



Center for Visual  
Culture of Balkans

THE TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF  
THE SOCIETY FOR SEPHARDIC STUDIES

# Sephardic Jews between Religious, Ethnic, and National Identity



**BELGRADE,  
27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>  
JUNE 2022**

**ABSTRACTS  
OF PAPERS**

*Sefi Graphics Design*



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## ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS



Ben-Gurion University  
of the Negev



החברה לחקר יהדות ספרד ומורשתה | סוסייטי פוֹר סֵפֶרָדִים סטודיאס  
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Moshe David Gaon Center  
for Ladino Culture



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### **CONFERENCE SECRETARY**

AVISHAG BEN-SHALOM  
Dr. VUK DAUTOVIĆ

### **ORGANIZED IN CONJUNCTION WITH:**

THE MOSHE DAVID GAON CENTER FOR LADINO CULTURE OF BEN-  
GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

THE CENTER FOR STUDIES OF JEWISH ART AND CULTURE AND THE  
CENTER FOR VISUAL CULTURE OF THE BALKANS AT THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BELGRADE'S FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

THE CENTER FOR SABBATEAN SEPHARDIC CULTURE IN ISTANBUL;

ONEG ŠABAT – JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER BELGRADE

**Belgrade 2022**

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## FOREWORD

### SEPHARDIC JEWS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Even our era of fluid and overlapping identities has not ended the age-old tension between different aspects and perceptions of Jewish identity. Is the principal determinant of Jewish identity a person's relationship to "Judaism", or should Jewishness be perceived primarily as an ethnic culture and identity? After all, the term *Iudaismos* (Judaism) is not a Jewish one; it was coined by the ancient Greeks to designate the laws and customs of the people of the Israelite state of Judah. The pre-modern Hebrew language did not even have a word for "religion". Classical rabbinic texts generally do not speak of "Jews", but rather of the collective "Israel", whose redemption would be communal and occur in history, within this world.

However, during their long Diaspora, the overwhelming majority of Jews lived in one of the two hemispheres, Christian or Islamic, and in both they were recognized as an ethno-confessional entity, with rare ruptures between the two components of this syntagm. Rupture in one of these components was usually accompanied by rupture in the other. However, the Hispano-Christian "crusade" against Judaism (led mainly by local clerics, theologians, and preachers), which led to the near-destruction of Castilian and Aragonese *aljamas* from 1391 to 1415, and to the concomitant problem of *judeoconvertos*, subverted the validity of this syntagm. For the first time, the religion and ethnicity of tens of thousands of people once known—and still widely regarded—as Jews were at odds. The New Christians were Jewish in terms of their social and economic relations, their ethnic culture, and their social reputation; yet their religious identity was at least theoretically identical to that of the majority population. The Expulsion sought to end the Jewish subversion of the assimilation of New Christians into their new faith, but the "problem" endured well into our own days.

In subsequent centuries, while the overwhelming majority of their Ottoman brethren reembraced the securities of the double but mostly indivisible ethno-confessional identity, the Conversos played major role in shifts and changes in the ways that Jews and Christians understood the relation between religion, society, and state.

With the two Serbian revolutions of the early nineteenth century, followed by the Greek and Bulgarian uprisings, the Ottoman Jewish rabbinic elite (including such figures as Ribbi Yehuda Bivas and Ribbi Yehuda Alkalay) led a revolutionary change of Jewish identity, creating the Jewish national idea and the Zionist movement.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
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Dr. **KOTEL DADON**

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### MONDAY, JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>

#### **Arrival of participants in Belgrade.**

**15:00:** Meet in front of the Museum of Applied Arts (*Muzej primenjenih umetnosti*) at 18 Vuka Karadžića Street for a guided tour of the exhibition "Fashion World of the Kalef Family," given by the museum's advisor Draginja Maskareli.

**16:00:** Walk/Ride to the Cathedral of St. Sava (*Hram Sv. Save*) in Vračar, Belgrade (those joining us at this juncture are asked to meet the rest of the group at 16:30 by the main entrance to the church).

**16:30:** Guided tour of St. Sava and its crypt

**18:00:** Ride to Zemun

**18:30:** Tour of Zemun's Synagogue, the Herzl family house, and the Jewish graveyard

**21:00:** Dinner in Zemun (not sponsored by the organizers)

**23:00:** Return from Zemun to the Rectorate (Studentski trg) of Belgrade University

### TUESDAY, JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup>

#### **The day's events will be held at Belgrade University's Rectorate Kapetan Mišino zdanje, Studentski trg 1**

08:00-09:00: **Registration**

09:00-09:30: **Opening Ceremony and Remarks:**

H.E. Yahel Vilan, Ambassador of the State of Israel  
Danijel Sinani, Dean of the Philosophy Faculty, University of Belgrade  
Nenad Makuljević, the Center for the Visual Culture of the Balkans,  
University of Belgrade



Jelena Erdeljan, the Center for Studies of Jewish Art and Culture,  
University of Belgrade  
Eliezer Papo, Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture, Ben-Gurion  
University  
Bariş Telimen, Center for Sabbatean Sephardic Culture

09:30-10:10: **Session 1 – Keynote Lecture (Main hall)**

- **Shalom Sabar (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**, Spain of Three Religions through the Lens of Iberian Jewish Art

10:10-10:30: **Coffee Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

10:30-12:00: **Session 2 – Balkan Jewish Folklore (Main hall)**

Chairperson: **Krinka Vidaković Petrov**

- **Hanita Barbiro (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Identity of Djoha – the Comic Hero of the Sephardic Folk Tradition
- **Susana Weich-Shahak (Jewish Music Research Centre at Hebrew University)**, *Bavajadas i konsejikas* infantiles - Humor y disparates en el cuento infantil sefardí
- **Sanja Trifunović (University of Vienna)**, The Role of the Jews in the Production of the Ottoman Karagöz Shadow Theatre

12:00-13:00: **Lunch Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

13:00-14:45: **Session 3 – Sephardica Balcanica I (Main hall)**

Chairperson: **Jelena Erdeljan**

- **Damir Šabotić (University of Graz)**, Bosnian Sephardim between Modernization, Acculturation and Anti-Semitism
- **Avishag Ben-Shalom (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Multi-Faceted Loyalty of Bosnian-Sephardic Intelligentsia to their General Jewish, Partially Sephardic, Yugoslav and Micro-Local Sarajevan Identity
- **Gordana Todorić (Gaon Center, BGU)**, The Social Context of Bohoreta's Monograph The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia – the Case of Jelica Belović Bernardzikovska
- **Ivana Vučina Simović (Belgrade University)**, Discourse of Modernization in the Memories of Belgrade Sephardim between the Two World Wars

14:45-15:15: **Coffee Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

15:15-16:30: **Session 4 – Sephardica Balcanica II (Senate hall)**

Chairperson: **Eliezer Papo**

- **Ana Štulić (Université Bordeaux Montaigne-AMERIBER)**, Being Sephardic in Late Nineteenth-Century Serbia
- **Miloš M. Damjanović (University of Priština, Kosovska Mitrovica)**, The Status of Jews in Kosovo and Metohija and their Relations with Other Ethno-Confessional Groups amid the Final Decades of Ottoman Rule, 1876-1912
- **Eyal Ginio (Hebrew University)**, Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Balkans: The Jewish Community of Iştip/Štip during and in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars
- **Suzan Nana Tarablus (independent researcher)**, *Baba, bize neden Dönme diyorlar* (Daddy, Why do they Call us Dönmeh)?

16:30-17:00: Coffee Break (Senate hall)

17:00-18:45: **Session 5 – By the Waters of Virtual Sepharad (Senate hall)**

Chairperson: **Kotel Dadon**

- **Mladenka Ivanković (Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade) and Ana Ćirić-Pavlović (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)**, Sephardim in Early-Modern Mediterranean Trade: Daniel Rodrigues and “la Scala di Spalato”
- **Benedetto Ligorio (University of Rome)**, At the Service of the Citizens and the Common Good: The Republic of Dubrovnik's Jewish Consuls in Algeri, Genoa and Vlōre
- **Moisés Orfali (Bar-Ilan University)**, Livorno's Sephardic Jews as an Exemplar of Jewish Identity in the Broader Socio-Economic Space
- **Krinka Vidaković Petrov (Belgrade University)**, In a Foreign Harbor: The Turkish Jews of Zemun

19:30: **Transportation from the Rectorate to Dedinje, Belgrade**

20:00: **Reception at the Israeli Embassy**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29<sup>TH</sup>**

**Sessions at Oneg Šabat – the Jewish Cultural Center (Jevrejski kulturni centar) 16 Jevrejska Street (a 10-minute walk from the Rectorate)**

**09:00-10:30: Session 6 - Portraits**

Chairperson: **Nenad Makuljević**

- **Kotel Dadon (University of Zagreb)**, Portraits of Dalmatian Rabbis in the Eighteenth Century
- **Marcos Silber (University of Haifa)**, At the Crossroads of Izmir: The Meeting of Rabbi Haim Falachi, Adam Mickiewicz and Armand Levy as a Missing Link in the Development of Proto-Zionism
- **Michael Studemund Halévy (University of Hamburg)**, One Life, Many Narratives of Belonging

**10:30-11:00: Coffee Break**

**11:00-12:30: Session 7 – Sephardic Visual Culture**

Chairperson: **Shalom Sabar**

- **Nenad Makuljević (Belgrade University)**, Multiple Identities in the Art of Leon Kojen and Moša Pijade
- **Vuk Dautović (Belgrade University)**, Zionism and Sephardic identity: The Oneg Shabbat Society's Building in Belgrade
- **Jelena Erdeljan (Belgrade University)**, From Iberia to the Balkans: Sephardic Art and Culture in the Pre-Modern Era and the Question of Comparative Study of Two Mediterranean Peninsulas

**12:30-13:30: Lunch Break**

**13:30-15:00: Session 8 – Sabbatian Studies**

Chairperson: **Bariş Telimen**

- **Jonatan Meir (Ben-Gurion University)**, Sabbatianism in Livorno: An Unknown Ladino Letter from Nathan of Gaza, 1665

- **Miquel Beltrán (University of the Balearic Islands) and Meritxell Blasco (University of Barcelona)**, Preservation of Sabbateanism and its Link to Kabbalah
- **Efrat Lederfein-Gilboa (Ben-Gurion University)**, Ishmael and the Messiah: A Sabbatian view of Islam and the son of Hagar

15:00-15:30: **Coffee Break**

15:30-17:15: **Session 9 - Text and Home**

Chairperson: **Susy Gruss**

- **Ora R. Schwarzwald (Bar-Ilan University)**, Developments and Changes in Ladino Haggadot
- **Gila Hadar (Haifa University)**, Why do Women Sing? From Sephardic to Socio-Political Identity
- **Hava Pinhas-Cohen (independent researcher)**, David Albachari's "Jerusalem": The Story on a Tablecloth of a Belgrade Kitchen
- **Iris Brown (Ono Academic College)**, The Modern Hebrew Debate in Argentina's Sephardic Community

17:15-17:45: **Coffee Break**

17:45-18:30: **Session 10 – Talk-Performance**

Chairperson: **Avishag Ben-Shalom**

- **Judith Cohen (York University, Toronto)**, *Ea, Judeus, a enfardelar*: Convivencia and Songs in Pre- and Para-Expulsion Spain – a Talk-Performance

18:30-19:30: **The Knighting Ceremony of the Yitzhak Navon Order of the Knights of Ladino**

Moderator: **Eliezer Papo**

2022 Laurates:

- **Dona (Prof.) Krinka Vidaković-Petrov**, Memorial Institution Staro sajmište (presented by Dona Jelena Erdeljan)
- **Dona Biljana Albahari**, National Library of Serbia (presented by Don Vuk Dautović)

**THURSDAY, JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>**

**Sessions at Oneg Šabat – the Jewish Cultural Center  
16 Jevrejska Street**

**09:00-10:30: Session 11 – For Zion shall Come Forth from Zemun**

Chairperson: **Vuk Dautović**

- **Yitzchak Kraus (Bar-Ilan University)**, R. Yehuda Alkalay – the First Visionary
- **Eliezer Papo (Ben-Gurion University)**, Prince Miloš Obrenović of Serbia as a Role Model for H. R. Yehuda Alkalay's Peculiar Development of the Classical Rabbinic Concept of *Mašiyah ben Yossef*
- **Branko Ostajmer (Croatian Institute of History)**, The Zionist Congress of 1908 in Zemun

**10:30-11:00: Coffee Break**

**11:00-12:45: Session 12 – the Outer Perimeters of Virtual Sefarad**

Chairperson: **José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim**

- **Hugo Martins (CH-UL / University of Potsdam)**, A World in Dispute: The Interaction between Jews, State and Imperial Jurisdiction in the Free City of Hamburg (17th - 18th Centuries)
- **Benjamin Brown (Hebrew University)**, With the Help of God and Ashkenazi Rabbis: The Struggle to Preserve Sephardic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Karlsburg
- **Eugenio A. Alonso Lopez (University of Miami)**, A Portuguese Crypto-Jewish Diaspora in Seventeenth-Century Cuba and the Circum-Caribbean Basin
- **Ian Pomerantz (independent researcher)**, Between Sefarad and Ashkenaz in Early Twentieth-Century Philadelphia

**12:45-13:45: Lunch Break**

**13:45-15:15: Session 13 – the Written Word**

Chairperson: **Ivana Vučina Simović**

- **Amir Banbaji (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Path of Medieval “Meliša”: Maimonides and Moses Ibn Tibbon
- **Silvina Schammah Gesser (Bar-Ilan University)**, Lives under Siege: Representations of Sephardic and Crypto-Jews in Iberia and Spanish America
- **José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim (Universidade de Lisboa)**, The Shekhinah in the West? *Menina e Moça* – they Took me from my Parents’ Home. . .

15:15-15:45: **Coffee Break**

15:45-17:30: **Session 14 – Between Local and Jewish Patriotism**

Chairperson: **Avishag Ben-Shalom**

- **Maria Fragkou (University of Vienna)**, Grey Areas and Blurred Boundaries: Sephardic Supra-Nationals in a World of Nation-States and Urban(e) Patterns of in Transitory Spaces, 1912-1930
- **Doğa Filiz Subaşı (University of Yozgat Bozok, Turkey)**, Repercussions of Zionism in Early Twentieth-Century Istanbul: The Case of the Press
- **Joana Bürger (University of Washington)**, A Zionist Contribution to the Making of Greek Jewry
- **Susy Gruss (Bar-Ilan University)**, *Forjando una conciencia nacional a través de grandes figuras del judaísmo sefardí*

17:30-18:00: **Coffee Break**

18:00-19:45: **Session 15 – Identity Struggles**

Chairperson: **Moisés Orfali**

- **Yitzchak Kerem (Hebrew University)**, Romaniote Jewry in Light of Sephardic Settlement in the Ottoman Empire
- **Dimitrios Varvaritis (independent researcher)**, Envisioning a Future for Greek Jewry in the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Case of Isaac Kambeli
- **Davor Stipičić (Institute for Recent History of Serbia)**, Jewish National and Religious Identity within the Framework of Yugoslavian Socialism

- **Nitai Shinan (National Library of Israel)**, From Pariahs to Cultural Icons: The Hispanization of the Jews and Conversos Culture in Modern-Day Spain

20:00-21:00: **Concert on the premises of the Cultural Center:**  
**The Shira Utfila Band, By the Rivers of Sava and Dunav –**  
**Songs from the Musical Tradition of Balkan Jewry**  
(Courtesy of the Center for Sabbatian Sephardic Culture)

## **ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS**



**Amir Banbaji**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## **The Path of Medieval "melitsah": Maimonides and Moses and Ibn Tibbon**

My paper discusses medieval and renaissance critiques of Maimonides' denigration of poetry and rhetoric. Beginning with a brief exploration of Maimonides's approach to figurative language (*Moreh* 3.43, as well as the *Introduction* the *Perek Helek*), the bulk of the paper concentrates on efforts made by Hebrew writers who sought to revise and reform Maimonides' literary thought. The paper discusses the poetics of Moses Ibn Tibbon, whose *Introductions* to *Perush Shir ha-Shirim* (after 1273) and *sefer pe'ah* both suggest a distinctly different approach to both midrash and poetic language. Time permitting, I will also explore the cultural connections between Ibn Tibbon's literary outlook to Profiat Duran's aesthetic method (*Ma'aseh Efod*, 1403), and Judah Messer Leon's resurrection of Hebrew Rhetoric (*Nofet Tsufim*, 1475).

**Hanita Barbiro**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## **The identity of Djoha – the Comic hero of the Sephardic folk Tradition**

This lecture submitted hereby to the convention – Sephardic Jews – between Religious, Ethnic, and National Identity, offers a close look at the Identity of Djoha, the comic hero of the Sephardic folk tradition. The majority of the Jews whom were exiled from Spain, settled in Rumelia (the European part of the Ottoman Empire) or Anatolia (Asia Minor), that is in areas where the common languages were Greek, Slavic languages and/or Turkish- and only a minority settled in the Middle East, namely in areas where the common language was Arabic. Along with that, the Sephardic embraced Djoha, the comic hero of the Arabic folktales - and not his Turkish equivalent, Nasruddin Hodja. In addition, the Sephardic convert many of Nasruddin folktales about Djoha. It might be said, that the conversion was due to the fact that in the Turkish folk tradition, Nasruddin is characterized as having a distinguish Ethno-confessional identity, and whom is a religion teacher. In that sense, Djoha, the comic hero of the Arabic folk tradition has a vague Ethno-confessional identity. Djoha resemble Superman of nowadays, all the religious group which are part of the Arabic and Trans- Mediterranean Cultural mosaic can identified with him, although he belongs to everyone and no one. In the majority of the Sephardic folktales, not only Djoha Ethno-confessional identity is vague but irrelevant. Rarely the narrative of Djoha folktales required a distinguish Ethno-confessional identity – but even then once he is being characterized as a Jew and once as a Muslim. This lecture is an attempt to

examine the vague Ethno-confessional identity of Djoha and the implication of that fact for the identity of the Sephardic narrators of Djoha folktales.

**Avishag Ben-Shalom**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## **The Sarajevo Dispute: Bosnian Jewry between the New Jew and the New Sephardic Jew**

In this lecture, I will show how the members of the Sephardic movement (*Sefardski pokret*) in Sarajevo have constructed a new Sephardic identity in the course of an internal Zionist debate that unfolded in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It culminated in 1924 in what came to be known as the “Sarajevo Dispute”. The dispute occurred between a group of Sephardic Jews who sought to create a separate Sephardic Zionist movement, where they would preserve and cultivate the Judeo-Spanish language and Sephardic tradition and see to their unique interests, while the leaders of the Zionist movement in Yugoslavia, mostly Ashkenazi Jews with some Sephardim, wanted all Zionist organizations to operate under a single umbrella. According to the latter, creating a separate Sephardic movement would lead to secessionism and separatism within the Zionist movement .

I will rely on essays by two activists in that movement, both from Sarajevo, who at a certain point studied at the University of Zagreb. The first was written by Samuel Kamchi (1904-1972), and titled “The Sephardic Jews and the Sephardic Movement” (*Sefardi i sefardski pokret*). The second was written by Ješua Kajon, and titled “The Sephardic Jews to This Day” (*Sefardi do danas*). In them, the authors explained to their opponents the goals and the reasons for founding the Sephardic movement. Both essays were published together in 1927 in a single brochure by Esperansa – a Zionist organization that united

all Sephardic students in Zagreb. The essays constituted the manifesto of the Sephardic Zionist movement.

According to Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, “The main concept of the Sephardic Jews, derived precisely from their Westernization, was to preserve their specific Sephardic identity through modernization”. Through these essays, I shall demonstrate how these Jews construct the category of “Sephardism” and redefine it in dialogue with other members of the Zionist movement in Yugoslavia, while at the same time adopting many of the Orientalist and Eurocentric ideas to which they have been exposed in the course of their studies.

**Miquel Beltránm**

University of the Balearic Islands and Meritzell Blasco, University of  
Barcelona

## **Preservation of Sabbateanism and its Link to Kabbalah**

Our objective is to explain the reason why the messianic message of sabbateanism served to spread the study of Kabbalah, increasing the interest of its doctrines after 1665. Nathan of Gaza was told to experience a prophetic possession by a heavenly messenger and announced that Şevi was the Messiah. But after Şevi's conversion to Islam several important rabbis held that the widespread study of Kabbalah was partly responsible for the Sabbatean debacle. Nathan of Gaza died in 1673, still trying to explain why the Messiah had failed to manifest himself on any of the dates that Nathan had predicted. Shabbatai died in 1676, never having entirely reconciled his different faiths and rituals. Nevertheless, this did not conduct to the end of the movement but, once again, the kabbalistic theology of the faith kept it alive even if it suffered fervorous attacks. Pur aim is to prove that the kabbalistic writing of Nathan, Cardozo and other Sabbatean thinkers were so sophisticated and profound that they continued to be read, even by rabbis who had no interest in Sabbateanism, to the point of changing Jewish Identity in capital aspects.

**Benjamin Brown**

Department of Jewish Thought, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## **With the help of God and Ashkenazi rabbis: The struggle to preserve Sephardi identity in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Karlsburg**

At the beginning of the 19th century, a few Sephardi synagogues still stood in Transylvania, holding onto their particular liturgy and customs. We do not know much about these congregations, but two responsa, one by R. Shmuel Landau (1750-1834) and the other by R. Moshe Sofer (the Hatam Sofer, 1762-1839), may shed light on the struggle of a small community to preserve its identity in this Ashkenazi environment. The questions to the two rabbis were penned by two different people from Karlsburg (Alba Iulia). Both of them reported that the Sephardi community had decided to impose a ban on any members who would pray in the Ashkenazi synagogue, and, surprisingly, that the Ashkenazi community had pledged their cooperation. However, a plague ravaged the Sephardi community, such that they no longer had enough men for a prayer quorum, nor teachers to train the youth in the Sephardi customs and pronunciation. The question addressed to the rabbis was whether the ban was still in force, and if so, whether it could be invalidated. While R. Landau denied the validity of the ban with regard to the children of those who issued it, Rabbi Sofer wished to preserve it but suggested some practical means to circumvent the prohibition. Both of the authorities conveyed their wishes that God help the Sephardi community resurge, multiply and "mend its fences". A few decades later, the famous Ashkenazi rabbi of Karlsburg, Yehezkel Panet (1743-1841), was invited to deliver a sermon at the Sephardi synagogue. As these documents manifest, the Ashkenazi congregation, and Ashkenazi rabbis

of countrywide authority, helped the “rival” Sephardi congregation get back on its feet, and did not deem its separate existence a threat to Jewish unity.



**Iris Brown**

Ono Academic College

## **Shaping Religious Leadership for a Sephardic Community: The Correspondence between Rabbis Isaac Chehebar and Isaac Antebi Sacca (Buenos Aires) as a Case Study**

Between the years 1981-1989, Rabbi Isaac Chehebar, rabbi of the Halabi community in Buenos Aires, conducted a fascinating correspondence with his distinguished student Isaac Antebi Sacca, later the rabbi of the Sephardic community. This correspondence, part of which has not yet been published, reveals the positions and personality of Rabbi Chehebar. Even more interestingly, these letters reflect the way in which Rabbi Chehebar sought to shape and educate his student as the religious leader of a future community.

Rabbi Yitzchak Moshe Chehebar (1912-1990), was born in Aleppo, Syria, emigrated to Argentina in 1953 and settled in Buenos Aires, where he founded the "Yesodei Hadat" Community and the Beit David Yeshiva. He was later appointed Chief Rabbi of Argentina. Rabbi Chehebar was an impressive figure who ran the community with strong authority and did not hesitate to enter into struggles over his positions and religious views.

In this lecture I will seek to learn from the correspondence and other sources how Rabbi Chehebar perceived the desired figure of a Sephardic religious leader in the Diaspora community, mainly in the prism of three aspects: preservation of the Sephardic method of Torah study, the attitude to secular studies and the attitude to Zionism and the State of Israel. As we will see, he sought at the same time to strengthen the religion in the community, to

preserve the Sephardic tradition and to maintain an openness to modernity - elements that sometimes seem contradictory. To get the most out of it he strove to find delicate balances - and the way to do so he wished to instill in his student as well.

**Joana Bürger**  
University of Washington

## **A Zionist Contribution to the Making of Greek Jewry**

With the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the Jewish population living under Greek sovereignty increased tenfold and diversified significantly. In this period of political turmoil, Moisis Caimis (1864-1929) – a Zionist pioneer and community leader hailing from Corfu – used his Greek-language publication *Israilitiki Epitheorisis* (1912-1916) to carve out a space for Jewish existence in the Greek state. Following Thessaloniki's allocation to Greece (1913), Caimis endeavored to integrate the city's Sephardic Jews into his vision of a imagined political community of Greek Jewry. This paper analyzes how Caimis conceptualized local, national and transnational aspects of a modern Jewish identity, while striving to harmonize Greek patriotism and Jewish nationalism. I conclude that *Israilitiki Epitheorisis* utilized *Zionism* as a vehicle for the cultural unification of the linguistically diverse Jewish communities in Greece. By focusing on the life and work of Caimis, who was raised in the bilingual Greco-Italian environment of Corfu before moving to Athens in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this article provides a novel supralocal perspective to the study of Greek Jewry, which emphasizes the importance of both Jewish publishing on the Ionian islands and the institutionalization of Jewish life in Athens for the formation of a Jewish identity in Greece.

**Judith Cohen**

York University, Toronto, Canada

## **“Ea, Judeus, a enfardelar”: convivencia and songs in pre-and-para-Expulsion Spain, a talk-performance**

“Convivencia”, in certain circles, has become a household word, having found its way from academia to social media, cavalierly cited as a reference to the “good old times” in medieval Iberia, where Jews, Christians and Muslims are depicted as having provided an example of convivial sharing. It is often extended to notions about music, in which history conveniently becomes elastic, and late 19<sup>th</sup> century songs in Ladino can be presented as having “survived for 500 years”. The degree of musical and poetic sharing which, as far as one can ascertain, did take place in what we will call here, for convenience, medieval Spain, has been studied, by myself and by others. Here, I want to look at depictions of “the other” in some sources, starting with the emblematic 13<sup>th</sup> century “Cantigas de Santa María” attributed to / claimed by King Alfonso X. What do the images of Christian, Muslim and Jewish musicians in the CSM miniatures tell us, compared with what the stories in the songs relate? How much musical and daily life “convivencia” was really taking place, judging from the Cantigas and from the “Siete Partidas”, the laws that Alfonso published in the vernacular?

Time permitting, we will go further forward in time to around the time of the Expulsion and the vision of the “mora”, which may be interpreted as “Moorish” and/or as “dark”: the folklorized “dark girl” of para-and-post Expulsion times, and her appearance indiaspora Ladino song texts.

Late 20<sup>th</sup> and current 21<sup>st</sup> century discourse in Spain transformed three complex religions into three “cultures” – “las tres culturas”, as if none others existed, and as if there were only one culture among each religion’s communities. Together with the notion of “convivencia”, and the inaccurate assumption that all Ladino songs are “500 years old” , this has often led to solemn pronouncements about centuries-old influences between Ladino songs – especially the romantic 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century love songs most people have heard - and flamenco, neither of which existed before the expulsion. Is there evidence of Gitano-Jewish convivencia in pre/para-Expulsion times, regardless of what their music sounded like at the time?

## **Kotel Da-Don**

Judaic studies, University of Zagreb

### **Portraits of Eighteenth-Century Dalmatian Rabbis**

In the region of Dalmatia, the city of Split, *Esplatro* אֵשְׁפֶלֶטְרוֹ as it was called by the Jews, located on the border between the Ottoman and European worlds, prospered during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Jewish community in the city, most of whose members were engaged in commerce involving international trade between the Republic of Venice, which ruled Split, and the territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, also prospered and grew.

At the time, the small old port of the city became one of the most important ports in international trade, following the 1577 initiative of Daniel Rodriga, a local Jew of Portuguese descent, to establish a free port in the city, which was later adopted by the authorities of the Republic of Venice.

The fact that the Jews of Split were given permission to engage in all kinds of work and economic activities contributed to the development of the Jewish community and a significant increase in the number of Jews in the early seventeenth century, from 70 to 272 in 1638.

However, later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the status of the port of Split, which served as a gateway to goods going to and from the Ottoman Empire, was diminished as the importance of the land route from Asia to Europe across the Balkans declined and was replaced by direct maritime trade. The damage to the status of the port naturally led to the

diminished status of the city and its economic situation, as well that of the Jewish community and its members. The direct result was a reduction in the number of the members of the community: in 1796, only 173 Jews were left.

Split's status continued to decline following geopolitical changes in the late eighteenth century, which included the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1797, which had ruled Split until then and included it in its territory, followed by the annexation of Dalmatia, including the city of Split, by the Habsburg Empire. In 1805, Split became part of the Kingdom of Italy under Napoleon's patronage and in 1814 was re-annexed to the Habsburg Empire. These changes affected the economy and demography of the small Jewish community, which nevertheless managed to continue to function, like a spring bubbling from the ground, nearly unaffected by the prevailing meteorological conditions.

The community preserved its spiritual continuity, was headed by talented rabbis and maintained constant contact with the community in the Holy Land of Israel, known as the *Old Yishuv* (היישוב הישן, *haYishuv haYashan*).

A study conducted by scholars regarding the community's contributions to the poor Jewish community in Israel, (פנקס טבריה וקופת רבי מאיר and פנקס ארץ-ישראל), (בעל הנס), showed that the small Jewish community of Split continued to provide assistance to the Jewish communities in the four holy cities (Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias).

In this lecture, I should like to speak about some eighteenth-century rabbis of the Jewish community of Split, who left their mark. Unfortunately, there is no single source that systematically reviews all the Split or Dalmatian rabbis, so it was necessary to gather information from various sources. There was very

little available information about some of the rabbis and it was necessary to examine a number of manuscripts. The literature I used to prepare this lecture includes the following:

1. Books belonging to the rabbis of Split
2. Books belonging to other rabbis and other texts with pieces of information on the biographies of the Split rabbis
3. The National Library of Israel: Archives and Manuscripts Division
4. Various scientific articles (Moritz Levy, Eliezer Papo, Daniel Carpi, Yaron Ben Na'a, Makovetzky-Bornstein) and books dealing with the sacred works of the *SHaDaRim* (acronym for SHelichei DeRabanan—an emissary of the rabbis), and rabbinical emissaries from Eretz Israel who were sent to collect charitable donations (Gaon, Yaari).

The rabbis I included in my research are as follows:

Rabbi Avraham David Papu, Rabbi David Pardo, Rabbi Shabetay Ventura, Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak Musafia, Rabbi Avraham Chay Musafia and Rabbi Moshe Yitzchak Ashkenazi Tedeschi.

Due to time constraints, I shall focus here on only one rabbi: *Rabbi Avraham Chai Musafia*.



**Milos M. Damjanović**

University of Pristina, Philosophy faculty – Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia

## **The Status of Jews in Kosovo and Metohija and Relations with Other Peoples in the Final Decades of the Ottoman Occupation, 1876–1912**

From the Russo-Turkish wars of 1876-1878 and the establishment of the League of Prizren, the demographics of Kosovo and Metohija were disrupted. Emigrants who came to these areas contributed to this, as did the ethnic emptying caused by the emigration of the terrified Serbian Christian population. Due to greater pressure and genocidal actions from fanatic Muslims and the anarchic circumstances which ruled over the border province of the “sick man of the Bosphorus”, security conditions changed greatly. Intensified interethnic relations between the two leading peoples in Kosovo and Metohija – Serbs and Albanians – were reflected in the status of the small Sephardic population. Frequent open conflicts, the arbitrariness of local feudal lords, the nonexistence of legal protection, the weakness of the Ottoman authorities, religious fundamentalism, widespread illiteracy and folk superstitions all influenced the status and life of Kosovo-Metohijan Jews. Due to such a state of affairs, the followers of Moses were at times victims of arrogance and brutality from Albanian and Turkish oppressors and subject to political abuse during certain political events. The paper explores and highlights those circumstances.

**Vuk Dautović**

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

## **Zionism and Sephardic identity: The “Oneg Shabbat” Society’s Building in Belgrade**

The complete civil emancipation process of the Sephardic community in Belgrade became noticeable during the early XX century. Visually speaking, this was expressed through the building of numerous public-private constructions, formed in accordance with the Orientalist visual culture cultivated throughout Central Europe. The appropriation of the Central European Orientalist model by the Sephardic community in Belgrade was a novelty that completely altered the manner of its representation. The adoption of Orientalism in the construction of public community buildings as well as in private instances marked the period of emancipation of Belgrade Sephardim until the beginning of WWII. This relationship of the Sephardim towards Orientalism represents an understudied phenomenon which can be observed and understood more closely through the example of the Belgrade Sephardic community. With the construction of a new synagogue Beth Israel in the neo-Moorish style (1908), Belgrade’s Sephardic community accepted the Orientalistic concept in the expression of its identity. The preference for this model was confirmed by the construction of public structures and monuments based on the designs of architect Samuel Sumbul. The Oneg Shabbat and Gemulit Hasidim Society was built first, followed by a memorial to Jewish soldiers killed in the wars from 1912 to 1919 at the Sephardic cemetery, and finally the House of the Jewish Church-School Community in Belgrade. The Oneg Shabbat building served as a new synagogue, communal

space, and cultural and political center in the old Sephardic neighborhood during the interwar period. In the Oneg Shabbat building were seated the first Zionist organizations, whose goals were to bring the political idea of Zionism closer to the Sephardic community. One of the most important steps in their mission was the use of the Ladino language. The paper will discuss the cultural and visual context of their role.

**Jelena Erdeljan**

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

## **From Iberia to the Balkans. Sephardic Art and Culture in the Pre-modern Era and the Question of Comparative Study of Two Mediterranean Peninsulas**

This paper will delve into the question of method pertaining to the study of Sephardic art and culture in the Balkans, especially in view of its crucial significance for the formation of not overall identity of the Balkans in the premodern era. It will consider the role of Sephardic culture in the process of cultural transfer between the Iberian and Balkans peninsulas and its key contribution in strengthening the interconnections between the Balkans and the broader Mediterranean world. A point of specific interest will be the investigation of processes of creation of Jewish art in the Iberian peninsula and Sephardic art in the Balkans as a result of interaction and communication between Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities and their cultural identities. Case studies will draw from the examples of Sephardic art and monuments in the Balkans from the territories of present day Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Maria Fragkou**  
University of Vienna

## **Gray areas and blurred boundaries: Sephardi supranationals in a world of nation-states and patterns of urbanness in transitory spaces, 1912-1930**

In many respects, Thessaloniki's (Salonika's) history is Sephardim's story. As the city of the largest Sephardic community in the diaspora, as the capital retains its position as, education, business, and cultural center of Sephardism. This paper purports to explore the tensions between governmental and national bodies in the era of state-building and nationhood and some groups of elites in Greece who was part of comunidad sefardita, and some of them they had European origin or European citizenship (Spanish, Portuguese, Austrian, French, Italian). This paper analyzes the transition from the subnational to national political level, focusing on investigating the most important crises of the period and how they affected the European elite groups who lived in the city. The period of 1912–1930 is a special period in contemporary history, when the Sephardic history belongs in the wider historical framework, the wider place and time of European and world history. The evolution of the world affected not only the interpretation of this period but also the historical phenomena both local and national, international and global.

**Silvina Schammah Gesser**

Salti Institute for Ladino Studies , Bar-Ilan University

## **Lives under Siege: Representations of Sephardic and Crypto Jews in Iberia and Spanish America**

The paper focuses on three different yet closely intertwined literary representations of Sephardic and Crypto-Jews, on eve of the 1492 Expulsion, at the court of the Catholic Kings; in colonial Río de la Plata, 1605, as the Spanish conquerors sought to monitor the strategic port of Buenos Aires while struggling to establish themselves in the New World and, back to continental Spain of the Counter-Reformation, more exactly 1650, a period that coincided with the Golden Age of the Spanish Baroque, and the rise of artistic figures as Diego de Velázquez, who had Jewish ancestors.

These literary representations correspond to the trilogy written by the acclaimed Argentine Sephardic dramaturge, Ricardo Halac (born 1936). In this trilogy, *Mil años, un día* (1983), *La lista* (2016), and *Vidas vigiladas* (2019), Halac critically explores the kaleidoscopic and refractory identities of Sephardic and Crypto Jews in Spain and Spanish America, at crucial historical moments when the Christian majority on both sides of the Atlantic is obsessed with establishing its religious, ethnic, social, cultural and economic supremacy.

**Eyal Ginio**

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## **Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Balkans: The Jewish Community of İştîp (Štip) during the Balkan Wars and their Aftermath**

Jewish Salonica played a central role in leading the much smaller communities of the Ottoman Western Balkans. Benefiting from free movement, networks of study, commerce and social relations, conducted in Ladino (and sometimes in Hebrew), sustained the social and economic dependence of the smaller communities on the Salonican community. This was particularly true in times of crises. The Ottoman loss of the European provinces during the Balkan Wars (1912-13) had a tremendous impact on the local Jewish communities. Major urban centers, like Edirne and Salonica, lost much of their rural hinterlands. The impact of this change on the small Jewish communities of the Peninsula is still understudied.

The end of the "Ottoman-Sephardi" hinterland and its division among the different Balkan kingdoms stands at the center of this presentation. First, I explore the role of the Salonican community in offering assistance and shelter to the surrounding smaller communities during the Balkan Wars. Then, I move to discuss the impact of the new boundaries on the Salonican community's ability to offer assistance to its coreligionists, now foreign citizens of neighboring countries. My main case-study is the Jewish community of İştîp (nowadays Štip). By exploring articles published by Jewish and Ottoman press in Ladino, Hebrew and Turkish as well as reports produced by Jewish aid organizations, the presentation analyses the role of Salonica as a center of

Jewish aid catering to the Jewish smaller communities of the Balkans and the impact of the newly created borders on its ability to continue playing this role.



**Susy Gruss**

Instituto Salti, Universidad Bar-Ilán

## **Forjando una conciencia nacional a través de grandes figuras del judaísmo sefardí**

La última personalidad de la serie monográfica titulada “Grandes figuras del judaísmo Sefaradí”, redactada por Abraham Elmaleh y publicada por *El Tiempo* de Tel Aviv (1950-1967) fue la de “Rabi Yehuda Hay Alkalay (Precursor del Sionismo político antes del Dr. Herzl)”.

La serie, publicada durante más de cinco años, reúne figuras destacadas de todos los confines de la diáspora sefardí moderna como, Rabi Barukh Mitrani, Salomón Rozanes o David Cazes, algunas investigadas y publicadas por Elmaleh en distintas plataformas. En general, los artículos publicados en *El Tiempo* no se extienden a más de dos o tres publicaciones sucesivas. Sin embargo, los capítulos dedicados al Rab Alcalay fueron cinco (*El Tiempo* 21.11.1966- 3.1.1967). Es probable que sólo fuera el azar quien destinó al Rab Alcalay a ser el último de la serie ya que, pocos meses más tarde Elmaleh perecería y en abril de ese mismo año, *El Tiempo* cerraría sus puertas. Pero no por eso deja de ser significativo que el broche de oro de la serie fuera el principio de todo: la importancia del legado del Rab Alcalay en la configuración de una conciencia nacional judía.

Durante la ponencia se analizarán los aspectos que Abraham Elmaleh eligió resaltar en la personalidad del Rab Alcalay con el objetivo de crear un consenso y un sentimiento de orgullo étnico-nacional.

**Gila Hadar**

Jewish History Department, University of Haifa

## **Why do women sing? From Sephardic Identity to Social and Political Identity**

Moshe Attias wrote in the introduction to his book 'Romancero Sefaradi': "Romance songs played an enormous role in the lives of the Sephardim, and particularly in the life of the Sephardic woman. This was, for generations, almost the sole source of her spiritual diet...songs gave expression to certain personal, family and public situations".

According to Moshe Atias's description, romance songs fulfilled the woman's need for self-expression. In this lecture I'll show that the Ladino songs sung by Sefardi women had a deeper significance. The songs expressed an existential problem and raised a cultural demand – to hear their voice and to express their experiences and their feelings, opinions and social and political identity and views in their own words.

To this end I have selected cultural songs as one of the ways of demonstrating how women negotiated their spaces and identities in the Sephardic culture from the 15<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Yitzchak Kerem.**

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## **Romaniote Jewry in Light of Sephardic Settlement in the Ottoman Empire**

In light of Sephardic Settlement in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries in the Greek Peninsula and Turkey, much of Romaniote halacha was dominated and replaced by Sephardic rabbinic decisors, and the Romaniote prayer rite was replaced by Sephardic prayer ritual, but much of Romaniote tradition, and Judeo-Greek language was retained. For example Ioanniote holidays like Irtaman, fifteen days before Purim, was preserved. Throughout the Ottoman period and until the Holocaust, the Romaniote synagogue layout of east to west with the ehal (ark) on the east wall and the bimah on the west wall, was preserved. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century the weekly Haftarah was translated into Greek or Judeo-Greek. In Thessaly in particular there were many marriages between Sephardim and Romaniotes, but since the Sephardim had difficulty learning Greek, many Romaniote traditions faded. However, the Ioanniote Jews continued writing their own piyyutim, singing their own melodies, and using their own language. Judeo-Greek was still spoken until WWI, but afterward and until their almost complete annihilation in the Holocaust, they continued speaking Greek. The Romaniote Jews continued their tradition of the aleph scroll before circumcision, and the use of the Shaddai hanging on or over the parochet.

## **Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai - The First Visionary**

Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai (Sarajevo, 1798 - Jerusalem 1878) was the visionary of the Jewish state prior to Herzl, and I wish to prove this claim by reviewing the records of his writings published after 1840. Alkalai published many pamphlets in his life, in which he tried to influence Jews to progress towards a collective settlement in the Land of Israel; this is his uniqueness. That is to say, until his time there were some, not many, immigrations to the Land of Israel, but these were specific groups making Aliya, such as the aliya of the Hasidim and of the aliya of the disciples of the Gaon of Vilna. These groups chose to purchase land in a certain place, and I would define them as local settlements. Alkalai's vision was a national vision for the benefit of all Jewish people, and he called for a national revival and a return to the historic Land of Israel. Alkalai, as a rabbinic figure, was the first to call for active national redemption, and he rejected the passive waiting for salvation. Fifty years before Herzl, he formulated a political plan for the establishment of a national home in Palestine. His plan included approval from the Turkish Sultan to settle in the Land of Israel, and he called upon the Jewish collective to take part in this process by establishing a settling society and even establishing a national financial fund to bankroll this activity. In addition to his political program, he advocated the productivity of the Yishuv, territorial concentration, normalization, social justice, culture and language. The studies on Alkalai are very few, and I hope my research will enrich the study of this important historical figure. In my paper I will present the main points of his method and

prove my argument that Rabbi Alkalai was the first visionary of the state of Israel. I will also, on the one hand, discuss his influence, and on the other hand review the great opposition to his approach.

**Mladenka Ivanković**

Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade

&

**Ana Ćirić-Pavlović**

ELTE University, Budapest

## **Sephardim in the Early Modern Mediterranean Trade: Daniel Rodrigues and “la Scala di Spalato”**

This essay aims to portray the involvement of Sephardim along the trading routes between Europe and the Orient by focusing on the transformation of Spalato (Split) into a significant trading center of the Mediterranean. Daniel Rodrigues (Rodriga), a Portuguese Sephardi *converso*, entrepreneurial merchant and diplomat had a distinguished role in this process. Often represented as a paradigmatic “port Jew”, he stands for one of the most prominent Jewish personalities in historiography dealing with the early modern Mediterranean. In the late sixteenth century he initiated the development of Spalato into a free port within the Venetian empire, ensuring privileges for Jewish merchants thus enhancing simultaneously the expansion of the Sephardi international trading network under the Ottoman protection. Moreover, not only did Rodriga build *la scala* (harbor) and enabled much lower taxes for Ottoman imports but also secured an adjacent *lazaretto*. This quarantine brought fundamental improvement of public health conditions in the age when the plague regularly decimated coastal city populace. As a result, local economy flourished while both Levantine and Balkan Sephardi merchants became frequent intermediaries in the increasing exchange of commodities within the framework of the Mediterranean basin and beyond.

**Efrat Lederfein-Gilboa**  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## **Yishma'el and the Messiah: A Sabbatian view of Islam and Yishma'el**

With Sabbatai Sevi's conversion to Islam in September 1666, Jews reevaluated their attitudes towards Islam, Muslims, and the imagery of "Yishma'el" as structured in Jewish exegesis. Sabbatian thinkers, one of whom was Sabbatai Sevi himself, were preoccupied with the question of the role Islam played in the process of redemption. Islam was sometimes referred to directly, but most often through the Jewish figure of Yishma'el. Most Sabbatians, however, preferred neither. They referred only to the act of conversion and not to the object of conversion: Islam.

The purpose of this lecture is to examine the different attitudes of Sabbatian thinkers towards Islam. What knowledge did Jews of the 17th century possess about Islam? How did they display that knowledge? Why do Sabbatian thinkers prefer to use the imagery of Yishma'el rather than to speak about Islam itself? Is there a difference in the theology of Jews living in Muslim areas such as the Ottoman Empire, Morocco, and Yemen and those living in Christian areas, mainly in Italy and Poland? And finally, how can we explain the absence of any mention of Islam by most thinkers?

**Benedetto Ligorio**  
University of Rome

## **At the Service of the Citizens and Common Good: The Jewish Consuls of the Republic of Dubrovnik in Algeri, Genoa and Vlöre**

The Republic of Ragusa had three important consulates entrusted to the Sephardic Jews in three different states of the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Era: Valona, Algiers and Genoa. The Apulian family of Coduto had the office of consul of Dubrovnik in Valona, Albanian harbour of the Ottoman Empire for one hundred years, between the 16th and 17th century. David Magistre (or Maestro) was consul of Dubrovnik in the Republic of Genoa from 1756 to 1772 and had significant correspondence with the Rectors of Dubrovnik, an important testimony of the less known new phase of expansion of the economic role of Dubrovnik in the 18th century and at the same time of the pragmatism and laical perspective of the both sea republics. Dubrovnik had also a Jewish consul in Algiers, in the Berberian Coast, where the Busara family covered the office of consul for the late quarter of the 18th century. The consuls had an important role of trade connections between states but despite the common belief the economic activity was only a part of the real role of the consuls. The consuls of Dubrovnik had other main tasks: guarantee the safety in travel and protect the interest of citizens of the Republic, build official and unofficial connections with the civil authorities of the region in which the consulate was based. Usually they communicated periodically the prices of the wheat and the seaworthiness thus contributing to planned food supplies and the preventing famines. Sometimes they were involved in the operation



of rescue of citizens and release of enslaved or abducted people. Their status of people with an honest and respectable reputation, not necessarily rich, makes the Jewish consuls the perfect candidates to the role of bridge between cultures and states. The Dubrovnik consuls practically supplied with their political, social and economic networks to the slowness of the official diplomatic bureaucracy and contribute to follow the common good of the States of their net.

**Eugenio A. Alonso Lopez**  
University of Miami

## **A Portuguese Crypto-Jewish Diaspora in 17th Century Cuba and the Circumcaribbean Basin**

Very little is known about a Portuguese presence in the Caribbean. Even less is known about the other “Portuguese”, the Crypto-Jews or Converso who have much less of a niche in that historiography. The question is why were any Portuguese there and how they managed to arrive in the area. A further question is if they were indeed Conversos, how and why they settled in the area. These questions have only been possible after reviewing many cases of purported Judaizers in the Tribunals of the Inquisition of Mexico and Cartagena de Indias during their jurisdiction over the area. The answers can only come as a result of investigating recent documentation uncovered on archives in Mexico and Spain. It is now possible to peer into the world of the Portuguese Crypto-Jewish Diaspora and their familial and commercial ties in the area. The number of those referred to as Portuguese by the Spanish authorities is the genesis of the evaluation of those that entered into the sphere of influence of Inquisitorial authorities. It will constitute the basis of an exploration of a hereto unknown history of the Luso Jewish Converso diaspora in less populated and marginal areas of the Spanish empire where the Inquisition seems to have had a weaker presence. The retelling of this history will uncover a network of people and places linking the accused with the larger Converso and Crypto-Jewish centers of the period.

**Hugo Martins**

CH-UL / University of Potsdam

## **A world in dispute. The interaction between Jewish, state and imperial jurisdiction in the Free City of Hamburg (17th-18th centuries)**

This presentation focuses on the legal history of the Portuguese-Jewish community in Hamburg during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, more specifically on how the Portuguese resisted local practices and conceptions of justice to impose their own values in communal and international disputes. Based on the protocol books of the Portuguese Nation (1652-1682), the judicial proceedings of the local courts (Niedergericht, Obergericht, Admiralitätskollegium), the imperial court (Reichskammergericht), as well as the proceedings of the Danish Royal Chancellery, the aim of this study is to analyse how Portuguese justice worked side by side with the aforementioned jurisdictions in legal proceedings involving members of the Portuguese Nation during the 17th and 18th century. In general, the complex interactions between these different legal frameworks will be explored, with the aim of assessing the impact of local justice on the adjudication and identity formation of the Portuguese community, during one of the most important periods of its history.

## **The Zionist Congress in Zemun in 1908**

One of the key dates in the history of the Zionism on the soil of the South Slavic countries was 1902, when the Bar Giora Society was founded in Vienna. The full name of the society was “Society of Jewish Academics from Yugoslav lands” (“Društvo Židova visokoškolaca iz jugoslavenskih zemalja”), and in its ranks it gathered Sephardim and Ashkenazim (although mostly Ashkenazim). In the coming years, Bar Giora successfully implanted the Zionist idea in the Slavic south, and particular successes were achieved in the city of Osijek. The most important figure in Osijek was dr. Hugo Spitzer (1858-1936), president of the Jewish Community of Osijek, who early on became enthusiastic supporter of Zionism, and in whom the Bar Giora Society found a key support. That is why the first two congresses of South Slavic Zionists, organized by Bar Giora, were held in Osijek (1904, 1906), while the third congress was held in 1908 (August 16-17) in Zemun.

A significant Jewish community lived in Zemun (almost 700 Jews, or more than 4% of the total population at the time of the Congress), the town was also important to the (Yugoslav) Zionists as the place from which Theodor Herzl originated, but even more important was the fact that in Zemun Sephardim and Ashkenazim lived together, and that the city was on the border between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Serbia. Zemun Congress, held in a festive atmosphere at the Hotel Central, was much more than a student congress, it gathered the most prominent Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian Zionists, and one of the proclaimed goals was to manifest the

brotherhood of Sephardim and Ashkenazim. As the presentation would show, this goal was achieved and the Zemun Congress marked a new step forward in the development of Zionism on the soil of the Yugoslav countries.

**Moisés Orfali**  
Bar-Ilan University

## **An example of Sephardi Jewish Identity in the Broader Socio-Economic Space: Livorno**

One of the remarkable examples of national identity and interreligious uniqueness rigorously maintained in the western Sephardi communities is the case of Livorno, whose Jewish and national identity was emphasized in the definition adopted by the congregation as *Nazione Ebraica portoghese e spagnola*. This definition was institutionalized due to the intervention of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I of Medici (1549–1609), and didn't change as we will see despite the community's reform programs over the years.

In Livorno, which would become the second largest Sephardi settlement in the West after Amsterdam, the legal protection of this group identity implicitly eased the conditions under which these particular individuals could act as cosmopolitan Jews. Their share in the commerce of the port was a dominant one. The contribution they made to the wealth of the Grand Duchy was inestimable. They founded a flourishing trading community whose activity had such wide social and economic repercussions that historians have called it the "oasis" of Tuscany.

This lecture will deal principally with the Sephardi hereditary oligarchy of the *Nazione* regency, which became institutionalized due to the intervention of the grand duke. This character of the regency had rigorously maintained the Sephardi identity of the community. Not only was this identity emphasized in

the definition adopted by the congregation *Nazione Ebraica portoghese e spagnola*, but the *italianos*, *tudescos* (Franco-germans), *berberiscos* (North-Africans) and others had to continue the sephardization of their rite, their school system, and their community life.

**Krinka Vidaković Petrov**  
Belgrade University

## **In a Foreign Harbor: The Turkish Jews of Zemun**

The Sephardic community of Zemun (Semlin) was established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by some Sephardim from Belgrade, who fled to Austria after the Ottomans recaptured the city in 1739. More Jews came from Belgrade to Zemun during the two Serbian uprisings and the Serbian-Turkish wars. They enjoyed the status of “protected Jews” in a small community comprised of an Ashkenazi majority and immersed in a Central European cultural environment. We propose to research the historical and cultural identity of the Sephardim of Zemun, an early meeting place of the Central European Ashkenazim and the Oriental Balkan Jews; and see what changes could be detected in the transition from the Austrian.



**Nitai Shinan**

National Library of Israel

## **From pariahs to cultural icons: the hispanization of the Jews and Conversos culture in contemporary Spain**

In the first and second decades of the eighteenth century a large wave of converso persecution engulfed the main cities of Spain. This persecution put an end to the practice of Jewish costumes among the conversos. After the third decade, charges of Judaizing were seldom brought before the holy office. It seemed that at last the long dream of the inquisition was at last achieved. Spain was one country united by the catholic faith.

While Spain was completely free from every trace of Judaism, several intellectuals responsive to the urgent need to defend Spain cultural heritage from the harsh criticism of European enlightenment thought, started to research the cultural heritage of the Spanish Jews.

This process started with Feijoo and was continued by the Spanish scholar José Rodríguez de Castro. Castro dedicated the first volume of his *Biblioteca Española* to the literary creation of the Spanish Jews believing that its output could prove the value of Spanish Culture. José Amador de los Ríos continued his work, viewing the expelled Jews and their decedents as commissioned by the providence to propagate Spanish culture among the Nations.

My lecture will explore these early efforts and their causes and effects well into the twentieth century, when the peninsular Jewish history was at last recognized as a part of the national history.

**Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald**  
Bar Ilan University

## **The Developments and Changes in the Sephardic Ladino Haggadot**

Up to the sixteenth century, Sephardic Haggadot included only instructions in Ladino within the Hebrew text. From the sixteen century on, both the instructions and the Haggadah texts were translated into Ladino, with considerable changes between the free translations of the instruction and the very rigid translations of the texts. The Hebrew songs at the end of the Haggadah that had been included in the Ashkenazi and Italian Haggadot were added to the Ladino Haggadot only since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The twentieth century brought about more changes in the Haggadot: the Ladino text is printed in letters which are not the Hebrew script; there are new free Ladino translations different from the traditional ones; the songs "*Un kavretiko*" the equivalent of *Had Gadya*, and "*Kien supiense*" the equivalent of *Ehad Mi Yodea* were added to the Haggadah. The paper describes the changes and explains them based on the historical, cultural, and demographic changes in the Sephardic communities.

**Marcos Silber**  
University of Haifa

## **At Izmir Crossroads: The meeting of Rabbi Haim Palachi, Adam Mickiewicz and Armand Levy, as a missing link in the Development of Proto-Zionism**

A Jew, a Pole and a French entangled in one of Izmir's synagogues between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This phrase that could begin a classical joke reflects a meeting that indeed happened in Smyrna in 1855. The three are Rabbi Haim Pallaggi (Palachi), the well-known Chief Rabbi of Smyrna, the Pole is the National Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, and the French is Armand Levy, his secretary. This wholly ignored meeting encapsulates a story of understandings and misunderstandings in the encounters of a traditional Sephardic Rabbi, a "European" poet, and a cosmopolitan revolutionary on the Jewish and non-Jewish frontier, addressing the potency of the still existing recalls of Sabbateanism and Frankism, memories of destruction and exile, and hopes of redemption. How they met? What they talk about? And more importantly, how they interpret their conversation, and what were its echoes? By trying to explore the circumstances of the meeting and their deep echoes in the proto Zionist thought, the paper will explore how traditional Jewish lives encountered non-Jewish modernity on the one hand and how non-Jewish agents of modernity encounter traditional Jewish lives on the other, leading to new Jewish and non-Jewish interpretations of "reality." By doing that, the presentation will address the transference of ideas of diaspora and return, from the Sefardic Ottoman Empire to the Ashkenazi Western European Jewry, from "rabbinic thought" to "European nationalism" via Polish and Jewish diasporas and myths of return.

**Ivana Vučina Simović**

Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

## **Discourse of Modernization in the Memories of Belgrade Sephardim between the Two World Wars**

In this paper I analyse how the beginnings of the modernization and emancipation processes were remembered in the texts describing the past of the Sephardim from Belgrade. The corpus consists of Jewish publications which appeared in Serbian between the two World Wars. These texts testify to the specificity of the Jewish culture of remembrance which praise the modernity and cultural assimilation of the Jews in Serbian society on the eve of twentieth century. The analysed discourse bear a strong resemblance to the discourses of the European and the Balkan orientalism, but it also testifies to the influence of modern Jewish authors.

**Davor Stipić**

Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade

## **Jewish national and religious identity in Yugoslavian socialism**

Starting with the concept of transnational and transcultural nature of Jewish community on Western Balkans throughout the centuries, this article will examine the changes of Jewish national and religious identity within the socialist and secular Yugoslavian society after the World War II. Considering the consequences of three very important events: 1. Victory of Communist revolution and radical change of social and political context in Yugoslavia after the War; 2. The Holocaust in which perished approximately around 80% of pre-war Jewish population of Yugoslavia and 3. The creation of independent Jewish national state in 1948, our intention is to give the answers on some important questions such as: How did different parts of Jewish people (orthodox Jews, communists, Sephards, assimilated Jews...) perceived their national identity after the War? What was the attitude of Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia toward this question? We will, also separately, analyze three main topics: 1. National and religious identity of ordinary Jews, 2. Identity of Jewish writers in socialist Yugoslavia (Ivan Ivanji, Dailo Kiš, Ženi Leb, Aleksandar Tišma) 3. The usage of expressions *Jevrejini* and *Židovi* and their connotation regarding local Jewish identity in different parts of Yugoslavia.

## Being a Sephardic Jew in the Late Nineteenth-Century Serbia

This paper aims at contributing to the study of Sephardic experience and everyday life in the late nineteenth-century Serbia, using as the main source a Sephardic periodical, *El Amigo del puevlo*, (Belgrade 1888-1893, Sofia 1893-1895). Founded as an official newspaper of the Jewish community of Belgrade, under the leadership of its president, Yaakov Moshe Alkalay, *El amigo del puevlo* was defined as “*djornal por novedades israelitas, literatura i sensia*” [‘newspaper for Jewish news, literature and science’]. When the first issue of *El amigo del puevlo* came out, the Sephardic press had already had a solid tradition in Salonika, Istanbul and Vienna. Although articles in *El amigo del puevlo* resemble models seen in earlier Sephardic periodicals such as *El tiempo* (Istanbul, 1872) or *La Epoka* (Salonika, 1875), the content of some of them is area-specific and, thus, reveals interesting information on the attitudes and points of view that the Serbian Sephardic Jews had on a variety of topics (education, politics, religion, history, language, etc.) as well as on practical circumstances of their life in Serbia. Written almost entirely in Judeo-Spanish, in Rashi characters, this newspaper is also a precious source of information on the linguistic features of the language used by Sephardic Jews in Serbia.

**Doğa Filiz Subaşı**

University of Yozgat Bozok (Turkey)

## **Repercussions of Zionism in Istanbul in early 20th century: The case of the press and publications**

The 19th and 20th centuries of the Ottoman Empire were marked by key factors such as not only modernization and cultural and linguistic revitalization but also the key role played by the emergence of Zionism as well as its repercussions in the Jewish communities, which accommodated many detractors of the movement mainly in two groups: anti-Zionists (such as David Fresko, editor of the newspaper El Tyempo, Lucien Sciuto, a Jewish Salonican journalist, David Florentin, director and redactor of the newspaper El Avenir, and Zionists (such as Nahum Sokolov, a journalist who, years later, became one of the key figures of the Zionist movement, the chief rabbi Haim Nahum, and brothers Ben-Giat, among others). These groups constantly exchanged accusations in the early years of the 20th century. This study describes the conflict between Zionists and anti-Zionists through some literary texts (letters, news, booklets, etc.) published in the Sephardic newspapers of Istanbul

## **Baba Bize Neden Dönme diyorlar? (Daddy why do they call us Dönme (convert Salonicans))**

I am planning to present my fourth book, "*Baba bize neden dönme diyorlar?*" (Daddy why do they call us Dönme (converts))?" In the foreword of the book Prof. Dr. Cengiz Şişman, an expert on Sabbatean Studies, notes to following:

"... The 28 interviews in the book in your hand are not "disclosures" or "confessions" about this community, but an effort of different individuals for self-discovery and for understanding their historical, sociological and psychological relationship with their own community. In a way, it is a desire to return to one's roots, which started in parallel with an interest in sub-identities among different ethnic and religious groups in the 1990s and 2000s in Turkey. In fact, the Salonican's effort to express their feelings publicly could be in earlier works such as Michèle Blumenthal and Michel Grosman's documentary *Sazanikos*, and in the books of Ilgaz Zorlu, Rifat Bali, Marc Baer. Memo Kösemen and myself. However, for the first time, Suzan Nana Tarablus has succeeded in bringing together a significant number of interviews in which the sub-branches of this community, Yakubi, Karakaş and Kapancı are represented in a single volume. Although it is not possible to claim that this volume represents all the practicing and non-practicing individuals in this community, it is still an invaluable treasury for both Sabbatean descendants and Sabbatai studies in the long run.

There is no doubt that the story of each individual speaking here is unique. After commenting upon a few common themes in the interviews of these



people, whom I prefer to call Cultural Dönmehs or Salonicans, and many of whom I know, I would like to leave the reader alone with these interesting conversations”.

**José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim**

Centro de História, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa

## **The Shekhinah in the West? *Menina e Moça* – they Took me from my Parents' Home. . .**

In 1554, in the workshop of the exiled Sephardic Jew Abraão Usque, in Ferrara, a work was published in Portuguese under the title *História de Menina e Moça* [*History of Child and Girl*]. The author was Bernardim Rodrigues, a poet from the court of King Manuel I, that participated in the famous *Cancioneiro Geral de Garcia de Resende* (1516). We know little about him. The more important data on Bernardim is that, under the protection of the king, he became a student of Lisbon University and later was appointed to the post of *Escrivão da Câmara*, or secretary, which means he belonged to the circle of the Crown.

The *História de Menina e Moça* it is well known due to his exoteric content. To some authors, there is nothing concerning Judaism in this book, which is a pioneer of "bucolicism" in Portugal, and therefore its anagrams refer to it. For others, the posthumous printing of the work by Usque raises suspicions that Bernardim was a New Christian, and that certain messages included, as well as the anagrams used, refer to crypto-Kabbalistic elucubrations.

Due to the importance of female anagrams in the text, we suspect that there is a surreptitious message about the "Shekhinah" that should be explored.

**Gordana Todoric**

Moshe David Gaon Center, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

## **The social context of Bohoret's book *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia – The Case of Jelica Belovic Bernardzikovska***

The problem of cultural contextualisation of the study Sephardic woman in Bosnia presupposes dealing with those factors that were, in real time, really relevant not only to the creation but also to the constitution of the meaning of Bohoret's book. Factors that are primary to Sephardic studies (language and topic) should be added and those external factors without which Bohoret's book and its importance cannot be fully understood.

Given that the writing of Jelica Belovic Bernardzikovka was an impetus for the emergence of a Sephardic woman in Bosnia, we believe that insight into her work contributes to a more complete, even transcultural understanding of Bohoret's study.

Therefore, we will try to show in the paper the key features of social / women's activism of Jelica Belovic Bernardzikowska, a certain parallelism of her and Bohoret's life circumstances, as well as the social conditions in which Belovic's text appears.

## **The Role of the Jews in the Production of the Ottoman Shadow Theatre Karagöz**

This lecture aims to illuminate the Jewish identity through one of the most popular theatrical forms of the Ottoman period. The French travel writer Jean de Thevenot was the first to notice that the performers of this theatre in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were mostly Jews. The topic focus is on the anthropological-linguistic analysis of various aspects of the role of Jews in the production of this Ottoman theatre: Jews as performers, Jews as characters in the plays, Jewish narratives and language use, as well as Jewish origin of this theatre. Taking into account all previously clarified aspects of the Jewish role, the lecture indicates that elucidating the role of the Jewish player is of great importance, both for a better understanding of the specifics of the narratives, as well as the development and reform of the Shadow Theatre Karagöz in 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece. The final acknowledgement of this examination is to support the idea of possible Sephardic and Romaniote origin of this theatre, or the fusion of both Jewish elements - deeply related to Christian and Muslim components, and thus, in some aspects, a universal and recognizable form of theatrical expression of all ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire at the time.

**Dimitrios Varvaritis**  
University of Vienna

## **Envisioning a future for Greek Jewry in the shadow of the Holocaust: the case of Isaac Kambeli**

In 1950 the Greek-Jewish journalist and wartime community leader Isaac Kambeli published a collection of essays entitled *Εις τας επάλξεις του Εβραϊσμού* ('At the ramparts of Judaism'). Encapsulating a Zionist vision for the future and postwar identity of Greek Jewry the book passed, largely unnoticed, by Kambeli's coreligionists as well as the general reading public of Greece. Kambeli was at the time a contentious and controversial figure. Having served as president of the Jewish community of Athens during part of the German Occupation (October 1943-March 1944) and having furthermore survived his own deportation to Auschwitz, Kambeli was placed on trial, in late 1946, for collaboration in the persecution, arrest and deportation of the city's Jews. Kambeli's subsequent acquittal did not diminish the controversy, within Greece's postwar Jewish leadership and community, surrounding his wartime activities. Yet despite this controversy Kambeli's book remains an important source of information and opinion that has, to date, received very little attention in the pertinent scholarly literature on the aftermath of the Holocaust in Greece. This paper aims to address this gap by critically examining Kambeli's book. The paper will present and summarise the book's content and attempt to place it within the overlapping contexts of both Kambeli's career and the wider developments concerning postwar Greek Jewry.

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