identité religieuses était trouvée suffisante. Par conséquent, les organisations des communautés ottomanes n'ont pas créé les institutions éducatives d'un niveau plus haut où l'on pourrait donner l'éducation nationaliste et laïque et elles ont laissé les jeunes libres après un certain niveau. De ce fait, l'éducation laïque, de haut niveau, a été apportée aux Juifs ottomans par des établissements comme l'Alliance Israélite. En dehors de cela, les Jeunes Juifs ottomans ont fait leurs études dans toute sorte d'écoles, et ceux qui n'en avaient pas les moyens financiers, dans les institutions éducatives ottomanes où le système de la bourse était appliqué d'une façon répandue. Dans ces écoles, il y avait des contingents pour les jeunes Juifs comme c'était le cas pour les autres non musulmans. D'où, en effet, l'existence des élites juives ottomanisées dans la bureaucratie ottomane de haut rang. Nous pouvons expliquer la situation par la présentation d'une figure. Selon l'annuaire d'Etat, il y a à Istanbul sept rüşdiye (école secondaire, collège) juifs en 1909 (1327 H). Des écoles primaires aussi sont répandues, mais les institutions plus élevées, ayant rapport avec la Communauté juive n'étaient pas fondées par le grand rabbinat ou les fondations concernées. Les écoles de l'Alliance, d'origine française, qui donnaient une éducation de plus haut niveau, avaient été créées sous les auspices du célèbre banquier Kammondo, et elles étaient au début, comme on le sait, des institutions auxquelles s'opposaient les administrateurs de la nation juive ottomane et les leaders religieux. On voit la même chose ailleurs aussi, par exemple, dans le département d'Aydın. On constate à Izmir une diminution du nombre des collèges alors que des écoles primaires y étaient assez nombreuses. Au cours de ces années-là, l'éducation d'un niveau plus haut encore n'était pas organisée par la Communauté juive elle-même; les jeunes allaient aux autres écoles et aux institutions telles que Mektebi Mülkiye (Ecole des Sciences politiques), écoles de droit et de médecine. On ne recontraît pas

² Başb. Osm. Arş. (B.O.A.) (Archives ottomanes de la Présidence du Conseil). Irade, Mec. Valâ-No. 5129, 2 Şaban 1266/Juin 1850

d'élite juive parmi les ministres, ambassadeurs et gouverneurs ottomans; mais on ne pourrait pas sous-estimer le nombre de bureaucrates juifs ottomans dans les hauts rangs des organisations des différents ministères, des finances et de la santé. Par exemple dans les régions de la Macédoine et de Janina nous avons constaté la présence de pas mal de fonctionnaires juifs dans la bureaucratie départementale à cette époque³. Enfin, comme c'est le cas de certains éléments dans l'Empire, ceux qui avaient deux langues et qui parlaient le turc comme leur langue maternelle parmi les intellectuels juifs n'étaient pas en petit nombre.

Ces années-là, un groupe d'intellectuels juifs dans lequel se trouvait également Haim Nahum, futur grand rabbin, ont constitué une commission de la langue et proposé l'adoption du turc comme la langue de la nation juive au lieu du judéo-espagnol. Ils ont donné une motion à ce sujet à la Sublime-Porte (voir le communiqué intitulé "*Turkish Language and Jewish-Ottoman community*," que j'avais présenté à Tel-Aviv. (En cours d'être imprimé). D'ailleurs, il y avait des cours de langue turque dans toutes les écoles où la jeunesse juive faisait ses études, et ces écoles ont augmenté, par une mise en application d'avantgarde, le nombre des cours de langue turque, et ont mis dans leurs programmes d'études des cours qui se donnaient en turc comme l'histoire et la géographie ottomanes. Il appert que ceux qui appliquent pour la première fois, après Galatasaray (Mekteb-i Sultani), cette structure éducative, sont les écoles juives. Par exemple, nous savons que Moïse Fresco, intendant (kethüda) du grand rabbin, avait publié à Izmir dans les années 1888-1890 un journal intitulé "*Üstad*" (*Maître*) en langue turque, mais avec les lettres hébraïques. Nesim Mazliyah a publié, à l'époque de la 2^e Monarchie, la revue "*İttihad*" (*Union*) et Moïse Kohen la "*İktisadiyat Mecmuası*" (*Revue des Sciences économiques*) en 1915-1918. Enfin, Avram Galanti était un des intellectuels ottomans bilingues, qui se distinguaient à cette époque

Les Juifs avaient un groupe d'avant-garde qui soutenait le mouvement monarchiste. Nessim Mazliyah, Albert Ferid Asseo, Albert Feva à Paris, du groupe du Journal "*Meşveret*", le célèbre Emmanuel Karasso et Nesim Russo étaient des politiciens qui étaient déjà en contact avec les Jeunes Turcs révolutionnaires à l'époque d'Abdülhamid. Ajoutons dans ce groupe Avram Galanti, l'un des célèbres visages de la dernière époque. Les intellectuels juifs ont entièrement soutenu la 2^e Monarchie. Ils ont donné ce soutien non pour un consensus national comme l'ont fait certaines nations balkaniques ou les intellectuels grecs et arméniens, mais directement dans le cadre du patriotisme ottoman. Du reste, les Juifs n'ont pas fait cas non plus du sionisme qui était un nationalisme laïc à l'époque et sont toujours restés à l'écart des autres éléments de l'Empire. Alors que les Bulgares, les Grecs et les Arméniens participaient aux élections avec des programmes nationaux, cette tendance n'a jamais existée chez les juifs, et même, ces derniers n'ont pas créé de clubs nationaux contrairement aux Albanais et aux Arabes. Les Juifs se trouvaient dans une position qui soutenait le Parti de l'Union et du Progrès (İttihad ve Terakki)

Les Juifs étaient représentés d'une façon plus efficace au Parlement de la Deuxième Monarchie par rapport à celui de 1877 (En 1877, il y avait au Parlement Avram Aciman, Menahim Salih, Ziver de Bosnie et Daviçon Levi de Janina). Et maintenant, c'étaient Vitali Faraci d'Istanbul, Emanuel Carasso de Salonique, Nesim Mazliyah d'Izmir et Hezekiyel Sason de Bagdad. Au Sénat se trouvaient Daviçon Karmano et Behor Askinazi. Quand on a perdu Salonique après la Guerre balkanique, Emanuel Carasso a été élu d'Istanbul.

³ Avram Galante, *Türkler ve Yahudiler (Les Turcs et les Juifs)*, Istanbul 1928, pp. 128-136. Nous publierons prochainement, au sujet des fonctionnaires juifs, certaines connaissances dues aux classifications récemment effectuées dans les Archives de la Présidence du Conseil. Voir: Ortaylı, "*İkinci Abdülhamid devrinde taşra bürokrasisinde gayri müslimler*" (*Les non-musulmans dans la bureaucratie provinciale à l'époque d'Abdülhamid II*), Séminaire du Sultan Abdülhamid II. Fac. des Lettres de l'Université d'Istanbul, pp. 163

Les Juifs ottomans ont vécu l'époque de la 2^e Monarchie sous la représentation et la direction du Grand Rabbin Hayim Nahum, un des intéressants visages de notre histoire récente⁴. La personnalité de Nahum fait l'objet de discussions même de nos jours parmi les historiens. Mais, le fait que sa carrière a montré une élévation par le soutien de l'Union et du Progrès et que le grand rabbinat est devenu un poste supérieur et efficace à la fois du point de vue politique et du point de vue protocolaire, a eu lieu à son époque. En vérité, la circonstance que "Istanbul ve tevaîî millet-i Yehudam hahambaşisi", c'est-à-dire le Grand Rabbin des Juifs d'Istanbul et de ses environs, occupait un rang supérieur parmi les leaders spirituels de tous les pays ottomans (memalik-i mahrusa), est soulignée dans les firmans de nomination depuis le Sultan Mahmoud II, mais cette réalité a été précisée sous le leadership de Hayim Nahum. Dans l'annuaire d'État de la même année (1327 H), on parle de Nahum sous le titre de hahambaşi (grand rabbin) et des chefs se trouvant dans 27 centres importants sous celui de başhaham (rabbin principal, en chef). Comme nous l'avons indiqué, le statut du grand rabbin à Istanbul d'être le leader religieux et administratif de tous les Juifs existe depuis l'époque classique ottomane. En outre, il y avait un statut de Karaî cemaatbaşılığı (poste du chef de la communauté karaïte) pour le groupe de Karaî (pluriel Karaim) qui était un secte distinct tout à côté de la nation juive. Les registres de Karaî et de Juifs ("Karaî ve Yahud Defterleri") pour les années 1255-1327 H. (1839-1909 ap. J.C.) contiennent pas mal de correspondances susceptibles de témoigner de la structure administrative concernant les deux communautés. En général, on prenait l'avis du Grand Rabbin à Istanbul concernant les nominations de rabbin à un endroit quelconque et d'autres affaires ayant de l'importance. Le recensement de la communauté de Karaim se faisait séparément. La différence de sectes entre les deux communautés, les synagogues distinctes construites dans un même quartier (pour la synagogue, la communauté Karaim utilise l'expression kinéssa) et la différence de compartiments financier et administratif y jouaient le rôle principal.

A la 2^e Monarchie, on utilisait, dans les documents officiels et semi-officiels, dans la presse, l'expression "Memalik-i Osmaniyye Musevî milletinin reis-i ruhanîsi, hahambaşi rütbetlu Hayim Nahum efendi"⁵ (Hayim Nahum Efendi, chef spirituel de la nation juive dans le pays ottomans, ayant le titre de grand rabbin) pour qualifier le grand rabbin juif. Lui, il jouissait d'un grand prestige et d'une grande autorité auprès du gouvernement. Il faut voir dans ce rôle la personnalité de Nahum aussi bien que l'idéologie de l'Union et du Progrès. En fait, c'est en raison de sa prestigieuse position que les notables des autres groupes non musulmans dans l'Empire prenaient Nahum pour cible. Or, le peuple grec-orthodoxe se trouvant dans la partie Roumélie (l'Europe Ottomane) se plaignait fréquemment de la communauté juive auprès des administrateurs par des inculpations de mise dans le tonneau piqué d'aiguilles à l'intérieur et d'enfanticides et introduisaient des actions. L'État avait décrété des firmans interdisant les plaintes de cette sorte à l'idée qu'il ne valait pas la peine de les prendre au sérieux⁶. Mais les événements se répétaient. Au milieu du 19^e siècle, un mouvement antisémite a commencé dans les départements de Tirhala (Trikala), Janina sur le raconter que deux personnes avaient reçu en rêve des messages de Jésus-Marie contre les Juifs, et des centaines de personnes ont donné des requêtes de plainte⁷. Pour ces raisons, les Juifs aussi avaient émigré avec les Musulmans à Edirne, Istanbul et Izmir surtout des endroits en Europe ottomane qui étaient passés à la Grèce. De même, à peine terminée la Guerre de Crimée (1854), les Juifs aussi

⁴ Ce firman-çı daté du 2 juillet 1909 (23 Cemaziyelahir 1327) est intéressant: B.O.A., *Karaî ve Yahud Defterleri* (Registres de Karaî et Juifs), pp.38-42; firman de nomination daté du 2 juillet 1909 (23 Cemaziyelahir 1327)

⁵ B.O.A., le même registre, hüküm 17 Cemaziyelewel 1259/Juin 1843.

⁶ B.O.A. *Mühimme*, No. 78, p.616, 25 Muhhareme 1013/Avril 1609. Voir à ce sujet Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, édit. Menage, Oxford 1973, p.23

⁷ B.O.A. *Irade-i Hariciyye*, No. 3902, 1267 de l'Hégire (1850-1851)

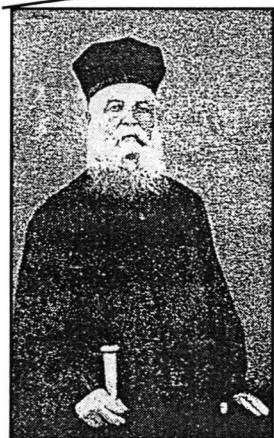
avaient émigré de Crimée avec les Musulmans au territoire ottoman à cause de la pression russe sur eux ⁸.

Le nationalisme qui s'est identifié avec la culture chrétienne de l'Occident ne signifie pas grand-chose pour les Juifs ottomans. L'élite juive ottomane n'a pas l'air non plus de montrer grand intérêt au sionisme qui fait partie des mouvements nationalistes modernes. Les représentants sionistes, le Dr. Lichtheim, le Dr. Jacobson, se plaignent de cette situation dans leurs rapports de 1911 à 1914. Les leaders juifs ottomans parlent en bien par exemple de Batzaria Effendi (Aprilnarr) et ils décrivent le célèbre grand rabbin Haïm Nahum comme quelqu'un d'intrigant et à qui on ne pourrait pas faire confiance. Il paraît que les intellectuels sionistes occidentaux ne constituent pas une exception dans l'incapacité de comprendre l'intellectuel oriental. Le sionisme n'était pas devenu, contrairement à ce qui s'est passé en Europe orientale, une idéologie populaire dans les pays ottomans. L'histoire de l'Empire s'est fermée sans qu'un problème sérieux soit apparu entre les Juifs et les Musulmans.

⁸ B.O.A. *Irade-Dah.*, No. 23899, 15 RA 1273 et *Irade-Mec. Mahsus*, No.5, CA 1273

Rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael – The Spiritual Leader of the Sepharadim of Craiova, Romania, and the amazing History of his Book of Hebrew Poetry Translated into Ladino

Prof. Al. Zimblér, Craiova



Rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael
(1856 - 1932)

good knowledge of the Jewish communities in Bulgaria, being familiar with the religious education there¹. Sometimes later he returned to his native Rhodos which, following the Italian-Turkish war, was then under Italian rule. Since the period 1922-1932, when he was—until his death—Great Rabbi of the island, a number of religious poems in Ladino have been preserved.

As it comes out from what is perhaps his last biographical note, “in Krayova² he was the rabbi-Hazzan of the Komunidad Yisraelit-Safaradit. And Krayova is, in all probability, the key to understanding what prompted Rabbi Yisrael to start his project of a free translation. In this Sephardic but European synagogue most congregants did not understand Hebrew anymore, their religious experience during the High Holidays was next to none.”³

¹ Sermon delivered in Spanish by Rabbi Reuven E. Yisrael on the first day of Rosh ha-Shana 5674 (1913) in the Spanish-Israelite temple in Craiova, and translated into Romanian by Lazăr M. Eskenazi and published by the “Vitorul” Press in Craiova, Romania.

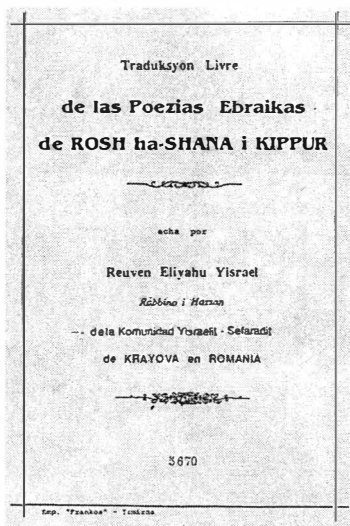
² Both Rabbi Yisrael and Rabbi Yerushalmi use the spelling Krayova; for the sake of geographical correctness, we shall use the Romanian spelling (Craiova) when referring to the city of Craiova, and preserve Rabbi Yisrael's spelling when referring to or citing from his work.

³ Rabbi Isaac Yerushalmi, in Introduction to *Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael's traduksyon Livre de las Poezias Ebraikas de Rosh ha-Shana I Kippur 5670 and the Six Selihoth of the 5682 Edition* (Cincinnati, OH, Sephardic Beth Shalom Congregation: Ladino Books, 1989), p. 11.

This presentation introduces the personality of one of the Craiova rabbis who distinguished himself by his erudition and scrupulousness in doing his duty as a pastor, by his modern, pragmatic spirit which led to the active, conscious participation of his parishioners to religious life. That is why he has won the right to be mentioned nowadays, after so many decades, before the end of the century.

Rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael was born in the Island of Rhodos in the Aegean Sea, then belonging to the Ottoman Empire, in a famous rabbinical family which represented the environment in which he received his education.

Considering the few biographical data we have, it seems that Rabbi Reuven Yisrael spent most of his adult life as a rabbi of the Sepharadim in Craiova, a city situated west of Bucharest, in Romania. Anyway, he arrived in Craiova having a rich experience. Probably he had previously known other sephardic communities in Southern-Eastern Europe. A clue appeared in a published intervention that allows us to assume that the author had a



The small volume mentioned in our presentation has an extremely important introduction, as well as the translation of some liturgical texts for the High Holidays: Rosh ha-Shana and Yom Kippur.

Nevertheless, our purpose is not only to introduce a personality of the past of Craiova, but also to signal the amazing fate of a modest book published at the beginning of this century in our city by the then prestigious publishers "Samitca".

Preoccupied with his spiritual mission which he wanted to exercise effectively and not formally, the Sephardi rabbi in Craiova was encountered with a problem not entirely new in the history of religions: the most suitable language for worship. The "*Septuagint*" — the Greek translation of the Old Testament — was done in the second century B.C. by 70 or 72 Hebrew scholars. It is the basic text for the following translations of the Old Testament in other languages. Since then there have been repeated attempts to bring the religious practices closer to the congregation, thus applying a democratic principle in the religious life of the people.

It is perhaps much closer to us—in time and space—the performance of the two monks Cyril and Methodius who, despite the Pope's opposition, translated *The Bible* into Slavonic, thus making it more accessible to the people. Also, the translation of *The Bible* into German by Martin Luther marked a moment of reference in the history of religion, a decisive element determining the success of the Protestant faith.

Obviously enough, the modest rabbi in Craiova cannot be compared with the above-mentioned illustrious personalities. Nevertheless, the dilemma he faced was the same: whether to conduct the religious service in the traditional holy language, or to find a more suitable modality of making the content of the liturgical texts more accessible to the congregation. In his preface to the book published in Craiova in 1910, he tries to give an answer and motivate his choice:

"I introduce to you the sacred hymns sung in our temples on the holy days of Rosh ha-Shana and Yom Kippur, translated from the Hebrew text and adapted to the musical motifs without, of course, departing from the original meaning. Here is the reason of my assuming the burden of this translation. Many members of the Spanish-Israelite community in Craiova, where I officiate, have expressed this wish. And right they are, as our orations said in Hebrew were better recited in languages known and understood by the people. All the more so, on the High Holidays of Rosh ha-Shana and Yom Kippur, the use of a language understood by all (a todos) will be preferable..."⁴

"...they often complain, and justifiably so, that our prayers are said in Hebrew, a language they ignore completely. The prayers for the High Holidays, they add with regret, leave us unimpressed, and are even terribly boring for us, as we find ourselves compelled to spend many hours in Temple singing and reading texts written in a language totally

unknown to us."⁵

Also, the piyyutim should be recast in simpler and more modern language, "not to diminish anything from this beautiful piyyutim which leave their impression on our hearts and

⁴ Traducsi3n Libera de las Poezias Ebraicas de Roş Aşana I Kipur Ecia por Reuben Eliau Israel, Rabino I Mazan de la Comunidad Israelita-Spaniola de Craiova en Romania Eul 5670 (Craiova: Institutul Grafic Samitca, 1910), p. 3.

⁵ See the American edition of Rabbi Yerushalmi, p. II.

quite often cause us to shed tears, raising our souls toward the Most High, and compelling us to examine our conscience and our actions.”⁶

According to Rabbi Yerushalmi, the editor of the American edition, less known is the fact that the Sephardic prayer books (siddurim, mahzorim) have long contained translations of the psalms in Ladino not only “for the eyes”, i.e. for quick reference as the Hebrew text was being chanted to fulfill the liturgical tradition of the congregation, but also as a valid substitute for the real thing:

“As one whose childhood was molded by the learning and formal recitation of these piyyutim, I feel I am in a special position to evaluate and appreciate the work of Rabbi Reuben Eliyahu Israel, may he rest in peace, the author of this unusual Ladino translation. I say unusual because from the onset mixed signals confront the reader. On the title page of the book the word *livre* (later *libre*), free, figures prominently, a clear indication of what to expect. But the notion of a free translation in a liturgical setting was so innovative and bold that some backtracking became necessary. The first sentence in the preface does just that. It states that these texts are *tradusidos tekstualmente del Ebreo*, textually translated from the Hebrew. And so we have a free translation; and yet, it is textually translated from the Hebrew! If asked to resolve this apparent contradiction, Rabbi Israel would probably defend his

methodology along these lines. Except for an occasional periphrastic expression, his text certainly mirrors the contents of the poems he is translating. It is therefore literal. On the other hand, it is also free to the extent he felt free to replace old and worn-out Ladino words with crisper and more modern sounding French or Italian equivalents, whether these were hispanized renditions of words attested in the respective languages, or custom made by him. To help his unprepared readers, he even provided at the end of the 1910 edition a three page list (pp. 60-62) of some two hundred new vocabulary items *para akeyos ke no los entyenden*, for those who do not understand them.”⁷

But this is not confirmed. The book we have and which, undoubtedly, is the original, first edition published by the Samitca Publishers in Craiova in 1910, does not have this annex (word list). As a matter of fact, pages 60-62 do not exist, as the last page of the book is 46.

What was the American researcher confused by?

He was confused by the existence of a different edition of the book that, paradoxically, bears the same date: 5670 (according to the Hebrew chronology). This is obviously a later edition, using a modified orthography, containing texts written in Hebrew and Latin letters. Indeed, it has got the above-mentioned word list on pages 60-62, and an erratum on page 63. On the other hand, the former edition bears the logo of the Samitca Publishers and the date, 1910, the latter has got only the mention *Emp. “Frankos Izmirna”*. But, comparing the Hebrew characters, we feel entitled to place this edition closer to the year 5682—that is, 1922—when an edition of 35 Hebrew poems was published on *Rosh Ha-Shana Kippur I Selihoth*. Its author is the same Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael, “*ex Rabbino I Hazzan de la Komunidad Yisraelit Sefardit de Krayova en Romania I actualmente Gran Rabino de Rodes.*”

Finally, we mention the American edition published in 1989 by the Sephardic Beth

⁶ Idem, p. IV.

⁷ Idem, p. i.

Shalom Congregation in Cincinnati and edited by Rabbi Isaac Yerushalmi (already cited). The book, part of the collection of "Ladino Books", is a scholarly edition, with a vast introduction written by the editor. Let us grant the specialists the pleasure of studying the historical and linguistic parts of the Introduction, as well as the texts of the poems themselves. Our purpose has been to illustrate the strange fate and map-traceable wanderings of this unpretentious booklet published in our city at the dawns of this century.

As we have already seen, the American editor defends and supports the courageous endeavor of his older brother. According to him, religious texts translated into Ladino were in use in other Sephardic communities as well.

Actually, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the remarkable scientist and humanist dr. Iuliu Barasch referred to a similar situation. Writing under the pseudonym of Rafael Sincerus, he contributed a series of notes to the "*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*" (1842-1846) which were later translated into Romanian by dr. E. Schwarzfeld and published in Bucharest under the title "*Itinerary in Krakov, Galitia, Bucovina, Moldavia and Wallachia in 1841-1842*".

Regarding the practice of using the "dialect" in the synagogues, I. Barasch writes:

"The Spanish dialect, thus called in order to distinguish it from the Spanish language, has no permanent literature in the proper sense of the word. Nevertheless, the Spaniards use it for the introductions to their prayer books, *tefila*, for the explanation of their practices and prayers, as well as for their translations... because, as a matter of fact, very few of them understand Hebrew, not even the Hebrew of their daily prayers. Besides, there exist certain *darasa*, or sermons, written in the Spanish dialect, and this is also used in the synagogue. Thus, the sale of *mitvot*, the acknowledgements, etc., is being done in this dialect which also serves for certain prayers said on particular days. In such a situation, the cantor reads the Hebrew verse, and then its translation into Spanish (Ladino)—now ex-tempora, now according to a stereotype formula. This procedure, practiced in a Spanish orthodox synagogue so very particular about preserving its traditions, is extremely interesting as it reminds—on the one hand—of the Talmudic translators, *meturgheman*. On the other hand, it proves that the use of the popular language in the synagogue to explain the prayers and even for the utterance of individual prayers is a very Jewish practice. It cannot be considered a young and exotic sprout in the garden of God, as claimed by some communities in Germany which insist on being considered as orthodox."⁸

Let us now summarize the existing information on the different editions of the work dealt with in our presentation.

First, we have an original copy of the book published in Craiova in 1910. It is, undoubtedly, the first edition. Unfortunately, it was not available to the American editor, which led to confusions.

There is also the latest edition, a vast, monumental edition published by Rabbi Isaac Yerushalmi in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1989. It is a copy of the original work of Rabbi Reuven Yisrael, on the cover of which we find the year of publication (5670) as well as the mention "Rabbino I Hazzan de la Komunidad Yisraelit—Sefaradit de Krayova en Romania". From the very first page we can see that it is a different edition later published by our rabbi in Izmir (Emp. "Frankos"—Izmirna).

There are visible orthography changes. The preface was enlarged, including a final part addressed to "a mis kolegos los Sres hazzanini", that is to his fellow cantors. The religious texts, carefully ordered, are kept in accordance with the Craiova edition: Selihoth, the eve, first

⁸ Kuller, Harry, *Opt studii despre istoria evreilor din Romania*. (București: Hasefer, 1997). p. 3.

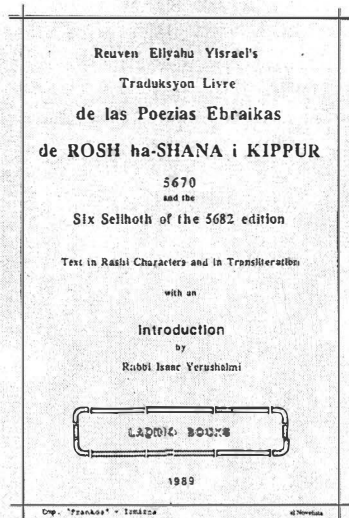
and second day of Rosh ha-Shana, the eve of Yom Kippur and the religious texts for the holiday, all printed in Hebrew and Latin script. Moreover, we find a free translation of Psalms 24, 81, 130 preceded by a note of the translator in which he mentions the fact that, as these psalms are recited on the High Holidays, they have reproduced from his work "*Traduksion de Tehillim in Judyo-Espanyol*" still in manuscript form. Also, there is an alphabetical glossary (according to the order of the Hebrew alphabet), and an "erratum".

Also, the American edition reproduces a different work published in 5682 (1922) with the mention of the "*El Novelista*" Press, "*Traduksyon Libre de 35 Poezias Ebraikas de Rosh ha-Shana Kippur I Selihoth*". This time it is mentioned that Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael is ex-rabbi and hazzan of the Israelite-Sephardic Community in Craiova, Romania, and Great Rabbi of Rhodos. Only a few pages of the book have been reprinted in this volume: the beginning, comprising the Selihoth (p. 7, 8, 12, 14-17) and the end (p. 78,79). We find a valuable piece of information on page 16: marking a text correction with an asterisk, the editor adds the following footnote in English: "Based on author's correction listed on page 80 on second edition". Thus we could conclude we are dealing with at least the third edition of (let us call it the "Rhodos") variant; the year 5682 on the front cover could have been conventionally added, the printed text proper belonging to a later edition most probably printed after the author's death.

Also, on page XVIII of the American edition, we find the following interesting footnote: "The pagination of the six *piyyutim* which are found after page 63 does not follow the sequence of the 1910 edition. Their pagination reflects the order of the 1922 edition. Thus your copy is not defective".

It is interesting to note how this booklet got to the U.S.A. where its author was honored by a luxury, scholarly edition. This is also the purpose of Rabbi Isaac Yerushalmi, the coordinator of this edition, presumably a professor of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and a member of the Beth Shalom Sephardic Community there.

We have already mentioned the ample introductory study of Rabbi Yerushalmi who highly appreciates the work of his predecessor. We shall now refer to a more sentimental text included in this volume (p. XIX), entitled "Me lo ado komo ke si..." (I remember as if...) and, of course, written in Ladino. The author presents to us the figure of his first teacher—Sinyor Haham de Amon—to whom the volume is, in fact, dedicated. He had come to teach him "a little of the Law"—*un poko Ley*—one autumn morning of the year 1934. "Sinyor Haham took me to his home and thus, for ten years, I kept going to Mr. Haham's place, in winter and in summer, to learn. During all these years, Sinyor Haham took me to all the services taking place in Kuzguncuk." Now in his 60's, Rabbi Yerushalmi gratefully remembers his teacher who taught him the Law and traditions, and, most of all the laws of life—to keep his eyes wide open, and not to behave foolishly. As he accounts all these childhood remembrances, the author mentions the methods used by his teacher to introduce the little boys he was looking after in the mysteries of the Holy Books. "Now and then Sinyor Haham was producing a different colored booklet, reading to us passages in Ladino... He was taking care of this book and never lent it to anyone. After the Kippur tefila he would take a nap, and I would walk slowly, quietly, lest I should wake him up, to take a look at it."



More than fifty years later, writes the American rabbi, he had the chance to lay hands on a book of poems for the High Holidays in Ladino, written by Elyahu Yisrael when he was the Haham of the Sepharadim in Craiova, Romania. He was sure that had been the very book his teacher had been using:

“It was for me like discovering an old friend because there were in it words and Holiday hymns that made up, in time, the basic elements which any Sephard, rich or poor, had in his own blood.”

Rabbi Yerushalmi confesses that his editing of the 1989 volume was accompanied by a great deal of nostalgia, and motivates his use of both Hebrew and Latin letters with possible reminiscences of those willing to use the language of their ancestors. Further on, the author writes: “The 5670 edition ends with a list of some words for those who do not understand them. The great majority of these words have been borrowed from French, some others from Italian, while those that seem to have been borrowed from Spanish are nothing else than hispanized French... But in his 1922 edition he renounced this list and he added instead six *piyyutim* which were not there in the first book”.⁹ As we have already mentioned above, this remark proves that the American editor considered as the first edition not the book published in Craiova in 1910, but a following variant (or one of the following ones) presumably published later and not necessarily in Craiova.

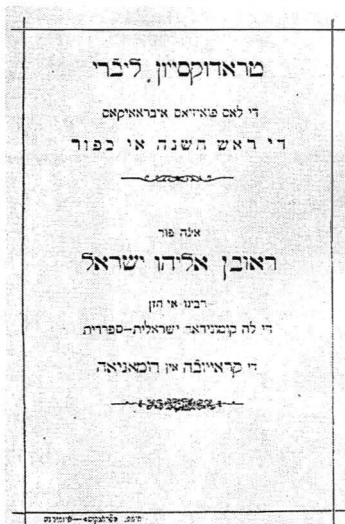
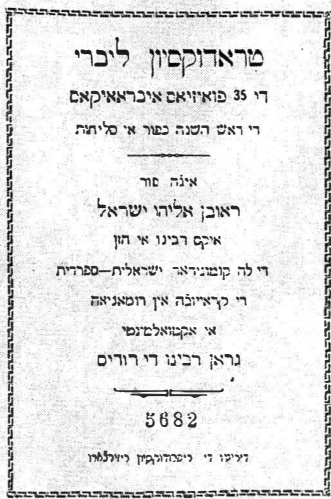
But Rabbi Yerushalmi is not guilty for that. The routes such books take in the world at large (in our case, around the Sephardic communities) are devious, and not devoid of surprises. The author tries to explain the way in which the work of the Craiova rabbi traveled from the Balkans to America: “The particular copy from which this enlarged edition was prepared bears the personal stamp of Rabbi Joseph de Tchaves, chief rabbi of Athens, Greece. Other people may have owned this copy before him or after him. Its last owner was Haham Avraham Gargir, a Smyrniote who conducted services up to the mid-thirties at the Sephardic Beth Shalom Congregation in Cincinnati, Ohio.”¹⁰

Nowadays it is clear to us that the original version of this book was born in Craiova in 1910. This is where it started its wanderings throughout the world. As regards its author, it is worth citing the conclusions to the Introduction of the American edition:

“On a more personal level, I would like to conclude by saying that for decades Rabbi Israel’s translations, especially his version of the Yom Kippur confessions, have successfully uncovered for me mem-

9 La edyson de 5670 tyene a la fin una lista de “*algunos byervos para akeyos ke no los entyenden* (p. 60)” La grande mayoridad de estos byervos es tomada del fransez, unos kuantos del italiano, myientras ke ls ke paresen ke son tomados del espanyol no son nada mas ke fransez ispanizado... Me en la edyson de 1922, esta lista la kito, l a su lugar metyo 6 piyyutim ke faltavan del primer livro.

¹⁰ See the American edition, p. XVI.



orable levels of nurturing piety. The task of introducing the work of a creative person often puts us in the unenviable corner of the perennial critic. My admiration for Rabbi Israel's courage in tackling, even in those early days, the delicate issue of the vernacular in the liturgy for the sole benefit of the laymen, and his passionate appeal on behalf of their religious needs, places him among those open-minded leaders that have always graced our communal scene. If I have spared no effort in preparing this enlarged and restored edition, it is in view of my conviction that a remnant out there will read it and profit by his touching words. They are potent. They have enlivened many souls."¹¹

We can only join this homage to our fellow townsman who, at the beginning of this century appeared like a modest provincial clergyman, preoccupied with the problems of his community. Now, at the end of the same century, we can see him in his true dimension as a lucid thinker, and a courageous militant for the democratization of the religious life and, implicitly, for the formation of a modern society. He was a most distinguished personality for the history of the Sephardic community and, without any doubt, for the history of our city.

It is our opinion that we should continue our research of the life and activity of Rabbi Israel, both in Craiova and during his pre- and post-Craiova years. The limited space allowed prevented us from including a presentation of a sermon delivered by Rabbi Israel on the first day of Rosh ha-Shana 5674 (1913) in the Spanish-Israelite Temple in Craiova. This sermon was translated and later printed by dr. Lazăr M. Eskenasy, the president of this community. The sermon presents the rabbi as a man with a vast life experience, wise and close to his faith and his congregation. He was unusually perspicacious and lucid in his understanding of the world, and of the political and social phenomena in this part of Europe at the beginning of the present century. Of course, the central idea of the sermon was his action towards the preservation of the Jewish spiritual values. The man, who, three years before, had successfully introduced the use of the Ladino language during the religious service, was now praising the Hebrew traditions and language.

As we have met here on the opportunity of a scientific session devoted to the Sephardic Jews and because the use of Ladino has been mentioned more than once, I am going to conclude with the thoughts of Rabbi Yerushalmi regarding the destiny of this language:

"Kontandos son akeyos ke komo mi no solo lo avlan en kaza i lo eskriyen en letrearse kon konosidos, ma ke parvinyeron a ambezarlo a sus kriaturas nasidas en sivdades onde el Ladino no se oye mas. Las letras ke me eskribe David mi ijo son por siguro las ultimas letras en Ladino de esta jenerasyon. Kon el se estan serrando los livros... una lingua no es solo una lista de byervos ke la persona se ambeza de kavesa, ma una manera de pensar i de ver al mundo, es dunke una manera de bivir. I komo la pensada i la manera de bivir de altyempo ke sostenian al Ladino ya desparesyeron desde munco tyempo, la lingua kedo sola... Si una lingua no bive i se enflorise, se hazinea i se amata..."¹²

This is the origin of Rabbi Yerushalmi's idea to publish the series of ten titles of "Ladino Books" the purpose of which being "to bring to light some of the books that embody the life and customs of our people in the towns of its dispersal. I must do it because, little by little, there will be no one left capable of prizing these books, and their words and phrases."

¹¹ Idem, p. XVII.

¹² "Satisfied are those who, like myself, not only speak it in their homes and use it in letters to their acquaintances, but also manage to teach it to their children born in towns where Ladino is not heard any more. The letters written to me by my son David are definitely the last letters in Ladino written by this generation. The books end with him... A language is not only a succession of words that a person learns by heart, but a manner of thinking, of seeing the world, of living. And, as the old times way of thinking and living — that supported the use of Ladino — has long ago disappeared, the language remained alone... If a language does not live and flourish, then it get ill and dies..." Idem, p. XXIII.

We wish to express our hope that one day, during a future scientific session, someone will be able to talk about the way in which such a noble and generous project is accomplished.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I wish to express my deepest respect and admiration for Rabbi Isaac Yerushalmi and the prestigious Jewish institutions in Cincinnati, Ohio, the U. S. A., that have participated in the publication of this splendid edition. They have thus contributed to the better knowledge of a reference moment in the history of the Jewish communities in Craiova, Romania. I most sincerely hope that Rabbi Yerushalmi is in good health and that he continues accomplishing his generous project of publishing the "Ladino Books" series, the book discussed above belongs to.

Next, my most pious thoughts go to Mr. Solomon Goldstein, a Sephard from Craiova who died not long ago and who, before his departure from this world, had provided a great deal of the necessary documentation, including the American edition. Rabbi Yerushalmi himself signed the book and dedicated it to Mr. Samuel Goldstein.

It is my duty to thank Mr. Victor Eschenazy, a Sephard too, who translated the texts from Ladino into Romanian and furnished a lot of information about the Spanish-Israelite community in Craiova and its members. He has spent his whole life in our city. Unfortunately, though intellectually very productive, Mr. Eschenazy is physically disabled by a most serious disease.

Last but not least, my sincerest thanks and gratitude to Mr. Lucian Zeev Herscovici of the National Library in Jerusalem who sent me the photocopies of the three "*Poemas*" de Rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael, Gran Rabino de Rodes 1922-1932 (Transliteration de la esteritura Rashi par Andrew Sturm) and published in "Aki Yerushalayim" in 1985.

The Last Rabbis of Sofia

Iosif Levi - Sofia - Bulgaria

Many Jews lived in Sofia

even before the liberation of Bulgaria from the

Ottoman yoke and almost half of the population there was Jewish.

Rabbi David Pipano made an investigation about the rabbis who lived in Sofia from the end of the 15th century to 1960. According to it there were 57 rabbis. The last rabbis were Daniel Zion and Dr. Asher Hananel.

It is known that Rabbi Daniel Zion came from Salonika but he settled in Sofia since his early age. He was rabbi in one of Sofia synagogues and also a member of the Rabbi Court. Rabbi Daniel Zion proved to be not only an ordinary official but also a great thinker and specialist in our religion. He wrote several books in which he dwelt first of all on biblical questions regarding mental diseases, human existence and death. In 1930 he published in Bulgaria the book *The Nature of Life* and somewhat later also another one — *Mental Diseases And Their Treatment*. He translated *Pirkei Avot* together with the Bulgarian publicist Eliezer Anski and made a philosophical and historical analysis of the Kabala. He wrote the book *Jewish Laws Regarding Divorce* together with the lawyer Albert Varsano. A great contribution to the Bulgarian Jewish population is the prayer book (sidour) for performing the holiday of Saturday and some other Jewish rituals issued by him. Although Zion did not make a literal translation of the content; on one side of the page the prayer was given in Hebrew and on the other — its translation in Bulgarian. This book is being reprinted until this day and it serves as a basic book for our parishioners today.

Rabbi Daniel Zion had a great authority also with the Bulgarian rulers and the Bulgarian tsar. He was in contact with other religious figures from the Orthodox Church as well as from the Danov's sect (a sect which worships the sun).

During the Second World War when there was a danger for the Bulgarian Jews to be deported, too, Rabbi Daniel visited bishops and other men of note with the request to cancel that decision. In May 1943 the Bulgarian government decided to move all Bulgarian Jews from Sofia to the province. Since Daniel Zion did not manage to contact the tsar, he organized a prayer—meeting in the synagogue of Yuchbunar, although the Consistory did not agree. He tried to calm down the Jews from Sofia and call them to a demonstration which was to reach the place of the tsar. He was at the head of the demonstration and everybody followed him. Shortly after they had left the synagogue and started along the boulevard towards the palace the mounted police came against them, broke up the demonstration and arrested many Jews who were sent to a camp. It is known that Rabbi Daniel Zion hid with the bishop of Sofia. Although for some time he fell into disgrace with the Consistory because of the relations he had with the Christians, Rabbi Daniel Zion had a great authority with the Bulgarian Jews. After the foundation of Israel he immigrated there together with most of the Bulgarian Jews. He died in Israel at the age of 103. He had one daughter who married a hazan in Bulgaria. He had also three sons who went to Israel with him. One of them was director of the theatre of the kibutsims, in Tel Aviv and the other one was a member of "Yad Mordehai". He wrote also the book titled *Five Years under the fascist yoke*.

The last Bulgarian rabbi was Dr. Asher Hananel. He was born in 1895 in the town of Shoumen. As a young man he got a scholarship from the Consistory and went to the town of Breslau (today the town of Wrotslaw). He completed the Rabbi School there and got a doctor's degree. When he came back to Bulgaria he became a rabbi of Sofia. Dr. Asher Hananel was a highly accomplished person. He wrote several books on religious topics, for example *Legends from Talmuda*, *Biblical Characters and Famous Authors* as well as *Pentateuch in Sermons*.

During the war he was at the head of the delegation which visited Bishop Stefan who as the Bishop of Sofia interceded for the Bulgarian Jews and opposed both the deportation and the movement from Sofia of the Jews. After the end of the war and after the foundation of Israel, greater part of the Bulgarian Jews immigrated to Israel. He was declared rabbi of Bulgaria in 1960. He began to work together with Eli Eshkenazi on the materials *Sheelot Uteshuvot* in the Synagogue of Sofia and on that basis they published two volumes on the topic: *Jewish sources for the social development of the Bulgarian lands*. Dr. Asher Hananel was also a senior research associate in the Bulgarian Academy of Science. He died in 1964. He was held in the greatest respect to the end of his life.

As it is well known greater part of the Bulgarian Jews are descendants of the Spanish Jews and for that reason Ladino was the spoken language for the Bulgarian Jews in the beginning of the century. Newspapers, prayer—books and other materials were published in this language. I want to introduce to you two Bulgarian Jews who examined the history of the Sephardims and investigated Ladino.

The first of them, Solomon Avram Rozanes, was born in 1862 in the town of Rousse. He came from a respected merchant's family whose descents were in Spain. He received his initial schooling in his native town in "heder" with rabbi Graciani.. He studied also with the rabbi Haim Bejarano who later was the rabbi of Odrin and then became the chief rabbi of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire with head office in Istanbul. In 1873 a school was opened through the Alliance in the town of Rousse. That gave him the possibility to learn French and Turkish. In principle, the young Rozanes had the gift for learning foreign languages and for that reason when he became 12 years old he went on a long journey with his uncle in the present day Israel. That gave him the possibility of learning Hebrew and Arabic. He came back to Rousse in 1877. However, soon after that the war for the liberation of Bulgaria between Russia and Turkey broke. Since the town of Rousse was a field of war actions Rozanes' family moved to Zemlin, near the town of Belgrade. He learnt German there. The situation of the family changed for the worse and for that reason the 16 years old Rozanes started to take care about the maintenance of his family. Once robbers came into the house, they attacked him and wounded him very seriously. He went to be treated in Bucharest and there he got in contact with his former teacher Bejarano. Rozanes was a polyglot. He learnt Romanian for a short time and during his stay in Galați he learnt Greek and Italian. His aim in life was to study the history of Jews. First he wrote a paper about the history of the Jews in the town of Rousse. Later, when he lived in Constanța, he contributed to the Jewish magazines *Amagid* and *Israel*. He wrote materials about the life of Josif Caro who lived in the town of Nikopol, near Rousse and also about the Bulgarian tsaritsa Theodora who had Jewish origin. Rozanes had the idea of writing a history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire. He spoke many languages, he had the possibility of visiting many towns and getting acquainted with the archive materials in the Jewish communities. He worked many years for his dream under very hard economic conditions. He did everything at his own will, without any financial support. In this way he managed to write in six volumes his basic work *History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. Unlike other scientific workers who wrote in other languages Rozanes wrote his work in Hebrew. The first volume was published in 1907. The whole work includes 2500 pages. They were printed later in publishing houses in Sofia. The last volume was published in Israel after his death.

The work of Solomon Rozanes has a great importance for studying the history of the nations, included in the Ottoman Empire, because at that period almost all states, including the present state of Israel, were under sultan's domination. Other authors wrote usually about particular areas or nations and there was almost no information about the Jewish communities in Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, etc.

The 70th anniversary of his birthday was officially celebrated in 1932. There was an attempt to gather all his works which were not included in his basic work but it was unsuccessful. The fact that *History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire* was written in Hebrew had a dual meaning. On one hand Rozanes had difficulties in printing the work because not all printing houses had the necessary type of print, but on the other hand, that gave possibilities to the Jewish centres all over the world to get more familiar with the history of the Jews in that region. There is not any doubt that Rozanes' work is of great importance in studying the history of the Jews on the Balkan Peninsula.

Undoubtedly, Isak Moscuna is one of the greatest researchers of the life of the Sephardims, their style of living and language. He was born in 1904 in the town of Varna. He studied in Italy, Germany and France.

Isak Moscona worked in different places as a business executive but his real aim in life was to study thoroughly the language, the customs, the spirit, the rituals, the proverbs, the sayings and the historical past of the Bulgarian Jews. He wrote many papers on different problems, including an interesting study on the origin of the family names of the Bulgarian Jews. He emphasized in it that some of the names are biblical like Cohen, Levi, Israel, but instead of having their own family names, many of the Jews who had come from Spain brought with themselves the names of the towns in which they had lived like Cordoba, Pardo, Sevilla, Toledo, Castro, Catalan, etc. or of Italian towns like Romano, Pizanti, Taranto, etc. Regarding the female names there were such biblical names like Rachel, Devora, Dina, Malka, etc., but there were also names of Spanish origin like Alegra (Simha) Buena, Blanka, Linda, Malvina, etc., Moscuna discussed in almost 15 pages the origin of the proper and family names of the Bulgarian Jews by arranging them in an alphabetical order. Moscuna studied not only the Jewish names but also Ladino and Djudezmo.

In his opinion Ladino is the original language transferred by the Spanish-Portuguese Jews. In his standard type it is the Old Castilian with some Hebrew. The vernacular was influenced by the Arabic, Portuguese and some dialects of the Iberian Peninsula. On the Balkans the language gradually transformed by borrowing many words from the Jewish groups there but Turkish had a special influence. That is namely the vernacular Djudezmo, a type which even today can still be found here and there. It was in this language that the printing houses in Istanbul, Smirna and Belgrade published hundred of books for the needs of the Bulgarian Jews. The basic word stock of Djudezmo is rather limited. It includes 4000 words from Castilian, about 1500 from Turkish, about 500 from Hebrew. However, the main word stock is Castilian.

Hebrew influenced a lot this language because the rabbis in Spain corresponded among themselves in Hebrew. In this way, for example, the following words entered Judesmo: *haham* (scholar, scientist), *hazan* (priest), *shohet*, *ketuba*, *get*. Some Hebrew words have entered the language as derivatives, for examples *mazaludo* (happy man) from *mazal*, *ainarah* (bad eye) from *ain ra*, *dankave* (dam kaved - heavy blood in the sense of boring), etc. *Alhad* (Sunday) entered the language from Arabic instead of the Christian word *Domingo*. *Aalhad* in Arabic means "the first" like *iom rishon* in Hebrew. In the same way there is a difference in the word *dio* meaning God instead of the Spanish word *dios*. Many Turkish words entered the language, for example *salan* (slaughterhouse), *charshi* (market), *meani* (pub, inn), *berber*, *hamal*, etc. Many words with the meaning of foodstuffs have Turkish origin like for example: *guvech*, *dolma*, *pilaf*, *kuskus*, *baklava*, etc. Greek has also some influence through the words *nikouchir* (host), *papu* (grandfather), *abramila* (dry plum). Italian borrowings are words like *epiegado* (trade servant), *sigurita* (insurance), *genetores* (parents), etc. There are also German borrowings which have entered the language through

Idish like *jorsa* (memorial service) from *jahrzeit*, *schlemlag* (drob-sarma¹), *bulisa*, *rubisa*, etc.

Generally, it can be said about Djudezmo, that this was the language which united the Sephardims living on the lands of the Balkan Peninsula and the Near East, which at that time were part of the Ottoman Empire. After the First World War that language began to lose its position and in the 30's it became almost non-understandable language for the young generation. Djudezmo became spoken language for the old generation in the years of the Second World War. After the destruction of the big Jewish community in Thessalonike, today only one greater group of about 25 thousand people, living in Turkey, speak that language, but it is in decline even there. The activity connected with preserving this language is coordinated with the help of *Aki Jerushalaim* magazine which is published in Israel.

In the end we should add to all said above Isak Moscuna's great contribution. He has compiled a dictionary consisting of about 10 thousand words but unfortunately there is still no sponsor who can help for publishing it. A part of the dictionary appeared in the *Annual* of the Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria. Furthermore, just before he died, Moscuna left us two editions de luxe of proverbs, sayings and short stories in Ladino and Hebrew. On this occasion he was given a commendation by the King of Spain, by the Secretary of the UNO of that time and by many institutions.

¹ a dish of diced liver, rice and herbs

Bulgarian Jews and their contribution to culture

Iosif Levi – Sofia, Bulgaria

The
Jewish community in

Bulgaria is one of the oldest in Europe. Near the Danube River there is a tombstone of 2nd century B.C. and it is a proof that there and then Jews lived in our lands. There were Jews also during the time of the Byzantine Empire and even one Bulgarian tsaritsa of the 14th century. Theodora (Sara) was of Jewish origin. The main part of the Jewish population in Bulgaria came here after the Jews were expelled from Spain. During the Ottoman yoke the Jews lived in their own communities and the main language they spoke was Ladino.

After the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke and the signing of the Berlin Treaty all minorities in Bulgaria got the full rights like the main Bulgarian population. That gave possibility for the Bulgarian Jews to learn the standard Bulgarian language and to contribute to the development of the Bulgarian science and culture.

One of the great persons of Jewish origin who contributed a lot to Bulgaria is Dr. Nisim Mevorach. It is very difficult to describe his life. He was a lawyer, a diplomat, a lecturer, research worker and a man of great interests in the field of literature and art. He was born in 1861 in a poor family with many children. His father died early and he had short memories of his mother. He completed a Jewish primary school in Sofia and then a secondary school. In 1910 he went to study law in Geneva supported by his brothers. He graduated in 1914 and in the following year he defended his doctor degree. Those were rather difficult years. During the First World War he was sent to the front for some time but later he was exempt and he began his work as a lawyer. He married in 1919 and in the next year his first son Valeri was born. As a lawyer he worked together with another lawyer who was also a Jew and whose name was Lidgi. He preferred to deal with civil cases. Mevorach gained great experience as a lawyer and for that reason he was often sought as such person. In 1925 there was an attempt on the king's life in "Sveta Nedelya" church. As a result of this there were many proceedings at law and Mevorach also took part in them. During one law-suit an author of a book was accused that the content of his book was not only a threat against the state but it also did not have any literary value. Then Mevorach addressed the Prosecutor and told him that he would not try to estimate the literary value of a given book because that would mean that he would be like an elephant in a glass-store.

Just before the Second World War the persecutions against the Jews started in Bulgaria. In 1940 the Nation Defence Act was passed and it referred especially to the Jews. In connection with this Mevorach participated in working out reports against it. On behalf of the Lawyers Council such a report was sent to the president of the National Assembly. Similar report was made by the Central Consistory of the Jews in Bulgaria. Mevorach was not satisfied with this only. He wrote a 200-page study against the racism as a scientific theory. Naturally, the censorship did not allow this book to "see the light of day"

After the end of the war, as an eminent lawyer, he was invited to be a member of a commission whose assignment was to draw up the new Constitution of Bulgaria. He participated also in drawing up the main civil-law documents. He wrote an important paper on Obligations and Contracts Law. Later he was concerned with Marital Law. The last act in which he put much effort was the Marital Code which was passed several months before his death /April, 1968/.

In 1947 Prof. Mevorach was appointed minister plenipotentiary of Bulgaria at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His first mission as a diplomat was con-

nected with drawing up the peace treaty for Bulgaria after the Second World War. He carried out many activities in order to prove that during the war the Bulgarian people fought actively for the salvation of the Bulgarian Jews and in this way he aimed at mitigating the clauses in the peace treaty regarding the reparations which Bulgaria had to pay. All this had to become generally known to the world public because these facts were not known.

On the 3rd of November, 1947 Mr. Mevorach was appointed minister plenipotentiary of Bulgaria in Washington, the USA. He was there till the 24th of December, 1948 when he was recalled to Bulgaria due to false denunciations. Soon after that it was proved that the denunciations were false but of course it was awkward to send him again to the USA and for that reason he remained to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as head of International Organizations and Contracts Department. He had to deal with the difficult task of negotiating for concluding the peace treaty. Greece set up a claim for USA 70 million. Thanks to the great effort made by Mr. Mevorach the claim was reduced ten times. After that he continued with the negotiations and later many agreements were concluded between the two countries until the diplomatic relations were resumed and good neighbourly relation were established.

Later Prof. Mevorach devoted himself to scientific work. From 1955 till 1962 he was consecutively a Dean of the Faculty of Law twice. He was also a member of the Academic Council at Sofia University. For more than 15 years he delivered lectures on marital law. His text-books on marital law were issued three times. He was a very interesting lecturer and that's why the students were pleased with him and they listened to him with pleasure. He often made use of humour in order to get the audience under control.

Now I want to introduce to you one of the greatest Bulgarian poetesses. There is no child in Bulgaria with completed primary school who does not know the name of Dora Gabe. Perhaps few of them know that she is a Jew but all of them know her wonderful poems. Dora Gabe (Gabai) was born in 1886 in the town of Dobrich. Her parents were Peter Israelevich Gabe (Gabai) and Ekatherina Samoilova Dwell. They came to Bulgaria from Odessa after the liberation and they settled in Doroudja. At home Dora listened to Russian and French from her early childhood and later she listened to Greek and Turkish. She got her primary education in the town of Shoumen and her secondary education in the town of Varna. After that she studied at Sofia University. She continued her studies in Switzerland and then in Grenoble, France. Her family moved to Sofia in 1908. Here she met the eminent literary critic Boyan Penev whom she married later. She had close contact with the great Bulgarian poet of that period — Peyo Yavorov.

Dora devoted herself to poetry. She organized her own salon which was visited by some of the most eminent poets and writers, including Ivan Vazov. Dora Gabe reacted to everything happening round her but she liked children best and that's why she wrote mostly for them. Her works are translated into the main European languages as well as in Moldavian, Mongolian, Indian, Hungarian, Slovak.

Dora Gabe did not forget that she was a Jew. In one of her poems she shares what her father had told her before he died: "Do not forget that you are tsar David's grandchild." In another poem she says: "Do not look for me. I am a grain of an old biblical family. My spirit is two thousand years old." At the end she says: "Do not look for me. I'm a daughter of two nations, brought home — taken away. Where will you find me?" Dora Gabe lived nearly one hundred years and that's why her work is so huge. Sometimes she wrote about events which had moved her as for example the death of the partisan woman Vela or the heroic death of the Jew Emil Shekerdjyski who had returned the bombs thrown at him by the policemen (the poem "Emil"),

Another eminent writer from Bulgaria is Elias Canetti. He is the only one who was born in Bulgaria and is a Nobel laureate. He was born in

1905 in the town of Rousse, near the Danube River. His mother tongue is Ladino but he preferred to call it Spanish. In one of his books "*The Cut Tongue*" he says: "My ancestors had come from Spain in 1492." In this book he tells about everything he experienced in his family circle with the Sephardim traditions. He felt his mother's defiance towards the German Jews (tude-scos) and towards the Sephardim families coming "from no good family". But Canetti said that he did not forget the proverbs and songs from his childhood. When he got familiar with the history of the Sephardims and the Jewish poetry of "the golden age" he said the following "Maybe, I am the only person in whom the languages of the two great stand one next to the other. That is the time of the Hitlerite disaster. At the age of 33 I had to leave Vienna and take my German with me in the same way in which the ones who had been expelled from Spain took their Spanish." As it is well-known Canetti became Nobel laureate for literature written in German. German was his second mother tongue.

I began by telling you about Hisim Mevorach's life and perhaps I shall finish with his son—well-known in Bulgaria as Valeri Petrov. In fact he bears his mother's name. He grew up in a highly intellectual family and having good will and gift it was not difficult for him to achieve great success. He completed the Italian School in Sofia and then graduated from the Medical Faculty. Some of the most important events in his life are the following: he took part in the second stage of the war as a journalist, he worked in the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome and he made two big journeys—the first one was to China and the second one—to Africa. Although he completed medicine, his talent revealed best in poetry and literature. In 1942, as a student he wrote the poem *Iuvenes dum sumus* which, of course, was expurgated. The poem deals not only with the mood of the good student before an examination but also with that state of spirit which was born as a result of the war—time situation of "alerts", "retreat", etc.

One of Valeri Petrov's greatest deeds is the complete translation of Shakespeare's plays—a deed to which he devoted almost twenty years of his life. The translation is in verse and, as the specialists in English have written, it is true to the original. Up to that time there were only separate and incomplete translations. Now the Bulgarian literature has a translation of Shakespeare's work at a level corresponding to the new development of the Bulgarian language at least for half a century ahead.

Valeri Petrov is considered to be one of the greatest modern Bulgarian poets even today. In his poems *It is raining, the sun is shining* or in *The Open Autumn* it is seen how the poet can speak about the great matters with human simplicity or how he can draw big conclusions about human fate and mankind from the small matters. Valeri Petrov's plays have toured all theatres in Bulgaria. But there come also the minutes of reflection:

*why shouldn't we tell it, minutes of sadness:
Roads, years, pursuing glory,
striving to cover the uncoverable secrets.*

The poem *Farewell, Father* is the poem with which the respectful son takes good-bye with his father, the poem which Valeri Petrov dedicated not only to the great man who created him but also to the man who moulded the person Valeri Petrov in his own image. In the end he says: "*And he passed with some bitterness. Rest in peace, Don Quijote!*" Not only the filial affection and sorrow are present in this farewell but also what was due was rendered to a kind of man who fought against the evil, to a Don Quijote.

What I wrote here is just a small grain because, in fact, the contribution of the Jew intellectuals plays a great role in the spiritual development of the country and the nation, in the science and art of Bulgaria. Thus, for example, Prof. Fadenheht was one of the greatest lawyers from the beginning of the century, Prof. Isak Passi is a generally-recognized specialist in the field of esthetics and he was nominated for Nobel

laureate. Academician Azarya Polikar is a famous physicist, he has lectured in Germany for a long time. Prof. Vitali Tadjer is an outstanding lawyer at Sofia University.

In the field of literature the famous persons besides Dora Gabe are Haim Benadov, Armand Baruh, Victor Samuilov, Victor Baruh, etc.

In the field of theatre and cinema the directors Boyan Danovski, Mois Beniesh and the present—day ones Leon Daniel, Grisha Ostrovski and Leontina Arditu are held in high esteem. In the field of cinema the name of Angel Wagenstein is famous for his great works and together with it are the names of Zako Heskiya and the actors and actresses Leo Konforti, Josif Rozanov, Luna Davidova, Itsko Fintsi, Clara Armandova, Eva Volitser, etc.

In the field of fine art the artist Jules Pascin is world famous. He was born in the town of Vidin, on the Danube River. He worked in France. He is one of the founders of a school of fine arts and then of the Academy of Fine Arts. Other famous artists are Boris Shatz and the modern ones Joan Leviev, Greddi Assa with one of his big canvas being in the Museum of Holocaust in Washington, Andrei Daniel, Jack Avdala, etc.

In the field of music very famous is the choir—master of the choir at the Synagogue existing for several generation already and known as choir Tsadikov. One of the greatest Bulgarian composers — Pancho Vladigerov — is a son of the Jewish woman Pasternak. Other people to be mentioned are Alexis Weisenberg — world famous pianist, Bitush Davidov — one of the creators of the opera genre in Bulgaria, the singers Ida Fintsi, Leon Arie, Sabin Markov, etc.

This is not the end of the list but the time does not allow to finish it.

Some Considerations Regarding Ladino

Prof. Dr. Ion Pătrașcu

It is a well-known fact that Spain had become — ever since ancient times the second homeland of the Jews spread all over the world.

But, in 1492, as much as 165.000 to 400.000 Spanish and Portuguese Jews were forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula following a decree signed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Some others — approximately 50.000 “conversos” Jews — converted to the Christian faith in order not to be banished. In Spain and Portugal they left the fruits of a long life together that materialized in a number of works of Jewish spirituality incorporated into the Hispanic culture. But they also carried away with them some interesting values of poetry, philosophy and art, expressed in a remarkable Renaissance Spanish. The Romanian scholar Nicolae Iorga was right when he stated that the Iberian exiles carried away with them “not only the most correct Castillian language but also the Middle Ages songs of Spanish heroism”.¹

The French called the Jews banished from Spain in 1492 and, a few years later, from Portugal, “Sephards”. This is a generic term preserved until the present times. The language spoken by the Spanish Jews is called “Ladino”². Sometimes in the past it was called “romana” — the Old French name for the Romance languages. Undoubtedly, the Sephards’ language cannot be mistaken for the “Ladin” dialect that, as well as “Romanche” is spoken in the Swiss canton Grisons, the ancient Rhaetia of the Romans.

Anyway, the Sephards’ Ladino vocabulary is a mixture of Old Spanish, Hebrew, Portuguese, Greek, Turkish, and Arabic words written in Hebrew script and, later on, in Latin script. Nevertheless, the spelling is different from that of Spanish. It is a “Djudezmo”, a Judaic, Hebrew language. Under the circumstances, even if Ladino is not devoid of the old Hispanic identity, it has become (and this is my own opinion) a kind of international language, such as Esperanto or the “Occidental” of Carryover that I am going to refer to later on. As a testimony we have the numerous Turkish words, identical or similar to those found in Laden, but also in the Slav languages, and even in Romanian.³ The studies of the Spanish scholar Gonzales Lubber, of 1930, based on a manuscript in Laden discovered at the Cambridge University seem to lead to the same conclusion: the Sephards’ language could easily be considered a sort of an international language. It does not really matter whether it is made up by a specialist or not, as in the case of “Occidental”.

A hard work towards the discovery of Ladino texts found out a number of works, later published in the anthology “*The Sephardic Tradition*” published by Moshe Lazar under the aegis of UNESCO.⁴

A great number of different works made the Sephardic spirituality known all over the world. Mentioned should be made of “*Cronica General*”, written by Alfonso de Sabio (1270), the “*Romanza*” of Lorenzo de Sepulvalda (1551), or better-known authors like Adela Alicia Requena, Frida S. de Mantovani, or Dr. Jorge Liturini and Leon Feuchtwanger or Arturo Uslar Pietri.

In all cases, the instrument for communication of this spiritual world was Ladino. Unfortunately, this language has not been sufficiently studied. The already mentioned Spanish

¹ See “*Neamul Românesc*” of 20th of October 1937.

² “Latin” in Spanish.

³ Very useful is the list — very useful, despite some etymological mistakes — annexed to the “Documentary” signed by Victor Eschenazi and Al. Toma Firescu, and published in “*Excelsior*”, nr. 2, 1998, p. 5.

⁴ For example, the “*Poem of Joseph*”, written in Ladino with Hebrew script, and dating from the first half of the 15th century, was first published in this anthology

philologist Gonzales Lubera is only an exception. As stated above, Ladino initially enjoyed a linguistic identity, but afterwards — after the Sephard's arrival in the Balkans area — it became, more and more, a mere instrument of communication by massively taking over vocabulary elements and grammatical structures, thus gradually changing into an international, artificial language. By the living together of the Sephard Jews with the Yiddish-speaking Jews, the international character of Ladino was further emphasized. Although it could not become an international artificial language, Ladino remains until this day the second language of communication between the Jews speaking the different languages of their countries of origin.

Noticing this tendency, Professor Edgar de Wahl⁵ made up the rules of a new international language, a kind of a variant of Esperanto which he called "Occidental", containing a large number of elements from Ladino, Yiddish, and the languages of the Balkans. Later on, a book entitled "*Occidental, Modern International Language — a Grammar Course in Romanian*" by SAESCU was published in Craiova, Romania.⁶

Nowadays this book is a bibliophile's dream. It is not to be found in any of the libraries of Craiova, neither in the Central State Library in Bucharest⁷ nor in the Central University Library in Bucharest.⁸ It is only available in the Central Library of the Jassy University⁹ by the goodwill of which I could study it, and at the Library of the Romanian Academy¹⁰. The author signs with a pen name made up of abbreviations: S(andu) + A(șer) + Esc(henasy) = SAESC(U). He was the renowned Sephard painter, composer, polyglot, coins- and stamps-collector belonging to a family of local Ashkenazy Jews assimilated by the Sephards in this part of the country. He was a devoted admirer of the Craiova poet Traian Demetrescu whom he probably imitated as regards his pen name.¹¹ Sandu Așer Eschenazy lived in Craiova between 1871 and 1947.

There are few bibliographical mentions about this grammar.¹² Nevertheless, the attempt to circulate a new international language, containing eterogenous elements from Ladino, Yiddish and a number of other languages (Romanian included), as well as the scarcity of Saescu's grammar make us mention the fact in itself.

The 1992 Symposium held in Craiova and entitled "Pages in the History of the Sephardic Community in Oltenia", as well as the article in "*Excelsior*" already mentioned, have brought a number of contributions to the knowledge of the Sephardic culture, and of the personalities illustrating it, both in Craiova and in Oltenia at large. To this rich information I should add the presence (still not mentioned) of the private libraries of the Sephards in Craiova and other towns in Oltenia. They are made up of a number of rare and old books, sometimes first editions, of Spanish literature that, later on, found their way into the library of the "Carol I" High School in Craiova, as donations. For the citizens of Craiova, all these books existing in a school public library constituted their first contact with the civilization, science, art and culture of this Romance country. One should mention Marcel Romanescu, prof. Al. Popescu-Telega—the distinguished Romanian specialist in hispanic studies—or prof. Luca Preda.

⁵ Edgar de Wahl was born in 1867 in Olviopol, the Ukraine. A physician and mathematician, he spent his life in Tallin, Estonia.

⁶ *Occidental, limbă internațională modernă* (Craiova: SPERANȚA Printing House. Preface by Prof. Geza Hant, Cluj). IV + 39 p + 1 plate.

⁷ Confirmed by letter no. 2081 of March 14th 1988.

⁸ Confirmed by letter no. 2752 of August 11th 1988

⁹ Catalogue mark IB 2388

¹⁰ Catalogue mark I 145245.

¹¹ Tra(ian) + Dem(etrescu) = TRADEM.

¹² Three articles only published in Craiova, in *Jurnalul* (IV/1937, nos. 872,875, and 876) and one article, *Limbi internaționale și artificiale* ("International and Artificial languages") signed by Al. Graur, in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* (Nr.6/1938). After signaling the publication of Saescu's grammar in Craiova (p. 580), and after some general linguistics considerations,

the author reaches the following justified conclusion: "I do not think it possible that Esperanto or Occidental will ever impose themselves because of the errors that they contain" (p. 583)

But the Sephards settled in Oltenia wrote, translated or edited a great number of books, interesting for their content and for the study of Ladino as an international language used for communication, part of the spiritual patrimony of the Sephardic communities. They have also contributed to the development of the regional culture in this geographical area of Romania. Here are some titles cited in the same article of Victor Eschenazy and Al. Toma Firescu: "*Meghilat Ester*" by A. S. Gold, "*Traduccion libera de las poesias ebraicas de Ros Asana Y Kipur*" of Rabbi Reuben Eliyahu Yisrael, "*Traduccion libera de sierto textos de nuestra liturghia santa*" edited by Iehuda Sabetay Itzac Levi, "*Crassion*" of Rabbi Zechri Isakov Halevy, or the first periodical in the world written in Ladino, "*Luzero de la pasensia*" published in Turnu Severin under the care of Rabbi L. M. Crispin.

I studied two issues of this "journal" — as its editor calls it. The first one (Year I, Number 1) "*en skritura y lingoa spaniola en ritus esraelitos spanioles del Oriente*" was published in Turnu Severin on November 23rd 1885¹³ and it cost "6 frankas al anio, en Severin, afoera 7 fr., pagado antes". The second one (Year II, Number 7) was published on March 3rd 1886. This periodical appeared bimonthly until 1889. The last issue is dated 14 Adar 5649 (February 19th 1889).

On the title page of the "journal" and then in his address to the readers the editor mentions that the articles are written in "lingoa spaniola". Nevertheless, it can be easily seen that — as a matter of fact — the Spanish words are transcribed etymologically, and not according to the orthographic system of Spanish. Thus, the Spanish word "escritura" becomes, in his journal, "skritura", "lengua" becomes "lingoa", and "espanola" becomes "spaniola" (as in Romanian). Similarly, the Spanish "rito" becomes "ritus", "francos" is rendered by "frankas", "ano" by "anio" (as pronounced), "fuera" by "afoera" (just as the Romanian "afar"), and the Ladino word "sivdad" tries to render the Spanish "ciudad". We can even detect a certain hesitation as regards the title of the periodical: "Luzero" is printed "Lusero" in the address to the readers.

The system of transcribing the Spanish words in "*Traduccion libera...*" is almost similar. Nevertheless, there are certain differences, such as the different rendering of the word Rabbi: it appears as "Rabbin" in "Luzero de la Pasensia" and "Rabino" in "*Traduccion libera...*"

All these brief remarks lead us to the conclusion that the language used in the above mentioned writings is not Spanish (as stated by the editors of the respective publications) but Ladino. It is a greatly modified Spanish, enriched with mixed vocabulary structures and sentence constructions that stress its character as an international language, obviously influenced by Romanian and other Balkan languages.

Several other books and periodicals printed in Craiova and Oltenia support the idea of a substantial contribution of the Sephardic culture to the development of the Romanian culture in this part of the country. They made possible the integration of a number of Sephardic personalities and of Sephardic cultural products in the landscape of the local Romanian spirituality. An enumeration of all these personalities and works is not possible in the limited space of this presentation, the purpose of which was to signal the presence of the Ladino and Occidental as international languages in Craiova and Oltenia for a long period of time.

¹³ Library of the Romanian Academy, Catalogue mark V337.

The importance of studying the history of Sephardi Jews in the Balkans

Prof. Dr. Alexander Cornescu-Coren

During the Balkan wars of the 19th century and especially prior to the First World War, in that part of Europe known as "barrel of burnt dust" we learnt of divisions, hostility between neighbours, and weak in comparison to western Europe.

In contrast the Sephardi Jews in the Balkans possessed a common tradition as descendants of the expelled of Spain. They spoke Ladino and this was the common language of the Jews of Bosnia, Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria.

Amongst the Jews of the Balkans there was not the factionalism - which characterised the people of the various states in the regions - but rather unity; They knew how to assist each other even if they lived in different countries.

These Jews did not have boundary disputes and territorial demands from each other and therefore served as a unifying force in the Balkans; an example how Jews from different countries could live together without hatred and without warfare. Truthfully - they were a minority in a large non-Jewish population but the important factor is the example, the model of life-style, in education which they gave their children, in the honour which they gave to the Jewish faith, which can be seen in the Sephardi Jewish synagogues separate from the Ashkenazi in (Rusehchiuk), Craiova or the Congregation in Bucharest.

The Jews of the Balkans provided an example of tolerance within their community in another way - the Ashkenazim (who originated from Poland and Russia) and came to the Jewish communities in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey - in which there was a Sephardi majority, were well absorbed without any problems. I remember the period after the Second World War, how it was that a Jew named Lovinger - an Ashkenazi was head of the Sephardi community of Greece and how the Sephardi Jews of Romania, following the war, constituted an integral part of the federation of Jewish communities in that country. From this one can also learn of the life of the Jews in the Balkans countries.

Another example is the considerable contribution made to the countries in which they lived. For this purpose one can rely on two examples - Jacques Elias and his contribution to academic institution in Romania and whose name is remembered till today in wide academic circle and the name of a national hero in Bosnia following the Second World War, in fact a hero of partisan war - Nisim Elbahari.

The Sephardi Jews of the Balkans also teach us another aspect - the creation of culture after the rupture, tearing and exile following the expulsion from Spain in 1492. The Sephardim who emigrated to Western Europe and America became part of the local Jewish communities and with those who arrived in North America changed their culture to western Jewish culture, but in the Levant it was different. In the Ottoman territories of the Balkans - from the Adriatic coast through Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Romania, there was born an Eastern Sephardic (as distinct from Western Europe) Judeo-Hispanic culture up to the 20th century. The fact that it remained for 400 years under Ottoman suzerainty—an empire in which there lived many nations- simply promoted its specific unity despite slight regional variations in dialect and popular traditions.

The Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Balkans and on the Aegean coast "sephardized" the Jews world and in cities such as a Istanbul, Edirne (Adrianople), Izmir (Smyrna), Salonica and Sarajevo, there was reborn a transmitted "Spain", an original Sephardi Jewish culture. The communal organization of these Jews, the retention of their

Jewish identity, the education frameworks, the family style of life and the connections between the various communities of these Jews constitute a rich well which has not been sufficiently researched - a study which may very well lead to conclusions, and lessons, not only concerning the State of Israel but also the whole Jewish world and no less interesting - concerning co-existence of minorities in the Balkans states of today.

“The Effects of the Enlightenment on the Jews of Salonika: Political or Socioeconomic Advancement?”

Yitzhak Kerem, Aristotle University,
Thessaloniki, Greece.

Offshoots of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment movement beginning in 1770 in Western and Central Europe, reached Salonika only in the 1850s. The Haskalah strove for assimilation in language, dress, and manners and advocated loyalty to the modern centralized state. One of its objectives was emancipation for the Jews of the diaspora. The movement desired the productiveness of Jewish occupation through entering crafts and agriculture, and secular education and culture.¹ The movement entered Salonika through the entrance of primarily Jewish sponsored French oriented schools, promoting secular French education, destined for the local Jewish population. In the case of this large Jewish community within the Ottoman Empire, this Jewish enlightenment process differed in style, in its motives, and in its effects from the Judeo-French experience, that which has often been placed to serve as a model and guide.

This article attempts to take the position that this local Jewish enlightenment process, was not a movement integrally needed for achieving Jewish emancipation, but rather led to socioeconomic advancement. Political advancement for Salonikan Jewry in the 19th century, as well as for the other minority groups of the Ottoman Empire, was attained through Ottoman political initiatives and as a result of the Tanzimat reforms, and not due to a Jewish movement for equal political rights. These political reforms predated the entrance of secular European elements in Jewish education and culture in Salonika, but by the end of the 19th century the modern Jewish schools, the press, the clubs, and the organizations of the Jewish community Salonika had an effect in molding local Jewish political movements. The new Western European based educational systems initiated by Salonikan Jewry and imported primarily from France, educated and provided the Jewish youth with tools that advanced them socially and economically.

While the French Assembly issued the French Jews individual rights in the Enlightenment, the Ottoman situation differed. The millet system had already previously offered communal autonomy; the Ottoman reforms with the religious communal authority in the background protected the individuals of the minority groups and intended to protect the personal status of the individual.

Salonikan Jewry didn't need to integrate into Turkish society in order to prosper. They were already a social and economic power, well respected by the Ottoman governmental authorities since the Iberian expulsions in the latter part of the 15th century and early 16th century. As a majority, and less often plurality of the population of the city of Salonika for most of their settlement since their arrival as Jewish Sephardic expulsees after the 1492 Spanish expulsion, the Jews were held in high esteem by the Sultans. The stature

¹ Y.S., "Haskalah", *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol.7 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1972) 1433-1452; See also Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn, A Biographical Study* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973)

of the leading local communal rabbinic leaders in the region and throughout the Jewish world, served as exemplary model for the local and national Ottoman political figures. They ran their own internal affairs, and the authorities didn't infringe upon Jewish observance of the Sabbath or religious judgements made by the Beit Din. Salonika was a city where the port was closed on the Sabbath and the community was well known for its Sabbath observance. Economically, as an economic power, they could be depended on for their tax collections needed to assist in financing the frequent wars of the Ottoman Empire. In order to obtain political rights, the Jews never needed to conform to Turkish dress or intermarry, as Napoleon had requested of French Jewry. There was never any question of the allegiance of Ottoman Jewry to the Ottoman Empire. Never was internal autonomy under the millet system challenged in order to strengthen national devotion. The rights that the Ottomans gave to their minorities depended on to what extent power and civic participation could be given in accordance to religious Islamic norms at the time. As the Ottomans closeded to Europe, they proofed themselves to issues of political representation and legal jurisprudence, and thus, in time, they included the minorities in the process. In response to the French Jewish Enlightenment, secular French language and culture filtered through to Salonikan Jewry.

Even though the Jewish community had endlessly been overburdened financially by the whims and tyranny of the local Pashas, by the beginning of the 19th century general conditions had improved. As the Ottoman Empire became more exposed to modernization and European ideas and influences, life improved for the Jews.

In general, the dhimmi status, that of the tolerated non-Muslim indigenous populations under Islamic rule,² was on its way to eventually be eliminated. In 1830, Sultan Mahmud II, made a declaration differentiating the religious groups under his reign only by their house of worship:

"I distinguish among my subjects, Muslims in the mosque, Christians in the church, and Jews in the synagogue, but there is no difference among them in any other way. My affection and sense of justice for all of them is strong and they are all indeed my children."³

Prior to this, the Jews of Salonika, as well as the other Jews and non-Jews of the Empire, were relieved when in 1826 the janissaries were ruled out and executed. In Salonika, when Achmet Bey ordered the execution of the 3.000 janissaries, the general population was relieved that this obstacle to reform had been eliminated, and for the Jews in particular, there was a cause for relief after being a target of provocation for generations.⁴ This led the way for Mahmud II to begin attempting a wide reform plan, which included military and education reforms, centralization, instituting a census, cancelling the military feudal farms, organizing and centralizing the waqf, and creating European patterned political ministries.⁵

After the death of Mahmud II in 1839, in the same year his son Abdul Megid was coronated and the birth of the reforms of the Tanzimat(reorganization) were to take place.

² Bat Ye'or. *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*. (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck. Farleigh Dickinson University Press, and London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985), 47-49

³ Enver Ziya Karal. "Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly, 1876-1877", in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*. (New York and London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982) 387-434.

⁴ David Recanati. (ed.) *Zichron Saloniki, Gedulata Vehurvata Shel Yerushalayim Debalkan I* (Tel Aviv: Havaad Lehotzaat Sefer Kehilat Saloniki, 1972) 99

⁵ Bernard Lewis. *Smichata Shel Turkia Hamodernit* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983), 64-85

The Hatt-i Cherif of Gulhane, or the Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber, declared by Mustafa Reshid Pasha on 3 November 1839, was a step toward "Europeanization, administrative centralization, modernization of the State apparatus, and secularization".⁶ This document in the words of Carter V. Findley, "initiated the process of egalitarian reform but in terms which were not well enough elaborated to have material impact on government service."⁷ It decreed guarantees for life, honor, and property, demanded a regular and orderly military conscription, abolition of tax-farming, regularization of tax-assessment, and called for the application of the judicial process for all the subjects; irrespective of religion. The Jews now had the right to testify in court against a Muslim, the torture of the accused was outlawed, property could not be confiscated, anyone causing harm against the Jews (or any other non-Muslims) would be punished, and the Jews now received civilian rights parallel to those of the Muslims. The Rescript promised equality for members of all faiths in the enactment of the specifications of these imperial concessions. The Council of Judicial Ordinances was assigned to advance these aims. Findley also noted that, "Some practical improvements followed the promulgation of this decree, but they do not appear to have included any dramatic change in the access of non-Muslims to official position, unless we so interpret the inclusion of representatives of the non-Muslim communities in the local administrative councils set up in 1840." Politically, the Jews prospered jointly with the other non-Muslim groups such as the Greek-Orthodox, and Armenians, during periods of 19th century reform for the non-Muslim minorities or general Ottoman reform.

In 1843, in the name of the Sultan, the Grand Vezir, Reza Pasha, publicly approved before all of the religious heads citizen's rights for all the people of the Empire. He declared that, "he is ready to defend life, honor and property to all of his subjects, including Jews and Christians, because everyone is equal before him."⁸ In 1855, the Sultan annulled the Kharaj completely and determined that all of his subjects are eligible for military conscription, but the Jews and the Christians could pay a ransom called "bedeliye askeriye" or "bedel" in order to receive exemption from military service. The Jews of Salonika paid this ransom until 1909, toward the end of Turkish rule in the city, which terminated in 1912. It was announced that a non-Muslim could only serve through the rank of colonel, but in the civil service there was no grade limit for non-Muslims.

In 1856 the Sultan declared the Hatt-i Humayun firman, whereby he approved again the rights and the duties of his subjects. The Jews kept the privileges, that they attained from past Sultans; the Chief Rabbi was to give an oath of allegiance to the Sultan before entering office, a joint committee was appointed to oversee the property of the Jewish community, freedom of religion was declared, it was forbidden to force a Jew to change his religion, Jews were appointed to various governmental positions, the Jews as Ottoman citizens could be admitted to state civilian schools and to governmental schools of higher learning and military schools, Jewish religious judges (dayanim) were even granted to preside over cases of inheritance amongst their fellow co-religionists, all citizens were obliged to serve in the army with the existing option of exemption by payment of ransom, all those who weren't Turkish subjects could purchase plantations and houses, and religious heads could be appointed to the great assembly of the High court in every city. The Sultan also determined that high officials keeping their subject's property against the law,

⁶ Esther Benbassa. *Un Grand Rabbin Sepharde En Politique 1892-1923* (Paris: Presses Du CNRS, 1990) 19.

⁷ Carter V. Findley. "The Acid Test of Ottomanism: The Acceptance of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Bureaucracy" in (ed.) Braude and Lewis, 339-368.

⁸ Yitzchak Kerem "The History of the Jews of Salonika in the 19th and 20th Centuries" in *Pinkas Kehilot Yavan* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem) (In press in Hebrew.)

would be released from their positions.⁹

Within the law, life, honor and property were to be guarded. The wealthy Jews exploited these rights in order to become wealthier easier, and paved the way for industrial development. Jewish wealth in Salonika grew to such a point that when the Sultan Abdul Magid visited the city in 1858, the wealthy Jews of the city invited him and his entourage to stay in their private homes. Mehmed Ali Pasha, head of the navy, resided at the Allatini residence, and the Minister of War stayed at the Fernandez home.¹⁰

The 18th February 1856 Imperial Rescript abolished the discriminatory status of the dhimmi.¹¹ On paper this resemblance of a constitution offered equality between Muslims and non-Muslims,¹² although it didn't clearly specify it. In practice the established non-Muslim communities already did have freedom of religion. In reality, this was an opportunity of the non-Muslims to advance into the ruling Ottoman establishment. Whereas even in the absence of a formal legitimization to institute such tasks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews served as physicians, secretaries, and advisers for sultans and notables, but now as a consequence of the Imperial Rescript, members of these same minority groups received official positions in the administration, judiciary and educational system of the Ottoman Empire.¹³ Noteworthy was that the Armenians and Greeks received the major diplomatic posts abroad. The Jews were integrated into other diplomatic posts, major Western Consular Posts, and other Consular Posts.¹⁴ Salonikan Jewry, being in the periphery and not in the capital, didn't have access to the Porte, like the Jews of Istanbul, but they did have consuls such as Salomon Fernandez, the Italian General Consul, serving as of 1861.¹⁵

Salonikan Jews eventually filled public positions; in 1888 Yaakov David Benveniste and Yaakov Yitzhak Kazes served in the municipality, and in the Meglis Idari, the special municipal council, there were always two permanent Jewish members; the chief rabbi and another Jew. In 1888 Bohor Effendi Saltiel filled this post. He was followed by Shabetai H. Abravanel, Mentesh Effendi Estrumza, and Beniko Saltiel.¹⁶

Findley introduced the subject that the foreign service was to serve as a test ground for checking egalitarian distribution of jobs amongst the entire population. For example, in Istanbul he noted that prior to 1844 Muslims represented 71% of the Foreign Ministry employees with 29% non-Muslim contingent composing of 8% Greeks, 14% Armenians, 3% Jews, 2% Arab Christians and 2% European origin.¹⁷

The 1844 census showed a change. The Muslim percentage dropped to 55% and the non-Muslim percentage was 45%, with the latter consisting of 17% Greeks, 25% Armenians, and only 4% Jews. By 1897 the census revealed the same proportions between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the Greeks replaced the Armenians as the dominant plurality with 22% to 15% and the Jewish proponent remained a 4%. The Jews were a small minority amongst these two larger minorities of this region of the Ottoman Empire, so it is of no surprise that their participation was much less.

From Benbassa's research it can be noted that the 1856 decree called for the non-

⁹ Recanati, 120.

¹⁰ Kerem

¹¹ Bat Ye'or, 49

¹² Benbassa, 20, and Karal, 388

¹³ Karal, 388-389

¹⁴ Findley, 353

¹⁵ [24] M. Franco *Essai Sur L'Histoire Des Israélites de L'Empire Ottoman: Depuis Les Origines Jusqu'à Nos Jours* (Reedited: Paris: Centre D'Etudes Don Isaac Abravanel, 1980) p.242

¹⁶ Recanati, 153

¹⁷ Findley, 345

Muslim communities to proceed with reforms; promoting the institution of mixed councils, composed of religious and secular, charged with the administration of temporal affairs'.¹⁸ She also noted that already present were the secular forces, who were recruited amongst the notable holders of economic power, and who sometimes were in close relations with Ottoman authorities, made their entrance in the communal institutions. This officialization of the role of the secular would be a determining factor in the new political process of these confessional groups, isolated institutionally from the central power, especially in the era of the nationalism of the Near East. The Jews profited from the new arrangement, even if these recommended structures weren't truly operational.

The Tanzimat provided a framework for Jews to become exempt from the military, and didn't compensate religion for devotion to the Empire. Jewish devotion to the Empire strengthened when Jewish rights were safeguarded. In the traditional Jewish community of Salonika, a strong triumvirate religious head ruled the community with authority and respect. No force was present to demand allegiance for the Nation-State over the natural functioning of the religious community. Their patriotism to the Empire was assured.

The Salonikan Jews didn't achieve the above rights and government appointments through the Jewish Emancipation, but in the context of an Ottoman political initiative. It's important to add though that these privileges and rights remained on paper rather than become instituted in practice, or they became felt at a later date. For example, sometime after the 1856 decree, the Sultan Abdul Megid visited the medical school in Istanbul and reported that he found no Jews registered there. He uncovered that Jews refrained from registering since the institution lacked kosher eating facilities and the students were compelled to study on the Sabbath. He immediately ordered the formation of a kosher kitchen and permitted the Jews to be absent from Sabbath classes. As a result of his action, Jews began to register in the school. It was only later that this change filtered to Salonikan Jewry. One of its graduates, Dr. Jack Pasha, was a doctor and Turkish military general, who also served the Salonikan Jewish community faithfully.¹⁹

The Galatasaray Lycée (established in 1868) and the School of Law, founded in 1874, eventually accepted Ottoman and Salonikan Jews.²⁰ Change was gradual, but not avoided.

The Jewish Enlightenment in Salonika occurred after the Ottoman political improvements and contributed to socio economic change for Salonikan Jewry, a process which took decades before changes were felt. In general the Enlightenment process arrived in the Balkans much later than its arrival upon French and Central European Jewry. When it arrived, the communities were in a state of spiritual dampening; previously caused by the powerful influence of 17th century Sabbateanism and later due to the economic plagues brought on by the 18th and early 19th century Turkish wars.²¹

Amongst Ashkenazic Jewry, Yiddish had transformed into a living Jewish language much earlier than Judeo-Spanish did amongst Sephardic Jews. By the mid-19th century, novels, translations, and newspapers had not appeared yet; excluding the utmost exceptions. Previously Salonika was a center for publishing *Sifrei Kodesh* - Rabbinic works, but they were destined for a small and scholarly few. *Meam Loez*, the Biblical commen-

¹⁸ Benbassa, op cit..

¹⁹ Recanati, 121

²⁰ Findley, 347

²¹ Kerem

tary, had already appeared in the 18th century, but there were not popular works from the greater world in a common popular language for the Jewish public in Salonika.

The principles of the French revolution were foreign to the Jewish community of Salonika. In the mid-19th century, "modernization" (or more precisely termed a technological and sociological updating with the ways of the West) had not yet arrived in Salonika, also known as "Ir Ve'em Beyisrael" ("a Jewish Metropolis" or "a city with a large Jewish population"). Terms like democracy, freedom, and equality were unknown.

The influence of progressive French ideas entered Salonika in the late 1850s. Two individuals in particular laid important foundations for the Jewish Enlightenment in Salonika; the Rabbi Yehuda (Juda) Nehama and Dr. Mois Allatini. Allatini, who came from a lineage of Italian doctors²², and was a wealthy merchant, dealing also in banking and various industries, was a witness to an inept traditional Talmud Tora. He wanted to enter into its curriculum the instruction of foreign languages, tools for attaining modern knowledge and Western culture. He didn't want to oppose the institution head on, nor push aside the beliefs and superstitions that were in abundance amongst the community members. He conceived of the idea of adding to the Talmud Tora, an independent wing, which would serve as a model institution.

Dr. Allatini worked incrementally to block the objections of the rabbis and other religious figures. He fought against their laziness, personal interests, and inability to act. He had power due to his knowledge, wealth, and prestige in the eyes of the Empire, its officials and consuls. In order to appease the rabbinate, he apportioned large sums of money from Kupat Hesed Ve'emet to charitable institutions. Even though Chief Rabbi Asher Kovo didn't particularly like him, he gave Allatini his sponsorship for Allatini's reorganization plans and called 50 of the community's notables to judge the plans. Allatini's reorganization, under the direction of 24 delegates, determined that on every piece of incoming and outgoing merchandise to and from the city, a tax of 10 piastres would be implemented.

The community objected. Lingual instruction, a sign of modernization, was refuted by the community. It was seen as a de-Judaizing force. When Allatini was on a trip in Istanbul, he met with a member of the Rothschilds, who was impressed by the idea of a modern school in Salonika. Rothschild planned to return to France to search for a Hebrew and a French teacher and gave a positive report to the French Consistoire. Allatini benefitted from this Rothschild contact on that visit by receiving a firman to open up a school which would teach French and Turkish. The firman compelled the leaders and the rabbis to recognize the establishment of such a school. The document was read at a colorful ceremony in the presence of the governor, the rabbis and the city's notables. The school was established, but there still remained opposition.²³

In 1856, Allatini brought Rabbi Lippmann, a modern rabbi from Stassbourg to fulfill this task. Four years later, after being hindered in his work by "religious fanatics" in the community, he returned to his community of origin. Although he was frustrated by the above resistance to European ideas by elements in the community, who suspected him of "spreading infested ideas that could choke any religious feeling in the hearts of the Jews"²⁴ he succeeded in training a number of students to work in accounting and as scribes in the economic institutions of the city. In the following years one of his students opened a

²² Joseph Nehama. *Histoire Des Israélites De Salonique*. Tomes VI et VII. (Thessalonique: Communauté Israelite de Thessalonique, 1978), pp. 658-663

²³ Kerem

²⁴ Alliance Israelite Universelle Archives (AIU). Paris. AIU Grece VII.B.27. Aaron Jacques Baruch to President of the AIU. Salonique, 21 Avril 1914.

school for the instruction of foreign languages.

Rabbi Juda Nehama, a descendant of rabbis, studied Torah and Talmud, but decided to also learn Hebrew, French, and English. He didn't function as a rabbi, but as a commercant, he dealt with grains, insurance, and navigation. He devoted his time to the uplifting of ignorance and religious fanaticism. He was to be a founder of the local Alliance Israelite Universelle committee, but prior to this in 1859 he opened up a publishing house. Due to difficulties in obtaining a license, he had to work clandestinely. He also opened a school. In 1861 he translated for his students from English to Judeo-Spanish "The Universal History" by Peter Parali. One day the governor Hifzi Pasha entered his printing house in anger and confiscated the material and threatened to hang Nehama (under the victory arch of Galiere). His hanging was to be an example against those who created public disorder. Due to Nehama's close acquaintance with the English consul, the latter brought the news to the attention of the Minister of the United States in Istanbul, and the punishment was annulled.

In 1864 Nehama published the first Judeo-Spanish newspaper in Salonika "*El Lunar*". In the words of M.D. Gaon, "the newspaper resembled more an encyclopedic journal which contained information about science, translations from noted rabbinic works, stories, historical pieces, folkloric stories, commercial issues, and the like."²⁵ He only printed 6 issues. Various great European rabbis and personalities, such as Shmuel David Luzzato, Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi residing in Tunis, Yisrael Knapalmacher, Mordechai Levi Mortera, Shlomo Nisim from Montova, Y.B. Goldberg, Sunz, and Peretz Smolenskin, had corresponded with Nehama in order to learn from him information about the Salonikan Jewish community's history, the current situation, and the state of its rare books and manuscripts. He also was in contact with the heads of the Jewries of Russia, Austria, France and Great Britain, and these contacts are reflected in his work "*Michtivei Dodim Miyayin*" (1893).²⁶ He published in 1877 a book about Albert Cohen. He published numerous other works, which due to space limitations, can't be mentioned here.

He also endeavored to develop and meet the needs of the city in general. Thanks to his efforts, the city received a gas company, a petrol company, a water company, and an electric train. He thought of these ideas and was a pioneer in working to obtain them.²⁷ In September 1877, he received the rights to install a water distribution system, which he passed over to European companies. Despite his progressive ideas, he wasn't excommunicated by the rabbis Rabbi Asher Covo and Abraham Gattegno. Since 1875 he was a member of the ruling committee of the Jewish community.

After Allatini's failure to renovate the Talmud Tora, together with his brother-in-law Solomaon Fernamadez, the consul of Toscana, he worked to form an A.I.U. school. Fernanadez was held in high regard by the Turkish officials, and he used his influence. Allatini was aided by the rabbis Juda Nehama and Abraham Gattegno, who founded the philanthropic organization "Hesed Olam". They helped Allatini financially by assisting to subsidize the new school that Allatini wanted to form, and for the needs of the poor, orphans, and widows.

The local A.I.U. committee was formed in 1862, but failed to establish a school due to financial difficulties. In 1864 A.I.U. president Adolph Cremieux turned to the Chief Rabbi to accept the idea of the foundation of a school.²⁸

²⁵ M.D. Gaon *Yehudei Hamizrah Beeretz-Yisrael II* (Jerusalem: 1938) 463-464

²⁶ Yeduda Yaakov Nehama, *Michtivei Dodim Miyayin Part I*. (Salonika: 1893), and *Part II*. (Salonika: no date)

²⁷ Gaon

²⁸ A.I.U. III B.20. Salonique

The A.I.U. promised Rabbi Kovo that a new institution would rest on strong foundations, due to the assistance of the French government. The rabbi supported the idea and was impressed by the effort to spread wisdom and languages. Again in 1873, the rabbi supported the school's foundation. The presence of Rabbi Juda Nehama, as one of the school's founders, influenced without a doubt the positive opinion of the Chief Rabbi, Raphael Acher Kovo toward the school. Allatini overcame the financial difficulties and persuaded the wealthy members of the community, many of whom were foreign subjects and felt no obligation to contribute to communal activities, to help finance the establishment of an A.I.U. school.

Finally on 20.8.1873 the first A.I.U. school was established in the city. Two hundred boys studied at this school under its first principal Moris Marx, formerly an A.I.U. principal in Baghdad.²⁹ The school was to be a conglomeration and merger between the A.I.U. and the Italian School (Regie Scuola Italiana) of the Italian government, but in the end, the latter closed its school and disagreed to merge. At anyrate the students of the Italian school were amongst the A.I.U.'s first students. (Amongst them were even 3 Catholics; the rest were Jews.) Allatini was elected as president of the A.I.U. local committee and Nehama was the vice-president.

In 1874 a girls school was established. Sponsors of the project in Livorno sent two teachers and the instruction was in Italian.

When Baron Hirsh came to Salonika in 1875, he agreed with Allatini to provide matching funds against money raised by the local Jewish community in order to build a building. Several renown philanthropists, Reuvain Sasoon, Frederick David Mocata, and the Count de Camondo also contributed. The Baron kept his promise and in 1876 the new building was inaugurated. In 1875 the enrollment consisted of 210 boys and 150 girls.³⁰ By 1910-1912, there were 8 schools in Salonika under the auspices of the A.I.U., with an enrollment of over 5,000 pupils.³¹

Volos and Larissa had small schools founded in 1865 and 1869 respectively, but they were short lived.³² The A.I.U. became an integral pedagogic force in the education of the Jewish youth of the city. The A.I.U. served as a bridge and a guide to the western ways of Europe. Literacy increased greatly. A new generation was educated to become French teachers and merchants. Others later became doctors, lawyers, engineers after being sent to France or Istanbul for training. French became a principal language in the community.

Allatini succeeded in renovating the archaic Talmud Tora. He formed a reorganization committee consisting of former A.I.U. principal Yisrael Danon, Haim Shalem, a private school principal and former student of Rabbi Lippman, Nehama, and the Italian language teacher Avramino Varios. A new principal, Moshe Yaakov Ottolenghi, led and revitalized the institution. This Livorno Jew patterned the institution after the ultra-religious enlightened spirit of the Italian schools. He led the school of 1.200 students until his death in 1900.

²⁹ Bulletin de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle. 2^e semestre 1873. Paris, 1873. p.30. For additional details on the development of the A.I.U. schools in this period, see: A.I.U. IV B.21-22 Salonique (1874/88 and 1878/1890 respectively).

³⁰ Bulletin del Alliance Israelite Universelle. 2^e semestre 1876 p.52

³¹ Bulletin de l'A.I.U. Troisième Série, No. 36. Année 1911. 81, and Troisième série, No. 37. Année 1912. 96

³² A.I.U. Grece II B 16. Larisse, II B.31 Volo, III E 58-59, and XX E. 253-261; Gérard Israel. "l'Alliance Israélite Universelle 1860-1960. Cents ans d'efforts pour la liberation et la promotion de l'homme" in Cahiers de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle. Numéro Special. No. 127. Fevrier 1960 p. 52.; and N. Leven, Cinquante Ans D'Histoire. L'Alliance Israelite Universelle (1860-1910) (Paris: Felix Aican, 1920), 15.

The most visible form of advancement seen in Salonika and within its Jewish community appeared in light of the ongoing industrialization within the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman policy makers sought to use industrialization as a tool for eventual general prosperity for all of residents of the Empire, and thus, Sultan Abdulhamit II (1876-1909) "developed the existing armaments and clothing factories, created originally to provide for the needs of the armed forces."³³ The Jews of Salonika had been previously been involved in providing fabrics and uniforms for the Ottoman army in past generations. Salonika at the time had brick, beer, cotton cloth, and tile factories.

The Ottoman historian Stanford Shaw noted the change in urban life during Abdulhamit II's reign:

In Istanbul, Izmir, Edirne, Salonica, and other main cities, streets and sidewalks were now paved and lit with gas lamps and kept clean and safe. Horse-drawn public streetcars were operated, usually by foreign concessionaries. There were thousands of small merchants selling goods and luxury items from every corner of the earth. The myriad of post offices, telegraph lines, and steamships provided internal as well as external communication. Modern medical services eliminated the plague as a major threat, giving the average subject a far more pleasant and secure existence than had seemed possible only a century before.³⁴

For the Jews in particular, their prosperity was a factor in their remaining in Salonika, while large numbers of Christians were fleeing to Greece and Bulgaria due to unrest in Macedonia.³⁵ Salonika had been a place of refuge for Greek Jews escaping anti-Semitic persecutions of the 19th century. Throughout the century, the Jewish community of Salonika had a continually rising population.³⁶ Salonika, itself, enabled greater economic opportunities than what smaller cities could offer.

The Jews of Salonika benefitted from improvements in transportation in the city and in the region. In 1871 Salonika was connected to Skopje and Mitrovitsa by railroad. The line was expanded to Belgrade in 1880 and by 1888 this line coined the "Orient Express" reached Vienna.³⁷ Salonika was joined by train to Monastir in 1893 and to Istanbul in 1895. In 1891 the tram pulled by horse was inaugurated in the city. In 1889, France began to build a secure multi-pier port for large ships to dock in Salonika. The Jews were noted for being quite active in loading and unloading, as shipping agents, and in the area of insurance.

Other technological additions helped the city and its residents. In 1898 a Belgian company supplied to the city's residents live running water coming from the Hortiachi mountains. In 1899 electricity was installed in Salonika. In most of the projects of this nature initiated by European companies, Salonikan Jews participated as investors and stockholders.³⁸

³³ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 236...

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 241

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 239-240

³⁶ Yitzchak Kerem, "The Influence of Antisemitism on Jewish Immigration Patterns from Greece to the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century" in Caesar E. Farah, ed., *Decision Making And Change in The Ottoman Empire* (Kirksville, Missouri: The Thomas Jefferson University Press at Northeast Missouri State University, 1993) 305-314. Minneapolis, Minnesota: 14-19 August 1988)

³⁷ *Saloniki, Ir Ve'em Beyisrael* (Tel Aviv: Hamahon Leheker Yahadut Saloniki, 1967) 3, 20

³⁸ Recanati, 156

The Jews had been at the forefront of industrial development long before the time of Abdulhamit II. Since the second half of the 18th century, the spinning mill founded by the Saias family was the largest and most sophisticated of its kind.³⁹ In 1858, Dr. Allatini established a large flour mill, and several years later, he opened a beer factory. Then, he followed by establishing brick and tile factories. In 1883 the "Allatini Ceramics" factory was founded. It's known that by 1875 the Company for Silk-Spinning was well-established, and other Jewish owned spinning mills belonged to Torres and Mizrahi, Shabetai Hassid, and Sidis. In 1898 Yosef Modiano established a factory for womens scarves and silk spinning.

Not only had the Jews been the first to import fabrics and other items from Europe, but they also imported industrial equipment, such as steam engines, pumps, and motors. The Fratelli Tiano were amongst the importers of machinery. In 1868, Joseph Kovo opened a house of commerce for printing press supplies. The A.I.U.'s French education had two significant spin-offs; secularization and radicalization. The secularization led to the parting of traditional religious ways, but it led to the creation of a Judeo-Spanish cultural renaissance. Through its Judeo-Spanish newspapers, like *La Epoca* founded in 1876, the Jews of the city and the region read about the world in their language. The local Judeo-Spanish culture began to flourish. There were musicians, and Judeo-Spanish speaking theater.⁴⁰ Romances and poetry became popularized to the Jewish masses. Salonika became a haven for Judeo-Spanish culture and a beacon to the Sephardim of the Balkans and the Mediterranean region. Previously its reputation was confined to that of a community of astute and revered rabbinic authorities, as manifested in the 16th century, after the Iberian Spanish and Portuguese expulsions. Now the city had become a cultural attraction.

The Italian influence, via Italian government education and through the affluent Italian Jewish merchants "the francos" who had established themselves in Salonika at the end of the 18th century, upon Salonikan Jewry was very significant. Italian translations appeared in poetry, romances, theater, and historical, moral, scientific, hygienic, pedagogical and religious works. The Judeo-Spanish literary language was insufficient and many idioms had to be borrowed from Latin. Words were borrowed from Italian, then from French, and finally primitive forms of Spanish were added to Judeo-Spanish. Some authors tried to leave out Turkish and Hebrew words, and many added their own Italianisms and French words. Syntax and construction appeared more in accordance to French and Italian norms than to Spanish. In the opinion of researchers like Michael Molho, the language was reduced to a jargon.⁴¹

However this large Jewish population, that reached 70,000 individuals and even exceeded that figure in the beginning of the 20th century, couldn't meet the needs of many of its members. The overcrowded and old-style Fusion schools and Hadarim continued to leave the children in a state of ignorance.⁴² They learned how to pray, a bit of Bible, and about the Holydays, but they were unfit to work in the new professions available to Salonikan Jewry. Their teachers were self-trained and lacked instruction. They couldn't better themselves economically by being lawyers, doctors, and merchants; they remained the peddlars, the fishermen, port workers, and tobacco factory workers. The children studied in dilapidated conditions and lived in the poor neighborhoods sur-

³⁹ Ibid., 155

⁴⁰ Elena Romero, *El teatro de los sefardies orientales*. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Instituto "Arias Montano". 1979.) 3 Vols

⁴¹ Michael Molho, *Literatura Sefardita de Oriente* (Madrid: C.S.I.C., Instituto "Arias Montano". 1960) 142-143.

⁴² *AIU Greece VII B 27. Baruch report.*

rounding Salonika; Regie Vardar, Kalamaria, 151, Toumba, etc. ... Their shelter was provided by the good grace of the Jewish community. This element remained dependent on the community until the Holocaust, but due to the socioeconomic upgrading, prompted by the Western education of the A.I.U. and the Talmud Torah, the-poor segments dwindled and a petit-bourgeois class formed. Future physical disasters and plagues also aided in continuing poverty.

Now that the community had gone beyond the slim realm of the rabbinic influence that enclosed them until the arrival of the Enlightenment, the inspirational youth in particular were influenced by new ideas, challenges, and modes to change their environment and surroundings.

By the end of the 19th century, and in particular, in the first decade of the 20th century, the stage was set for radicalization. Avraham Ben Aroye was a teacher in the Jewish school of Philippopolis (Plovdiv).⁴³ He also was active in the Bulgarian Socialist movement. Once one of his former teachers Behor Azaria, founder of the Jewish publication "*Shofar*", in a public meeting, noted that for the Jews there was no need for socialism and there was no point of trying to make them into socialists. In reaction to this, Ben Aroye wanted to prove that in Jewish society, as well as in non-Jewish society, there are the same conditions compelling "class struggle". He sought to bring socialist theories to realization by establishing a socialist and syndicalist movement. He came to Salonika and succeeded in creating a Jewish workers movement, which was able to flourish after the Young Turk Revolution. At this same point the local Zionists came out in the open and created B'nai Zion in 1908, after they had been underground since 1899

Ben Aroye mostly attracted the Jewish tobacco workers from the "Regie" factory and elsewhere. At first he tried to establish a multi-ethnic Serbian, Greek, Turkish, and Jewish movement, but it was short-lived. Although Ben Aroye was educated in the conservative militant wing, his liberal views and flexibility were his key to success. Although he had some intellectuals like David Recanati, Dasa, Shmuel Yona, David Menashe, Assael and Benveniste, some of whom were A.I.U. graduates, most of his following consisted of Judeo-Spanish speaking secular workers. He had a local newspaper *Avante*, established the Ferrar library, and represented the Socialist Labor Federation of Salonika at the Second Socialist International.⁴⁴ The Socialists demonstrated separately from the Young Turks in 1909, at the one year anniversary of the Revolution. They raised the red flag and didn't want their class struggle contaminated. He had wide support. When Christian Rakovsky came from Rumania to speak on 4.11.1911 there were 8.000 in attendance. The latter condemned the Italian threat to open war and proposed a general disarmament. He also proposed a federation of democratic Balkan States. When the Greeks entered Salonika in 1912, nearly 5.000 Jews were organized Socialists.

In Salonika, the Zionists were intellectually formulated by their A.I.U. educated; dedicated to educating the Jews of the Orient to the ideals of the French Revolution, while still retaining Jewish cultural and religious traditions. The majority of the A.I.U. graduates were either apathetic to Zionism and disputed the issue of Zionism. Ben Aroye didn't believe in the potential of Zionism and the reality of establishing a Jewish State (After the Holocaust, he regretted his mistake and settled in Israel.). A large mainstream population

⁴³ Avraham A. Ben Aroye "Reshit Hat'nua Hasotsialistit Bain Yehudei Saloniki" in Recanati, 309-320

⁴⁴ George Haupt and Paul Dumont (eds.) *Osmanlı İmparatorlugunda Sosyalist Hareketler* No 14 (Istanbul: Gozlem Yayinlari, 1977); and George B. Leon, *The Greek Socialist Movement And The First World War. The Road To Unity.* (East European Monographs, No. XVIII) (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1976) 12-17

under the influence of the official Jewish community remained aloof from Zionism, and a minority, consisting of young fervent and active Zionists dynamically propagated a small, but continually growing movement in Salonika until the Holocaust. Its numbers were small, but it influenced thousands to move to Eretz-Israel.

The Kadimah society, formed in 1899, by a group of local rabbis, had been fairly dormant until the fall of Hamadian rule. Its Hebrew literature library and lecture hall were not well used by the public and its leaders didn't spread propaganda that reached the public until the rise of Zionism in Salonika starting in 1908.⁴⁵ Due to his Zionist vision, Asher Mallah, who was active in the Young Turk movement, was put on trial for treason in front of a military tribunal. Although Dr. Nazım Bey, the official prosecutor of the Committee of Union and Progress, demanded the death sentence, he was pardoned by the judges after defending himself and proving that cooperation with the Zionist movement could bring much material utility to the country. He assured that a Jewish State would not emerge by force, but by means of mutual consent.⁴⁶

David Florentin, was an ardent and active Zionist. He edited the newspaper *El Avenir*, was a General Zionist, and worked for the World Zionist Organization in London. He kept the Zionist flame alive in Salonika. Avraham Recanati envisioned the merger between the religious Mizrahi movement and the Revisionists, and fought for Jewish religious rights. He edited the Zionist newspaper *Pro-Israel*, became the Assistant Mayor of Salonika, and was a world leader in the Zionist Revisionist movement.⁴⁷ The Berlin based Hilfsverein educational movement, which was short-lived in Salonika, introduced "Ivrit Beivrit", Hebrew instruction in Hebrew. Recanati, Florentin, and others represented the local Zionist movement at numerous World Zionist Congresses.

The Young Turk movement, in an effort to prevent the local community from being swooned by Zionism, pressured Salonikan World Zionist Congress delegates to stop their Zionist activities.⁴⁸ One delegate, Mois Cohen (who later became known as Tekinalp), agreed and participated only as an observer. An Ottoman delegation which visited Europe was sent to warn the A.I.U. leaders in Paris against Zionist tendencies

Several local Jews integrated into the front rows of the Young Turk movement. Emmanuel Carasso was one of four speakers, who spoke at the 1908 demonstration in Salonika at Liberty Square ("Platia Eleftherias" in Greek) when the movement advocated for a constitution.⁴⁹ Hundreds of Salonikan Jews volunteered afterward to fight and invade Istanbul in order to maintain that the Sultan keep his word and back a constitution

The Jews were divided into two streams; one supported an extranational roof that would unite all the peoples of the Empire. The Zionists and the Jewish nationalists wanted to return to Zion and supported a settlement in the framework of Ottoman sovereignty and Turkish agreement. The A.I.U. graduates and the Club des Intimes consisted of the former group.

Carasso eventually was elected to the parliament in 1908 as one of four Ottoman Jews. In 1910 he refused to be Minister of Public Works, but was elected to the Senate in 1912

⁴⁵ Baruch Rejort

⁴⁶ Yitzchak Kerem "Asher Jacob Mallah" *Encyclopedia Judaica Year Book 1988-9* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1989) 383-384

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⁴⁸ David Farhi "The Jews Of Salonika And The Young Turk Revolution" in Meir Benayahu (ed) *Sefunot Volume XV* (The Book of Greek Jewry - V) (Jerusalem, 1971-1981) 137-152 (Hebrew)

⁴⁹ Recanati, pp 195-197

Nissim Effendi Mazliach, of Izmir, served as a municipal court judge in Salonika. In 1908 he was elected to the parliament by the residents of Izmir and was appointed secretary of the presidency of the parliament. Emmanuel Shalem was a renowned international lawyer, honored by Turkey. Nissim Effendi Russo served the General Governor Huseiyin Hilmi Pasha. The pharmacist, Raphael Ben Ouzio, delivered messages between jails and the Young Turks in the mountains. Like Russo, he was in the underground and put up posters during the nights preceding the Revolution.⁵⁰

Tekinalp was on the outer layers of the Young Turk movement. He devoted himself to write and promote fraternity amongst Turks and Jews. In 1910 he formed the Ligue d'Ottomanisation amongst local Jews.⁵¹ In 1910, he organized a trip of the Salonikan Club des Intimes to Cavalla to fraternize with the Club Ottoman Union et Progres. He stayed in Salonika until the Greek conquest in 1912. He became an ardent Kemalist at the end of World War I. When he moved to Istanbul in World War One, he published an economic weekly *Iktisadiyat Mecmuasi* and wrote essays on cultural and political themes in several leading magazines. He also wrote several books. He became a patriotic Turk and never returned to live in Salonika, which remained under Greek rule.

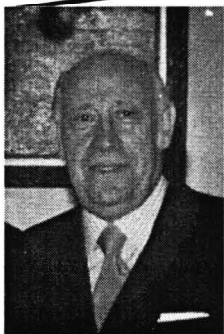
Ottoman reforms paved the way for the general framework for the institutionalization of political rights for Salonikan and Ottoman Jewry. The Sephardic Jews of Salonika, a majority of the city's population for most of Ottoman rule, were influential in the city and in the Empire well before the French Revolution and its exportation from West. However, this movement for political rights and liberty had an effect on the Empire. The French Jewish enlightenment repatched the Salonika Jewish community's spiritual and intellectual life through education and communal support. After generations of spiritual and economic stagnation, the above factors and a process of industrialization in the city in the latter half of the 19th century contributed to a flourishing cultural and economic Jewish community by the end of Ottoman rule in the city.

⁵⁰ Kerem, "The History of the Jews of Salonika in the 19th and 20th Centuries".

⁵¹ Jacob M. Landau, *Tekinalp, Turkish Patriot 1883-1961* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Institut Te Istanbul, 1984) 3-7

Message pour ALBERT MÉNASSÉ - Istanbul de la part d' ISAAC MÉNASSÉ

Geneva



*Israel Ménassé le
Président des
Communauté Juive
d'Istanbul*

ISRAEL MÉNASSÉ est né à Istanbul en 1913, issu d'une famille nombreuse (5 soeurs et 3 frères) modeste et respectueuse. Après avoir terminé brillamment ses études il se lance dans sa vie professionnelle, travaillant d'abord dans une banque, puis dans le commerce pour s'unir ensuite avec le plus grand groupe commercial et industriel de Turquie.

Marié le 9 juin 1935 à Lucie Arayou, il a eu deux enfants, nés respectivement en 1937 et 1940 et quatre petits enfants, tous en bonne santé.

Israel Ménassé était un homme de coeur, un homme loyal, un admirable père de famille, grand-père, frère et ami. Décédé subitement en octobre 1974, il fût enterré au cimetière israélite d'Hrnavutköy, dans

une zone speciale intitulée PARADIS et destinée exclusivement à ceux qui, comme lui, se sont dévoués pour la Communauté Israélite.

Cet homme est pleuré parce qu'il était très aimé par ses amis, par des hommes d'affaires, par tous ceux qui le connaissaient, en Turquie comme à l'étranger. On ne partait jamais quand on avait besoin de lui sans se sentir réconforté. Il était le gentleman, l'homme qu'on ne recontre plus que rarement, celui à la poignée de main franche et solide.

Il eut une enfance difficile. C'est pourquoi il se pencha sur les oeuvres de bienfaisance dès qu'il le pût et se consacra notamment à la MICHNE TORA, une oeuvre qui s'occupait de l'enfance malheureuse, qui nourrissait et habillait des centaines d'écoliers, issus de familles nécessiteuses.

Ayant reçu une éducation religieuse, il plaça sa confiance en Dieu, qui l'aida dans les difficiles missions qu'il entreprit au sein de sa Communauté où il finit par être reçu d'abord dans l'équipe dirigeante, élu par la suite Président du Conseil Laïc du grand Rabinat de Turquie, ce qui équivalait en somme avec le Président des Communautés Juives de Turquie. A ce titre déjà, travaillant main dans la main avec le grand Rabbin David Nsses, il a créé des liens solides d'amitié entre le judaïsme turc et les autorités de ce pays. Il y avait à ce moment environ 100.000 juifs en Turquie, émigrés par la suite vers diverses destinations et il n'en reste plus aujourd'hui qu'environ 20.000. L'honorabilité d'Israel Ménassé fait honneur à la famille Ménassé et à la Communauté Juive.



La délégation de Turquie allant féliciter le Vali à l'occasion de la fête de la République

C'est lui qui a facilité et fructifié les contacts entre les juifs de Turquie et l'État d'Israël, contacts qui ont dépassé toutes les espérances puisqu'on constate les liens solides d'amitié et de collaboration qui existent aujourd'hui entre la Turquie et Israël.

Nous ne verrons plus la silhouette d'Israel Ménassé, son bon sourire et son visage rayonnant. Nous n'aurons plus cette source de confiance qu'il inspirait mais il restera dans nos mémoires comme celui qui a longuement oeuvré pour le judaïsme en Turquie et pour les bonnes relations turco-israéliennes.

Appendix A

Raphael David Saban



In memoriam Raphael David Saban, Hahambasi and Chief Rabbi of Turkey

Raphael David Saban

was born in Istanbul in 1873. His grandparents on his mother's side, Yuda Cassavi and his wife Régine Ariéh, who were very religious and had considerable influence on their grandchild, encouraged him to undertake talmudic studies.

His first master, whom he always remembered with gratitude and respect, was Rabbi Yomtov Kohen, a highly qualified teacher with enormous pedagogical talent. Raphael David was also greatly influenced by Rabbi Yussef Kohen and Rabbi Conorté De Leon, who were frequent visitors in his grandfather's home.

At the age of 16 he was granted his semihà for the Shechita of all types of animals ("Ofoth ve Behemoth"). After studying with the most famous Mohel of the time, Rabbi Uriel Maimon, at the age of 17 he obtained the Semihà de Moheluth. At the age of 18 he obtained his rabbinical degree and became the private secretary of Rabbi Moshe Ha-Levi, locum tenens of the Chief Rabbi¹.

At the age of 20 through his meditation a conflict between the Schochetim and the Board of Turkish Jewry, whose President at the time was Mentesh Pasha Galimidi, was settled promptly.

In 1897 he married Rosina Nassi, daughter of an eminent rabbi of Istanbul, Chaim Nassi, Av Beth-Din of the time.

At the age of 24 he was elected member of the Permanent Rabbinical Council (also known as the Council of Twenty) and simultaneously became the secretary of the Beth-Din Atzedek.

At the age of 30 he was called upon to be a member of the Beth-Din Atzedek. Some years later, in 1940, at the death of his teacher, Rabbi Yitzhak Shaki, he was called to chair this Court as Av Beth-Din.

In 1908 he was delegated by the then Chief Rabbi of Turkey, Chaim Nahum, to the City of Council of Istanbul and he remained a member of this body until 1925. In 1911 he was sent to Aleppo by Chaim Nahum in order to settle a quarrel which had split the Community and succeeded in pacifying the Jews of that town.

From 1907 till 1912 he was Marè Deatra of Hasköy, from 1912 to 1953 he was both Marè Deatra of Galata-Beyoglu-Kasimpasa-Sisli, of the Italian Jewish Community and of the Ashkenazi Community.

On January 25, 1953 he was elected to the position of Chief Rabbi of Turkey.

He died in Instambul on the 8 of the month of Kislev 5721 (November 26, 1960), at the age of 87, after having served his community for some seventy years.

He collaborated with three of the most eminent rabbis of Turkey; first with Moshe Ha-Levi, whom he always mentioned with the greatest respect (he always remained "el Siñor"

¹The title of Moshe Ha-Levi was "Kaymakam" which corresponds exactly to the latin locum tenens

("the Master") for him² who as Kaymakam Effendi (Locum Tenens) of the Chief Rabbi from 1872 to 1908, during Abdulhamid's reign, occupied an exceptionally important position in the history of Turkish Jewry, then with Chaim Nahum and finally with Chaim Bedjarano

He was particularly interested in the problems of the Caraites, who came to consider him their protector.

He was also very sensitive to the problem of the "Agunot", women abandoned by their husbands who had emigrated without granting them a divorce, a situation fairly frequent in territories of the former Ottoman Empire, where, since the turn of the century great numbers of Jews had emigrated to South America, often leaving their wives behind. He was very active in their defence and one of the six Rabbis³ who prepared the document "Mahberet Qiddushin 'Al Tenai", Constantinople, 5684 (1924) inviting a reform in halakhic procedures on this matter⁴.

He also left two manuscripts. The first one, "*Doresh Shemot*" defines the hebrew equivalents and the hebrew spelling of oriental and european non jewish names used by Jews, in connection with the correct preparation of legal documents such as "ketuboth", "ghet-tim", etc. The other one known as the "*Mitrash naperushim*" is a comment on the commentaries of Rashi on the "N'ah" ("Neviim Aharonim" or "Later Prophets and Hagiographers")

He had an extraordinary memory and, according to some, was reputed as knowing the whole Talmud by heart.

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² It is worthwhile mentioning that at a later stage his former students and collaborators spoke of him in exactly the same terms and up to this day he remains for many "El Sinor"...

³ The others were Yizthak ben Eliezer Ariéh, Yizthak Shaki, Yaacov Aruete, Moshe ben Habib and the Chief Rabbi Chaim Bedjerano

⁴ On this problem José Faur, *Lezioni per il nostro tempo dalle fonti Halachiche sefardite*, *Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, Roma, Vol.XLIX, (1983), 582-600, translated from *The Rabbinical Assembly - Proceedings* - 1978

The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain

Prof. Ion Patroiu, Ph.D. University Craiova

Before the 13th century

three communities lived peacefully in Spain:

Christian, Mosaic and Moorish which, to a great extent benefited from a political and military balance between the Muslims and the Christians. The Jewish community used to be numerous and hard-working. They had obtained high social ranks and social positions in cities where they were checking trade and finance.

After the Christian victory of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, the balance was broken. The Christian community took over the important positions within a European religious intolerance. An economic crisis (hunger, epidemic diseases, wars) was overcome by a shrewd manipulation against the prosperous mosaic community which started being massacred. The pogromme in Seville in 1397 caused the death of 4,000 Jews and was extended to the Jewish districts *ñ aljames ñ* in all the big Spanish cities.

The Jews who were not killed were compelled to accept Christian baptism to remain alive. There followed other discriminatory steps. A bill in 1412 forbade the Jews to wear silk clothes, to have honorary degrees, and deal in the following trades: buccaneer, butcher, carpenter, or tailor. They had to live in ghettos and were not allowed to move away.

Even christianized, the former Jews were reluctantly reintegrated by being called *marrano*, *judaisante*, *judeoconversos*, but they succeeded in saving part of their social positions. Some of them even climbed to high religious or royal positions. On the other hand, by being Christian, some of them could marry and enter the noble classes. Already in 1449 a petition addressed to the Catholic church showed the highest noble families in the Spanish nobility had Jewish blood. Even Ferdinand the Catholic was Jewish by his mother's ancestry. The same origin had the Great Master of the Calatrava Order, the nephew of the Toledo archbishop.

The envy as well as the rage against the conversos increased. They were accused of practicing their old rituals in secret. Starting with 1467 a new series of attacks was planned. King Ferdinand extended the Inquisition throughout Spain. By making of the new Inquisition formula a state institution, the Spanish royalty foregrounded its role.

Starting with 1478 the kings of Aragon and Castille had the right to appoint or dismiss the inquisitors. From 1480 the poor conversos started being dispossessed of their fortunes. By appointing the famous Tomas de Torquemada as inquisitor, the climax of conversos prosecution was reached. The royalty understood the big profit the Inquisition could raise and set it under its direct control by creating the Council of the Supreme and General Inquisition (*Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisition*).

Killing the inquisitor Pedro Arbues de Epila in 1485 in Zaragoza caused the rage of Inquisition against the conversos. Henry Kamen characterized it: *the great campaign of arresting the conversos meant to put an end to the social and political domination of the new Christians in administration*.

The Conquest of Granada on 4 January practically marked the re-conquest and no limits for the Inquisition. Frightened, the Jews sent their messengers to Queen Isabela to ask for protection. They offered 30,000 gold pieces to cover the war expenses as well as to give the royal government satisfaction by living in separate districts surrounded by walls where they were to lock themselves before dark, or to refrain themselves from trades practiced by the Christians. Isabela and Ferdinand were about to accept but the firm intervention of Torquemada made the project fail. In only three days on 3 March 1492 Ferdinand and Isabela gave an edict by which the Jews had to become

Christian or, if not, they had to leave Spain before 31 July 1492. Whoever refused was to be executed with a previous confiscation of their private belongings. The only thing allowed to them was selling their belongings but they were to transfer their value not in gold, but in exchange letters or in products. At the same time Christians who housed the Jews after 31 July 1492 were punished with fortune confiscation.

In Antonio Dominguez Ortiz book, 150,000 Sefardic Jews were banished while 250,000 converted themselves to Christianity, deciding to confront the terrible Torquemada. Other references speak of 800,000 Sefardic Jews leaving Spain in 1492.

Many of those who remained in Spain were burnt alive or baked in the famous quimodera ovens after losing their fortunes. Neither scientists escaped, nor those who had especially favoured the Spanish state - as for instance Isaac Abrahamel who had financed the conquest of Granada, or Luis who had been made a knight by Juan II as well as his cousin who financed Christopher Columbus' expedition. The latter's geographical discoveries were to make of Spain the first great colonial empire of the world.

In the golden century of Spain (1530-1640) the auto da fés went on under Charles V when Spain became the most powerful country in Europe. Until 1525 almost all the clients of the tribunals of Inquisition were the Jews who secretly continued to practice old rituals, i.e. 91% to 99.18%. In this way the Inquisition in Toledo made all Jews disappear so that in the middle of the 16th century an inquisitor complained about not being able to find any Jew left.

The Catholic kings thought that ships loaded with gold and silver which used to dock almost daily from America would be enough to ensure their prosperity forever. They could not understand their error, nor could they realize the Sefards were not the only victims but Spain itself, too.

Just when Spain had the largest colonial empire built, the one where the sun never set, when Spain was about to create an imperium mundi, the country was deprived of its most diligent and enlightened members, who fled either to Protestant countries or to the half-tolerant Ottoman Empire, or to the traditionally tolerant Romanian principalities.

By stretching the kingdom of Castille over Portugal, too, in 1580, a large number of maran Jews came to Spain where they found it difficult to integrate. In a few decades of peace after Portugal started the war of independence (1640), the marans are considered the 5th column, the main target of the Inquisition until 1725 when the last great Jew hunt took place.

It was the moment when Spain lost its demographic increase, as well as numberless men of letters or scientists because the country is almost absent from participating in the scientific European movement between the 17th and 18th centuries. Just when Spain was passing towards the modern age, a large number of craftsmen was lost, specialists in trade or finances, efficient people, or people with ideas disappeared. Instead of the efficient Sefard or maran Jew, there appeared the Spanish inquisitor with his sword under the cloak, who soon started scaring away the natives in the colonies. Generally speaking, some of the Spanish colonies became an easy prey for the English or the Dutch who were more tolerant and excellent traders.

Definitely, if Spain did not become a great universal power in the world, it was because of banishing the Jews. The same big mistake was made by France, with similar consequences. France found it its duty to impose Catholicism throughout Western Europe and then trying to succeed where Spain had failed. On 18 October 1685 the Edict of Fontainebleau revoked the famous Nantes edict of religious tolerance by which 100,000

Huguenots had to start their exile, therefore depriving France of its most valuable forces.

Those are the consequences of Spanish and French intolerance. Intolerance has always and everywhere had the same dead-end with a collapse of its initiators or instigators, as well as devastating consequences. Intolerance will forever be the peoples' greatest enemy

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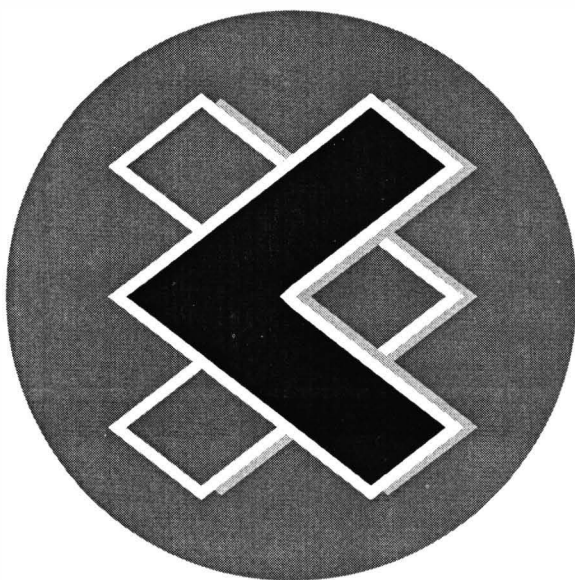
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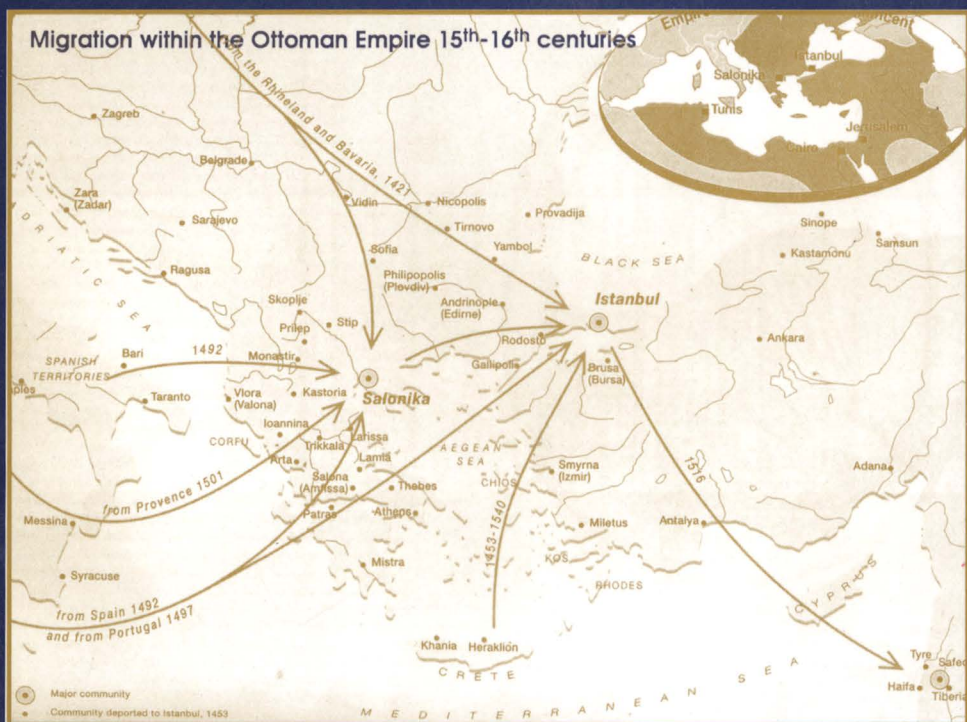
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My speech has clearly not been intended as an outline, not even a very sketchy one, of a potential history of the Romanian Sephardim. This would take a lengthy, painstaking research. However, as I was jotting down these notes, I said to myself such effort would be worthwhile and should be made now that the people capable of making it are still around. Our symposium, the outcome of a joint initiative and cooperation of Mr. Alexander Cornescu-Coren and the Center for the Study of the History of Jews in Romania could be a first valuable step in this direction.

Acad. Prof. Dr. NICOLAE CAJAL



15000.