

HISPANIA JUDAICA BULLETIN

Articles, Reviews, Bibliography and Manuscripts on Sefarad

Editors: Yom Tov Assis and Raquel Ibáñez-Sperber

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production of philosophical texts in vernacular languages has, until now, been a relatively neglected field of research in the realm of Sephardic studies. The recuperation and study of this production, a *desideratum*, would go some way toward enhancing our knowledge and further comprehension of the Sephardic intellectual legacy in the Early Modern period.

Filling Lexical Gaps: Spanish as Ibn Verga's First Language of Reference

Eliezer Papo

Even though Shevet Yehudah was written in Hebrew, in the best tradition of Sephardic melitsah, Spanish language seems to be omnipresent in the anthology; first of all (as expected) lexically (usage of Spanish words), but many times one can also discern Spanish influences on morphology and syntax of Shevet Yehudah's Hebrew. As far as lexical borrowings are concerned, they can be divided into two categories: innocent borrowings (or borrowings caused by the lack of a totally adequate Hebrew equivalent) and premeditated borrowings (or borrowings with literary function). The sole scope of the paper is to analyze the linguistic policy of Ibn Vergas (Yehudah, Shelomo and Yosef)¹ in all the things related to the (conscious or unconscious) borrowing from the Spanish language of the time.

The novelty and the uniqueness of the book *Shevet Yehudah*, in the context of the contemporary rabbinical writings, have already been discussed by a handful of scholars.² There is but a little doubt that the final composition of this didactic, philosophical and theosophical text (basically, an anthology of Jewish tribulations ever since the destruction of the Second Temple until the times of the author himself – or, more accurately, the authors themselves),³ was inspired by the

- 1 On the composition of the anthology see M. Schlüter, 'Zuchtrute und Königszepter: zur Frage der Komposition des *Shevet Yehuda*', *Jewish Studies in a New Europe. Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Jewish Studies in Copenhagen 1994*, U. Haxen, H. Trautner-Kromann and K. L. Goldschmidt Salamon eds., Copenhagen 1998, pp. 712-731.
- 2 See, for example, Y. Baer, '*Shevet Yehudah* by R. Shelomo Ibn Verga: Introduction', Sh. Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, A. Schochat ed., Jerusalem 1946/47, pp. 7-16 (Hebrew); J. Faur, *In the Shadow of History: Jews and Conversos at the Dawn of Modernity*, New York 1991, pp. 177-217; J. Dan, '*Shevet Yehudah*: Past and Future History', *Jewish Mysticism IV* (1999), pp. 25-56.
- 3 See, for example, J. Dan, 'The Art of Telling in the Book *Shevet Yehudah*', *Molad* 4 (1971/72), pp. 671-679 (Hebrew); E. Gutwirth, 'Italy or Spain?: The Theme of Jewish Eloquence in *Shevet Yehudah*', *Daniel Carpi Jubilee Volume: A Collection of Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Daniel Carpi upon His 70th Birthday by His Colleagues and Students*, Tel-Aviv 1996, pp. 35-67; M. Awerbuch,

Expulsion of Spanish Jewry; a traumatic event with enormous philosophical, political and religious repercussions for world's Jewry.⁴

The sole scope of the present paper is to analyze the linguistic policy of the Ibn Vergas (Yehudah, Shelomo and Yosef)⁵ in all the things related to the (conscious or unconscious) borrowing from the Spanish language of the time.⁶ Even though *Shevet Yehudah* was written in Hebrew, in the best tradition of Sephardic *melitsah*, the Spanish seems to be omnipresent in the anthology; first of all (as expected) lexically (use of Spanish words), but many times also morphologically and syntactically, as will be shown later.

⁴ 'Die Religionsgespräche in Salomo Ibn Vergas *Schevet Jehuda*', *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, L. von Bernard Lewis and F. Niewöhner eds., Wiesbaden 1992, pp. 43-59.

- 4 On the place of *Shevet Yehudah* in Jewish historiography in general and in Iberian Jewish historiography in particular see E. Gutwirth, 'The Expulsion from Spain and Jewish Historiography', *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, A. Rapoport-Albert and S. J. Zipperstein eds., London 1988, pp. 141-161; R. Amrán, 'Las historia de los judíos en Sefarad según las crónicas hebreas medievales: "críticas" y "autocríticas" de quince siglos de coexistencia', *Derekh Judaica Urbinatensia* 1 (2003), pp. 84-96; G. Zelenina 'The Expulsion of 1492 in Two Chronicles of the XVI Century', *Vestnik Evreyskogo Univerziteta* 24 (2001), pp. 73-100 (Russian); M. d. C. Artigas, 'Esperanzas y tribulaciones de los hebreos españoles: *La vara de Judá*, de Solomón ibn Verga', *Maguén - Escudo* 103 (1997) pp. 35-40. On the place of *Shevet Yehudah* in the Ashkenazi culture see M. Stanislawski, 'The Yiddish *Shevet Yehudah*: a Study in the "Ashkenization" of a Spanish-Jewish Classic', *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, E. Carlebach, J. M. Efron, D. N. Myers eds., Hanover 1998, pp. 134-149.
- 5 On the composition of the anthology see M. Schlüter, 'Zuchtrute und Königszepter: zur Frage der Komposition des *Shevet Yehudah*', *Jewish Studies in a New Europe: Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Jewish Studies in Copenhagen 1994*, U. Haxen, H. Trautner-Kromann and K. L. Goldschmidt Salamon eds., Copenhagen 1998, pp. 712-731.
- 6 The question of Ibn Verga's contribution to the birth of the idea of relativity and subjectivity of religion as a response to the trauma of the 1492 Expulsion I have already treated on another place: E. Papo: 'Ribi Shelomo Ibn Verga i el nasimiento de la idea de la relativita de las relijiones komo una de las repuestas a la trauma de la Ekspulsion del anyo 1492', *Alle radici dell'Europa, Mori Giudei e Zingari nei paesi del Mediterraneo Occidentale (10 incontro, secoli XV - XVII)*, *Atti del convegno internazionale (Verona, 15 e 16 Febbraio 2007)*, F. Gambini ed., Firenze 2008, pp. 169-184 (Ladino).

Lexical Borrowings

Innocent Borrowings (or Borrowings Caused by the Lack of Totally Adequate Hebrew Equivalent)

I shall start with the lexical borrowings in *Shevet Yehudah*. Many of them are, actually, quite natural and even expected. What would be more logical for a Hispanic Hebrew writer than to use a Spanish word, when speaking of Spanish-Christian society, its culture and institutions, its religious practices and the artifacts used in them.

Thus, in the chapter XL we find in the middle of a Hebrew sentence terms such as *cardinal* (cardinal), *arsobispo* (archbishop) and *obispo* (bishop). Ibn Verga is well aware of the Hebrew term *hegemon* which designates a Christian prelate of higher rank, but the Hebrew term does not reflect the precision of the terminology developed in Christian languages, which discerns accurately between different ranks of higher clergy. The author uses first the too-general and somewhat vague and imprecise Hebrew term, which is immediately followed by three different Spanish terms which reflect the precise distinction normal in "Christian" languages. The leap from Hebrew to another language is introduced by the word *ha-niqraim*, as usual in rabbinic writings:⁷

On the second day we showed up in front of the Pope and we found [there] a grand court adorned with embroidery, and that was the place where the disputation was to be held. There were seventy chairs there for the prelates, which are called *cardinales* [cardinals], *obispos* [bishops] and *arsobispos* [archbishops] [...]

ביום השני באנו לפני האפיפיור ומצינו את החצר הגדולה מלובשת רקמה, והוא מקום הויכוח. ושם שבעים כסאות להגמונים הנקראים קארדינאליס, ואובישפוש וארסובישפוש [...]

However, though, in spite of the non-insignificant lexical borrowings, grammatically and syntactically this sentence remains a Hebrew sentence. Consequently, the second two Spanish nouns are even inaugurated with the Hebrew conjunction *ve* (and). The use of Spanish words to describe Christian concepts inexistent in Judaism nor in Hebrew language, can also be illustrated by the following Hebrew description, aimed to reflect a single Spanish word: *confesor* (confessor):⁸

7 Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, Jerusalem 1946/47, chapter XL, p. 96.

8 Ibidem, chapter XX, p. 67.

And that priest was an important man, כי והכומר ההוא איש חשוב, כי because the queen was confessing המלכה הייתה מתודית עמו, to him, what is called in vernacular הנקרא בלשון לעז קונפישור [...] *confesor* [...]

At the beginning of this chapter we are given additional information about this particular priest:⁹

Because one priest from the order of the כי כומר אחד מכת הדורשים הנקראים פידריקאדוריש [...] *pedricadores* [preachers] [...]

Again, the Spanish word *pedricadores/predicadores* (preachers) is much more revealing than the inaugurative Hebrew description. From the Spanish term one can actually learn that this priest was a Dominican monk (as these were referred to as preachers in contemporary Spanish). The Hebrew description, even if it is a word for word translation of Spanish original, just does not have the same level of clarity.

In one of the imaginary discussions between King Pedro and Nicolau de Valencia (XXXII, p. 78), we find the later say to the king:

And Nicolau said: "I've heard about אמר ניקולאו, שמעתי עליך, you, our king, that Your Highness מלכנו, שרצון רוממותך לצאת is planning to declare a war on your למלחמה על אויביך אשר נקראו enemies, which are called *infielles* אינפיאליש [...] *infielles* [infidels] [...]"

It seems that our author felt that no Hebrew term can faithfully reflect the entire diapason of meanings contained in the Spanish term *infielles* – infidels.

However, though, some Spanish words in the anthology are not preceded or followed by their Hebrew (more or less successful) equivalents. Such is the case, for instance, with the honorific title *maestre*, which shows up many times in the text.¹⁰

Also, in the chapter LXIV, when the Christian mob accuses the Jews of desecrating the chalice during the (church) procession, two Spanish words, *procesión* (procession) and the *cáliz* (chalice) are used without any attempt to translate these Christian terms into Hebrew:¹¹

Oh our Master! We were humiliated אי אדוננו! והנה נפלנו נפילה beyond any humiliation, we were שאין אחריה נפילה אחרת, walking along the path in a *prosesion* והנה אנחנו כעולים במסילה [procession], and the cardinal in front בפרוסיסיון על הבצורת, of us with a *calis* [chalice] in his hand, וההגמון הגדול לפנינו עם when the Jews appeared on the window, קאליס בידו, והנה היהודים spilling the vessel of urine on the *calis* נשקפו בעד החלון ושפכו כד של [chalice]. שתן על הקאליס.

However, though, it would be wrong to assume that our author/s reaches out for Spanish lexemes only in the context of describing Christian institutions and practice. Some religiously neutral terms for which the author did not have any Hebrew equivalent, have also found their way into the work. Thus, for example, in the chapter LXIV we find a word *salvadje* (savage):¹²

In the second year of the [reign of the] בשנה ה' למלך דון אנריקי הביאו לפניו שאלבאגי וז *salvadje* [savage] [...] תארו [...]

Also, in the mentioned discussion between King Pedro and Nicolau de Valencia, we find the former asking the king:¹⁴

Nicolau said: "And what is there in the אמר ניקולאו: "ומה יש world that does not make one wonder?, has בעולם שאינו דבר מתמיה? וכבר אמר דוד: 'נפלאים are your deeds and my soul acknowledges מעשיך ונפשי יודעת מאד', the meaning of which is: רצה לומר: יודעת מאד extensively but not totally, and who knows אבל לא בכל, ומי יתן סבה the reason why the *calamita* [magnet] להמשכת הקאלאמיטה את attracts iron?" הברזל?"

Even in modern Hebrew for *calamita* we use the *magnet*, lacking an academy-made Hebrew neologism. If so, it would not be fair to expect Ibn Verga to come with a better linguistic solution.

Also, Jewish communities in Spain are referred to in *Shevet Yehudah* by their

9 Ibidem, ibidem.

10 See, for example, ibidem, chapter XL, p. 96.

11 Ibidem, chapter LXIV, p. 152.

12 Ibidem, p. 159.

13 Thus pronounced in the Spanish of the time. Compare contemporary Spanish *salvaje*, pronounced with [x].

14 Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, chapter XXXII, p. 84.

Iberian name *aldjamas* (originating in Judeo-Arabic *yāma'a*: community, in modern Spanish pronounced as *aljama* with [x]):¹⁵

And that is what I have hear on my	וכן שמעתי על שולחן אבי מפי
father's table from two emissaries	שני שלוחים [...] והם שלוחים מן
[...] and these were emissaries from	האלג'אמאש אשר מקשטילייה
<i>aldjamas</i> which are in Castile [...]	[...]

Not surprisingly, Ibn Verga's toponyms (especially when referring to places in Europe) are also eminently Spanish. As known, mediaeval Hebrew did not have an established norm of naming different European states and cities, mountains and rivers – and, thus, when referring to places which were not mentioned in classic Jewish sources, the Hebrew writers tended to use vernacular terminology, or at least the Jewish-vernacular name of the *topos*, which was usually derived from the "Gentile" name. In these cases each Hebrew writer would, obviously, reach out for the local language of his immediate surroundings; and for the Ibn Verga's this, of course, was Spanish.

Thus, we find in *Shevet Yehudah* Castilian names for continents (*Asia*¹⁶), countries (*Alemaña* [Germany],¹⁷ *Andalucia* [Andalusia],¹⁸ *España* [Spain],¹⁹ *Inglatera* [England]²⁰ and cities (*Belgrado* [Belgrade],²¹ *Londres* [London],²² *Napoles* [Naples],²³ *Ocaña* [a town in Castile, north-east from Toledo]²⁴ etc.. Consequently, the inhabitants of these cities are also referred to by their Spanish names; as, for example, is the case of *Napolitanos*.²⁵ Also, the Jews of the Eastern Roman Empire are called *Romanotes*,²⁶ as usual amongst Spanish Jews.

In the chapter LXIV a French Christian sage, Johanes Versoris, in his response to a king poses the following rhetorical question:²⁷

In what way would our king and master	ומה יועיל לאדוננו ומלכנו
profit if he was to spill the sacred water	כאשר ישפוך על היהודים
over the Jews, and if they were to be called	מים קדושים ויקראו
with our names, Pedro and Pablo, if they	בשמנו פידרו או פאבלו
are to observe their religion as Akiva and	הם שומרים דתם כעקיבא
Tarfon?	וטרפון?

Interestingly enough, in Ibn Verga's book even the French speak Spanish. The exemplary Christian names are not given in their French (Pierre and Paul) variant – but rather in Spanish: Pedro and Pablo. There is no doubt that for our author the Spanish was the first (if not the only) language of reference.

Expectedly, even Ibn Verga's zoological/mythological vocabulary was influenced by contemporary Spanish. At least two animals: *cameleon* (chameleon)²⁸ and *onsa* (she-bear)²⁹ and two mythological creatures: *sentario* (half man and half horse)³⁰ and *serena del mar* (siren)³¹ are referred to in the book by their Spanish names; and such is a case with a *coral*, mentioned a few times in one single chapter. Also, quite innocently and in an unpremeditated manner, if referring to Christian calendar Ibn Verga uses Medieval Spanish names for months. Compare, for instance:³²

15 Ibidem, chapter VII, p. 38.

16 Ibidem, chapter XII, p. 57.

17 Ibidem, chapter LXIII, p. 154.

18 Ibidem, chapter VII, p. 33.

19 Ibidem, chapter VII, p. 33.

20 Ibidem, XVII, p. 66; chapter LXIII, p. 146. On Ibn Verga's perspective on the Expulsion of England's Jewry see J. Shatzmiller, 'Shelomo ibn Verga and the Expulsion of the Jews of England' *Exile and Diaspora. Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, A. Mirsky, A. Grossman, Y. Kaplan eds, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 349-355 (Hebrew).

21 Ibidem, chapter LXIII, p. 145.

22 Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, p. 96, chapter XVII, p. 66.

23 Ibidem, chapter XIX, p. 66.

24 Ibidem, chapter XII, p. 56.

25 Ibidem, chapter LXIV, p. 157.

26 Ibidem, chapter XXVIII, p. 72.

27 Ibidem, chapter LXIV, p. 129.

28 Ibidem, chapter XXXII, p. 89. Compare contemporary Spanish *camaleón*. The form that appears in *Shevet Yehudah*: *cameleon* is also documented in different Spanish texts from centuries 14th to 16th, as, for example, in Alfonso de Palencia's *Universal vocabulario en latín y en romance*, from the year 1490, reedited by Gracia Lozano López, in 1992. REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Banco de datos (CORDE) [online]. *Corpus diacrónico del español*. <<http://www.rae.es>> [November 14th 2010].

29 Ibidem, chapter LXIV, p. 160. This Aragonese form is preserved also in modern Judeo-Spanish, with aglunited article: *lonsa*. Compare also the Monastir Judeo-Spanish dialect form: *onza*.

30 Ibidem, chapter XXXII, p. 89. Compare contemporary Spanish *centauro*.

31 Ibidem, ibidem. The figure *serena del mar / de la mar* can be found in Spanish literature from 14th to 17th century, for example in *La Celestina* by Fernando Rojas. Compare also Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Madrid 2001, entry 'serena', acepción 2: f. Desus. Sinera (ninfa marina).

32 Ibidem, chapter XL, p. 95. On astronomy in *Shevet Yehudah* see B. R. Goldstein 'The astronomical tables of Judah ben Verga', *Suhayl* 2 (2001), pp. 227-289.

The emissaries of the communities came here on the first day of *Djenero* [January] [...]³³

שלוחי הקהילות הגיעו
הנה ביום ראשון לחדש
ג'ניירו...

Premeditated Borrowings (or Borrowings with Literary Function)

As known, *Shevet Yehudah* is full of imaginary, exemplary or wishful, dialogues between Jews and Christians.³⁴ The “representatives” of the Christian side are usually kings (more rarely queens), high prelates, and philosophers, the populist semi-educated priests and uneducated common masses. The representatives of the Jews are rabbis or some anonymous (but still individual) man and woman. According to the peculiar stand of the author of *Shevet Yehudah*, anti-Semitism seems to be the characteristic of fanatic semi-educated village preachers and their flock,³⁵ while the notables (mundane as well as church notables) are usually philo-semitic or at least do not share the anti-Semitic prejudices of the commons. When the dialogue over the “Jewish question” is taking part amongst the notables themselves – then the kings, as representatives of the future liberal state, that Ibn Verga was hoping for,³⁶ are usually more enlighten than their spouses, other nobleman or even prelates. In some of these dialogues Spanish words are used to

33 Thus pronounced at the time. Compare contemporary Spanish *enero*.

34 On Ibn Verga's perspective on famous Tortose disputation see A. Meyuhas Ginio, 'La controversia de Tortosa (1413-1414) según *Sebet Yehudah* de Selomoh ibn Verga', *El legado de los judíos al Occidente europeo, de los reinos hispánicos a la monarquía española: cuartos Encuentros Judaicos de Tudela, 11-13 de septiembre de 2000*, Pamplona 2001, pp. 23-32

35 On Ibn Verga's perspective on Anti-Semitism see D. Flusser, 'The Anatomy of Antisemitism: on Solomon Ibn Verga's *Shebet Yehudah*', *Immanuel* 9 (1979), pp. 77-80 as well as M. J. Cano Pérez, 'Antisemitism in the Hispanic-Hebrew Tradition: Its Reflection in the Mediaeval Jewish "Chronicles"', *Europe at the Close of the 20th Century: International Symposium Christianity-Judaism-Islam*, F. Gál and J. Pusová eds., Prague 1994, pp. 53-69. For the Spanish translation of the later see M.J. Cano Pérez, 'El antijudaísmo en la tradición historiográfica hispanohebrea', *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 47 (1998), pp. 37-56.

36 On Ibn Verga's perspective on religious pluralism and tolerance see Papo: 'Ribi Shelomo Ibn Verga'; Y. Schwartz, 'Three Rings or Three Cheats: Revealed Religion and Pluralism between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment', *Streams into the Sea: Studies in Jewish Culture and Its Context, Dedicated to Felix Posen*, R. Livneh-Freudenthal and E. Reiner eds., Tel Aviv 2001, pp. 268-282; A.L. Mittleman, 'Toleration, Liberty, and Truth: A Parable', *Harvard Theological Review* 95, 4 (2002), pp. 353-372; J. Faur, 'Imagination and Religious Pluralism: Maimonides, Ibn Verga, and Vico', *New Vico Studies* 10 (1992), pp. 36-51.

create the atmosphere of authenticity. When interpolated into a replica ascribed to Christian protagonists of the anthology (or even to Jewish protagonists when they are speaking with Christians) the Spanish loan-words append to it an additional touch of credibility. Thus in the chapter XXXII we find a Jew speaking to a Christian in the following manner:³⁷

[...] part of them are white, as sapphire which is called *diamante* [...] and *ahlama* which is called *gasinta* [...]

[...] יש חלק לבן כמו הספיר נקרא דיאמאנטי [...] והאחלמה הנקראת גאסינטה [...]

One should suppose that for the Jewish collocutor the Hebrew names of the gemstones should suffice – but being the fact that the Christian is not eloquent in Hebrew, the Jew has to translate the biblical names of the gem-stones, referring to them by their Spanish names: *diamante* (diamond)³⁸ and *gasinta* (hyacinth).³⁹ In a similar way, in the chapter VIII by using a Spanish term for a Jewish holiday in the middle of a Hebrew text, Ibn Verga ingeniously creates illusion that he is quoting (translating but not totally) from some old Christian text:⁴⁰

And then the judge and his man came to the house of the Jew and he said: “May God see and judge, for I have not killed him, these are my enemies who want to make me fall!” And they took the Jew to the prison, and this was the first night of *Pascua de Cenceñas* [Feast of Unleavened Bread], which is called by the Hebrews *Pesah*.

אז בא השופט ואנשיו לבית היהודי ואמר: יראה ה' וישפוט, כי אני לא הרגתי ושונאי ביקשו להפילני! ושמו היהודי בבית הסהר, והיה זה ערב פאשקואה די סינסיניאש, אשר העברים קורין פסח.

Referring to a Jewish Holiday by a Christian name, and to the Jews in third person (“which is called by the Hebrews *Pesah*”) imply that the quoted text was written originally by a Christian hand and was only partially translated by the author and included in his compilation.

In a similar way, in the chapter VII, in a long discussion between *ha-melekh ha-hadir veha-hasid melek Alfonso mi-Sfarad 'im Tomas he-hakham, ha-mehudad* (the mighty and pious king Alfonso of Spain and Thomas the sharp sage) the king refers to the Jewish patriarch Ya'aqov as to *Patriarca Iacob*.⁴¹ Jewish writers usually refer to Ya'aqov as *Ya'aqov Avinu* (Ya'aqov our father). The usage of a

37 Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, p. 89.

38 Ibidem, chapter XXXII, p. 89.

39 Ibidem, ibidem.

40 Ibidem, chapter VIII, p. 46.

41 Ibidem, chapter VII, p. 34.

term *patriarca* in this context is totally Christian – and, thus, appropriate for a Christian king, whose words Ibn Verga “only transmits”.

This literary strategy is used throughout the book. Thus, for example, in the chapter LXIV. In the fictional letter of the above mentioned French sage Johanes Versoris to the king he speaks of the *Kohen Gadol*, but refers to him by his Spanish name:⁴²

The entrance of the High Priest, which is called by us *Sanserdote mayor* [...] ⁴³ כניסת כהן גדול, נקרא אצלנו שאנסירדוטי מאיור [...]

A Jewish speaker would probably leave the term *kohen gadol* untranslated, even if he was to speak in another language. The Christian, however, in the middle of a Hebrew text translates the term *kohen gadol* into a Christian (for Ibn Verga it just had to be Spanish) language. By mere translation of the key term the reader receives the impression of reading a Christian text which was only translated into Hebrew. This is one of finest examples of Ibn Verga’s virtuosity!

Just like with other Spanish nouns, Ibn Verga does not use the Spanish ethnonims only when missing Hebrew equivalents. Sometimes, he uses Spanish toponims and ethnonims in spite of well-established and known Hebrew traditions, and in these cases one has to ask himself what might be the reasons behind his linguistic decisions.

Thus, in the chapter XII we find a Spanish dignitary (*adam mekhubad be-malkhut*) that quotes to the king *Don Manuel hijo del rey Alfonso* an “excerpt” from the imaginary *Sefer zikhronot le-malkhe Roma* [sic. Roma and not Romi] (Chronicles of the Kings of Rome), some kind of “declaration of intent” given to the dignitaries of Roma [again *anshe Roma* and not *anshe Romi*] by a supposed *Ish ivri shaluah mirushalayim* (“a Hebrew man sent from Jerusalem”).

Obviously, the fact that the man is described as a Hebrew and not as a Jew, as well as the fact that he is an emissary from Jerusalem (the place where Jews are sovereign, at least in spirit) makes his impertinent words credible, at least for Ibn Verga’s imaginary dignitary, since (unlike the Jews of Diaspora, who have to adapt their rhetoric to their sad state of affairs) the sovereign Jews of Jerusalem can afford to share with gentiles their authentic *Weltanschauung*, disclosing to

42 Ibidem, chapter LXIV, p. 138.

43 Compare contemporary Spanish sacerdot. In Middle Ages the vernacular form sacerdot was frequent in different Roman languages. Compare, for example, the Portuguese variant of the famous romance *Devota calumniada*, published in M.A. da Fonseca Monteiro Reinas, *Nave de Haver e Almedilha*, PhD Disertation, Universidade de Lisboa (Faculdade de Letras), 1957, pp. 411-413, which says: *qu’ala qu’andava d’amores, c’um sancerdote de missa, o sancerdote, agastado, i-a la paixão nu’na tinha.*

them their real positions, hopes and intentions. The original “excerpt”, of course, was written in Latin and it was quoted in front of the king in its original language. The passage in *Shevet Yehudah*, though, is Hebrew translation of the Latin text, as implied by the author’s words: *veze ’inyano ne’etaq milatin li-lshon ha-qodesh* (and this is its content, transmitted from Latin to the Language of the Temple [service]). In the “excerpt” the ancient Romans are repeatedly called *Romanos* and not *Romaim*, as habitual in normative Rabbinical Hebrew:

Because our God is so good, that if there were ten righteous people amongst fifty thousands of our evildoers, or [even] if there was one [single] person that might atone for the sin of the people, you would have seen, oh *Romanos*, as the Egyptians have seen, how much more then all your Gods could do our God alone. Know surely, that all the times we sin you will be our masters, only for the time that the anger of our God’s is turned against us the *Romanos* will have power [...] Oh, *Romanos*, believe me one thing [...]

[...] כי הוא כל כך טוב אלהינו, שאם היו בינינו עשרה צדיקים עם חמישים אלף רשעים, או היה אחד כל כך טוב כי בעבורו יתכפרו העם, הייתם רואים, הרומאנוס, כמו שראו המצרים, וכמה היה יכול אלהינו לבדו מכל אלהיכם יחד. תדעו באמונה, כמה נהיה אנחנו חטאים תהיה אתם אדונינו, והזמן שיתמיד חרון אף אלהינו על העברים, כך יתמיד ממשלת הרומאנוס [...] או, רומאנוס, תאמינו לי דבר אחד [...]

Strikingly, later in the “excerpt”, even the very Jewish State, Kingdom of Judea, is referred to by its Spanish and not by its Hebrew name, and all of this in the middle of a Hebrew text:

For you have known the level of cooperation between Rome and *Djudea* and between *Djudea* and Rome.

ידעתם כמה שלום היה לרומי עם ג'ודיאה, וג'ודיאה עם רומי [...]

Moreover, later in the text, Herod is not referred to as Meleh Edomi (as the reference to his non-Jewish past would be hinted in normative Rabbinical Hebrew) – but rather, in a very peculiar mixture of Hebrew and Spanish, as: *ha-meleh idumeo*:

And I shall say the following, after you have expelled the firstborn son [Archyleus] of the Edomite king, because of his evil regulations [...]

ואני אומר זה, כי אחר שגרשתם את הבכור מהמלך אידומיאו על חוקיו הרעים [...]

It seems that in this particular place, Ibn Verga was trying to add to the authenticity of his Hebrew "translation" of the Latin "excerpt" by leaving in it "Latin" words. If this assumption is true, this is quite an unusual "present", a glimpse into rabbinical command of the Latin, by the end of 15th century. As most of his contemporary colleagues, Shelomo Ibn Verga was very fluent in the spoken vernacular language of his area and therefore used naturally the term *Romanos* as the Sefardi Jews at the time would have used.

Morphological Influences

On few additional instances one cannot escape the impression that Ibn Verga was, actually, thinking in Spanish, while writing in Hebrew. Thus, in the continuation of the above quoted sentence from the chapter VIII, Ibn Verga treats the Hebrew word *layla* (night) as if it was feminine, like in Spanish, *la noche*:⁴⁴

And on the first night of <i>Senseñas</i>	וקמו בלילה ראשונה לסינייניאש
[Passover] they have risen and killed	והרגו מן היהודים כל אשר מצאו
all the Jews that they found [...].	[...]

Similarly, in the chapter LXIV he treats the Hebrew word *i* (island) as feminine, obviously influenced by the fact that Spanish word *isla* is feminine:⁴⁵

[...] and he expelled me to the island from	[...] גרשני לאי אשר ממנה
which I was taken [...]	לוקחתי [...]

However, though, the Hebrew word is not conceived as feminine throughout the book. Thus, for example, in the chapter XVII, it shows as masculine:⁴⁶

[...] the island called today <i>Inglatera</i>	[...] האי אשר נקרא היום
[England] [...]	אינגלאטירה [...]

Syntactical Influences

Just like many other Jewish authors, who taught in their vernacular language while writing in Hebrew, Ibn Verga from time to time translates Spanish expressions into Hebrew, word by word. I shall limit myself only to two examples of

44 Ibn-Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, chapter VIII, p. 46.
45 Ibidem, chapter LXIV p. 160.
46 Ibidem, chapter XVIII, p. 66.

calqued translations in the book *Shevet Yehudah*, which to my mind illustrate the phenomenon in the best way. The first example is taken from the chapter XV:⁴⁷

And when they left they asked each	וכאשר הלכו משם אמרו איש
other: <i>How can we take revenge from</i>	אל רעהו: "במה נקח נקמה
<i>these?</i>	מאלה?"

There is no doubt that the form *laqahat neqamah* is a word by word translation of Spanish expression *tomar venganza*. In proper Hebrew one is supposed to say merely *lingom*. The second example is taken from chapter LXIV (p. 131):

[...] and that is the place where Ya'aqov,	[...] והוא המקום שראה יעקב,
the third patriarch, have seen angels [...]	האב השלישי מלאכים [...]

It is obvious that the term *ha-av ha-shlishi* translates into Hebrew the name used in Spanish to describe Ya'aqov: *tercer patriarca*. This term, so frequent in Spanish spoken language and literature is totally unknown in Hebrew language or literature.⁴⁸

In the chapter VII Ibn Verga creates a neologism *kefulot*, based on Spanish word *doblas* (type of coin):⁴⁹

And now the Jew is becoming snobbish,	ועתה היהודי משתדר, ואם
and if he has two hundred golden coins	יש לו מאתיים זהובים מיד
he immediately wears silk clothes and his	לובש בגדי משי ולבניו רקמה,
sons embroidery, what even [Christian]	מה שלא יעשו השרים אשר
dignitaries, who have yearly income of	להם הכנסה אלף כפולות
thousand <i>doubles</i> , do not do [...]	לשנה [...]

To conclude: Prior to the Expulsion naturally the members of the intellectual elite, such as the Ibn Vergas (Yehudah, Shelomo or Yosef), even if well-versed in Hebrew classic literature and in the secrets of the Hebrew language, could not escape the Spanish linguistic influences on their Hebrew writings. Sometimes it seems that they did not have much choice. To articulate a Hebrew-Jewish voice in a predominantly Christian society was not always an easy task. Many a time Hebrew lacked precision in describing Christian phenomena. In those cases, the best solution was to achieve the attainable accuracy by using the actual Christian terminology. For Spanish Jews it was natural to use Christian terminology

47 Ibidem, chapter XV, p. 62.
48 Compare the term *patriarca Jacob* in ibidem, chapter VII, p. 34, ascribed to King Don Alfonso.
49 Ibidem, chapter VII, p. 30.

developed by Spanish language and culture. One part of *Shevet Yehudah's* virtuosity is to be found in the fact that its author/s managed to convert this defect (lack of Hebrew words in certain fields of life) into an effect, elevating it to the level of a literary instrument used in order to add to the authenticity of Christian characters of the book. By ascribing to them Spanish terminology in discussions on topics of Hebrew Bible and Calendar, Ibn Verga makes them sound Christian. This linguistic distinction makes them more convincing, and strongly suggests that their positions, opinions and beliefs are those of actual Christians and not mere Jewish projections. However, though, not always Spanish influences on *Shevet Yehudah's* Hebrew are conscious and controlled. After all, the Ibn Vergas were of Castilian origin, and as such thinking in Castilian was as natural to them as breathing, as can be attested from the morphological and syntactical influences discussed above. It is hard to break free from the impression that most of the instances of usage of Spanish terms and concepts in *Shevet Yehudah* do belong to the category of literary strategy rather than to the category of mere necessity and/or unconscious habits. It might be that linguistic distinction (marking Christian characters and/or "documents" as such) was not Ibn Verga's only literary aim. Just like in *Don Quixote*, in *Shevet Yehudah* joviality, wittiness, and carefully gardened nonchalance seem to author's most cherished possessions.⁵⁰ If not Yosef's, at least Shelomo's.

The Sephardi Romancero: Its First Century

Hilary Pomeroy

As Hispanic ballads were originally transmitted orally it is not surprising that there is very little direct evidence, in either manuscript or print form, of the development of the Sephardi ballad tradition in the sixteenth century when it became independent of the Spanish tradition. Despite the paucity of primary materials it is, however, possible to put together a picture of Sephardi ballads at that time. I suggest the following four categories as tools to studying the ballad's trajectory from Spain into the Sephardi Diaspora: 1) News-bearing ballads (romances noticieros) were usually composed soon after the historical events that they relate. By examining texts narrating events that took place either during the last decade of the fifteenth century or during the sixteenth century, it is possible to recognise which new ballads were created and circulating shortly after the Expulsion from Spain. 2) The printed song and ballad collections that first appeared in Spain during the course of the sixteenth century provide a template with which to compare the evolution of the Sephardi ballad. It would be unlikely that the changes that occur naturally in an oral genre would have yet developed. 3) Whilst only the opening lines of ballad texts are given as tune indicators, sixteenth-century piyyutim present a reliable source of the most popular Sephardi ballads circulating in the sixteenth century. By examining the characteristic features that the Sephardi ballad tradition has acquired with the passage of time, it is possible to surmise what would have been the state of the ballad in the sixteenth century.

Analysis of the state of the Sephardi Romancero in the sixteenth century is severely hampered by the almost complete absence of source material. As the leading authority on the Sephardi ballad, Samuel G. Armistead, has pointed out: "Textual evidence of Judeo-Spanish traditional balladry prior to the final decades of the nineteenth century is notably sparse".¹ These words apply in particular to the first century of the ballad tradition in the Sephardi Diaspora. Professor Armistead

50 For the comic aspects of *Shevet Yehudah* see E. Papo, 'An Atypical Account of Jewish Suffering?: A New Glance at Comic Technics and Elements in *Ševet Yehuda*', (in preparation).

1 Armistead, Samuel G. & Joseph H. Silverman, ed., with Biljana Šljivić-Šimšić, *Judeo-Spanish Ballads from Bosnia*, Philadelphia 1971, p. 13.