

Visualizing the Past: The Role of Images in Fostering the Sephardic Identity of Sarajevo Jewry

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This article explores the use of photographs in Moritz Levy's book dedicated to the history of Sephardic Jews in Bosnia, published in Sarajevo in 1911. While the photographs accompany the historical narrative and aim to prove the preservation and continuity of the unique Bosnian Sephardic identity throughout the centuries, they were, as the article argues, distinctly modern creation. Visually prominent and imbued with an aestheticized quality, they relied on Ottoman official albums of promotional photography, Austro-Hungarian orientalized images of occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the new Jewish art. As a result of this novelty, Levy's book became a model for the way in which later Yugoslav Jewish publications presented Bosnian Sephardim. Due to the turbulent historical events in the region these images became politicized, assumed a memorial role, and have also recently inspired a renewal.

KEYWORDS: Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sephardic movement; Photography; Moritz Levy; Daniel A. Kajon; *Spomenica*.

VISUALIZANDO EL PASADO: EL PAPEL DE LAS IMÁGENES EN LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA IDENTIDAD SEFARDÍ DE LOS JUDÍOS DE SARAJEVO.— El presente artículo examina el uso de las fotografías en el libro de Moritz Levy, dedicado a la historia de los sefardíes de Bosnia, que fue publicado en 1911. Aunque las fotografías acompañan la narrativa histórica intentando demostrar la preservación y continuidad de la identidad singular de los sefardíes bosnios a lo largo de los siglos, fueron, como se demuestra en el artículo, claramente una creación moderna. Visualmente destacadas e impregnadas de esteticismo, y fundadas en los álbumes oficiales otomanos de fotografía promocional, las orientalizadas imágenes austro-húngaras de la Bosnia ocupada y el nuevo arte judío. Como el resultado de esa novedad el libro de Levy sirvió de modelo para la representación de los sefardíes bosnios en las publicaciones judías yugoslavas posteriores. Sin embargo, debido a los eventos históricos turbulentos en la región, esas imágenes fueron politizadas y asumieron un papel conmemorativo y recientemente también han inspirado una renovación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Bosnia y Herzegovina; movimiento sefardí; fotografía; Moritz Levy; Daniel A. Kajon; *Spomenica*.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1911 Moritz Levy, a young Jewish scholar and Sarajevo's future Sephardic chief rabbi, published the book *Sephardim in Bosnia, a Contribution to the History of Jews on the Balkan Peninsula*.¹ Levy's book was the first attempt to present the history of the Sephardic community living in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the 16th century. Using his academic training, recently acquired at Vienna University, Levy presented his topic in a scholarly manner, and, in addition to the lucidly written text, included a number of photographs. While some photographs showed preserved Jewish manuscripts, or depicted Jewish sites, such as Sarajevo's old Jewish quarter, the city's first Sephardic synagogue and the graveyard, the majority showed "Sephardic types" – Jewish men and women dressed in traditional clothes, or shown working or shopping at Sarajevo's old Turkish market. While they accompany the historical narrative and aim to prove the preservation and continuity of Sephardic tradition through the centuries, in attempt to strengthen the unique Bosnian Sephardic identity, the photographs included in Levy's book were, as the article argues, very much a modern creation. They are visually prominent and imbued with an aestheticized quality, relying on both eastern and western visual sources – Ottoman official albums of promotional photography, Austro-Hungarian orientalizing images of occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the new Jewish art. As a result of this novelty, Levy's book set an example for later Yugoslav Jewish publications concerning the Bosnian Sephardim. By employing modern means of visual communication – photography and photo-reproduction of works of art – they too depicted Sephardic uniqueness and were meant to instill a sense of identity, tradition, stability and continuity. Due to the turbulent history of the region, these feelings were at times severely challenged and interrupted, lending to these very same images a memorial role. More recently, in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the establishment of new nation-states in the region – these photographs of the traditional Bosnian Sephardic Jews now carry a message of renewal.

¹ Moritz LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (Sarajevo 1911).

THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AS A SIGN OF MODERNITY

The 1878 occupation and Bosnia and Herzegovina's inclusion in the Austro-Hungarian Empire affected as well the local visual culture and art, as artists from other regions of the empire began to visit and migrate to Sarajevo. The first painters were Western Orientalists who were attracted to Sarajevo's "exotic motif and oriental atmosphere".² While proud of bringing enlightenment and modernity to this "newly-added backwater", they also, by painting local picturesque motifs, acknowledged that this area, until recently a part of the Ottoman Empire, boasted its own unique oriental-European identity. One example of such a cultural colonization policy that combined local tradition with modernity was the Bosnian pavilion, one of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's main attractions at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1900. While the architecture of the pavilion was inspired by traditional Bosnian dwellings, striking art-nouveau wall murals depicting Bosnian characters in folk-costume were created by Alfons Mucha of Prague.³ The handicrafts, colorful carpets, and photographs of various rural figures wearing Muslim and Christian traditional clothes added to the 'exotic' atmosphere. The goal of this eclectic mixture was to create a largely imaginary, distinct pan-Bosnian (*bošnjak*) style of art and architecture.

This deliberate 'orientalization' was also advanced by the 1892-94 construction of Sarajevo's new town hall in the pseudo-Moorish style, also employed in the city's new Ashkenazic synagogue, built by the

² Much has been written in the aftermath of Edward W. SAID's theory (*Orientalism* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1978]) about Western Orientalism and its visual construction of an imaginary *Orient*; see, for instance Jocelyn HACKFORTH-JONES and Mary ROBERTS, (eds.), *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture, New Interventions in Art History* (Malden, MA – Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005). However, while for West-European countries such as France and England their colonies in North Africa and the Middle East provided such "picturesque Oriental sites," for Austro-Hungary this role was, after its occupation, largely played by Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the Austro-Hungarian approach to ruling Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Robert J. DONIA, *Sarajevo: A Biography* (London: Hurst & Co., 2006) pp. 60-91.

³ <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/paris-1900/> (accessed 19 January 2019).

Czech architect Karel Pařík in 1902.⁴ In both cases, the style was meant to symbolize the oriental roots, both of the city of Sarajevo, and – paradoxically – of Ashkenazic Jews, most of whom, as citizens of the Austro-Hungarian empire, migrated from its other provinces, settling in Sarajevo only after the occupation of the city.

This newly-introduced employment of visual images to imagine and shape a distinct “Oriental” identity of the recently included Austro-Hungarian province affected Sarajevo’s Sephardim as well. Until the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the use of visual images rooted in the classical western tradition was not highly pronounced in the local Jewish culture. Expelled from Spain in 1492 by the new Christian rulers, along with the last remaining Arabs, they were admitted to the Ottoman Empire, of which Bosnia and Sarajevo were an integral part, preserving the iconoclastic tradition of their Muslim hosts. Thus, until the end of the 19th century, Sarajevo’s Sephardim generally expressed their cultural identity through language, music and the written word, to a far greater extent than employing its visual forms. The arrival of the Austro-Hungarians wrought change.⁵

Among the first of Sarajevo’s Sephardic Jews to adopt novelties in visual culture were the members of the Kajon family. The father Daniel and his son Albert Kajon, opened in their hometown a printing press in 1892; a year later, they followed it with the first modern bookstore and publishing house. Finally, around 1900, they established a photographic studio in the city and began printing and publishing photographs and

⁴ On Moorish-style synagogues, see Ivan Davidson KALMAR, “Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews and Synagogue Architecture,” *Jewish Social Studies* 7:3 (Spring/Summer 2001) pp. 68-100.

⁵ For the concise history of Sarajevo’s Sephardim prior to 1878, along with references to previous scholarship, see Ivana VUČINA SIMOVIĆ, “The Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Sarajevo: From Social, Cultural and Linguistic Divergence to Convergence,” in *Sefarad in Österreich-Ungarn, Transversal: Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien* 13:2 (2012) pp. 42-44. For the changes in their lives during the reign of Austro-Hungary in the region, see Todor KRUŠEVAC, “Društvene promene kod bosanskih Jevreja za austrijskog vremena,” in *Spomenica, 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu*, ed. Samuel KAMHI (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1966) pp. 71-98. See also Harriet Pass FREIDENREICH, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979) pp. 11-25.

postcards of local figures and picturesque scenes depicting life in Sarajevo's Turkish market, the *Baščaršija*, and the city surroundings (fig. 1).⁶ Occasionally, Sephardic Jews appear on such postcards as well, as artisans or customers in the market (Fig. 2). According to a stylized advertisement on the back of those photographs, Kajon's publishing house specialized in printing photographs from across Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with book art, music books and scores.⁷

However, although Kajon contributed to such Western endeavor to shape a specific oriental identity for Bosnia and Herzegovina, he also took care to distance himself from it. His appreciation for the visual image and contemporary art was demonstrated by the adoption of a unique logo for his publishing house inspired by the images and contemporary art-nouveau style of the well-known Jewish artist Ephraim Moses Lilien, known as a passionate promoter of the Zionist idea.⁸ In this case the logo was inscribed with the publisher's monogram DAK (obviously created for Kajon), depicting an oriental bearded man wear-

⁶ I thank Prof. Karl Kaser of the Southeast European History and Anthropology Dept., University of Graz, for this information. See Nikola MARUŠIĆ, *Istorija fotografije u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. History of Photography in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 1918* (Tuzla: Godina izdanja, 2002) pp. 97 and 151. Kajon's photo studio was one of many active in multiethnic Sarajevo towards the end of the 19th century; see <https://gams.unigraz.at/archive/objects/context:vase/methods/sdef:Context/get?mode=bio> (accessed 24 January 2019).

⁷ For collection of photographs and postcards issued by Daniel A. Kajon's publishing house, see the project *Visualizing Family, Gender Relations and the Body. The Balkans approx. 1860-1950*, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, 2010-2014, project number P 22104-G18) and conducted by Prof. Karl Kaser, Barbara Derler, Ana Dorđević and Prof. Anelia Kassabova.

<http://gams.uni-graz.at/search/gsearch?hitPageSize=10&pid=vif&x2=http://gams.uni-graz.at/vase/3vif-search.xml&queryAsAnd=Daniel%20A%20Kajon&mode=simpleSearch&hitPageStart=1> (accessed 21 January 2019).

⁸ I was not able to establish whether the logo used by Kajon's publishing house was indeed Lilien's original work, or if it skillfully copied and adapted Lilien's unique style. Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874-1925) was of Polish Jewish origin but developed as an artist in Germany. From 1901 he was closely involved with the Zionist project, visiting Ottoman Palestine several times between 1906 and 1918, and helping with the establishment of the Bezalel School of Art and Crafts in Jerusalem. On Lilien see Michael STANISLAWSKI, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) pp. 98-115.



Fig. 1. Daniel A. Kajon, *Street Scene with a Donkey*, photograph, 107x160 mm between 1900 and 1918. The Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, Inv. No.: ÖMV/pos/10741

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Fig. 2. Daniel A. Kajon, *Sarajevo – Street Scene – Kujundžiluk (Silversmiths' Shop)* photograph, 108x160 mm; between 1900 and 1918. The Historical Archive of Sarajevo, Inv. No.: ZF-1929/11

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ing a striped turban, with a silhouette of a cityscape lined by mosques and minarets visible in the background (fig. 3). Thus, despite selecting an example of new “Jewish” art promoted by the supporters of cultural Zionism, who believed that its rebirth is possible only in the biblical Land of Israel, the logo itself vividly declared the Kajon family’s traditional identity as Oriental Jews living in Islamic surroundings. This oriental, Ottoman Sephardic identity was also promoted in Moritz Levy’s book *Sephardim in Bosnia, a Contribution to the History of Jews on the Balkan Peninsula*, which was, as noted, published in Sarajevo in 1911, by the Kajon publishing house and which included a wealth of photographs – primarily images of local Sephardim.⁹



Fig. 3. Ephraim Moses Lilien (?), Logo for Daniel Kajon’s publishing house, I don’t think *ca.* should be slanted 1900. Appears on the frontispiece of Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*, detail. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel

MORITZ LEVY’S BOOK

In his youth, Moritz Levy (1879-1942) was deeply affected by the cultural shift which resulted from the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Born into a traditional family, he received a religious education, but at the secondary level he decided to expand upon it by attending the newly-founded city Gymnasium as well, and thereby acquire a secular education. In 1901, this enabled him, with the help of a

⁹ See above note 1.

stipend, to register at the University of Vienna where he studied Semitic philology, philosophy and theology. In 1906, Levy attained his doctorate and a year later he passed the rabbinical exam; these prepared him for a life-long career as an educator, rabbi and scholar of Sephardic culture.¹⁰

While in Vienna, Levy became actively involved with *Esperanza*, the Sephardic students' organization. Founded in 1896, it was initially a diverse academic association of Sephardic students hailing from various countries of the Balkan Peninsula which had previously been parts of the Ottoman Empire. The common ground of the gathering was the ability to communicate in the Judeo-Spanish language and a mutual interest in preserving Sephardic cultural heritage. Both the language and the preservation of their cultural heritage served to shape their unique identity in Vienna's multi-cultural international community of students, representing far-flung regions throughout and even beyond the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹¹ However, in 1905, influenced by the growth of the Zionist movement, members of *Esperanza* became increasingly politicized, resulting in schisms between those in favor of preserving specific Sephardic forms of Diaspora nationalism and those opting for the pan-Jewish Zionist ideology. Later, as a chief rabbi of Sarajevo, Levy sought synthetic compromise, identifying with both the Zionist idea *and* cultural concerns of Sephardim. However, in 1907, as a young graduate, Levy was deeply immersed in the Sephardic cultural project and eager to return to his hometown and promote the educational and cultural program he was professionally trained for.

¹⁰ For Moritz Levy's biography (= "Moric Levi" in Serbo-Croatian), including a bibliography of his works, see <http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/sefardiweb/node/734> (accessed 21 January 2019). See also Avram PINTO, "Dr. Moric Levi, Sarajveski nadrabin," in *Jevrejski almanah, 1971-1996* (Belgrade, 2000) pp. 23-37, and Samija ŠARIĆ, "Zum Autor Moritz Levy," in Moritz LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel. Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1911* (Klagenfurt: Wieser, 1996) pp. 151-153.

¹¹ On *Esperanza*, see Amor AYALA and Stephanie VON SCHMÄDEL, "Identitätskurse und Politisierung der Sepharden in Wien am Beispiel des Studentenvereins Esperanza (1896-1924)," *Transversal; Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien* 11:2 (2010) pp. 83-102. See also, Ivana VUČINA, "Los sefardíes ante su lengua: los esperancistas de Sarajevo," in *Sefarad and der Donau, Lengua y Literatura de los Sefardíes en Tierras de los Habsburgo*, eds. Michael STUEMUND-HALÉVY, Christian LIEBL and Ivana VUČINA SIMOVIĆ (Barcelona: Tirocinio, 2013) pp. 341-360.

Among the first scholarly projects he undertook upon his return to Sarajevo was the publication of his doctoral thesis which appeared in 1911 as the aforementioned book.¹² Published by the Kajon publication house, in its spirit of openness towards the world of images and art, Levy's book alludes to its modernity by tasteful insertion of photographs – 29 illustrations to the text – prominently announced on the opening page, immediately following the book's title and the author's name. In the introduction, Levy described the book's original documentary sources – the official protocols of the Sarajevo sharia court written in Turkish, and the “*Pinakes*” register and account books of Sarajevo's Sephardic community, composed in Ladino and Hebrew.¹³ Levy's studies under David Hirsch Heinrich Müller (1846-1912), the renowned Viennese orientalist of Ashkenazic-Galician descent and distinguished professor of Semitic languages and literature, must have laid a solid foundation for his scientific approach.¹⁴ Moreover, in the introduction of the book, Levy thanks not only the librarian of the Emperor's Mosque, sheikh Seifudin effendi Kemura, but also Dr. Carl Patsch, the chief curator of Sarajevo's National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the director of the Institute for the Balkan Studies, for providing original copies of several reproduced illustrations.¹⁵

¹² <http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/sefardiweb/node/734> (accessed 21 January 2019).

¹³ The eighty-five folios of Turkish protocols Levy used were dated from 1552 to 1849 and were stored in the library of the Emperor's Mosque in Sarajevo; the two “*Pinakes*” (Heb.: *Pinkasim*), dated from 1720 to 1810, were preserved by the Sephardic community of Sarajevo (LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*, pp. III-V).

¹⁴ PINTO, “Dr. Moric Levi, Sarajveski nadrabim,” p. 24. On David Heinrich Müller, originally stemming from the traditional world of Talmud studies in Buczacz, eastern Galicia, see the obituary in *Ost und West* 2 (1913) pp. 161-163. In 1898, Müller published the *Sarajevo Haggadah* together with Julius von Schlosser and David Kaufmann. This was the first ever scientific publication and facsimile of an illuminated Hebrew manuscript, and certainly attracted Levy, once in Vienna, to this famous professor; see *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo: Eine spanisch-jüdische Bilderhandschrift des Mittelalters*, von David Heinrich Müller und Julius von Schlosser, nebst einem Anhang von Prof. Dr. David Kaufmann in Budapest (Wien 1898). For the latest in-depth research of this unique manuscript, see Shalom SABAR, *The Sarajevo Haggadah History and Art* (Sarajevo: National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018).

¹⁵ Carl Ludwig Patsch (1865-1945), was an Austro-Hungarian historian, geographer and archeologist who arrived in Sarajevo in 1893 to teach at the Gymnasium. His main

Finally, another mentor of young Levy also seemed to have indirectly inspired the publication of his book: Prof. Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852-1932) of the University of Salamanca. Pulido Fernández, a physician, academic and political activist, was one of the main promoters of the *filosephardismo* movement seeking to reintegrate Sephardic Jews into Spanish culture, perceiving it not only as a moral imperative but also as a national interest. In touch with Sephardic intellectuals in Europe and encouraging their national and cultural awakening, Pulido Fernández published *The Spaniards without Homeland and the Sephardic Race* in 1905.¹⁶ This monumental book included descriptions of personalities, sites and traditions of the Sephardic communities and their representatives that he encountered via his prolific travels and correspondence. Pulido Fernández's work made a great impression on Moritz Levy while he was still a student and president of *Esperanza* in Vienna, and he felt encouraged to write to him a long letter explaining in it the society's credo. The two established a contact and Levy's letter eventually appeared published in Pulido Fernández's 1905 book.¹⁷ Moreover, Pulido Fernández's book was accompanied by a wealth of photographs of figures and known individuals dressed in both modern and traditional clothes, community buildings and synagogues, and genre scenes from numerous regions of the Sephardic diaspora. Now that he embarked upon his own project, Pulido Fernández's book as an example of depict-

interest was in archeology, however, so he left the teaching position in 1898 in order to accept a post as curator of the National Museum. It is quite possible that Levy, who studied at the Gymnasium at the time, had already met Patsch by then. As the museum curator, mainly interested in antiquity, Patsch launched a series of archeological digs in Bosnia. In 1904, he founded the Bosnian-Herzegovian Institute for the Study of the Balkans and, until he left Sarajevo in 1918, built its vast library and collection of manuscripts, archival documents, photographs and geographical maps, developing it into an important research center. See <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd11605882X.html> (accessed 21 January 2019).

¹⁶ Ángel PULIDO FERNÁNDEZ, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí* (Madrid: E. Teodoro, 1905).

¹⁷ For Levy's letter written together with Isidor Sumbul, see PULIDO FERNÁNDEZ, *Españoles sin patria*, pp. 121-130. On Pulido Fernández and his contacts with the Sephardim, see Alisa MEYUHAS GINIO, "Reencuentro y despedida. Dr. Ángel Pulido Fernández y la diáspora sefardí," in *España e Israel, veinte años después*, ed. Raanan REIN (Madrid: Dykinson, 2007) pp. 57-66.

ing Sephardic diaspora in word and in image, certainly lied in front of Levy's eyes.

However, comparison of the photographs published in Pulido Fernández's book with those in Levy's reveals striking differences. Pulido Fernández's photographs usually occupy only small sections of the page and are often reproduced in poor quality. They seem to have been ascribed only secondary importance in relation to the primacy of the text, which they dutifully illustrate as background accompaniment. In contrast, Levy's photographic reproductions are of superior quality and featured prominently on the book's pages, resulting in a rich and novel aesthetic reading and viewing experience. Furthermore, the illustrations are either numbered or referred to in the text, or feature prominent captions with elaborate, explanatory titles. Thus, they serve as integral subject matter of the book, on equal footing with the text.

Evidently, in order to heighten (and justify) the scientific basis for his use of the images, Levy thanks Prof. Patsch in the introduction for permitting his use of originals from the Institute's collection. However, upon analysis of the book's images, this statement becomes highly problematic. All images reproduced in the book, both figure portraits and pictures of sites (aside from the manuscript pages held in the Emperor's Mosque's library and the Sephardic Community in Sarajevo), are signed in the corner with the stylized initials "AK" – Atelier Kajon (?), or "DAK" – where the letters A and D were aesthetically merged in single monogram. I would thus like to suggest that these were contemporary photographs produced in the Kajon family's photo studio.

Most of those images accompany the chapter discussing the traditional clothing of Sarajevo's Sephardim. While the beautiful, elaborate outfits are described in detail in the text, photographs of the male and female figures typically occupy two-thirds of a page. The sharp photographs allow the viewer to clearly perceive details of embroidery and jewelry, especially in the feminine outfits. The characters are depicted in a studio setting against curtains or wallpapers imitating natural landscapes, or alongside decorative plants. One of the female models appears in several photographs, donning assorted women's outfits (figs. 4-6).

Nevertheless, the text describes them as "the outfits that were in use most probably since the 16th century – if not earlier" of which, despite



Fig. 4. Photograph of a Sephardic Woman from Sarajevo, Atelier Daniel Kajon, in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (Sarajevo: D. A. Kajon, 1911) p. 46, fig. 9. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel.



Fig. 5. Photograph of a Sephardic Men and a Woman from Sarajevo, Atelier Daniel Kajon, in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (Sarajevo: D. A. Kajon, 1911) p. 37, fig.6. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel.



Fig. 6. Photograph of a Sephardic woman from Sarajevo dressed for street, in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (Sarajevo: D. A. Kajon, 1911) p. 60, fig. 13. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel.

“minor changes” some of “the components remain until today the same”,¹⁸ thus stressing the continuity of the tradition and of the distinct Sephardic identity of the personalities. Although they are products of modernity, Kajon’s photographs of the elaborate costumes were meant to spark the readers’ imagination of bygone splendor, arousing nostalgia and ethnic pride.¹⁹

Costumes as ethnographic information about distinct religions, regions and ethnicities existing in Ottoman Empire, were best known in Austro-Hungary due to the popular photographic costume book prepared by Osman Hamdy Bey for the 1873 Universal Exhibition in Vienna.²⁰ Hamdy Bey, well-known Turkish artist and archeologist, chose the photographs taken in the studio by Pascal Sébah, a photographer active in Istanbul and Cairo. In contrast to the Romantic and Orientalist images that were taken for tourists and included props creating an ‘oriental atmosphere’, the photographs of the costumes in Hamdy Bey’s album are authentic and focus on actual details. Worn by models, the costumes belonging to various groups are shown in three different examples on each page, projecting – at a time of Turkey’s growing weakness – its main message to the West: that of Ottoman Empire being a pluralistic, yet united society (fig. 7).²¹

¹⁸ LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁹ For such construction of the past in order to develop national identity, see Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and spread of Nationalism* (London-New York: verso, 1983) pp. 5-46. See also Christopher SHAW and Malcolm CHASE, eds., *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) pp. 1-17.

²⁰ Osman HAMDY BEY and Victor MARIE DE LAUNAY, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873. Ouvrage publié sous le patronage de la Commission impériale ottomane pour l’Exposition universelle de Vienne* (Constantinople: Imprimerie du “Levant Times & Shipping Gazette,” 1873), accessible at <https://archive.org/details/lescostumes-popul00osma/page/n3> (accessed April 7, 2019).

²¹ Michèle HANNOOSH, “Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean,” *History of Photography* 40:1 (February, 2016) pp. 19-20. See also Edhem ELDEM, “Powerful Images – The Dissemination and Impact of Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1870-1914,” in *Camera Ottomana, Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914*, ed. Zeynep ÇELİK and Edhem ELDEM (Istanbul: KUP, 2015) pp. 107-116.



Fig. 7. Osman Hamdy Bey and Victor Marie de Launay, *Les Costumes popularizes de la Turquie en 1873* (Constantinople: Impremier du Levant and Shipping Gazette, 1873) Part I, Section VI, Table XXII. no. 1: A Muslim Woman from Salonica; no. 2: A Jewish Woman from Salonica; no. 3: A Bulgarian Woman from Prilep

The ethnographic, straightforward approach used in Hamdy Bey's publication was also applied by Kajon, as it befitted the scientific character of Levy's book. Nevertheless, Kajon's images are also somewhat less documentary than Hamdy Bey's. They have an artistic quality visible in the tasteful composition of the photographs and subtle use of studio backgrounds, props and light, projecting a pleasant aesthetic experience.²² Moreover, the attempt to document these Sephardic costumes at a time when these were being replaced by contemporary Western clothing, and to use their ethnic character to inspire and strengthen Sephardic identity, had additional sources. Ashkenazi Jews, especially the acculturated ones living in western and central Europe, were involved in a national awakening and a cultural renaissance of their own. As *Ost und West*, the German Jewish journal published in Berlin from 1901 on, claimed, the authentic, traditional Jewish life had been preserved in eastern Europe, and it was there that assimilated western Jewry should look for inspiration.²³ In 1903 this journal published an article about Isidor Kaufmann, a Vienna-trained artist specializing in portraits and genre scenes depicting the life of traditional Jews in Hungary, Galicia and Poland.²⁴ What characterized Kaufmann's paintings was a masterful attention to the details of their clothes, rich embroidery, garments and fur, but also the atmosphere of melancholy and past splendor. While painting in Hungary in July 1900, Kaufmann encountered a Sephardic Jew and painted his portrait as well (fig. 8).

Kaufmann's work was well known in fin-de-siècle Vienna to Jewish and non-Jewish circles, and it most probably inspired Levy and Kajon

²² About the relation between the photography and art, see Aaron SCHARF, *Art and Photography* (Harmondsworth, Eng., Baltimore: Penguin, 1974).

²³ See Gavriel D. ROSENFELD, "Defining 'Jewish Art' in *Ost und West*, 1901-1908, A Study in the Nationalization of Jewish Culture," *Leo Baeck Inst. Year Book* 39 (1994) pp. 83-110.

²⁴ G. KUTNA, "Isidor Kaufmann," *Ost und West* 9 (1903) pp. 589-604. See also Tobias G. NATTER, *Rabbiner, Bocher, Talmudschüler. Bilder des Wiener Malers Isidor Kaufmann* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1995). During his trips, Kaufmann created sketches and acquired characteristic clothing items; back in his Viennese studio, he used models (often members of his family) and dressed them in those costumes in order to create portraits of the east European Jews. For an example of his work, see <https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/hannah-565321> (accessed April 7, 2019).

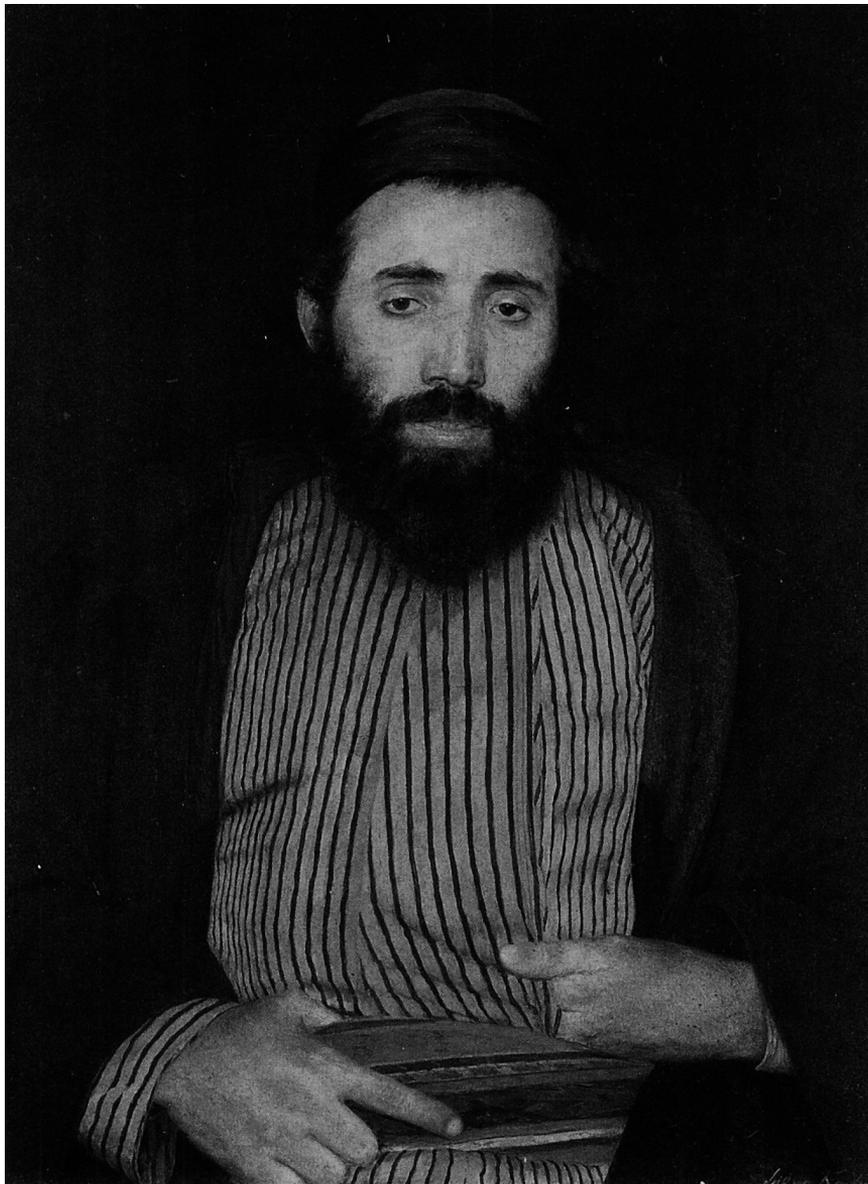


Fig. 8. Isidor Kaufmann, *Portrait of a Sephardic Jew*, 1900, oil on wood, ca. 50 x 40 cm. Private Collection, New York.

in their search for a proper balance between, on the one hand a factual photograph exploring ethnographic details, and on the other, the aesthetic and emotional quality originating in a work of art, such as Kaufmann's, that would help express a unique Sephardic identity.

Aside from the photographs of portraits, Levy's book includes also genre scenes. Among the illustrations, *Baščaršija* with its shopkeepers, artisans and shoppers, attempts to depict traditional life before the occupation. A tinsmith's shop and pharmacy are reminders that those professions were often occupied by Jews.²⁵ However, such depictions are actually based on Kajon's contemporary postcards. A case in point is an image depicting Sephardic women on the street, here framed by an aesthetic oval lending it a sense of artistic and timeless quality, but actually cut-out from a popular postcard entitled: "Sarajevo – A Street Scene, Silversmiths' Shop" and published, as described above, by Kajon's firm (see above fig. 2).²⁶

Although "staged", the use of images in Levy's book was pioneering. While exploiting modern facilities provided by Kajon's firm, they succeeded in transmitting novel expressions of traditional Sephardic identity – not via text or song, but through visual communication. Moreover, the book's inclusion of the images was influential. It set an example for later publications, primarily commemorative volumes known as *Spomenica*, published at intervals by Sarajevo's Jewish community, which we now turn to.

USING THE WORKS OF ART AS A SOURCE FOR EXPLORING SEPHARDIC IDENTITY

The next major publication that included numerous photographs of "Sephardic types from Bosnia" appeared in 1924. It was a commemorative volume – *Spomenica* – dedicated to the thirtieth anniversary of *La*

²⁵ LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*, pp. 75-76, p. 91, fig. no. 19; p. 92, fig. no. 20. See also KRUŠEVAC, "Društvene promene," p. 85.

²⁶ LEVY, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*, p. 70, fig. 15. For postcards of this image, see <http://gams.uni-graz.at/o:vase.2432>; <http://gams.uni-graz.at/o:vase.2340>; <http://gams.uni-graz.at/o:vase.2002> (accessed 22 January 2019).

Benevolencija, the welfare society of Sarajevo's Sephardic community.²⁷ The novelty of this publication was that, in addition to photographs, it also included reproductions of works of contemporary art depicting Sarajevo's Jewish sites, Sephardic types and scenes associated with traditional Jewish ceremonies.

By the time this exceptional volume was published Sarajevo's Jews were living under a new government – the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Moreover, they were now part of a cluster of Jewish communities, Ashkenazic and Sephardic, united since 1919 under the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities, with its center in Belgrade, the new capital of a new country. However, although expressing full loyalty to the state and its multinational and multi-confessional society, Sarajevo's Sephardim also expected continued recognition of their own ethnicity, which they enjoyed under both the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires. But, while the official establishment indeed answered such expectations readily, the problem arose within the Jewish community itself. The previously fermenting internal tensions between the Zionists and the adherents of the Sephardic national movement soon became exacerbated.

The genesis of the conflict between the two ideologies was in Vienna at the beginning of the century, as mentioned above. Now, in 1924, upon the formation of the largely Ashkenazic Zionist-oriented Jewish national institutions, it raged heatedly and became known as the "Sarajevo dispute".²⁸ Some supported Zionism and sought reconciliation, as ex-

²⁷ *Spomenica o proslavi tridesetogodišnjice sarajevskog kulturno-potpornog društva "La Benevolencija" maja 1924*, ed. Stanislav VINAVER (Belgrade 1924); for Benevolencija's (also occasionally spelled in Serbo-Croatian texts as "Benevolencia" or "Benevolensia") activities, see Avram PINTO, "Jevrejska društva u Sarajevu," in *Spomenica, 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu*, ed. Samuel KAMHI (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1966) pp. 174-179.

²⁸ The conflict in Sarajevo is well documented in the contemporary Jewish press and in various scholarly publications. See FREIDENREICH, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, pp. 148-149; Zvi LOKER, "Sarajevski spor i sefardski pokret u Jugoslaviji," *Zbornik 7* (1997) pp. 72-79; Eliezer PAPO, "Serbo-Croatian Influences on Bosnian Spoken Judeo-Spanish, as Reflected in the Literary Works of the Members of the Sephardic Circle," *European Journal for Jewish Studies* 2 (2007), pp. 343-364: 348 and n. 31; and VUČINA SIMOVIĆ, "The Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Sarajevo," pp. 55-56.

pressed poignantly by Moritz Levy, then the city's chief rabbi, who sought the middle path: "It is our duty to unite hand in hand with our brothers, Ashkenazim, in this great effort for the Renaissance of the Jewish spirit", wrote Levy, "But why should we neglect all that is specifically Sephardic which we inherited from our forefathers?"²⁹ In contrast, Dr. Vita Kajon, Daniel Kajon's younger son, a Viennese trained lawyer and one of the leaders of Sarajevo's Sephardic movement, explained the movement's position differently from Levy.³⁰ In a report sent to the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities' central committee, Kajon wrote: "We do not see in Jewry only two poles, nor do we recognize on the one side Zionism and on the other side assimilation. Our life is full-blooded. For us, the center and pivot of Jewish life is not to be found within the Zionist organization. Also, outside of it there is a Jewish national life."³¹

The 1924 edition of *Spomenica*, appearing in the midst of this dispute, seemed to have been designed with a broad, all-encompassing approach, meant to subsume the controversy, thus defusing it. Although celebrating thirty years of Sarajevo's Benevolencija's activity, *Spomenica* was published in Belgrade and edited by Stanislav Vinaver, a Serbian modernist writer of Ashkenazic Jewish origin.³² This choice already indicated its aim – the inclusion of Sarajevo's Sephardim in the new all-Yugoslav multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and in the new all-Yugoslav Jewish minority comprised of both Ashkenazim and Sephardim, stemming from all regions of the newly-founded country. Vinaver

²⁹ Moritz LEVY, "Letra de Saraevo," *El Mundo Sefardi* I/1, Vienna, Esperanza (April 1923) p. 42, quoted in VUČINA SIMOVIĆ, "The Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Sarajevo," p. 55.

³⁰ Dr. Vita Kajon's (1888-1942) main contribution was the reorganization of *La Benevolencija* which, in addition to a welfare society now encouraging Sarajevo's Sephardic students to study for a vast variety of professions, also became a very active cultural society. See Avram PINTO, "Dr. Vita Kajon," *Jevrejski almanah*, 1959-1960 (Belgrade 1960) pp. 168-175.

³¹ "Izvještaj Saveznom vijeću u Beogradu," *Židov* 22 (June 27, 1924) p. 3, quoted in: FREIDENREICH, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, pp. 148-49.

³² On Stanislav Vinaver, see Željko V. MITIĆ, "Zaboravljeni velikan srpskog jezika," # *NoviPolis*, <http://www.novipolis.rs/memento/29186/zaboravljeni-velikan-srpskog-jezika.html> (accessed 23 January 2019).

hoped to attain this goal with an all-encompassing, broad and pluralistic approach. Thus, on one hand, *Spomenica*, as befitting the anniversary of *La Benevolencija*, included articles dedicated to the history, language, music and ethnography of Bosnia's Sephardim. But, on the other hand there were also articles and stories rooted in the east European Yiddishism, Zionism, as well as the contributions of the local non-Jewish researchers dedicated to Jewish topics. However, *Spomenica*'s visual material included, as noted above, numerous photographs of Sephardic figures, that followed the precedent of Levy's book on Bosnian Sephardim. They were, as explained at the end of the publication, drawn from family albums and private collections, rather than created in the photographer's studio, thus lacking artistic and aesthetic impact of Kajon's photographs.³³ Nevertheless, a true novelty was the inclusion of contemporary visual art depicting the local Sephardic experience in modernist style. The Sarajevo artists Roman Petrović and Daniel Kabiljo were chosen for this task, the former a Serb and the latter of Sephardic descent.³⁴

By their choice of subject matter, Petrović and Kabiljo followed the example introduced in Levy's book. Just as Kajon's photographs once depicted specific sites linked intimately to Sephardic life in Sarajevo – women in *Baščaršija*, tinsmith shops or pharmacies – so too Petrović sketched streets of old Sarajevo, recalling the Ottoman era and including studies of Sephardic female and male figures in the outdoor settings. Similarly, Kabiljo applied a modernist style in depicting the interior of Sarajevo's Great synagogue – *Il Kal Grandi*, basing his depiction upon a photograph published in Levy's book. Moreover, he included moving

³³ *Spomenica o proslavi*, p. 26.

³⁴ The inclusion of such art may have been Vinaver's idea. During the WWI Vinaver was sent by the Serbian government to Russia on a diplomatic mission. During his stay there he may have encountered the Russian Jewish culture of that period which included a Jewish renaissance in the fields of art, theater, and literature. During the era of the Russian Revolution (ca. 1912-24), local Jewish artists created modern avant-garde Jewish art which combined Yiddish folklore and traditional Jewish art (ceremonial objects, illuminated manuscripts and scrolls, synagogues, gravestones, etc.) with contemporary artistic styles such as primitivism, expressionism, and cubism. See *Tradition and Revolution: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art, 1912-1928*, ed. Ruth APTER-GABRIEL (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1987).

depictions of Jewish ceremonies marking the eve of the Sabbath in a Sephardic home: a traditionally dressed woman blessing the light radiating from a lamp, and a man reciting the *Kiddush*.³⁵ What is most striking about those images, when compared to the “realism” of the photographs, is the daring modernist style these artists adopted (fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Roman Petrović, *Motif from Sarajevo*, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in Stanislav Vinaver (ed.), *Spomenica* (Belgrade: Vreme, 1924) p. 37.

³⁵ LEVY, *Sephardim in Bosnien*, p. 119, fig. no. 28. For the illustrations and detailed analysis of those works, see Mirjam RAJNER, “Between Local and Universal: Daniel Kabiljo, a Sephardic Artist in Sarajevo on the Eve of the Holocaust,” *El Prezente* 4 (December 2010) pp. 248-253.

The inclusion of both a Serbian and a Jewish artist, each depicting scenes of traditional Sephardic life in artistic styles typical of modern 20th century art, carried a message of universalism. With one foot firmly rooted in depicting the past, the modernist style they employed stepped directly into the future. However, the solitude of the depicted figures and especially the absence of children as an integral part of the Jewish family's world, seemed to transmit another message.³⁶ It followed the mood of Kalmi Baruh, the renowned Sarajevo scholar of Bosnian Sephardic Jewry.³⁷ In an article published in the 1924 *Spomenica*, Baruh complained:

The *romansa* is seldom heard in the house of a Sephardic Jew lately. Until recently, its oriental melody could be heard in Bosnia, whether to give rhythm to the rocking of a crib, or to celebrate a wedding or a circumcision with a song accompanied by the *pander* (tambourine). [Today]... the world of *romansa* has become incomprehensible to the Sephardim... The *romansa* has disappeared for younger generations... there was no one to pour into them their fervent emotions. These days, the *romansa* can be heard only from old women. They are still guarding the *romansa* as a rare jewel in their home.³⁸

Artists and scholars of Sephardic Jewry whose work was published in the 1924 *Spomenica* – by now the modernized and westernized grandchildren of such old women – took upon themselves the task of preserv-

³⁶ An album depicting scenes from a traditional Jewish family life (*Bilder aus dem altjüdischen Familienleben*) was created during the 1860s by Moritz Oppenheim (1800-1882), a German Jewish artist active in Frankfurt. All scenes in this album regularly included children. For a scene similar to Kabiljo's depiction of the blessing of the Sabbath light, but including children, see Georg HEUBERGER and Anton MERK (eds.), *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim: Jewish Identity in 19th Century Art* (Frankfurt am Main: Wienand, 1999) p. 288.

³⁷ Kalmi Baruh (1896-1945), influenced by Moritz Levy and his research on Sephardic heritage, became his disciple. He studied in Zagreb and Vienna and belonged to the second generation of university-trained Sephardic intellectuals. In 1923, Baruh completed his PhD dissertation on the Judeo-Spanish language of Bosnia at the Viennese University. A year later he returned to Sarajevo and, while generally supporting Zionism as a national movement, increasingly strove for full recognition of Sephardic culture and tradition. See Kalmi BARUH, *Selected Works on Sephardic and other Jewish Topics*, eds. Krinka VIDA KOVIĆ-PETROV and Alexander NIKOLIĆ, 2d corr. and rev. ed. (Beer Sheva – Jerusalem: Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture – Shefer Publishers, 2007).

³⁸ Kalmi BARUH, "Jezik sefardskih Jevreja," *Spomenica* (1924) p. 72.

ing this “rare jewel”. Thus, during the late 1920s and early 1930s Daniel Kabiljo continued to paint “Sephardic types” and Sarajevo’s old quarters, still inspired by Kajon’s photographs published in Levy’s 1911 book. Painting them while working, shopping or passing down the cobble streets of *Baščaršija* together with members of Sarajevo’s other ethnic groups – Muslims, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats – he depicted a unique pantheon of characters that formed “old” Sarajevo’s multi-confessional and multicultural world.³⁹

By 1933, however, the goal of preserving Sephardic heritage and assuring its position in contemporary society was lost. In the tense atmosphere following the rise of Hitler and the recent introduction of a dictatorship in Yugoslavia, the first issue of *Godišnjak* was published, a yearbook issued by Sarajevo’s *La Benevolencija* and Belgrade’s Jewish welfare organization *Potpورا* (support).⁴⁰ The publication was conceived as a calendar for the Jewish year 5694 (21 September 1933 - 9 September 1934). From its opening pages it projected an ideal of the assimilation of Sephardim into united Jewish and Yugoslav societies and the word “Sephardic” was now conspicuously omitted from the self-description of this publication. Moreover, the introductory text explained that “*Godišnjak*”, aside from its purely educational purpose for Yugoslav Jewry, has to also serve a broader idea: “to acquaint a general Yugoslav public with the cultural and social life of our Jews who for almost five centuries, while living in these regions and cooperating with the brotherly Slavic people, formed here a specific and unique cultural physiognomy.”⁴¹ The text referring to the past ten years of *La Benevolencija*’s activities is similar. Also, the term “Jews” (Jevreji) or phrase “Sarajevo’s Jews” in the report stressed their singular identity as one Jewish Yugoslav minority, without mention of their distinct Sephardic origin.⁴²

³⁹ See RAJNER, “Between Local and Universal,” pp. 251-253.

⁴⁰ *Godišnjak, “La Benevolencija” – Sarajevo i “Potpora” Beograd* (Sarajevo 1933).

⁴¹ “Introductory Word,” *Godišnjak*, p. XXIII. The reference to “almost five centuries” of Jewish presence in the region obviously referred only to Sephardim, not Ashkenazic Jews who only settled in the region much later.

⁴² Vita KAJON, “La Benevolencia u posljednjih deset godina (1923-1933),” *Godišnjak* (1933) pp. 1-32.

Godišnjak, like the 1924 *Spomenica*, included valuable scholarly articles, photographs and reproductions of works of art. Nevertheless, while most articles now referred to various historical and literary topics equally related to both “Serbian and Bosnian Jews”, Kalmi Baruh also included an article discussing Spanish *romansa*. However, one can taste the bitterness of his opening lines, alluding to the painful, politicized decline in interest and acknowledgement of the value and uniqueness of Sephardic culture:

Quite often there is talk among us about *romansas*; sometimes this poetic antiquity is also written about with more-or-less enthusiasm, preserved and nourished in the homes of Sephardic Jews. I even know – from conversations with acquaintances – that opinions on *romansa* are divided: although some perceive the *romansas* as primitive, or precisely because of it, as earnest poetry inspired by the most intimate murmurings of our distant and more recent past still quivering in the heart of the Sephardic Jew; others listen to *romansa* with a smile, not always without a certain belittling of this element of our oral transmission which is inevitably doomed to obliteration.⁴³

The works of art chosen for inclusion in *Godišnjak* are also sparse and politicized. They depict the “old” Sarajevo yet again – “A Jewish Artisan”, “The Old Jewish Woman in Čaršija” and “The Old Jewess” – are titles of images painted by three carefully selected Sarajevo artists: Petar Šain, a Croat, Daniel Kabiljo, a Jew, and Roman Petrović, a Serb (figs. 10-12). Sarajevo’s Sephardic characters that they depicted belonged in the past (and were not even identified as Sephardim), while *Godišnjak* in the spirit of King Alexander’s Yugoslavia stressed overall Jewish inclusion and equality among the representatives of their city’s (and their country’s) multiplicity of nationalities and religions. In spite of such loss of Sephardic distinctiveness, the feeling of unity, equality and belonging projected here was certainly of utmost importance to *Godišnjak*’s editors and their readers during a period when the first Jewish refugees from Germany began arriving in Yugoslavia, as Europe was gearing up for another world war.⁴⁴

⁴³ Kalmi BARUH, “Španske romanse bosanskih Jevreja,” *Godišnjak* (1933) p. 272.

⁴⁴ On German Jewish refugees seeking a safe haven in Yugoslavia, see Milan RISTOVIĆ, *U potrazi za utočištem: jugoslovenski Jevreji u bektsvu od holokausta, 1941-45* (Beograd: Javno preduzeće Službeni List SRJ, 1998) pp. 23-44.



Fig. 10. Petar Šain, *A Jewish Artisan*, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in *Godišnjak* (Sarajevo: Printing Press Menahem Papo, 1933-5694) np.



Fig. 11. Daniel Kabiljo, *The Old Jewish Woman in Čaršija*, oil on canvas, the City Museum of Sarajevo, reproduced in *Godišnjak* (Sarajevo: Printing Press Menahem Papo, 1933-5694) np.

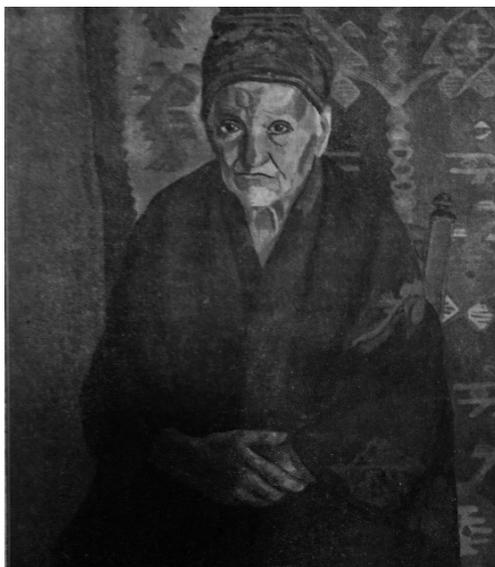


Fig. 12. Roman Petrović, *The Old Jewess*, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in *Godišnjak* (Sarajevo: Printing Press Menahem Papo, 1933-5694) np.

DESTRUCTION AND RENEWAL

During the WWII and the Holocaust more than 85% of the Sarajevo Jewish community perished.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the survivors, now living in the new society ruled by the communists, enjoyed relative freedom and set about renewing Jewish life. Thus, another *Spomenica* was published in 1966, marking four-hundred years since the arrival of Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁶ On perusing this volume, one cannot but be struck by how different it is from the previous publications discussed in this article. An impressive range of articles discussing history, tradition and culture of Sephardic Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as their fate during the WWII and the Holocaust was composed once again by both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars and writers. However, it is upon examination of the visual material added to this volume that one truly grasps the totality of loss due to the Holocaust and the magnitude of change in the post-WWII Yugoslav communist society. The texts are now decorated with numerous photographs of ceremonial objects of mixed Ashkenazic Austro-Hungarian and local Sephardic origin – a Torah curtain with Ladino inscriptions, a Viennese Torah breastplates, a Sephardic synagogue lamp, prayer book covers, Hanukkah lamps, a spice-box – all mixed together and presented without identification or explanation, relics extracted from their natural settings in synagogues and Jewish homes. The sense of discontinuity of Jewish life in general and Sephardic life in particular, of a past from which the present is separated by the abyss left by the Holocaust, is palpable.

Yet there is another side to this *Spomenica*'s visual message. Among its pages appear once again images of people – a pharmacist in his shop in *Baščaršija* (taken from Levy, 1911), people from a Bosnian Sephardic family album (reprinted from the 1924 *Spomenica*), Petar Šain's Jewish tinsmith in his alcove in the market (from *Godišnjak*'s 1933) – in contrast

⁴⁵ See Muhamed NEZIROVIĆ, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1992) p. 43; Avram PINTO, *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: "Vešelin Masleša", 1987) pp. 17-18.

⁴⁶ Samuel KAMHI (ed.), *Spomenica, 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu* (Sarajevo: Odbor za proslavu 400-godišnjice dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu, 1966).

to the photographs of the ceremonial objects, these human faces and spaces they occupy tell the story of the community's struggle to preserve its past and its identity.

EPILOGUE

Let us conclude with one final example. A book entitled *From the Album of Bosnian Sephardic Jewry*, published in Sarajevo in 2014, is a most recent contribution to documentation and preservation of the memory of Sephardic life and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁷ The book's author, Sonja Elazar, a descendant of two prominent Sephardic families who trace their roots in the Balkans back over five hundred years, initially began her research with a collection of photographs preserved in family albums (fig. 13). With much passion and humor, she

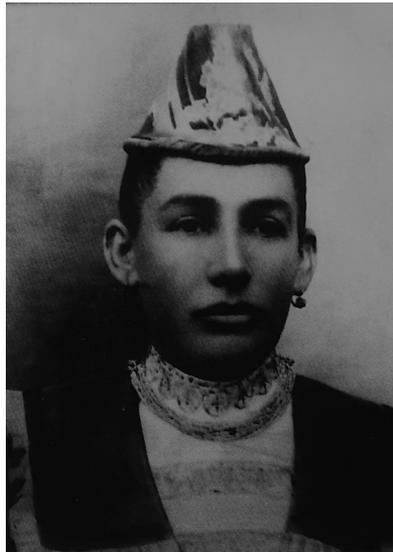


Fig. 13. Estera Elazar, Photograph, in Sonja ELAZAR, *From the Album of Bosnian Sephardic Jewry* (Sarajevo: Denameda, 2014) p. 37.

⁴⁷ Sonja ELAZAR, *From the Album of Bosnian Sephardic Jewry* (Sarajevo: Denameda, 2014).

unraveled the stories of the figures depicted. Their lives served as triggers for exploring Bosnian Sephardic Jewish life cycle traditions from birth to burial, religious and social customs, education, professional and cultural life, clothing, food, folk customs, legends and anecdotes.

The timing of this book was not coincidental. It followed the bloody civil war and breakup of socialist Yugoslavia at the end of the 20th century. Although Jews were not persecuted, living through the siege of Sarajevo, Elazar was directly confronted with the perils of this disastrous war and its aftermath. New destruction during the 1990s, accompanied by the emigration of many of Sarajevo's Jews, and even further retrenchment of the community, augmented once again the necessity of preserving the memory of Jewish life and thus saving it from oblivion.

Although Sonja Elazar is not a professional scholar of Bosnian Sephardic Jewry, nor is the book in question an "academic" publication, the ethnographic wealth of material and its visual richness – photographs, postcards, drawings and paintings depicting Sephardic material culture – follows in the tradition of other publications discussed in this article. Once again the power of images was used in order to create a sense of identity and belonging, of a community which by remembering its past has remained very much alive.

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