

DRAMATIC DIALOGUES IN THE JUDEZMO PRESS, 1873: PART ONE – SOCIOLINGUISTIC REMARKS ON REPRESENTATIONS OF MULTIPLE SOCIAL-REGISTER CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE*

DAVID M. BUNIS

(Center for Jewish Languages, Mandel Institute for Jewish Studies-The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

david.bunis@mail.huji.ac.il

RESUMEN

Antes de la década de 1860, los diálogos que intentaban representar el judezmo conversacional (o ladino, judeoespañol) se limitaban esencialmente a líneas de discurso atribuidas a varios personajes retratados interactuando en obras en prosa que de otro modo no serían conversacionales. Estas obras eran en su mayoría de naturaleza religiosa y los personajes que representaban solían ser figuras históricas de la Biblia, la Mishná y el Talmud. La obra judezmo original de Moše Šemu'el Kofino, *Pyesa de Yaakov Avinu i sus ijos* (Bucarest, 1862), construida casi en su totalidad en forma de discurso directo de sus diversos personajes, con algunas instrucciones escénicas, tomó la forma dramática moderna; pero sus personajes también se limitaban a figuras bíblicas, interactuando entre sí utilizando un lenguaje algo forzado y a menudo nada conversacional.

Uno de los primeros intentos de representar este lenguaje hablado de modo real fue una serie anónima de diálogos titulada *Novetades de la noche* ['Noticias de la noche'], aparecido en el periódico judezmo *El Tyempo* de Estambul en 1873. El lenguaje puesto en boca de sus personajes ficticios, que se turnan para pronunciar sus líneas como en el drama moderno, incorpora numerosos rasgos de lengua hablada contemporánea.

Los diálogos de *Novetades de la noche* aparecieron poco más de una década después de que el dramaturgo turco Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi (Estambul, 1826-1871) regresara de Francia y, bajo la influencia literaria francesa moderna, publicara en 1860 una obra titulada *Şair Evlenmesi* ['El matrimonio del poeta']. La obra de Şinasi revela analogías de muchos de los mismos rasgos conversacionales populares que luego se evidenciaron en *Novetades de la noche*. En el presente artículo se propone que los diálogos de judezmo podrían haber sido influenciados, directa o indirectamente, por el drama de Şinasi y por una conciencia general del género dramático contemporáneo entre los judíos del Estambul de finales del siglo XIX, lo que indica un grado de integración cultural judía dentro de la sociedad otomana circundante.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ladino; judeoespañol; sefardíes otomanos; prensa judía; lengua oral; diálogo; teatro; Ibrahim Sinasi.

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ABSTRACT

Before the 1860s, dialogues attempting to represent conversational Judezmo (or Ladino, Judeo-Spanish) were essentially limited to lines of speech attributed to various characters portrayed as interacting in otherwise non-conversational prose works; such works were mostly of a religious nature, and the characters they depicted were mostly historical figures from the Bible, Mishnah and Talmud. Moše Šemu'el Kofino's original Judezmo play, *Pyesa de Yaakov Avinu i sus ijos* (Bucharest, 1862), constructed almost entirely of lines of direct speech attributed to its diverse characters, with some stage instructions, took the modern dramatic form; but its characters, too, were limited to Biblical figures, interacting with one another using somewhat stilted, often non-conversational language.

One of the earliest attempts to represent actual spoken language as used by individuals belonging to diverse social sectors of a Judezmo speech community, that of late nineteenth-century Istanbul, was an anonymous series of dialogues entitled *Novetades de la noche* ['News of the evening'], appearing in the Judezmo periodical *El Tyempo* of Istanbul in 1873. The language placed in the mouths of its fictional characters, who take turns uttering their lines as in the modern drama, incorporates numerous features of contemporary spoken language; other features typical of the modern drama are also present, such as stage instructions and dialogues within dialogues.

The *Novetades de la noche* dialogues appeared a little over a decade after the Turkish playwright, Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi (Istanbul, 1826-1871) had returned from France and, under modern French literary influence, in 1860 published a play entitled *Şair Evlenmesi* ['The Poet's Marriage']. Şinasi's play reveals analogues of many of the same popular conversational features later evinced in *Novetades de la noche*. In the present article it is proposed that the Judezmo dialogues might have been influenced, directly or indirectly, by Şinasi's drama, and by a general awareness of the contemporary dramatic genre amongst the Jews of late nineteenth-century Istanbul, indicating a degree of Jewish cultural integration within the surrounding Ottoman society.

KEY WORDS: Ladino; Judeo-Spanish; Ottoman Sephardim; Jewish Press; Conversational language; Dialogue; Drama; Play; Ibrahim Şinasi.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It was the middle of the nineteenth century and the interface between the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish Enlightenment (or Haskalah) Movement, and Western European Enlightenment and Humanism which gave rise both to the Ottoman Jewish vernacular press in Judezmo (or Ladino, or Djudeoespanyol),¹ as well as to the Ottoman Jewish theater – that is, “theater” as conceived of in Western European terms. As Elena Romero (1969, pp. 187-212 y 429-440; 1970, pp. 163-176 y 438-508; 1979; 1983) began to point out in great detail in 1969, the press was the main literary platform on which many of the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Jewish dramas were first “staged,” as it were, that is, in which they were first published.

I had the great fortune in the 1990s to discover, on the pages of the Judezmo press published in Salonika on the eve of World War II and today housed in the National Library of Israel and the Library of the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, several series of fictional Judezmo dialogues featuring the captivating interactions of the elderly couples Tío Ezrá and his wife Benuta, and Tío Bohor and his wife Djamila, and members of their families and friends.² At the trying time in the history of the Salonikan Jews during which these series were being published, right before the brutal destruction of most of the community by the Nazis, the humorist Moshé Kazés and other Judezmo satirists of the time were full of nostalgia for the traditional Sephardic lifestyle of the preceding generations, which they saw disappearing before their eyes. Thus, much of their writing was of a wistful, sentimental

¹ On the first Judezmo newspaper, *Şa'are Mizrah* of Izmir (1845-46), see Bunis, (1993, pp. 5-66); for a general introduction to Judezmo, see Bunis, (2021a).

² I first reported on this serendipitous discovery in Bunis (1999a). I take this opportunity to thank the conference organizers and the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki once again for their spectacular hospitality during the conference.

nature, in which they attempted to document as much as they could of the traditional Selaniklî lifestyle, its typical foods, songs, and folkloristic and religious practices – always presented in a light, humorous vein, predominantly in language ostensibly typical of the community's older, conservative, non-Europeanized sectors, in interaction with members of the community's other social sectors – men and women, the elderly and the younger generation, the religious versus the more secular, the more tradition-bound versus the Europeanized, and so on. If the character of those dialogues had to be summarized in one word, I would use the word “nostalgic.”

Preparations for participation in a conference held in Istanbul in the spring of 2023 on the Jewish theater in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey led me to uncover Judezmo fictional dialogues which had appeared in the Judezmo press of Istanbul, some 70 years before the Salonikan series. If I had to characterize the majority of *those* dialogues in a single phrase, it would be “social criticism” – and particularly, criticism of the community's leaders and institutions, sometimes in their interaction with members of the Istanbul Jewish community's neighboring ethnic-religious groups. Like the Salonika nostalgic dialogues, these earlier dialogues of social criticism presented before the reader interactions between members of the diverse “social-level sectors” of a particular Ottoman Sephardic community, as represented in speech in “linguistic-register” diversity, ostensibly reflecting actual variation in the types of Judezmo spoken by the varied social sectors of the Jewish community being critically inspected by the writers. The dialogues reveal some of the social issues – and especially the complaints and gripes of some members of the community in rebellion against the administrative and religious establishment and their actions, deemed unacceptable by the dialogue writers and exposed in the dialogues in an attempt to help bring about their correction – which the writers of the time felt it was urgent to share with the readers of some of the earliest and most widely-distributed Judezmo periodicals of the time. In the instance of the dialogues which will stand at the center of the present analysis, the periodical was *El Tyempo* of Istanbul, which began to appear on October 1, 1872, as a daily under the direction of H̱ayyim Karmona.³ The dialogues appeared in 1873.

THE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION OF THE JUDEZMO-SPEAKING SEPHARDIM AND ITS LINGUISTIC REFLECTIONS

Over the centuries of their residence in the Ottoman regions, Judezmo writers demonstrated a keen awareness of and sensitivity to the social stratification of their communities, and the positive correlation between social sector and social dialect. Before the nineteenth century this correlation was often alluded to indirectly; but in the Judezmo press of the nineteenth and especially twentieth centuries it was sometimes touched on quite directly. A prime example of such treatment appeared in several Judezmo periodicals of Salonika on the eve of World War I.⁴ The piece alludes directly to the significant social-level and linguistic-register diversity of the Jews of Salonika which existed throughout the Ottoman period and into the early Greek State era; it had parallels in the other Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire and the succeeding post-Ottoman nation-states, although the specific linguistic details often diverged from one community to another. The piece can serve to give us an idea of the diversity to be found in the social fabric of the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Turkish and Balkan Jewish communities. The piece is transcribed from the original Rashî-letter Hebrew font used in the Judezmo periodicals of

³ Unless otherwise noted, in the present article, *El Tyempo* refers to the Judezmo periodical published in Hebrew letters in Istanbul, 1872-1930, and should not be confused with that published under the same title in Salonika, or the two published after World War II in Istanbul, in Turkish Romanization, under the name <El Tiempo>.

⁴ The text was first published in *El Kirbach* (1912, p. 3), and was later reproduced in *La Flecha* (1936, p. 1).

Salonika during this period, Romanized here using the simple, intuitive orthography close to that designed for native Judezmo speakers by the late Izmir-born journalist, Moshe Shaul (1929-2023).⁵ For the sake of those readers unfamiliar with Judezmo, an English translation is added:

MIL MANERAS DE EKSPRESARMOS

Los dji⁵yós de Saloniko avlamos de mil mo⁵dos i maneras el djudeo espanyol. Ka⁵da klasa del puevlo tyene sus frazas; ka⁵da kategoria de ombres tyenen sus manera de avlar; ka⁵da djornalista tyene sus espresyones; i ka⁵da uno i uno emplea sus byervos; i por tanto to⁵dos se dan a entender kon fasili⁵dad.

Por eshemplo, kuando kyeremos ke se alivyanen de entre mozotros syerta djente pezga⁵da, mozotros les dezimos: “Arrematasyón” kon bos de kantar. Los de la yeshivá uzan a emplear: “Rúah!” Las mujeres dizen: “Eskova detrás de la puerta”. Los nyervozos dizen: “Vazyando!”; los merka⁵deres emplean el byervo: “Espalda ke te vea!”.

Kuando en algún lugar non konvyene a avlar demazía, los nuestros enkomendan: “Shetiká”; Bula Klara uza a dezir: “Mu⁵dera”; el puevlo emplea el byervo: “Amu⁵disyón”; los de los klubos se dizen: “Sirma”; Ribí Avram Agadol dize: “Yod⁵eah lashón”, o “Otro lakirdi”.

Kuando algún zevzek fandaklí mos está rompyendo los selevros, los vyejos dizen ke “Tyene las vi⁵das bozea⁵das”; los mansevikos le gritan: “Amán, yit!”; los frankitos lo yaman “Rompe⁵dor”; las mujeres demandan “koronas de limón” o los yaman “Lafazán Chimino”.

A los ha⁵drozos non los pueden ver ninguno. Ansí es ke la djente de meoyo dizen ke son: “Guezmo de pyezes”. Los del puevlo los yaman: “Me fye⁵do en pyes”. Para los nuestros son: “Fandazmeno”; las mosikas, ke les agra⁵da burlarse de to⁵do, les dizen: “Chindjelipundjino”, i las mujeres en djeneral los yaman: “Tellí pullí”.

En vyendo pasar algún chalumdjí, uzo “yaparum ederim”, en saldireando braso, los nuestros lo yaman: “kabadaí”; el puevlo dize ke es “pelit de kanya”; los mansevikos lo asemejan a “kahalón”; i las mujeres lo tyenen por “manga⁵da”.

Si tenemos delante djente angustyoza ke mos es antipátika i kyere beber a muestra espalda ya saltamos to⁵dos a dezir: “Adyó de hallahutes”; el puevlo los yama: “danya⁵dores”; las mujeres los toman por “aver pezga⁵do”; i *El Kirbach* los konta por “turistas”. I de este mo⁵do ay miles i miles de kozas ke ka⁵da dji⁵yó selaniklí las emplea a su manera, i to⁵dos se entyenden sin tener menester de muchas espyegasyones i sin trokar la manera de avlar de ka⁵da uno.

⁵ In the present article the Romanized transcriptions of the Judezmo material, originally appearing in Hebrew letters, follow the system devised by Moshe Shaul and advocated by the Israel Authority for Ladino and Its Culture and the Ladino Academy of Israel (e.g., *b* = voiced occlusive [b]; *dj* = voiced [dʒ]; *b* = voiceless velar fricative [x]; *j* = voiced [ʒ]; *s* = voiceless [s]; *sb* = voiceless [ʃ]; *v* = voiced fricative [v]; *y* = voiced glide [j]; *z* = voiced [z]), with the following exceptions: *d* denotes fricative [ð] as opposed to *d* for occlusive [d] when represented by simple *dalet* <d> in the original text; *ð* denotes fricative [ð] when represented by *dalet*+diacritic <d̥> in the original; *g* denotes fricative [ɣ] (in some dialects of the Southeast Judezmo dialect region) as opposed to *g* for occlusive [g]; and an acute accent is used to indicate the stressed vowel in words having irregular stress. A middle dot (·) divides words which were written together in the original text but are ordinarily written in today's Roman-letter Judezmo as separate words. Slight punctuation changes were made to aid reading. For an analysis of this Romanization system see Bunis, (2021a, pp. 392-481) and Bunis (2021b, pp. *21-37 y 35-45). Transcriptions of the material in Hebrew proper follow the currently accepted standard.

[‘A THOUSAND WAYS OF EXPRESSING OURSELVES

We Jews of Salonika speak Judeo-Spanish in a thousand different ways and forms. Each class [or social sector] of the people has its own phrases; each type of person has his own way of speaking; each journalist has his [pet] expressions; and each and every person uses his [characteristic] words; and nonetheless all understand one another very easily.

For example, when we want to free ourselves from certain annoying individuals we tell them quite clearly “Arrematasyón!” [‘Get lost!’]. Those of the Jewish religious study halls use “Rúah!” [‘Spirit!’]. The women say: “Eskova detrás de la puerta” [‘(Be like a) broom behind the door!’] Nervous people say: “Vazyando!” [‘Pour yourself out!’]; the merchants use the expression: “Espalda ke te vea!” [‘May I see your back! Go away!’].

When it’s inconvenient to speak openly in certain places our crowd command: “Shetiká” [‘Silence!’ (H. *šētiqá*)];⁶ [the traditional, middle-aged housewife] Bula Klara is used to saying: “Muḏera!” [‘Silence!’]; those of the popular sector use the word “Amuḏisyón” [‘Shut it!’]; those [young men] of the [Western European-style] social clubs tell each other: “Sirma” [‘Filigree’ (T. *sırma*)]; [the old-fashioned, religion-focused] Rabbi Avram The Great says: “Yoḏéah lashón” [‘He understands our language’ (H. *yodea’ lašon*)], or “Otro lakirdí” [‘Change the subject’ (T. *lakirdí*)].

When some long-winded bore [T. *zervzek fandaklı*] keeps breaking our brains, the old people say that “Tyene las viḏas bozeaḏas” [‘He has a broken life’ (T. *boz-*)]; the young men shout to him “Amán, yit” [T. *Aman, git*]; los frankitos lo yaman “Rompeḏor” [‘Breaker’]; the women ask for “koronas de limón” [‘lemon peels’, against migraine] or they call them “lafazán chimino” [‘talkative’ (T. *lafazan*)].

No one can countenance braggarts. Thus, brainy people say they are: “Guezmo de pyezes” [‘Foot odor’]. The popular masses call them: “Me fyedó en pyes” [‘My feet stink’]. For our crowd [of progressive, westernized intelligentsia] they are a: “Fandazmeno” [‘Specter’ (G. *fandazmēno*)]; the young maids, who like to laugh at everything, call them: “Chindjilipunchino”; and the women call them: “Tellí pullí” [‘tastelessly adorned’ (T. *telli pullu*)].

When seeing some swaggerer [T. *çalımcı*] pass by, of the type “Yaparum ederim” [‘I will! I will!’ (T. *yaparım ederim*)], thrusting his arms, our crowd call them: “Kabadai” [‘Hooligan’ (T. *kabadayı*)]; the popular sector says they are a “pelit de kanya” [‘tough nut’ (T. *pelit*, S. *caña* ‘cane’), tough, valonia acorn]; the young men liken them to a “kahalón” [cf. J. *kaḡalón* ‘coward’, S. *cagallón* ‘large turd’]; and the women consider them “mangaḏas” [‘blusterers’, ‘paper tigers’] (G. *mágga* + S. *-ada*).

If we have before us a disagreeable person, who is unpleasant and wants to drink to our back, we all jump in and say: “Adyó de hallahutes” [‘Good riddance to scoundrels’ (H. *heleka*)]; the everyday people call them “danyaḏores” [‘evil spirits’]; the woman consider them to be “aver pezgaḏo” [‘heavy air’ (H. *amir*)]; and *El Kirbach* considers them “turistas” [‘tourists’ (in a negative sense)]. And there are thousands and thousands of similar expressions that every Salonikan Jew uses, each in his own way; and yet all understand one another without need for much explanation and without changing each one’s way of speaking.]

This brief passage is outstanding in that it offers a correlation between some of the diverse social sectors of the Salonika Jewish community, or “las clases del pueblo” [‘the classes of the people’] with specific reference to several society-related factors – to gender (“las mujeres dicen” [‘the women say’] apparently in opposition to most of the other sectors

⁶ The following abbreviations of language names are used in this article: A. = Arabic, F. = French, G. = Greek, H. = Hebrew, I = Italian, P. = Persian, S. = Spanish, OS. = Old Spanish, T. = Turkish.

mentioned, which we may understand to have been composed of males), to age (“los mansevikos” [‘the young men’] versus “los vyejos” [‘the elderly’] and others), to religious and cultural orientation (e.g., the traditionalist “Bula Klara” [‘Sister Klara’], religiously learned and conservative “Ribí Avram Agaḏol” [‘Rabbi Avram the Great’] and “los de la yeshivá” [‘those of the religious study halls’] versus the more modern, westernized and secular-oriented “frankitos” [‘Western Europeanizers’] and “los de los klubos” [‘the modern social-club members’]), to profession, class and status (“los merkaḏeres” [‘the merchants’], “los djornalistas” [‘the journalists’], “los del puevlo” [‘those of the popular sector’], “las mosikas” [‘the maids’]); and even personality types (e.g., “los nyervozos” [‘excitable people’], “los haḏrozos” [‘the show-offs’], and the self-important “chalumdjís” [‘swaggerers’]).

The passage illustrates the fact that by the early 20th century, Judezmo writers were very sensitive to and enjoyed writing about the linguistic diversity that existed in their community, and how it reflected the community’s social stratification. Some of the specific linguistic examples refer to forms characteristic of the Salonika dialect; but analogues existed in the other regional Judezmo dialects as well. The text alludes to a recognition, on the part of the journalists of the time, that the social structure of their formerly tradition-bound community was in the process of undergoing profound changes, and at the same time, the traditionally distinct social-level language registers were undergoing leveling as a result of pressure from the newer, western Europeanized variety of Judezmo – the “nuevo lenguaje” or “lingua frankeada” or “djudezmo kon byervos frankeados” [‘Judezmo with Europeanized words’], as the Salonikan rabbi, historian and journalist Michael Molho called it⁷ – which was rapidly gaining in prestige, and spreading even to the not-yet fully-westernized sectors. So, while the journalists were creating a kind of popular entertainment literature using the diverse registers of the language still existing in their time, it is very likely that they also had in mind that they were actually documenting the receding and vanishing registers in written form, for posterity.

How does this, in a sense, modern phenomenon – the documentation of diverse Judezmo regional and sociolinguistic registers in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both by linguists who were in touch with the community such as Julius Subak, Max Wagner, Max Luria, Cynthia Crews, and others, and by journalists who were influenced by them – tie into the larger historical development of the literature in the language?

LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF OTTOMAN SEPHARDIC SOCIAL STRATIFICATION BEFORE MODERNIZATION

Until the late eighteenth century, Judezmo literature was almost entirely of a religious nature, reflecting the community’s predominantly rabbinical leadership and religiously tradition-bound everyday members. Incorporated within some original texts and Judezmo rabbinic translations of Hebrew works, from the sixteenth and into the twentieth centuries, we find brief passages representing dialogues occurring between biblical characters or other Jewish national heroes and their adversaries, and other figures from the traditional Jewish world experience. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, parts of the formerly tradition-bound community gradually underwent modernization, westernization and secularization, and a Judezmo literature based on western European models began to be created. But for the more conservative, religious sectors who remained as they were, the rabbinic writers continued to produce a religion-oriented literature into the twentieth century.

⁷ *Aksyón* (Salonika, vol. 11, no. 3031, 1939, p. 2).

The oldest, religion-oriented text type in which Judezmo speakers would have encountered something resembling the Judezmo dialogue genre would have been the calque or highly literal, archaizing translations of the Bible, which began to be published in the sixteenth century, at least partially reflecting predecessors from before the expulsions from Iberia.⁸ Some such “conversations” are held between the Divinity and a biblical hero, at times indirectly; e.g., in the Constantinople 1547 Pentateuch with Judezmo, in Genesis 12:6-8 God speaks to Abram, promising him the Land of Canaan; Abram replies with an exclamation:

12 6 I pasó Avram en la tyera [de Kenaan], hasta lugar de Shehem, hasta [l]yanura de Moré [...] 7 I apareyose A[donay] a Avram, i disho: “A tu semen daré a la tyera la esta”, i fragó [Avram] a[l]yí ara por A[donay], el aparesido a el. 8 [...] I [l]yamó en nomre de A[donay] (Lazar, 2000, p. 28).

[‘12 6 And Abram passed through the land [of Canaan], until the place of Shechem, until the plain of Moreh [...] 7 And the Lord appeared to Abram, and He said, “To your seed I will give this land,” and there he built an altar to the Lord, Who had appeared to him. 8 [...] And he called in the name of the Lord.’]

Or in the sixteenth-century translation of Joshua 1:1-4, 10-11, in which God tells Joshua that He is giving the Land to him and the Israelites, and then Joshua tells the chiefs of the Israelite tribes to prepare food for the journey to the land they are to inherit. Joshua does not answer God directly; but the tribes reply to Joshua:

1 1 I fue depués de morir Moshé syervo de A[donay], i disho A[donay] a Yeoshua hijo de Nun, ministro de Moshé, por dezir: 2 Moshé mi syervo muryó; i agora levanta, pasa a el Yardén el este, tu i todo el puevlo el este, a la tyera ke yo dan a eyos, a hijos de Yisrael. 3 Todo lugar ke pizare planta de vuestro pye en el, a vos lo di, komo havlé a Moshé. 4 Dende el dezyerto i el Levanón el este i hasta el río el grande, río de Perat, toda tyera de los hitim i hasta la mar la grande onde se pone el sol será vuestro término [...] 10 I enkomendó Yeoshua a alguaziles de el puevlo, por dezir: 11 Pasa entre el real i enkomenda a el puevlo por dezir: Apareja a vos vianda, ke en komedyo de tres días vos pasantes a el Yardén el este por venir por eredar a la tyera ke A[donay] vuestro Dyo dan a vos por eredarla [...] 13 Membra a la koza ke enkomendó a vos Moshé, syervo de A[donay], por dezir: A[donay] vuestro Dyo aholgántán a vos i dará a vos a la tyera la esta [...] 16 I respondyeron a Yeoshua por dezir: Todo lo ke nos enkomendaste haremos i a todo lo ke nos enbiare andaremos (Lazar, 2000, pp. 568-570).

[‘1 1 And it was after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, that the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying: 2 Moses my servant has died; and now arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this nation, to the land which I give the children of Israel. 3 Every place on which the soles of your feet will tread I have given to you, as I have spoken to Moses. 4 From this desert and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the great sea westward shall be your boundary [...] 10 And Joshua commanded the officers of the nation, saying: 11 Go through the midst of the camp and command the nation saying: Prepare provision for yourselves, for in another three days you will cross this Jordan to come and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit [...] 13 Remember the word that Moses, the servant of the Lord commanded you saying:

⁸ On dialogues within the Bible see for example Peters (2024) and Rebera (1982, pp. 201-207).

The Lord your God is giving you rest and has given you this land [...] 16 And they answered Joshua saying: All that you have commanded us we shall do and wherever you send us we shall go.’]

In the sixteenth-century Judezmo version of the chronologically later book of Jonah (1:6-14) the interaction between the interlocutors more closely resembles a direct dialogue; the characters who interact are Jonah, the ship’s captain, and the sailors. The scene is introduced by the narrator, who presents characters, and they speak in turn:

1 6 I a[ll]yegose a el mayoral de el mastel, i disho a el [=a Yoná]: “Ke a ti a^dormi^do? Levántate, [ll]yama a tu Dyo, kisá se enveluntará el Dyo de nos, i non nos perderemos.” 7 I disheron ka^da uno a su konpanyero: “Anda^d, i echemos suertes, i saveremos por kyen el mal este a nos.” I echaron suerte, i kayó la suerte sovre Yoná. 8 I disheron a el: “Denusya a^gora a nos: por kyen el mal este a nos? Ke tu ovra, i de adonde vyenes? Ke tu tyera, i de ke este puevlo tu?” 9 I disho a eyos: “Dju^dyó yo, i a A[^donay] Dyo de los syelos yo temyén, ke fizo a el mar i a el seko.” 10 I temyeron los varones temor grande, i disheron a el: “Ke esta fiziste?” Ke supyeron los varones ke de delante A[^donay] el fuyén, ke denusyó a eyos. 11 I disheron a el: “Ke aremos a ti, i ke aka[ll]ye el mar de sovre nos, ke el mar andán i tenpesteán?” 12 I disho a eyos: “Alsa^dme i echa^dme a el mar, ke savyén yo, ke por mi la tenpesta la grande esta sovre vos.” 13 I remaron los marineros para fazer tornar a el seko, i non pu^dyeron, ke el mar andán i tenpesteán sovre e[ll]yos. 14 I [ll]yamaron a A[^donay,] i disheron: “Ruego, A[^donay], non a^gora nos perdamos por alma de varón este, i non des sovre nos sangre de kite, ke tu A[^donay], komo enveluntaste hⁱziste” (Lazar, 2000, p. 1500).

[‘1 6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him: “What meanest thou that thou sleepest? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.” 7 And they said every one to his fellow: “Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then said they unto him: “Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us: what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?” 9 And he said unto them: “I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him: “What is this that thou hast done?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. 11 Then said they unto him: “What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 And he said unto them: “Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.” 13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not; for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said: “We beseech Thee, O Lord, we beseech Thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee.”]

But in all of these examples the language is in the stilted calque register of the sacred text translations, and the structure diverges from that of the later, modern drama.

In the *Me-‘am lo‘eṣ* biblical exegesis series, initiated in Istanbul in 1730 by Rabbi Ya‘aqov Hulí and continued by other rabbis, one finds the popular retelling of biblical and post-biblical stories. When we look at the dialogues in the volumes of the series by Rabbi Yiṣḥak Magriso of Istanbul, for example, we encounter some features of spoken language appearing in representations of the language of a few different social registers – the rabbinic elite, manual laborers and agriculturalists – but these dialogues are not presented in independent,

strictly dramatic form, using the literary structure we ordinarily think of today as constituting “drama”; rather, they are interwoven in terse prose anecdotes, often revealing some linguistic features not characteristic of the spoken vernacular.⁹ This is illustrated, for example, in the following adaptation of an account concerning the kabbalist, Rabbi Isaac Luria of sixteenth-century Safed (Magriso, 1764, f. 61a):

I topamos ke akontesyó maasé¹⁰ en Şefaṭ,¹¹ ti[bané]” ve[tikonén]” bi[merá]” be[yamenu],¹² en tyempo del rav,¹³ ribí¹⁴ Yiṣhak Lurya, zi[hronó]” li[vrahá],¹⁵ ke metyeron dyes memunim¹⁶ de averot¹⁷ de los grandes del dor¹⁸ i bihlal¹⁹ de los dyes memunim metyeron al rav dito. Un día se levantó uno de los memunim demaḏruḡaḏa para irse a el kal²⁰ para ser uno de los dyes primeros en el beṭ akenéseṭ,²¹ komo su uzansa. I avyó la ventana para ver si amanesyó i viḏo una mujer afeytaḏa i endjoyaḏa ke salía de la puerta de su kortijo. I se levantó el dito memuné i se fue detrás de eya a ver onde iba. I la viḏo ke entró en un kortijo ke morava ayí uno ke lo sospecharon kon ésheṭ ish.²² Disho el dito memuné entre·sí, “Ya se entenyó onde es lo ke fue esta mujer. Syerto ke fue onde akel rashá²³ ke mora ayí para azer zenuṭ.”²⁴ I se fue el dito memuné al kal a dezir tefilá,²⁵ i le enkomendó al samás²⁶ ke después de tefilá ke los akojera a toḏos los memunim. I ansí izo el samás, i los apanyó a toḏos los memunim en un lugar, i bihlal estava el rav. I se levantó el dito memuné para dar eḏuṭ²⁷ de lo ke viḏo. Le disho el rav, antes ke enpesara a avlar el dito memuné a dar eḏuṭ de lo ke viḏo demanyana, “Estate kayaḏo i sera tu boka i no avles mal de las ijas de los djudyós, ke son buenas. Ke la mujer ke vistes es limpya de toḏo pekaḏo i muy onraḏa, i por ser muy onraḏa i onesta se levantó demaḏruḡaḏa ke no la vyera ninguno, i la sibá²⁸ de su ida demaḏruḡaḏa fue ke en akel kortijo vino un forastero de la parte de maarav,²⁹ ke está ayí su mariḏo, i le trusho un amanet³⁰ de su mariḏo, i le enbyó la dita mujer adezirle a akel ombre ke vino de la sivdaḏ ke está su mariḏo ke le enbyara su amanet ke le trusho, i le enbyó a dezir akel ombre ke el amanet ya se lo enbía, però su mariḏo le entregó un sekreto ke se lo diga a eya, i el dín³¹ es ke palavras no se entregan a shalíah,³² i por esto fue muhrah³³ ke fuera eya mezma a topar kon el.” I kuantu oyó el dito memuné esto,

⁹ For additional examples see, in Hebrew, Bunis and Adar-Bunis (2011, pp. 412-505).

¹⁰ ‘Occurrence’ < H. *ma’ase*.

¹¹ ‘Safed’ < H. *Şəfat*.

¹² ‘May it be rebuilt speedily and in our days’ < H. *tibbane vè-tikkonen bi-mhera bē-yamenu*.

¹³ ‘Rabbi’ < H. *rav*.

¹⁴ ‘Rabbi’ (usually preceding a masculine personal name) < H. *ri-/rabbi*.

¹⁵ ‘His memory for a blessing’ < H. *zikrono li-vraḡa*.

¹⁶ ‘Trustees’ < H. *mēmunim* (sg. *mēmunne*).

¹⁷ ‘Sins’ < H. *‘averot* (sg. *‘avera*).

¹⁸ ‘Generation’ < H. *dor*.

¹⁹ ‘Amongst’ < H. *bi-ḡlal*.

²⁰ ‘Synagogue’ < H. *qahal*.

²¹ ‘Synagogue’ < H. *bet ha-ḡēneset*.

²² ‘Adultery (with a married woman)’ < H. *ešet iš*.

²³ ‘Evildoer’ < H. *raša*.

²⁴ ‘Prostitution, adultery’ < H. *zēnut*.

²⁵ ‘Prayer, morning prayer’ < H. *teḡilla*.

²⁶ ‘Beadle’ < H. *šammaš*.

²⁷ ‘Testimony’ < H. *‘edut*.

²⁸ ‘Reason’ < H. *sibba*.

²⁹ ‘West’ < H. *ma’arav*.

³⁰ ‘Item in trust’ < T. *emanet* < A. *‘amāna(t)*.

³¹ ‘(Jewish) law’ < H. *din*.

³² ‘Emissary’ < H. *shaliaḡ*.

³³ ‘Necessary’ < H. *mukraḡ*.

seró su boka i no avló naḏa, i se alevantó el dito memuné i fue i izo hakirá i derishá³⁴ i se topó ke fue komo disho el rav. I vino el memuné delante el rav a demandarle pedrón, diziéndole ke le pedronara por lo ke iva a avlar. Le disho el rav, “A mi, ke me demandas, syendo ke kon mi no pekastes? Si es ke pekastes, fue kon la mujer, ke la sospechastes en mal i la djuzgastes lehaf hová,³⁵ no tenyendo haber³⁶ eya de ningún mal. Ke la presona no kale³⁷ ke djuzge a su haver lehaf hová, si no lehaf zahut.”³⁸ I así izo el dito memuné, i fue i le demandó pedrón de la mujer, asígún le disho el rav. I por aviso de esto disho el pasuk,³⁹ “Bešédék tishpot amiteha,”⁴⁰ keryendo dezir ke kuando vez a tu konpanyero ke aze alguna koza, no lo djuzges en mal, si no lo djuzgarás kon djustedad, ke es lehaf zahut.”⁴¹

[‘And we find that there happened an occurrence in Safed, may it be rebuilt speedily and in our days, in the time of the rabbi, Rabbi Yišḥaq Luria, of blessed memory, that they placed ten trustees in charge of guarding against sins, from amongst the greatest men of the generation, and amongst the ten trustees they placed this [aforementioned] rabbi. One day, one of the trustees awoke at dawn to go to the synagogue to be one of the first ten men in the synagogue, as was his habit. And he opened the window to see if the day had dawned, and he saw a woman who was beautifully groomed and bejeweled who was leaving the door of her courtyard. And this trustee got up and went behind her to see where she was going. And he saw her enter a courtyard where there dwelled a man whom they suspected of committing adultery with married women. The trustee said to himself, “It is clearly understood where this woman went. It is sure that she went to that evildoer who lives there to commit adultery.” And the said trustee went to the synagogue to say the morning prayer, and he ordered the synagogue beadle to gather together all the trustees after the prayer. And so the beadle did, and he got all the trustees into one place, and amongst them was the rabbi. And the said trustee stood up to give testimony about what he saw. The rabbi told him, before the trustee began to speak and give testimony about what he saw in the morning, “Be quiet and keep your mouth closed and don’t speak ill of the daughters of the Jews, who are good. Because the woman you saw is free of any sin and very honorable, and because of being very honorable and modest she got up at dawn so that no one would see her, and the reason for her going at dawn was because to that courtyard there had come a stranger from the west, where her husband is, and he brought her an item in trust from her husband, and the said woman sent word to that man who came from the city where her husband was that he should send the entrusted item, and that man sent word to her saying that he would readily send the item to her, but her husband had entrusted him with a secret to tell her, and the law is that words are not entrusted to a courier, and for that reason it was necessary for her to meet with him herself.” And when the said trustee heard this he shut his mouth and did not say anything, and this trustee went and investigated the matter thoroughly and it was found that it was as the rabbi had said. And the trustee came before the rabbi to ask for his forgiveness, saying that he should pardon him for what he was going to say. The rabbi said to him, “What are you asking [forgiveness] from me for, because you did not sin against me? If you have sinned at all it is against that woman, because you suspected ill of her and judged her as if she were guilty, her not having received any bad news. Let a person not judge his fellow as if he were guilty, but as if he were innocent.” And

³⁴ ‘Investigation’ < H. *ḥaqira*, *dēriša*.

³⁵ ‘Strictly, harshly, as if presumed guilty’ < H. *lē-kaf ḥova*.

³⁶ ‘News’ < T. *haber* < A. *xabar*.

³⁷ ‘Should, be necessary.’

³⁸ ‘Mildly, as if presumed innocent’ < H. *lē-kaf zēkut*.

³⁹ ‘Biblical verse’ < H. *pasuq*.

⁴⁰ H. *Bē-sedeq tišpot ‘amiteka* (Lev. 19:15).

⁴¹ For the Hebrew version of this story see *Šiḥe ha-Ari z”l*, Jerusalem, 1955, 3-4.

so the trustee did, and he went and asked forgiveness of the woman, as the rabbi had told him. And to demonstrate the correctness of this approach the biblical verse said, “In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour,” meaning that when you see your companion do something, do not judge him for ill, but judge him justly, which is, as if he was meritorious.”]

Although there are several features of conversational language here (e.g., references to places (“onde”), demonstratives (“akel rashá”), imperatives (“Estate kayađo i sera tu boka”)), what is presented is actually one short statement said by the trustee to himself; two brief monologues by the rabbi said to the trustee, who does not reply; and two indirect statements that the reader is told were said by the trustee, one to the rabbi, the other to the woman. Comparing the original Hebrew with the Judezmo one finds some divergences, including the somewhat less conversational quality of the Hebrew, although the first indirect statement of the trustee in the Judezmo version is formulated as a direct statement in the Hebrew.

Still closer to the structure of the drama as it is generally conceived of in the West today is the poetic work *Koplas de Yosef Aşadik* by Avraham Toledo; the earliest surviving printed edition is from Istanbul, 1732. The work takes the form of *ko(m)plas* or rhymed couplets, some of them attributed to individual speakers whose names precede their statements. For example:⁴²

Sonyóse Yosef un suenyo. “Ermanos, vide por vizos, vos kontaré un desenyó. Un suenyo me e sonyađo, ke olğarësh de sentirlo djusto i byen ordenađo. I enveluntí de dezirlo. Ke venían ġuestros masos adeređor, sin enbaraso se echavan de boka a basho i se enkorvavan a mi maso”: Sus ermanos repondyeron kon selo en el korasón, “Tus lokuras,” le disheron, “a esta manera son ke pensásh, desvanesiđo, ke as de enreynar sovre nos i delante de ti, perdiđo, enkorvamos tođos nos. Ráetelo del kashko, ke no penses en primero ni aprestes ni mas ni manko, ke el suenyo del pero pasaron estas kereyas.”

[‘Joseph dreamed a dream. “Brothers, I saw an image, I will recount it for you. I dreamed a dream, that you will find rest in hearing rightly and in good order. That your sheaves [of wheat] surrounded me, without pains they prostrated themselves before me and bowed down to my sheaf.” His brothers replied with envy in their hearts, “Your lunacies,” they said to him, “Is that how you think, madman, that you are to rule over us, and before you, deranged one, we shall all prostrate ourselves? Scrape it out of your skull, because, no more and no less, these are canine-like delusions that have passed before you.”]

But these rabbinic couplets too – although composed of rhymes placed in the mouths of specific, individual biblical characters, representing different socially-defined sectors such as age group and family, conversing with one another, at times even using slang – are not organized in the modern dramatic form, in the sense of exchanges of lines of prose, in approximation of the spoken language typical of modern dialogues or plays. Rather, the language is somewhat stilted and partly determined by rules governing the *kompla* genre.

Even more closely approximating the modern drama as a dialogue is Rabbi David Halevy’s *Sefer tov nē-yafe* (Bucharest, 1860), a manual of religious instruction for children. Although taking the form of a dialogue between the teacher and his pupil, the speaker’s names preceding their lines of speech, as in the drama, it is solely concerned with imparting

⁴² The *kompla* genre was anthologized and analyzed extensively by Hassán (1976), Romero (1981, pp. 69-98) and others.

information and has no dramatic impact, nor other characteristics of the drama, such as stage directions or indication of motion or onstage behavior.

ON THE VERGE OF MODERNITY: THE EARLIEST JUDEZMO DRAMA

The earliest Judezmo dramatic work I know that actually uses the dramatic format which we ordinarily associate today with western theatrical works, well-known in Western Europe from at least the sixteenth century,⁴³ is Moše Šěmu'el Kofino's *La pyesa de Yaakov Avinu*⁴⁴ *kon sus ijos*. It was published as a slim, separate volume in Bucharest, 1862, and was meant for performance by children in the author's local Sephardic Jewish school. From Kofino's play it is clear that, by this time, some Judezmo speakers were familiar with the modern play format. The first European-style school established for the Judezmo speakers of the Ottoman Empire was that opened in Istanbul, 1850, for the poor boys of the city's Jewish community, by the successful banker Abraham de Camondo. As pointed out by Ronit Fisher (2009), the first phase in the development of modern Jewish education in Romania began in 1851 with the founding of the first Jewish public school, in Bucharest; it was marked by the departure from the traditional Jewish elementary religious school, in answer to the desire of the elite sectors of the Jewish communities for schools reflecting their identification with modernization and interest in indoctrinating their children in its ideas and ideals. This phase included private schools for daughters of the Ashkenazi intellectual elite; the first of these was founded in Bucharest by Carolina Cohen in 1844; the languages of instruction there, as in all schools of this type established later in Romania, were Romanian, German, and French. In the Sephardic school directed by Kofino, Judezmo was obviously the main language of instruction. In his pioneering Judezmo play, essentially of religious orientation but taking a form obviously influenced by European dramatical works, the lines of prose spoken by the individual characters are preceded by the characters' names, and some stage directions are included. Nevertheless, as the following passage – paralleling the scene recounted in the *Koplas de Yosef Ašadik* reproduced above – the language placed in the mouths of the characters is only partly conversational, also incorporating features characteristic of the somewhat unnatural rabbinic Judezmo, nor does it use language that may really be said to represent actual social sectors of local Sephardic society of the time during which it was written. A few lines of this play should suffice to illustrate my point:

Yosef: Ermanos, un esfuenyo me sonyí:

Los ermanos: Diz, Yosef lo ke sonyastes:

Yosef: Me sonyí ke estávamos en el kampo kortando el trigo i azyendo ġaviyas. Ek, se alevantava mi ġaviya i se parava. I vuestras ġaviyas si arođeavan i se enkorvavan a mi ġaviya:

Los ermanos: Este esfuenyo ke te sonyastes se pođrá soltar kon dezir ke vas a enreyñar o pođestar sovre mozotros. [Aboltan de la kara.] O, ke esfuenyo ke se sonyó:

[*Joseph*: Brothers, a dream have I dreamed.

The brothers: Tell, Joseph, what you dreamed.

⁴³ See, for example, Culpeper (2012, pp. 21-39).

⁴⁴ 'Jacob our Forefather' < H. *Ya'aqov Avinu*.

Joseph: I dreamed that we were in the field cutting wheat and making sheaves. Behold, my sheaf rose up and stood. And your sheaves got down on their knees and bowed to my sheaf.

The brothers: This dream that you dreamed can be interpreted by saying that you will rule over or be in control of us. [*They turn their faces aside.*] Oh, what a dream that he dreamed.']

THE REPRESENTATION OF SPOKEN JUDEZMO DIALOGUE IN THE EARLY JUDEZMO PRESS

As was noted at the outset of this article, following Kofino’s singular contribution the major platform for the Judezmo drama, in the Western European sense of the term, was the periodical press. In the newspapers, plays were often published in installments, and then were occasionally republished as separate volumes. However, when the Judezmo press first arose in Izmir, 1845 with the birth of Rafa’el ‘Uzi’el’s *Ša’are Mizraḥ*, that periodical contained no dramatic writings, and the prose writings of which the paper was composed represented almost entirely the written language of a single social class, the middle class merchants, some of whom – like Rafa’el ‘Uzi’el – had already undergone significant Western Europeanization, with others beginning to follow suit. The linguistic register to which I am referring is exemplified in the following announcement of the opening of the Alliance Israélite Universelle School in Balat (Istanbul) appearing in the 29 July 1875 issue of *El Tyempo*.⁴⁵

LA NUEVA ESKOLA ISRAELITA EN BALAT	[‘THE NEW ISRAELITE SCHOOL IN BALAT
Al fin, la Eskola Israelita tan dezeaḏa en Balat vyene de ser avyerta, a la alegría de los ke aman el progreso i a la kontentés de los amigos de nuestra nasyón. Dizde 12 días los estuḏios ya se están dando en djuḏezmo, en fransés i en turko [...].	Finally, the so-desired Israelite School in Balat has been opened, to the joy of those who love progress and to the satisfaction of the friends of our nation. For twelve days now the lessons are being given in Judaism [or Judezmo or Hebrew], in French and in Turkish [...]

An even more typical example of the Western-Europeanized linguistic register – the “nuevo lenguaje” [‘new language’] or “djuḏezmo kon byervos frankeaḏos” [‘Judezmo with Western Europeanized words’] – is to be found in the following short, lexically heavily Westernized except from an article in the 25 November 1875 issue of Aharon de Yosef Hazan’s Izmir Judezmo periodical *La Esperansa* (page 4), reporting on the awarding of prizes to Jewish school children who had excelled in the study of Hebrew, Turkish and French:

LA DISTRIBUSYÓN DE PREMYOS DE NUESTRA ESKOLA NASYONALA	[‘THE DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES IN OUR NATIONAL SCHOOL
Ayer demanyana a la ora dyes i meḏya tuvo lugar en kaza del si[nyor]’ Jak Sidi la distribusyón de premyos de la eskola de la Aliansa Yisreelita, según lo tuvimos anonsyaḏo en nuestro último folyo [...]	Yesterday morning at 10:30 there took place at the home of Mr. Jacques Sidi the distribution of prizes of the Alliance Israélite school, as we had announced in our last issue[...]
Su Alteza, el Governador Djeneral, Is’ad Pashá, los raprezentantes de muchos gobiernos, Haydar Efendi, presidente de la enstruksyón públiko i del Diván Temyíz, [...] los redaktors de	His Highness, the Governor General, Es’ad Paša, the representatives of many governments, Haydar Efendi, President of Public Instruction and of the Divan-ı Temyiz, [...] the editors of various newspapers, and many other Christian

⁴⁵ On the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools of the former Ottoman Empire see Rodrigue (1993).

diversos djornales, i munchas otras notabili^dades kristyanas i turkas, su eminensya ma[alat]’ arav Avraam Palachi Efendi⁴⁶ ... i los onoravles merka^deres i notavles djudyós de esta sivda^d, asistían a esta seremonya.

La seremonya se avryó kon diversos kantes, entre los kuales un “Anotén teshuá”⁴⁷ muy ermozo. Después, diversos muchachos resitaron poezía o diskorsos en la[shón]” a[kó^desh],⁴⁸ turkesko, i fransés i tuvimos el plazer de ver a toda esta onorada asistensya aplaudir a nuestras kriaturikas. Después, tuvo lugar la distribusyon de prem[y]os ke alkansaron el número de 40 [...]

Nozotros [...] para perpetuar la memorya de esta seremonya, damos akí abasho la lista de los muchachos ke obtuvieron los primeros premyos:

Torá	Primo premyo	Nesim Bondí
Turko	“ ”	Avraam Ribí
Franséz	“ ”	Moshé Sidi

Dezearemos tener lugar para dar la nota de los 40 muchachos ke obtuvieron premyos [...]

and Muslim notables, His Eminence the lofty Rabbi Avraham Palacci Efendi [...] and the honorable Jewish merchants and notables of this city, attended this ceremony.

The ceremony opened with various songs, amongst them a very beautiful “Ha-noten tēshu’a” [Hebrew hymn]. Afterwards, various boys recited poetry or discourses in the Holy Tongue [=Hebrew], Turkish, and French and we had the pleasure to see this honored audience applaud our little children. Afterwards, there took place the distribution of the prizes, which reached 40 in number [...]

We [...] in order to perpetuate the memory of this ceremony, give here below a list of the boys who won the first prizes:

Torah	First prize	Nissim Bondi
Turkish	“ ”	Avraham Ribí
French	“ ”	Moše Sidi

We would have liked to have had enough room to note all 40 boys who won prizes [...]

REFERENCES IN THE EARLY JUDEZMO PRESS TO THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES IN FOREIGN THEATERS AND IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Chronologically, before the earliest theater-like dialogues appeared in the early Judezmo press, references already had been made to theater performances in other languages. Some alluded, directly or indirectly, to theaters outside the Ottoman Empire. Such references demonstrated the journalists’ familiarity with the theater hall and the dramatical performance genre as practiced outside the empire, and they brought an awareness of them to their readers. For example, the 10 February 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 4) wrote in connection with a performance at a Paris Theater:

En un balo ke uvo ultimamente en el Teatro de París vyene de akonteser un paso muy kuryozo. Una mujer estando asentada byen sígura se dezmayó subitamente. Apunto la alevantaron i la transportaron a una farmasía, i los me^dikós, por azerla retornar, fueron ovligados de darle kuras kontra el tósigo, syendo a la verda^d eya se topava ataka^da de un tósigo i no era dezmayo.

[‘In a ball that was held recently in the Paris Theater a very curious incident occurred. A woman who was sitting quite securely suddenly fainted. At once they lifted her up and brought her to a pharmacy, and the physicians, in order to revive her, were

⁴⁶ ‘The worthy rabbi Abraham’ < H. *ma’alat ha-rav Avraham*. The reference is to Avraham Palacci (Izmir, 1808 or 1809 - 1898), a chief rabbi of Izmir.

⁴⁷ The Hebrew prayer “Ha-noten tēshu’a” [‘the Giver of Salvation’]. On the prayer see Schwartz (1986).

⁴⁸ ‘The Holy Tongue [=Hebrew]’ < H. *lēšon ha-qodeš*.

obliged to give her remedies against poison, because in fact she had suffered an attack of poison and had not fainted.']

In the 16 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 4), readers were informed that:

En los días presentes se topan en Vyena dos ermanas de edad de 17 anyos nascidas en Amérika. Eyas están apegadas de los dos lados. La noche kantan en un teatro de Vyena i de día se deshan veer de el públiko en una sala. La entrada a dita sala, prima klasa kosta dos florines, i sigunda klasa, 1 florín por persona.

['During these present days there are in Vienna two sisters, aged 17 and born in America. They are Siamese twins. At night they sing in a theater in Vienna and by day they may be seen by the public in a hall. The entrance fee is two florins for first class, and one florin for second class, per person.']

With regard to a play staged in Moscow the 5 February 1875 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 4)) wrote:

La gazeta de Moskova rakonta [...] un deploravle aksidente arivado en un grande teatro de Moskova, en la ora de una de las últimas representasyones.

Myentres el último akto, un empyegado del teatro yamado Kochetkof estava yevando a la lodja de las bayladeras 16 ermozos kostumes de una ropa muy delgada, i kon estas vestimyentas tenían ke apareser a la shena. Kuando en pasando delante una lampa el empyegado no atinó i kon imprudensya al vidrio kayó i el fuego tomó prestamente en los rikos kostumes [...]

['The Moscow gazette relates [...] a deplorable accident that occurred in a large theater in Moscow, during one of the recent performances.

During the last act, a theater employee named Kochetkof was carrying to the dancers' loge 16 beautiful costumes of very thin cloth, and these garments were supposed to appear in the scene. While passing a lamp with a flame the employee imprudently did not pay careful attention to the glass and fell and the fire quickly spread to the rich costumes [...]]

But most such references were to performances in foreign theaters located in the Ottoman capital, particularly those in French. For example, the 1 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 2) noted the theft in Istanbul of a gold necklace from an actor appearing in a local French theater performance: "En nuestra kapitala ladrones se están muchiguando por las kayes ke se yevan de día oras i otras kozas. Ansí tambyén agora tres días vyenen de rovar una ermoza kolana de oro de uno de los djugadores del Teatro Fransés" ['In our capital the thieves are multiplying in the streets and they are carrying off watches and other items. Thus three days ago they happened to steal a beautiful gold necklace from one of the performers of the French Theater (Fransız Tiyatrosu)].

In its 24 September 1873 issue *El Tyempo* (p. 4) also mentioned the Greek Theater of Tatavla, near Feriköy, in the context of a fire which broke out there and damaged the building: "Shabat a oras de tarde el fuego se deklaró en Tatavla. Serka de Feri Kyoí una kaza i el Teatro Grego de Tatavla fueron destruidos [...]" ['On the Sabbath in the afternoon hours a fire broke out in Tatavla. Near Feriköy a house and the Greek Theater of Tatavla were destroyed [...]].

This is to say that the Jews of Istanbul in the 1870s were well aware of the institution of the European theater, and the dramatic genre performed in it.

JEWISH KNOWLEDGE OR AWARENESS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE OTTOMAN REGIONS AND ITS POSSIBLE EFFECT ON THE JUDEZMO DRAMATIC DIALOGUE GENRE

To point out the international importance of French in the world at the time, *El Tjempo* (29 January 1873, p. 4) offered readers the following tidbit:

LA LINGUA FRANSEZA

Ke kantidad se espanyó la lingua franseza por todas las partes de la Evropa, ke el emperador de Almanya, en repuesta a las felisitasyones del rey de Italya a la okazyón del anyo nuevo, le aderesó el telegrafo sigyente:

(En lingua franseza) “En rengrasyando Vuestra Maestad de tener tan amavlemente pensado en mi, yo vos emprezento la ekspresyón de mis dezeos los mas sinseros, por vos i vuestra famiya i la Italya – Frederik Gilyom.

[‘THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

The French language has been disseminated throughout Europe to such an extent that the Emperor of Germany, in reply to the greetings of the King of Italy on the occasion of the New Year, addressed to him the following telegram:

(In the French language) “Thanking Your Majesty for having kindly thought of me, I offer you the expression of my most sincere wishes, for you and your family and Italy – Frédérique-Guillaume.”]

The Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded by Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews in Paris in 1860, is often credited as being the main source for a knowledge of French literature and culture amongst the Jews of the Ottoman Empire; and much can be learned about the organization, its members, teachers, pupils and programs of study from the organization’s publications. The A.I.U. began to publish its *Bulletin de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle* on 2 January 1860. In 1862 a leaflet in Hebrew and Judezmo entitled *Hevrat Kol Yisra’el Haverim* ‘All Israel are Friends Society’ was published, probably in Istanbul or Salonika; it announced the founding of the society and its aims and was signed by Eliyyahu Estruk and Yehuda Nardman, the secretaries of the A.I.U. in Paris. In 1863 an A.I.U. school was established in Istanbul. In Salonika, 1864, the A.I.U. published a *Kuento dado de las asambleas de estos últimos tres mezes del anyo 1863, treslado i publikado a kosta del komité lokal en Saloniki* ‘An account given of these last three months of the year 1863, translated and published at the cost of the local A.I.U. committee in Salonika. Comité Central de la société l’Alliance Israélite [from French]’⁴⁹ An analogous report was published there in 1864. In Salonika 1864 there also appeared (apparently as a separate publication) a *Boletino de la Aliansa Yisreelita Universal, publikado a París en el mes de julio 1864, treslado i publikado del Komité Rejyonal Saloniki*; in 1866 another edition appeared. In 1867 Yosef Kalvo, the editor of the Judezmo periodical *La Nasyonal* (fd. Vienna, 1866) published an invitation to the readers to join the A.I.U.:

Muy estimado sinyor,

La Aliansa Yisreelit Universal [...] en los syete anyos de su eksistensya [...] alkansó un número de mas de sesh mil myembros [...] Venimos por nombrado del Komité Sentral de la Alyansa en París a kombidar a usted de onrar kon su firma a este santo adjuntamyento [...]

⁴⁹ It is cited in the online Bibliography of the Hebrew Book site of the National Library of Israel.

La redakción del *Nasyonal* [...], Yulyo de 1867

[‘Very esteemed sir,

The Alliance Israélite Universelle [...] during the seven years of its existence [...] has reached 6,000 members[...] On behalf of the Central Committee of the Alliance in Paris, we invite you to honor with your signature this sacred organization [...]

The editor of *El Nasyonal* [...], July 1867’].

Between 1867-1873 A.I.U. reports were published in Paris, Mainz and Krotoszyn (Poland). An editorial article in the 9 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. [2]) praised the work of the A.I.U. and encouraged the Jews of the Ottoman regions to become members:⁵⁰

La Aliansa Yisreelit Universal de París vyene de publikar dos livros, a muchos ezeplaryos, en franséz i en lashón akódesh,⁵¹ dando a entender sus rijos, sus pasos en su adelantamyento, sus okupasyones i al fin todás las kozas ke izo en provecho de la nasyón yisreelit⁵² en djeneral.

Todo buen djudyó ke pensa el prinsipyo, la baza de esta sosyetá ke yeva por nombre Kol Yisrael Haverim,⁵³ i de todás las buendaes ke izo i está azyendo por nuestra nasyón, deve korer una ora mas antes i abonarse a eya, donde la paga la mas chika es 6 frankos al anyo. Ke no gastamos en un anyo para no apartar un abonamyento para esta sosyetá ke sus frutos son los mas provechozos ke puede ser? Por lo kual tenemos un dever de nuestra Ley – si no dezimos dever de nasyonalidad – por ayudar en abonándonos a esta havrá.⁵⁴

Rengrasyamos⁵⁵ a todos los ke se están okupando de rejir esta saludoza havrá en azyendo traer abonados a eya, i partikolarmente rengrasyamos a los myembros del Komité ke se formó en este anyo en nuestra sivdad, los kualos dizde ke se enkarǵaron por azer un abrasamyento de la sivdad Kostán a París, izyeron adelantar el Komité de la Aliansa de nuestra sivdad ke no uvo semejante antes entre nos. Ansi, los abonados de nuestra sivdad ke están tomando parte en los buenos frutos de la Aliansa, son mucho mas ke antes. El eskopo de los myembros de nuestro Komité no es otro ke por ir mas adelante sus dever ke tomaron en azyendo abonar a muncha djente ke no savén aínda el gran provecho de esta havrá, i en mezmo tyempo bushkar a traer ayudos de toda manera a la Aliansa Yisreelit.

Nozotros les somos muy rekonosyentes por toda la buenda i provecho ke están sontrayendo, i les suetamos⁵⁶ ke tengan la paga buena del Dyo, amén.

La redakción

The A.I.U. was greatly lauded by Fresco and other “progressive” Judezmo-speaking leaders, including the strictly Orthodox harbinger of political Zionism, Yehuda Alkalay (1798-1878) of Sarajevo. The important role played by the A.I.U. in disseminating amongst the Judezmo-speaking Jews the French language and an acquaintance with its literature cannot be denied. But with specific respect to the dramatic-like dialogues which would appear in *El Tyempo* in the early 1870s it must be stated that, although French was being

⁵⁰ Here, and in the subsequent texts, translations of only the words deemed to need explanation by Spanish readers will be offered; the translations will not be repeated.

⁵¹ ‘Holy Tongue (i.e., Hebrew)’ < H. *lēšon ha-qodeš*.

⁵² ‘Israelite, Jewish’ < H. *yisrē’elit*.

⁵³ ‘All Israel are friends’ < H. *kol Yisra’el ḥaverim*.

⁵⁴ ‘Society’ < H. *ḥevra*.

⁵⁵ ‘We thank’ < I. *ringraziare*.

⁵⁶ ‘We wish’ < F. *souhaiter*.

taught in Western-style Jewish schools in Istanbul and some other cities of the Ottoman Empire by that time, it is unclear from the available sources exactly which French literary pieces were included in their curricula. As will be noted below, some French prose works were being translated into Judezmo in the 1870s and were offered for sale as separate publications, or were incorporated serially within periodicals such as *El Tyempo*. For example, the 20 March 1874 issue of the paper (pp. 2-3) announced both the initiation and anticipated sale of a Judezmo translation by Rafa'el M. Faradji of a French work to be distributed in Istanbul under the name *Lukresya Borgia*; presumably the reference was to Victor Hugo's *Lucrèce Borgia*, published in Paris, 1833. Faradji's Judezmo version seems not to have survived.

In the 1870s the more extreme religious authorities of various Judezmo speech communities expressed outright opposition to secular literature and to theatrical performances and the appearance of Jewish girls in them. They objected to the proposed staging of various French and other foreign dramas in Judezmo translation, such as a version of Molière's *Le Mariage forcé* (1664; Romero, 1983, 18-21; 30-34). One of their justifications was the verse in Psalms 1:1, "Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful." The "counsel of the wicked" was interpreted by Rabbi Eliezer in the Babylonian Talmud, 'Avoda zara 18b:9, as "referring to the theaters and circuses of gentiles [of their time]." "The Sages taught: One may not go to theaters or circuses because they sacrifice offerings there to objects of idol worship; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir." The statement is commented upon in Candle 2, Rule 1, Chapter 1 of the Hebrew moralistic work *Mēnorat ha-ma'or*, by the early fourteenth-century Spanish rabbi, Yiṣḥaq Abohav; in the Judezmo translation of that work published in Izmir, 1877 (f. 38a), the relevant statement says (of an observant Jew): "*No se fue a lugares de teatros i kahvanés i koltukes*" ['He did not frequent theaters and coffee houses and out-of-the-way places'].

Nonetheless, the communities' "progressive," "enlightened" sectors came to applaud the theater, and from the early 1870s their representatives began to stage Judezmo dramas, especially as benefit performances to aid the local Jewish poor. The earliest such dramas staged in the Judezmo speech communities of the Ottoman regions (from March, 1873 – i.e., two months after the "Novetades" dialogues began to appear in *El Tyempo*) – were almost entirely Jewish themed, and by Jewish authors: e.g., the "Exodus from Egypt"; and "Joseph sold by his brothers" (Romero, 1983, pp. 5-28). Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Judezmo was staged in Istanbul in October 1873 (Romero, 1983, pp. 13, 16-18).⁵⁷ According to the periodical *La Epoka* (9 April 1877, p. [3]) of Salonika, a play called "El Sid" (perhaps this was Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* [from 1636], although this is hard to believe) was staged in Edirne in that year to raise funds for the local Talmud Torah school; and as announced by *El Tyempo* (23 September 1879, p. [4]), a play entitled "Una letra" ['A letter'] was performed by children in Edirne, to help support the local Alliance school. It was only in the next decade that Judezmo translations of French dramas began to be published as separate volumes, and to be staged locally. One of the French authors who came to be a favorite amongst the "progressive" Judezmo speakers of the Ottoman regions was Molière; but his *L'avare* (first performed in Paris in 1668), translated into Judezmo as *El eskaso*, was only published in

⁵⁷ Originally published in English in 1597, the play was available in the French translation of Jean-François Ducis from 1772, which served as the basis of Francesco Gritti's Italian translation of 1779 (Bianco, 2023 y Ruiz, 2005), and in the Spanish translation of Francisco Rojas in 1780. No mention is made in the announcement of the play in *El Tyempo* (28 October 1873, pp. 2-3) of the language of the source text upon which the Judezmo version was based. The National Library of Turkey holds a French translation of the complete works of Shakespeare published by Pagnerre of Paris, in 1868; perhaps this edition was available to the Judezmo translator.

Istanbul in 1882.⁵⁸ In the same year Racine's *Esther* (from 1689) was published in Istanbul at the press of *El Tyempo* as *Ester: Tragedya en 3 aktos, del selebre eskritor fransés Rasín. Tiraḏa de la eskritura santa, trezlaḏaḏa del fransés por un anónimo*. The 2 February 1882 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. [4]) included the following announcement of the book's appearance, with special reference to it as a play:

La tragedya emportante de *Ester*, kompuesto del savyo i afamaḏo Rasín, vyene de salir de nuestra estampa. Eya es trezlaḏaḏa en nuestra lingua de una manera muy dulce i fasil.

Kon toḏo ke konosen byen nuestros korelijyonaryos el kuento de Mordeháy i Ester, ke salvaron a los djudyós de la muerte, toparán los meldaḏores en esta tragedya unos grandes sentimyentos, a de mas kuando se da en teatro o en representasyón este grande akontesimyento de la estorya de los djudyós.

El presyo del livro lo izimos muy barato. El se vende a gro[shes]' 2 ½ i se lo pueḏen prokurar de nuestra redaksyón o del espartiḏor de nuestra gazeta.

['The important tragedy *Esther*, composed by the wise and famous Racine, has just appeared at our press. It is translated into our language in a very sweet and simple manner.

Although our co-religionists know well the story of Mordechai and Esther, who saved the Jews from death, the readers will react to this tragedy with strong sentiments, especially since this great event in the history of the Jews is given in the form of theater or a representation.

We have made the price of the book very inexpensive. It is sold at two and a half piastres a copy and can be procured from our editorial offices or from the distributor of our paper.']

Molière would again be mentioned in the 23 October 1895 issue of *El Tyempo*, in a letter to the editor by E. Arditi from Constantinople, 15 September 1895, concerning the writer's critical review of a performance in Judezmo of Goethe's German *Mephistopheles* by "la tropa djermano-israelita" because of a scene portraying a synagogue in a manner he perceived as anti-Semitic, which was followed by a censure of Arditi in the Istanbul Judezmo periodicals *El Telégrafo* and *El Tyempo*. The writer assured readers that his criticism was not due to any slight meant toward the Ashkenazim, whom the writer expressed a general appreciation for, his being familiar with "sus abitudes i sus lingua (i mesmo un poko kon el "Yidish," ke no vos desplaga)" ['their habits and their language (and even a little with Yiddish, may it not displease you)']. Arditi remarked that:

Molyer, sovre la esena franseza, ridikulizó Tartuf; otros autores se atakaron tambyén a la relidjyón; pero en toḏa sirkonstansya, kuando se trató de meter en esena la Iglesia, esta última fue entornaḏa de toḏa la pompa nesesarya a aumentar su prestidjyo a los ojos del pueblo, i no menguarlo.

['Molière, on the French dramatic stage, ridiculed Tartuffe; other authors attacked religion; but in all circumstances, when the Church was portrayed on stage, the latter was surrounded by all the pomp necessary to augment its prestige in the eyes of the people, and not to detract from it.']

⁵⁸ Bibliography of the Hebrew Book, citing Moïse Franco (1897, p. 274). Since the book does not seem to have survived we do not know the Ottoman publisher; but it might well have been *El Tyempo*; in any case, it was listed in the 10 January 1882 issue of the paper (p. [4]) as being available for purchase at the newspaper office, and continued to be offered by *El Tyempo* into 1883.

Racine is mentioned in passing in an article on the French writer and consul in Istanbul, André Chénier (Istanbul, 1762-1794) in the 24 July 1896 issue of *La Buena Esperansa* of Izmir (p. [2]).

A search in the online Historical Jewish Press site reveals that perhaps the earliest actual stage performance in the Ottoman Empire of a French play in Judezmo translation – in this case, a drama by Molière, performed by Jewish school children – only took place in 1886 (Molière's *Le Mariage forcé*, in Rhodes, as reported in the 29 December 1886 issue of the Istanbul Judezmo periodical *El Telégrafo* (p. 2; Romero, 1983, pp. 36-37))⁵⁹; with another staged in 1890 (cf. Romero, 1983, p. 41); and two others in 1897, one along with one of Victor Hugo's poems in Judezmo translation (Romero, 1983, p. 41), another, as mentioned in the the 25 March 1897 issue of *El Tyempo*, p. 589): “Una komedya de Molyer fue djuḡado [...] por los elevos i las elevas de las eskuelas. Eya reushó muy byen i izo divertir bastante a toda la asistensya” [‘A comedy by Molière was performed [...] by the boys and girls of the schools. It was very successful and greatly entertained all present’]. In its 26 January 1899 (p. 364) issue, *El Tyempo* announced that a celebration at the Union Française [d’Istanbul, fd. 1894] in Pera (Beyoğlu) on behalf of the underprivileged children of the Alliance School in the Hasköy section of Istanbul would include performances by children of two French plays in Judezmo translation: “Enterpretarán una komedya en tres aktos entitulado “Los Medikós,” i el drama tan enteresante “Los ovradores” de si[nyor] Ujen Manuel” [‘They will interpret a comedy in three acts entitled “The Physicians” [perhaps a reference to Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire*], and the very interesting drama *Les Ouvriers* [1870] by Eugène Manuel [the son of a Jewish doctor, born in Paris’].

Although French dramas might have been used as reading material in the pioneering A.I.U. schools of the Ottoman regions in the 1860s and 70s, and thus could conceivably have had some, if undocumented influence on the original fictional dialogues in Judezmo published in *El Tyempo* during the 1870s which will constitute the focus of the remainder of the present article, we do not actually know this for a fact. All of the French dramatical works referred to above appeared after the *El Tyempo* dialogues which will concern us had appeared. A notice about an Alliance-subsented school for Jewish girls in Istanbul which appeared in the 12 November 1875 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 3) – that is, two years after the publication of the dialogues which will concern us – makes it clear which studies were presumed to be of importance at the time to at least some of the conservative parents of Jewish schoolgirls, and which were not – including “comedies and works of fantasy”:

LA NUEVA ESKOLA DE IJAS YISREELITAS

La nueva eskola de ijas yisreELITAS, subvansyonaḏa de la Aliansa, ke vyene de fondarse en Haskyoi, Kyiremitchi Mahalesi nu[meró] 9, ya empesó a espander sus raḏyos byenazentes sovre las famiyas djuḏías. Esta eskola, ke dizde munchito tyempo estava dezeaḏa, se topa frekuentaḏa oy de 50 elevas, mitaḏ gratis i mitaḏ paḡantes. De esta manera, si komo el número de las elevas, tanto paḡantes komo sin paḡar, deve ser

⁵⁹ If the performance by schoolchildren in Ortaköy of the play referred to as “El brigante” on pages 2-3 of the 17 March 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* was adapted from *Les brigands* (first performed in French in Paris, 1869), by Ludovic Halévy (whose father had converted from Judaism to Christianity) and Henri Meilhac, then apparently it was the earliest documented staging of a Judezmo translation of a French drama. But given the work's amoral theme – theft as a basic principle of society rather than as an abnormality – it is hard to believe that it would have been chosen for portrayal by schoolchildren in the conservative Jewish community of late nineteenth-century Istanbul. The “Muerte de Ludoviko Alevi” [‘Death of Ludovic Halevy’], depicted as an “autor dramátiko i romansyero” [‘playwright and novelist’], was announced in the 11 May 1908 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 771), but *Les brigands* is not mentioned there amongst his writings.

limitado, en poko tyempo, kumpyendosé el nu[meró]’, no va ser resivido mas de eyo, por lo kual, consejamos a los padres de famiyas i djenitores ke dezean ke sus ijas sean tanto kumplidas en el djudexmo komo en linguas ajenas, de profitar de esta okazyón i admitir sus kriaturas a la Eskola de la Aliansa.

El nombre de Aliansa basta solo para no tener menester de alavar el dirijamyento de esta eskola, ke está giada de Madam Nesim, mujer del sinyor profesor i direktor de la eskola de Balat, i ke, myentres el poko tyempo ke esta sinyora estuvo kon su marido, en Halep i en Samakof, kitó adelante ijas de sinyores ke le fueron konfiadas a eya.⁶⁰

Munchos padres de famiyas, apresyando por lo djusto la valor de la enstruksyón, se apresuraron de admitir sus ijas a la nueva eskola dirijida de una sinyora djudia franseza, tenyendo su diploma i rekomandada de la Aliansa. Otros djenitores ke no sigyeron este kamino, se deta dran aínda, van a regretar ke sus ijas no fueron admitidas. De mas, kuando van a ver los progresos presurozos ke van azer las elevas de la nueva eskola.

De otra parte, rekomendamos tambyén a akeos de los sinyores ke moran en el Bosforó i ke kudyan por la enstruksyón, ma ke por la leshura no pueden embiar a sus kriaturas, pueden meterlas enternas, i de esta manera, en konfiandolás a Madam Nesim, pueden estar siguros, tanto por lo ke toka a la enstruksyón komo por lo ke es al kudyado de todo raporto. En kuantto al presyo, el es razonavle, mirando todas las eskolas enternas, i se puede konvenir de grado a grado kon la direksyón.

La enstruksyón ke se da en esta eskola es solidá (rezya). No se echa punto en baldes por embezar komedias, artikolós de fantazía or kozas por tapar los ojos, otro ke se ensenya el djudexmo, el franséz, la kostura i otros lavores de mano nesesyarios<1> para azer de kada eleva una mujer kumplida i giadera de su kaza.

<1> Nota – Estos estudyos son ovligatoryos, ma se ensenya tambyén el pyano, el italyano i el dáich a las elevas ke dezearán embezarsen de eyo.

⁶⁰ In the 10 September 1875 issue of *El Tyempo* (pp. 2-3) it was stated clearly that the director of the girls’ school was Madame Nissim Behar, and the school in Hasköy had opened on the previous Sunday (5 September 1875). It was further noted that the school offered additional optional lessons, some taught by a second teacher: “Las ijas eskolaryas a esta eskola [...] dezean salvarsen de la enyoransa por entrar en la karera aklara da de la sivilizasyon [...] La direktrisa [...] se tomó [...] una sigunda maestra afin de azer dar a sus elevas las leisyones de la lingua ingleza [...] i toda lavor de mano, komo tambyén, por dar una enstruksyón mas kumplida, eya ará embezar el grego por akeas elevas ke demandarán [...] Esta sinyora [...] tuvo dirijido myentres mucho tyempo diversas eskolas de ijas, tanto en la Evropa komo en el enteryor de la Turkía” “The pupils in this school [...] wish to be rescued from ignorance and enter the enlightened path of civilization [...] The director [...] has added [...] a second teacher in order to be able to give her pupils lessons in English [...] and all kinds of handicrafts, and also, in order to provide a more complete education, she will have Greek taught to those pupils who request it [...] This lady [...] had for a considerable time directed other schools for girls, both in Europe as well as in the interior of Turkey.” “Madame Nissim” was the wife of the noted Judezmo-speaking Hebraist, Nissim Behar (1848 – 1931), who was born in Jerusalem, received an education in Paris, and directed several A.I.U. schools, including that in Galata, Istanbul, from 1874, and Jerusalem. He was one of the pioneers of the “Hebrew-in-Hebrew,” or ulpan-style Hebrew instruction, teaching the language in Hebrew itself, as he had been taught French in Paris. For further details see the chapter on him in Haramati (1978, pp. 84-125).

[‘THE NEW SCHOOL FOR ISRAELITE GIRLS

The new school for Israelite girls, subvented by the Alliance, which has been established in Hasköy, in the Kiremitçi Neighborhood, Number 9, has already begun to spread its beneficial light over its Jewish families. This school, which has been desired for a considerable time, is attended today by 50 pupils, half of them without having to pay tuition and the other half paying. Thus, because the number of pupils, both those who pay and those who do not, must be limited, in a short time, this number being reached, no others will be accepted, for which reason we advise the fathers of families, and parents who wish their daughters to be complete in their knowledge of Judaism (or Hebrew, or Judezmo) as well as in foreign languages, to take advantage of this opportunity and enroll their children in the Alliance School.

The very name Alliance is sufficient for there to be no further need to praise the directorship of this school, which is led by Madame Nissim [Behar], the wife of the teacher and director of the school in Balat, and who, during the short time she spent with her husband in Aleppo and Samakov, turned out well-educated daughters of the gentlemen who confided their daughters to her.

Many fathers of families, rightly appreciating the value of education, have already hastened to enroll their daughters in the new school directed by this French Jewish lady, possessing a diploma and recommended by the Alliance. Other parents, who have not followed this path and are still delaying, are going to regret the fact that their daughters were not enrolled. Especially when they see the speedy progress the pupils will make in the new school.

Furthermore, we call to the attention of those gentlemen who live on the Bosphorus, and who care about education, but the distance [to the school] makes it impossible to send their children [to it from home every day], that they can have their children board there, and in this way, placing them in the care of Madame Nissim, they can feel secure about all that concerns school instruction, as well as all other needs. As to the price, it is reasonable, considering that of all the other boarding schools, and the price can be reached conveniently with the directorship.

The instruction which the school provides is solid (strong). Not a moment is wasted on studying comedies, works of fantasy, or other things that delude the readers, but rather what is taught is Judaism (or Hebrew, or Judezmo), French, sewing and other handiworks necessary for making each pupil a completely-knowledgeable woman and housewife.<1>

<1> Note – These studies are obligatory, but lessons in piano, Italian and German are also taught to those pupils who desire to take them.‘]

And even if the A.I.U. pupils, and more relevantly, the writer of the *El Tyempo* dialogues, had read the French dramas of Molière or other French dramatists, one wonders if they could have appreciated the special quality of the language attributed by the authors to the members of pre-nineteenth-century French society, for example, the farcical language Molière attributed to the French peasants and other members of seventeenth-century French society, and whatever parallels might or might not have been drawn by the Judezmo speakers between those social sectors and their sociolects and the sectors and sociolects of the Jewish and non-Jewish societies sharing the spaces of the Ottoman Empire of the late nineteenth century. In fact, the use of non-normative popular language, as exemplified in the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues, would have run counter to the highly puristic attitude toward French, Judezmo, and languages in general which characterized the A.I.U. teachers from whom the Alliance pupils learned their French.

FRENCH INFLUENCE ON THE OTTOMAN TURKISH THEATER

The Karagöz popular Ottoman shadow theater began to be established in the empire from the sixteenth century, very possibly under the influence of Jewish immigrants from Iberia who had had theater experience before the expulsions brought them to the Ottoman Empire. A major characteristic of the Karagöz theater is its representation of members of the diverse ethnic groups of the empire, and the linguistic peculiarities – in their native languages and in Turkish – characteristic of each group. Referring to this theater's main character as “Karayós” in Judezmo, the Ottoman Jews would have been well aware of the types of popular dialogues the Karagöz theater – sometimes performed in accessible public places such as cafés and on the street – presented to the public, although they might have been somewhat insulted by its generally pejorative portrayal of the Jewish character.

In addition to the popular theater, from as early as the late eighteenth century the Ottomans' desire to advance and modernize their empire, as expressed, amongst others, in the maintenance of the Ottoman Capitulations, on the one hand, and French imperialistic interests in the region on the other, led the Ottoman regimes to encourage a knowledge of French language and culture amongst the inhabitants of the empire, especially members of the Turkish higher social strata. One realm in which this is to be seen is the rise in the empire of the modern European-style theater.

According to Mehmet Fatih Uslu:

in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the amateur theater practices performed in Istanbul at local houses and at schools at a later period began to be professionalized and publicized as of the early 1850's. In the early 1870's, the state realized the importance of theatre as a cultural-political instrument, and the theatrical experience accumulated over the last century became a professional activity in the public sphere with a large audience following it.

Uslu cites as catalysts for the development of the modern theater in nineteenth-century Istanbul: (1) the theatrical activities of Western European residents in Istanbul, such as the Italians, as early as the fifteenth century; (2) the interest in the theater in the Ottoman palaces, already discernible in the seventeenth century; (3) the French and Italian embassies in the Ottoman capital, which, also from the seventeenth century, hosted theatrical performances; (4) foreign theater troupes, such as those from Italy, France and Germany, which staged performances in the capital, as well as local Armenian theatrical entrepreneurship. As Uslu emphasizes, “One of the most remarkable attempts was the establishment of the Ottoman Theatre Literature Committee (*Osmanlı Tiyatrosu Edebiyat Heyeti*) in 1873”.

In the middle of the 19th century, Tutuncuoğlu Michael Naum Efendi built the first theater premises, The Naum Theater (Naum Tiyatrosu), a theatre and opera house on İstiklal Avenue in the Beyoğlu (or Pera) district of Istanbul. It was opened in 1844 and remained active until the building was severely damaged by the Fire of Pera in 1870. This became a landmark in the development of the Turkish theater. The Gedikpaşa Theater in the Gedikpaşa district of Istanbul is thought to have been built in 1859 and demolished in 1884. In these theaters, native Turkish actors, speaking Turkish, staged their own plays and world performances, such as the dramas of Hugo, Shakespeare, and Schiller. In a letter to his mother, Gustave Flaubert wrote that he watched an opera by Donizetti at the Naum Theatre the day after his arrival in Istanbul (Aracı, 2010). At the same time, Armenians in Istanbul translated and adapted European plays for bilingual performances in Turkish and Armenian (And, 1983, p. 23). Thus, a certain awareness of and acquaintance with aspects of European, and especially French, culture permeated Ottoman society, especially the upper echelons in the large cities.

As the reports cited above from the Judezmo press on performances of French and other non-Jewish dramas in Istanbul illustrate, from at least the second half of the nineteenth century the Jews of Istanbul would have been well aware of the existence of the dramatic genre through the existence of the French Theater and the staging of French theatrical performances, in French and local languages, in their city. Thus, the Jewish awareness of the existence of local dramatic theater in French and other European languages, and its reflection in translations in local contact languages, might have influenced the production of the 1870s Judezmo dialogues in *El Tyempo*, without any direct influence from the Alliance Israélite Universelle and its educational system.

THE 1870S JUDEZMO DIALOGUES IN *EL TYEMPO* AND THE OTTOMAN THEATER IN TURKISH

From the 1860s and 70s, the Judezmo press in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires began to broaden its linguistic representation of diverse social sectors, outside and within the Judezmo speech communities, mostly through the inclusion of fictional characters representing a variety of social sectors. The characters were portrayed in short prose sketches, usually of a satirical nature.⁶¹ Many of the early pieces tended to take the format of the novel or novelette rather than the drama, with some direct dialogues incorporated into the prose. Most of these pieces were adaptations of European fiction in Judezmo. For example, the seventh issue of *El Tyempo*, from 14 October 1872 (p. [4]) already has the first installment of a serialized Italian novel, entitled “Estorya de los reynos de Fransya,” an adaptation of *I Reali di Francia* by Andrea da Barberino (first published in Modena, 1491); within it, lines of dialogue are incorporated within the prose narrative.⁶² Although originally published in Italian, the subject would appear to demonstrate the interest of the Ottoman Jews in France and its history, at least as attributed to them by *El Tyempo*. In the 10 March 1873 issue (pp. 2-3) of the paper began the installments of *Las aventuras echas de Jil Blas* (continued as *La estorya de Jil Blas*), an adaptation of the novel *L'Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* by Alain-René Lesage, published between 1715 and 1735; the Italian translation, *Gil Blas di Santillano* (4 vols.), translated by Giulio Monti, first appeared in Venice, 1737; and the Spanish translation, *Las aventuras de Gil Blas de Santillana*, by José Francisco de S.I. Isla began to appear in Madrid in 1787. The National Library of Turkey holds a copy of the French edition published by Lebegue Impimeur-Libraire in Paris in 1819; perhaps that edition, if not that copy was available to the Judezmo translator.

Nevertheless, it is from 1873 that we also begin to find dialogues bearing a true resemblance to the modern dramatic format, with stage directions and alternating lines of direct dialogue attributed to the fictional characters whose names precede their lines. In these, finally, we begin to see attempts at the representation of the everyday voices of some of the Judezmo speech community's formerly unrepresented social sectors, in direct conversation with one another.

As has been alluded to in the preceding sections, the fictional Judezmo dialogues in the press did not arise in a cultural vacuum. By this time there was a general awareness among the Ottoman Jews of the theater with its dramatic fictional dialogues, both popular Ottoman and European, in the Ottoman cities generally. A particular breakthrough in the European-influenced Ottoman theater should be noted at this point. From 1867 to 1882, Agop Vartovyan (or Güllü Agop, 1840-1902), an Armenian who converted to Islam, headed the new Ottoman Theater Company in Istanbul. In 1870 Güllü Agop was granted an imperial ten-year patent of monopoly for producing dramas in the Turkish language in Istanbul

⁶¹ For linguistic observations on some of the earliest examples, Bunis (2013), Bunis (2021c).

⁶² On the author and his works see Dolci (1929), Allaire (1994-1995).

(Menemencioğlu, 1983). In its 26 February 1873 issue (p. 2) *El Tyempo* drew the readers' attention to the Gran Balo Nasyonal to take place, under royal patronage, at the French Theater (Judezmo Teatro Franséz, Turkish Fransız Tiyatrosu), in the central Beyoğlu or Pera section of Istanbul, for the benefit of the Vartoyan Beneficence Society:

Para noche de alhad, 1 marso, se va dar un gran balo nasyonal, en el Teatro Franséz (Bey Oğlu), soto el patronaje de Su Ekselensya, Mihram Bey Duz,⁶³ Dirán Bey Aleksanyán i Mikail Efe[ndi]' Abdulah,⁶⁴ a prófito de la Sosyetá de Byenfezensya Vartoyán. Se kree por síguro ke este balo va ser uno de los mas alavados, de modo ke todo ken gosta toparse deve prokurarse de tomar bilyeto ande el si[nyor]' Abdulah Frer o en el Teatro Franséz.

El presyo de un bilyeto es de una lira turka.

[‘On Saturday night, 1 March [1873] there will be a National Grand Ball, in the French Theater (Beyoğlu), under the patronage of His Excellency, Mihran Düz Bey, Diran Bey Alexanian and Mikail Efendi Abdullah, for the benefit of the Vartoyan Beneficent Society. It is believed that this ball will surely be one of the most praised, so that everyone who would like to be present should procure a ticket from Abdullah Frères or the French Theater.

The price of a ticket is one Turkish lira.']

The editor of *El Tyempo* obviously believed that this news would be of interest to his readers, and that some of them might want to attend.

At the same time, other producers were encouraged to start Turkish-language theaters in the provinces, and Turkish statesmen like Ziya Paşa (1825-1880) and Ahmed Vefik Paşa (1823-1891) were among the pioneers who started Turkish theater companies outside of the Ottoman capital.

According to Judezmo press reports, from the 1870s Jewish leaders were beginning to make public lectures in Turkish, and Jewish pupils, to recite and declaim non-fiction and fiction in the language. For example, in an adaptation in *El Tyempo* (4:697 [1875], p. 3) of an article that had appeared in the Izmir Judezmo paper *La Esperansa* it was noted that an award ceremony held in a local Alliance-funded school “se avryó kon [...] algunos pedasos de poezías o diskorsos en la[shón] a[kódesh], turkesko i fransés resitados de diversos elevos, ke fueron saludados kon muncha kaentor de todos los asistentes” [‘opened with [...] a few selections of poetry or lectures in the Holy Tongue [=Hebrew], Turkish and French recited by various pupils, who were saluted with great warmth by all those present’]. Again citing a report in *La Esperansa*, *El Tyempo* (4:770, 1876, p. 2) reported that a rabbinical discourse in Turkish by Chief Rabbi Avraham Palacci of Izmir in 1876 was the first of its kind, and something to be emulated by other Jewish leaders; it also noted that, the discourse being finished, “two young [Jewish] pupils also presented very praiseworthy speeches in Turkish. [...] This is the first time a chief rabbi [of the Ottoman Empire] lectures in the Turkish language.” Thus, from at least this time, the Judezmo speakers of the empire were not only aware of the local use of Turkish in public presentations; they were also beginning to make them themselves. Romero (1983, no. 36) cites a report from December 1886 in the Judezmo paper *El Telegrafo* of Istanbul that Jewish school children performed N. Kemal’s play *Zavallı Çocuk* in Turkish at a Jewish school in Rhodes; on page

⁶³ On Mihran Düz Bey (1817-1891), who belonged to the important Armenian Catholic Düzian family, amiras [‘feudal lords’] and Ottoman court jewellers, see Hartmann (2016, 187-222, esp. 192).

⁶⁴ On Abdullah Frères, royal photographers in Ottoman Istanbul see Özendes (2008, p. 1).

566 of her index, Romero cites another 30 Turkish plays staged by Jewish actors in the Ottoman regions between 1890 and 1914.

P[IERRE]. BAUDIN, “SOVRE EL IJYÉN” ([DIALOGUES] ON HYGIENE)

Perhaps in some way reflecting the growing interest in dramatic dialogues and theater performances increasingly captivating the residents of the Ottoman capital, but also the particular interest of the Judezmo press in finding ways to benefit the Jewish communities of the empire, many of whose members were, at this time, quite poor and uneducated (especially in European terms), the 9 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (pp. 2-3) began to publish a series of fictional dialogues entitled “Sovre el ijyén,” by P[ierre] Baudin (b. 1838). The participating characters were “Si[nyor] el mediko,” perhaps meant to designate a local non-Jew, possibly even Baudin himself; a local Jewish adult named “Mordeháy”;⁶⁵ and a Jewish schoolboy designated as “La kriatura” [‘The child’]. The authorship of the dialogues was attributed to the local “profesor de franséz” [‘French teacher’], P[ierre]. Baudin, who apparently conceived of the idea of fictional dialogues in Judezmo as an entertaining means of educating the Jewish public in matters of concern to the Ottoman regime as well as the Jewish community. M[onsieur] P. Baudin had been noted in the 1 July 1872 issue of the *Bulletin de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle* (p. [3]) as having contributed to the A.I.U. a copy of his book, *Les Israélites de Constantinople*,⁶⁶ and in the 1 July 1873 issue of that periodical (pp. 127-128) he was described as being a French teacher in the Jewish school in the Kuzguncuk quarter of Istanbul which had been established after the preceding school had been lost to a fire. The school had 30 pupils; Baudin gave three lessons per week in French, each lesson lasting three hours. The writer of the report noted:

M. Baudin est décoré pour services rendus à l’instruction: il a contribué à la fondation des écoles israélites de Constantinople et a publié quelques brochures en faveur des Israélites de ce pays; il m’a remis deux exemplaires d’une de ses brochures: *les Israélites de Constantinople*. Il fait paraître en ce moment un roman historique: *le Siège de Rhodes*,⁶⁷ qui a pour but de détruire l’accusation, si souvent renouvelée, de mêler de sang aux pains azymes. J’ai été heureux de voir un non-Israélite défendre avec tant de zèle et de persévérance la cause de nos coreligionnaires et, sous ce rapport, M. Baudin mérite d’être encouragé.

In the preface to *Le siège de Rhodes* (1873, pp. 6-7), which attests to his embracing approach to the Jews, Baudin described his intent in writing the book:

[...] toute notre pensée a été de faire le portrait de la femme israélite d’il y a quatre siècles. Nous avons cherché à la rendre telle qu’elle était: enthousiaste, généreuse et dévouée jusqu’à la mort à une cause qui n’est pas la sienne, mais à laquelle elle se trouve liée par la reconnaissance.

Fidèle à ses principes, elle s’identifie avec toute la vie de sacrifices d’une société qui n’est pas la sienne, mais sans jamais renier la foi de ses pères. Rachel Granada mourra israélite comme elle est née, donnant l’exemple de ces qualités solides qu’on voudrait retrouver chez toutes les femmes.

⁶⁵ H. Mordékay.

⁶⁶ The book bore the subtitle *Etude historique* and was published in Constantinople at the press of M. de Castro in 1872; it was reissued in *Istanbul* by Éditions Isis in 1989.

⁶⁷ Cfr. Baudin (1873, 1895, 1896, 1908a y 1908b). Baudin’s *Le Siège de Rhodes* was translated into Judezmo by Yosef Karmona (b. Istanbul, 1860) and was listed in *El Tyempo* (11 February 1874, p. [4]) as amongst the “livros ke se topan por vender en nuestra estamperia [...] *El asedjo de Roddes*” [‘books for sale at our press [...] *The siege of Rhodes*’]; the press was then located at Galata Sultan Han no. 12, Istanbul.

Cela dit, nous laisserons le public juge, et nous ne lui ferons pas l'analyse de notre livre. Nous accepterons, NOUS CHRÉTIEN, sa critique, si elle est juste, avec la plus grande reconnaissance, comme nous ne tiendrons aucun compte des interprétations malveillantes. Nous continuerons l'exécution du plan que nous nous sommes tracé, quoi qu'on en dise, et nous serons toujours prêt à mettre en lumière tout ce qui pourra rapprocher les Israélites des hommes qui ne sont pas leurs coreligionnaires.

On the cover of the Judezmo translation by Yosef Karmona, 'P. Baudin' is noted as an "ofisyer del Orden Imperyal del Mejidié" ['an officer of the Imperial Order of the Mecidiye,] a military and civilian order which had been instituted by Sultan Abdülmecid I as a reward for distinguished service to members of the French Army and certain others (e.g., Ottoman Jews such as the Sephardi Chief Rabbi [Rishon LeZion] Avraham Aškēnazi; Chief Rabbi of Izmir Ḥayyim Palacci; the businessman Yosef Navon of Jerusalem; and the banker and philanthropist Šemaya Angel of Damascus) who came to the aid of the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War against Russia.

El Tyempo published a total of six dialogues by Baudin. It is unclear whether Baudin wrote them in Judezmo, or they were translated into the language from French by someone at *El Tyempo* (perhaps Yosef Karmona, who translated his *Le siège de Rhodes*). Being in such close touch with the Jewish community of Istanbul it is likely that he had at least some competence in Judezmo, although he probably spoke with his pupils in French. The dialogues were introduced by Baudin in the 7 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (pp. 2-3) in the following note to the paper's editor, the latter then adding a short note of his own:

La letra sigyente nos fue aderesada del profesor si[nyor]' P. Boudén, Pera, el 7 djenaro 1873:

Si[nyor]' redaktor del djornal *El Tyempo*,

Vuestra amistaḏ i byen kerensya konosiḏa ke tenésh por el byen de vuestros korelidjyonaryos me dyo la idea de publikar en vuestro estimavle djornal una serya de artíkolos sovre el iyyén o arte de estar sano i rezyo, ke es una koza byen menesteroza por la viḏa del ombre en djeneral.

Yo me propozo de darvos, uno detrás de otro, algunos syertos artíkolos, ke forman un chiko livro muy provechozo para las famiyas ke keren bivir en buena salud.

Yo vos daré un diálogo de un meḏikó i de un enyorante, i estó siguro ke los meldaḏores de vuestro estimavle djornal serán kontentes i plazyentes de la pena ke vos tomásh para azer saver al puevlo lo ke es provechozo para no kontraer hazinuras, ke son a muchedumbre en nuestra póvera tyera.

Kuando una hazinura mos ariva, se dize munchas vezes, "El Dyo lo kijo." Esto es muncha verdaḏ i ninguno puede venir kontra El Kriaḏor de Lo Toḏo. Ma los akaviḏos no son nunka negros por tomarsen. Ansí, kuando el fuego se deklara súbito en kaza, si dizísh "El Dyo lo kijo," sin bushkar atabafar la lumbre, la kaza se kema; ma si echásh água sovre la lumbre, el fuego se amata, i siguramente ke vos no izítesh alguna kontrayedaḏ a la veluntaḏ del Kriaḏor. Vos tomátesh una prekosityón (akaviḏo) natural. Oy de este moḏo son de toḏas las kozas sovre la tyera. Mas vale guaḏrarse del mal ke de bushkarlo.

Yo konto sovre vuestra oblijensa i vos rogo, si[nyor]' redaktor, de agraḏeser vehu[lé]',⁶⁸

⁶⁸ 'And so on' < H. *wě-kule*.

P. Boudén

Nozotros rengrasyamos al si[nyor]' Boudén por la buenda^d ke nos va azer en mandando nos los artikolos de ijién, i estamos sigüros ke nuestros melda^dores serán plazyentes i tendrán algún entereso de eyo.

La redakسیون

The following is the first of Baudin's dialogues – one of the first of the fictional dialogues *per se* to appear in the Judezmo press of the 1870s – as Romanized from *El Tyempo* of 9 January 1873 (p. 4):

Plátika entre una famiya sovre el arte de gua^drar la vi^da, echo de si[nyor]' Boudén, profesor de franséz:<1>

KAPÍTOLO PRIMO

Es menester de respirar el aver⁶⁹ puro

EL MEDIKÓ: Ke está la ora de vuestra kaza, sinyor Mordeháy?

MORDEHÁY: Ah! Vos sosh, si[nyor]'. Entra^d dunke,⁷⁰ ma yo no se ke está la ora, syendo ay muchos días ke se ke^dó.

EL MEDIKÓ: Komo vyene ke vuestra ora se ke^de? Kale ke sea ke no ku^dyásh en eya.

MORDEHÁY: Kon to^do, yo la kurdeo ka^da lunes i la ku^dyo muy byen, ma no se.

EL MEDIKÓ: La veremos, no sea ke kere alimpya^da i vos vos ulvi^dariash de azerlo. Savésh, mi amigo, ke kuando la ora está suzya no pue^de kaminar.

MORDEHÁY: Es maravía. A·mi me paresía ke la ora kaminava syempre sin alimpyarla.

EL MEDIKÓ: No, mi amigo, komo tu, si keres bivir syempre bueno, kale ke te laves i te peynes i estés limpyo. Ansí es la ora; si el polvo tapa, el chark⁷¹ no pue^de kaminar.

MORDEHÁY: Yo no lo savía.

EL MEDIKÓ: Sin la limpyeza na^da no kamina, ni los echos, ni la saned^ad.

MORDEHÁY: Byen si[nyor]', por lo veni^dero yo ku^dyaré sovre mi ora, i entenyendo ke vos vos aderesásh ande mi, syendo yo kreo ke la ora no es mas ke un achake, grasya si[nyor]' por el konsejo.

EL MEDIKÓ: Yo vos va kontar una estorya, si[nyor]' Mordeháy. Vesh pasar esta kriatura por enfrente, lo yamaremos i verésh lo ke vos dize por mi sistemo.

MORDEHÁY: E byen, azeldo venir, veremos.

EL MEDIKÓ: (Yama al chiko Yakov. La kriatura se iva a·la eskola.) Ke tal estás, mi chiko amigo? Tu pasas sin dezirmos na^da. Estás bueno agora?

LA KRIATURA: Ah! si, si[nyor]', yo estó bueno i mi ma^dre me disho ke vos de grasyas a vos, si[nyor]' el medikó.

EL MEDIKÓ: Komo es esto? Kontamós lo ke te disho tu ma^dre.

⁶⁹ 'Air' < H. *avir* < G. *aéras*.

⁷⁰ 'Therefore, then,' cf. I. *dunque*, F. *donc*.

⁷¹ 'Wheel, cog' < T. *çark*.

LA KRIATURA: Mi madre me disho ke aunke sea uno prove, kale ke esté limpyo, respirar el grande aver, ke no syerve estar enserado muncho tyempo en una kamareta. Yo estava muy hazino⁷² achakes ke mi madre no puedía kudyar en mi, syendo somos muy proves, ma kuando vos le dishítesh ke los proves tambyén podían topar água por lavarsen, i respirar el grande aver ke el Dyo Alto emprezentó, tanto a los rikos komo a los proves por estar sanos, i dizde vuestra vijita, nozotros nos lavamos kada día i avrimos las ventanas kada manyana, i estamos muy buenos en kaza. Ansí, si[nyor]’ doktor, toda la famía rogan por vos.

EL MEDIKÓ: E byen, estásh mirando, mi amigo Mordeháy, ke se kere poka koza syempre por aleshar una hazinura. Se kere la limpyeza en el komo en las makinas.

MORDEHÁY: Kere dezir, si[nyor]’ doktor, ke vos sosh komo otros medikós, vos dezeásh ke kada uno esté sano, vos no kerésh enrikeservos en mirando a los otros hazinos. Ma estavos siguro ke el Dyo Alto vos bendizirá.

EL MEDIKÓ: No se trata de esto. Yo vos guadro por amistad. Ma kuando yo no estó, el medikó de la sivdad vos vyene karo. Kale ke los agásh venir i pagarles karo. I munchas vezes por ke?.....

Un día yo yeví mi ora a uno de mis amigos sa’atchís⁷³ por ke la adovara.⁷⁴ Kuando la vido me disho “Mi amigo, vuestra ora no tyene nada otro ke kere un poko asoplada enriva del chark por kitar el polvo, i kamina.” Ansí, ay hazinuras ke kon poka koza amahan⁷⁵ i no es menester de dar punyaños de groshes⁷⁶ a sharlatanes. Ma esto ke me disho a mi el sa’atchí mi amigo, no lo puede dezir a todos, ke si era ansí no se mantenía del todo.

MORDEHÁY: Vos tenésh razón, yo kreo, si[nyor]’. Es la mankansa del aver ke me da dolor de kavesa, syendo kuando me echo a dormir i todas las puertas i ventanas están seradas yo syento una negra golor i me aze danyo. Ma dizde ke yo avro las ventanas en alevantándome de dormir me veo muncho mijor. Ma en verdad, yo no lo tenía nunka pensado ke esto era del aver puro ke me azía tanto byen.

EL MEDIKÓ: Por eskapar, mi amigo Mordeháy, te kontaré una estorya. Ay muchos anyos ke una nave avía partido de Marsiya por irse a un lugar ajeno kargada de muncha djente. El kapitán de la nave, vyéndose tomado de una fuerte tempesta, se espantó por sus pasajeros, no sea arondjados de la nave de la fortaleza de la tempesta. Komandó ke los entraran a todos dyentro las kámaras i ke seraran todo, i ansí izyeron. Ma los dezgrasyados de los pasajeros, en mankansa de aver, empesaron a batayar i gritar de todas sus fuersas por ke les avryeran. Ma de la fortaleza del ayre, los gritos no venían en orejas de los marineros. Al fin, kuando la fortuna se akedó, avryeron las puertas por kitarlos. Ma malorozamente⁷⁷ toparon los tres kuartos de la djente muertos i el resto moryéndosen, i syendo no pudyeron rezistar (dayanear)⁷⁸ el guezmo⁷⁹ por mankansa de aver, se muryeron.

MORDEHÁY: Na⁸⁰ una terivle estorya.

⁷² ‘Ill,’ cf. OS. *hazino* < A. *hazín* ‘sad.’

⁷³ ‘Watchmaker’ < OT. *sa’atçı* < A. *sa’a(t)* + T. *-çi*.

⁷⁴ ‘Adovar’: ‘correct.’

⁷⁵ ‘Amahar’: ‘Be relieved.’

⁷⁶ ‘Ottoman piasters,’ cf. T. *g-/kuruş*.

⁷⁷ ‘Unfortunately’ < F. *malheureusement*.

⁷⁸ ‘Suffer, bear’ < T. *dayan-* + J. < S. *-ear*.

⁷⁹ ‘Smell.’

⁸⁰ ‘Here! behold!’ < Slavic.

EL MEDIKÓ: I lo mas terivle es ke es así verdaḏ. Kale estar limpyo, komer kozas sanas, i respirar el grande aver si keres estar sano.

(El resto vyene)

<1> Esto es el dialog ke empesimos a traer sigún avlimos en el núm[ero] 62 de nuestro folyo.

One senses that Baudin had no particular literary pretensions in devising his dialogues; rather, his intention was to educate that sector of the Jewish public who had received the least – or no – Western-style education, in the basics of modern hygiene, and in other matters he thought it was crucial for them to know, such as the utility of rain water (*El Tyempo* 10 January 1873, pp. 2-3); the sources of heat (15 January 1873, p. 2); proper childrearing and nursing with mother’s milk (16 January 1873, p. 2); the importance of regular bathing and the need to vaccinate children (22 January 1873, p. 2); and the need to keep a sick-room – and one’s home – clean (27 January 1873, 4). Meant for the popular sector, Baudin (or his translator) used popular Judezmo, with its natural elements of Hispanic (e.g., “golor”/“guezmo” [‘smell,’] “proves” [‘the poor’]), Hebrew (e.g., “hayot” [‘animals,’] “safek” [‘doubt’]), Turkish (e.g., “chark” [‘wheel,’] “kolay” [‘easy,’] “dayanear” [‘suffer, bear’] origin), and even a few Western Europeanisms that had become widespread by this time (e.g., French-origin “malorozamente” [‘unfortunately’]), although the dialogues bore some traces of the literary language of the rabbis of the time, such as the occasional use of the -*Vstesh* rather than -*Vtesh* marker of the second-person plural preterite indicative verb (e.g., “venístesh” [‘you came,’] but also more modern “dishítesh” [‘you said’]) – all of which give an indication of some familiarity with this corpus on the part of the writer. Since the rest of the dialogues are of no special literary or even linguistic interest, they will not be reproduced here.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMMENTS ON *NOVETADES DE LA NOCHE* (NEWS OF THE EVENING)

As indicated at the end of his sixth dialogue on Hygiene, which states “El resto vyene” [‘The rest will follow,’] Pierre Baudin intended to continue publishing his dialogues in *El Tyempo*. But, perhaps because the dialogues had produced no reaction on the part of the readers, and also because another – this time, anonymous – writer submitted the beginning of a different set of dialogues at this time, the publication of which clearly evoked reactions, both positive and negative, amongst the readers – Baudin’s dialogues were not continued in *El Tyempo*. Instead, in the 28 January 1873 issue of the periodical, in which Baudin’s seventh dialogue should have appeared, we find the start of a new series of dramatic dialogues, eventually reaching eight installments and totaling almost 9,000 words. It appeared under the rubric *Novetades de la noche* [‘News of the evening,’] and it was not only of timely interest – beginning as a detailed breakdown of the Jewish Community’s Annual Budget, published on page 2 of the 17 January, 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* as submitted by the Jewish Community Council, followed up by a harsh critique of it; these dialogues were formulated in racy, conversational language, and were evidently meant to provide dramatic literary entertainment as well as point out serious problems with the budget, and with the members and ideology of the Council members. For a reproduction of the budget, and the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues based upon it, see the second part of this article.

It is probably not a coincidence that the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues, the authorship of which was attributed to “Uno de nuestros abonados” [‘One of our subscribers’] began to appear after Güllü Agop had been granted his ten-year monopoly on the Turkish theater in

the Ottoman capital – and perhaps even more relevantly, following the return to Istanbul of Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi (Istanbul, 1826-1871), who is

considered the founder of the modern school of Ottoman literature and was probably the first Turkish writer to feel the need for directing literary expression to the masses. To accomplish this he advocated the reform of Turkish verse forms (based largely on imitation of French models, which he carefully studied and observed) and the adoption of a pure Turkish devoid of [exaggerated and overly-learned] Arabic and Persian vocabulary and grammatical constructions. (Ibrahim Sinasi in Britannica.com)

Şinasi's most famous work, a one-act ironic comedy entitled *Şair Evlenmesi* ['The Wedding of a Poet']⁸¹ was written after he had spent valuable time in Paris, where he was impressed by Enlightenment ideas, and cultivated relationships with Lamartine, Ernest Renan, and other French intellectuals. From Paris, Şinasi brought back Western literary ideas and influences. The westernized Judezmo speakers of the Ottoman regions, too, would eventually become familiar with these French writers; but some, such as Yişhaq Ferera of Istanbul, who identified strongly as an *Ottoman Jew*, would remind readers of *El Tyempo* (20 March 1902, p. 566) of a remark made by one of those writers, adding his own advice:

Lamartín disho: “Amigos! Tornaḏ vuestros ojos verso el Oryente; la verdaḏ nos vendrá de onde nos vyene la luz.”

Estos versos tan conseḡyíḏos meresen de ser gravaḏos en la memorya de toḏos los ke aman la luz i la verdaḏ.

[‘Lamartine said: “Friends! Turn your eyes to the East; the truth will come to us from where the light comes.”

These so-successful verses warrant being engraved in the memory of all those who love the light and the truth.‘]

CHARACTERS AND BACKGROUND OF THE DIALOGUES

The *Novetades de la noche* dialogue series was first introduced in the 28 January 1873 issue of *El Tyempo*, and the series continued through another seven issues of the daily paper.⁸² In the first installments of the series the two main characters, brothers, are introduced. They are Reuvén, apparently a businessman, and the older of the two brothers, and Shimón, still a schoolboy and yet, at times, very mature in his comprehension of his brother's often ironic and cynical remarks. Throughout the series Reuvén is respectfully addressed by Shimón as “basyá”⁸³ [‘older brother,’] the first-born son, or “bohor” (H. *bēkor*) traditionally enjoying a special place within the Sephardic family, and he is categorized by representatives from the local rabbinate as a “chelebi” (T. *çelebi*), here meaning a kind of “Jewish gentleman.”⁸⁴ (It should be noted that the names Reuvén and Shimón are customarily employed in rabbinic

⁸¹ On Şinasi and his writing see also Ergisi, 2010-12; his *Şair Evlenmesi* is available in English translation: Allworth (trans.) (1981).

⁸² An indication of the issue of *El Tyempo* in which each installment of the dialogue series appears will be given in the footnotes under the dialogues.

⁸³ *Basyá*, or *bastyá*, denoting the first-born son or older brother, seems to be a characteristic Istanbul Judezmo form; it is documented by the late Klara Perahya, of blessed memory, and friends in *Erensya sefaradi (proverbos i diças)* (1994, p. 360).

⁸⁴ The non-Jewish *çelebi* character is well known to popular Turkish theater enthusiasts from the Karagöz shadow theater; so, too, is the haham ‘rabbi,’ who also appears in our dialogues.

texts such as midrashim and the responsa literature to denote anonymous, stereotypical characters in interaction.) In later installments of the series, representatives of other social sectors of the Jewish community are alluded to or interact with the brothers. For example, the brothers' "vavá", or tradition-bound grandmother, would be asked to prepare an "adulkito" or "magic charm or burnt offering" on behalf of Shimón to protect him from evil spirits at night – apparently an indirect attack by the anonymous author on some of the supernatural beliefs held by certain sectors of the Jewish population at the time. Various members of the chief rabbinate and its functionaries also interact with the brothers.

PARALLELS BETWEEN *NOVETADES DE LA NOCHE* AND ŞINASI'S *ŞAIR EVLENMESİ*

In several respects the language, stylistics, format and general orientation of the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues are reminiscent of some of the characteristic, novel features of the language of *Şair Evlenmesi*, which one Turkish writer called "the first widely recognized play written by an Ottoman person in the style of modern European theatrical productions." ("İbrahim Şinasi" in *Wikipedia*). Like the dialogues in *El Tyempo*, published two years after Şinasi's death, Şinasi's play had been "printed as a serial, in parts [...], in his newspaper *Tervüman-ı Ahvâl*." Like Şinasi's play, which "directly and satirically addressed issues of contemporary interest," our anonymous dialogues concerned themselves with communal issues of direct interest to the Jewish community as a whole. And if, in his play, Şinasi "took advantage of humor to condemn the frequent arrogance and pretentiousness of the 'self-styled intellectuals,'" we shall see that the anonymous author of our dialogues attacked certain ostensibly self-serving members of the Jewish community's Medjlís Gashmí, the "section of the Jewish communal council which deals with the budget and finances." In contradistinction to the Turkish play, however, the specific themes raised by the anonymous author of the Jewish dialogues, as well as the fictional characters he used to touch on them, and the specific linguistic devices he exploited to convey a sense of the characters as they fit into the social fabric of Istanbul Jewish society at the end of the nineteenth century, were all uniquely and distinctively Jewish. If *Şair Evlenmesi* "was meant not only to entertain, but also to point [out] a moral," the *El Tyempo* dialogues were obviously intended as a sharp critique of the Jewish Community Council of the time, cast in a fictional form which the author probably thought would be more palatable to the community than the straightforward, critical prose essays on the subject which had appeared in the paper previously, while at the same time offering readers some artistic entertainment, perhaps so that the criticism might be received by readers with a grain of salt, and perhaps with less anger at the author.

LINGUISTIC ANALOGUES BETWEEN *ŞAIR EVLENMESİ* AND *NOVETADES DE LA NOCHE*

Some of the linguistic and stylistic parallels between *Şair Evlenmesi* and *Novetades de la noche* are worthy of discussion. As the Turkish writer cited above pointed out, in his play Şinasi "employed a Turkish language that was closer to the vernacular, rather than the vocabulary and structures previously used by the cultural elite." Like some of the popular Judezmo writers from the 1860s on (especially Josef Kalwo of Vienna), Şinasi "attempted to forge a pure Turkish (*öz Türkçe*), through the elimination of words borrowed from other languages in order to make the content and style of his work more appealing and easier to comprehend." (Berkes, 2014). Perhaps the reference is to highly learned words of Arabic and Persian origin in Osmanlıca, not very familiar to popular Turkish speakers, who spoke *kaba türkçe* ['popular or vulgar Turkish,'] which nonetheless incorporated numerous elements of Arabic and Persian origin with which the popular speakers were completely familiar.

As is true of Şinasi's *Şair Evlenmesi*, the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues illustrate numerous features suggested by proponents of the field of Conversation Analysis, or the study of mechanisms with which humans achieve mutual understanding and try to “make sense of each other,” as being typical of conversational language.⁸⁵ In the dialogues, the lines spoken by the brothers are meant as representations of the use of common, everyday Judezmo, much closer to natural, ordinary speech, especially that used by the popular masses, than the often highly Western Europeanized language used in the non-fictional journalistic writings in *El Tyempo* and other Judezmo papers of the same time. These short sketches are amongst the earliest documented fictional representations of conversational Judezmo, and thus they help us to understand how everyday members of the community were actually communicating with one another in Istanbul Judezmo in the 1870s – almost 40 years before Max L. Wagner published his detailed monograph on Istanbul Judezmo, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Judenspanischen von Konstantinopel* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1914).

PHONEMIC SPELLING AND POPULAR LEXEMES AND STRUCTURES

To facilitate reading, and bring the diverse elements of which Ottoman Turkish was composed to a form closer to that used by the popular speakers than by the cultured aristocrats, Şinasi intentionally distorted the way he spelled words in order to make the language more phonetic and to aid in the performance [or, to look for a parallel in our dialogues, which do not seem to have been performed, to the reading] of the play (Berkes, 2014).

In *Novetades de la noche*, some of the elements of Hebrew origin are spelled as in Hebrew, using the original, almost-entirely consonantal system characteristic of Hebrew and other Semitic languages (e.g., <wd'y> “vadáy” [‘certainly’]) – and having a parallel in the analogous spelling of words of Arabic origin in Ottoman Turkish (e.g., <sbb> “sebeb” [‘reason’] <A. *sabab* <sbb>), thus coinciding with the custom of authors of Judezmo rabbinical works. But many such words appearing in the dialogues were spelled phonemically, using the system traditionally employed in Judezmo to spell words originating in languages other than Hebrew or Aramaic (e.g., ”d’yy> “vadáy”).

At least one reader ostensibly reacted strongly to the use of such phonemic spelling by the author of *Novetades de la noche*. The reaction, perhaps actually ironic, took the form of a letter to the editor from “Uno de nuestros abonados” in the 4 March 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. [4]). The author of the letter sarcastically suggested that, if the words were not the Hebraisms of which he supplied the formal Hebrew spellings in his letter, then the editor should explain them parenthetically. Rather than a serious criticism, the entire letter was evidently a humorous critique of the use of non-Hispanic words in Judezmo, and if words of Hebrew origin were used, then, the writer seemed to be suggesting, they should be spelled as in Hebrew:

Sinyor redaktor!

En su estima^{do} djornal teníamos una koza muy buena para nozotros levantinos, ke no konosemos la lingua espanyola komo se deve, ke algunos byervos desconosidos del uzo Levante, mo·los espyegava⁸⁶ kon entre parantéz i mos topávamos muy kontentes.

⁸⁵ Conversation Analysis developed in the mid to late 1960s in a collaboration between Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff; on this approach to communication studies see Lerner (ed.) (2004).

⁸⁶ J. *espyegar* ‘explain’ < I. *spiegare*.

En su número 99, en el artículo entitulado “Novetades de la noche,” el kual no enyegamos ke está avlado por la buenda de la komuné en Kostá, vimos una soma de byervos desconosidos sin ninguna espyegasyón: en pajina 2, kolona 2, linya 22, vimos el byervo *samasim* <smsym>⁸⁷ i en linya 34 el byervo *inyán* <’nyyn>,⁸⁸ en kolona 3, linya 17 el byervo *vaday* <b’’d’y>,⁸⁹ i en linya 37 el byervo *avaná* <’b’’nh>,⁹⁰ en pajina 3, kolona 2, linya 3 el byervo *sivá* <šb’h>,⁹¹ en linya 29 el byervo *berid* <bryd>.⁹²

Muncho bushkimos en el diksyonaryo espanyol i en el shóresh⁹³ de la[shón]’’ak[ódesh], no los topimos en ninguno de los dos livros. I si ha[s]’’vesha[lom]⁹⁴ es lo ke pensimos, ke samasim kería dezir shamashim <šmšym>, i inyan kería dezir inyán <’nyyn>, i vadáy kería dezir vadáy <wd’y>, i avaná kería dezir avaná <hbnh>, i sivá kería dezir shivá <šb’h>, i berid kería dezir berit <bryt>, era mijor ke Si’estava kayado, era por savyo kontado. Ma no kreemos ke un si[nyor]’ Re[uvén]’ i su ermano Shi[món]’ tanto adelantados, ke tengan esta kantidad de yeros. Si no, ke eyos ya saven lo ke eskriven, i la mankansa es muestra, ke no puedemos entender. Rogamos ke mo’lo espyegen en el número venidero.

Uno de nuestros abonados

[‘Mr. Editor!

In your esteemed journal there is something that would be very good for us Levantine [Sephardim] who do not know the Spanish language as it should be: that if some words unknown in the Levantine style you would explain to us within parentheses, we would be very satisfied.

In issue 99 [of the paper], in the article entitled “Novetades de la noche,” which, we do not deny, speaks for the good of the community of Constantinople, we saw a number of unfamiliar words without any explanation: on page 2, column 2, line 22, we saw the word *samasim* <smsym>, and on line 34 the word *inyán* <’nyyn>; in column 3, line 17, the word *vaday* <b’’d’y>, and on line 37 the word *avaná* <’b’’nh>; on page 3, column 2, line 3 the word *sivá* <šb’h>, on line 29, the word *berid* <bryd>.

We searched extensively in the Spanish dictionary and in the Hebrew dictionary of roots and did not find them in either of the two books. And if, Heaven forbid, it is what we thought, that *samasim* meant *shamashim* <šmšym>, and *inyán* meant *inyán* <’nyyn>, i *vadáy* meant *vadáy* <wd’y>, and *avaná* meant *avaná* <hbnh>, i *sivá* meant *shivá* <šb’h>, and *berid* meant *berit*, it would have been better to keep quiet, “If one kept quiet, he would be considered a wise man.” But we do not believe that gentlemen such as Reuvén and his brother Shimón, who are so advanced, should have this number of errors. But rather, that they know what they are writing, and it is we who are lacking, and cannot understand. We ask that they explain things to us in the next issue.

One of our subscribers’]

The use “by the brothers” of the phonemic rather than historical Hebrew spellings was probably more in the nature of intentional “eye-dialect”; the spellings reflected the

⁸⁷ ‘Beadles’ < H. *šammašim*.

⁸⁸ ‘Matter’ < H. *‘inyan*.

⁸⁹ ‘Certainly’ < H. *wadday*.

⁹⁰ ‘Meaning’ < H. *havana*.

⁹¹ ‘Seven’ < H. *šiv’a*.

⁹² ‘Circumcision’ < H. *bērit*.

⁹³ ‘Root’ < H. *šoreš*.

⁹⁴ ‘Heaven forbid!’ < H. *has wē-šalom*.

popular, “merged” Judezmo forms of the words rather than their formal Hebrew spellings, and the author of the dialogues might have intentionally used the phonemic forms for their occasionally humorous nature when compared with their formal analogues. The critic called “yeros” [‘errors’] these spellings which the author, like Şinasi, might have (also) meant to facilitate their reading by readers unfamiliar with formal, consonantal Hebrew spelling, just as less educated Turks might have been somewhat unfamiliar with the analogous Arabic spellings of Arabisms in their Turkish.

In any case, it is unlikely that any of the readers were actually unable to understand the words – which in fact formed part of the everyday Judezmo lexicon of the time – because of their phonemic transcriptions, since the latter more closely reflected their everyday spoken forms in Judezmo than their formal spellings in Hebrew, and might thus have been even more easily understood in those forms than in the corresponding historical Hebrew spellings. It is interesting to note, in this respect, that the word “aver” [‘air’] was actually spelled as in Hebrew, <awyr>, in the first few installments of Baudin’s dialogues on hygiene; but in the final installment it was spelled phonemically, <’b’yr>, perhaps in an attempt to facilitate its identification and comprehension by the less-educated readers for whom the dialogues were intended. It is also worth mentioning that, in a humorous series entitled “Korespondensya de Hedjí el halvadjí kon su mujer Medjí,” published in 1871 by Yosef Kalvo in the Judezmo periodical *El Trezoro de la Kaza* of Vienna (beginning with vol. 1,1 [1871], pp. 3-4), similar spellings were used for Hebraisms (e.g., <s’b’ť> “sabat” [‘Sabbath,’] vs. H. <šbt> “šabbat,” <rap> “raf” [‘rabbi,’] vs. H. <rb> “rav”) (Bunis, 2013). In later Judezmo publications meant for wide popular circulation, this orthographic aid to readers lacking a knowledge of Hebrew became increasingly utilized to such an extent that, in satirical newspapers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this became the usual method used to spell Hebraisms (Bunis, 2005 and 1999b).

In dialogue six, written after the orthography critic’s letter had appeared in *El Tyempo*, the brothers actually discussed the spelling errors he had found in the dialogues, and they disclosed still others he had missed. The brothers concluded that a spy who had been surreptitiously listening to their conversations while hiding in the dark must have been the one who misspelled the words when, later, he secretly submitted the dialogues to the newspaper. In any case, rather than “correcting” their spellings, the subsequent dialogues show a universal use of the phonemic spelling of *all* Hebraisms appearing in the texts, including in the transcription of verses from the Hebrew bible – a clear sign that this use was intentional rather than mistaken.

THE DIALOGUES AS DRAMA AND THE POPULAR, SOCIAL-REGISTER-RELATED SPOKEN QUALITY OF THE CHARACTERS’ LANGUAGE

In the first installment of the dialogues we get an idea of how an intelligent, critical and independent-thinking, and yet still somewhat tradition-oriented and not highly Europeanized member of the merchant class in Istanbul, as represented by Reuvén, might have tried to explain to a more naïve and inexperienced member of the community, as represented by Shimón, the meaning, and inside story, of the community’s budget specification. The explanation includes an explication of some key terms used in the budget – especially “arihá” (H. *‘arika*) or “Jewish municipal tax on an individual” – and how the tax was calculated and collected from the members of the community. From the outset, the dialogues are phrased in language that might well have been close to the kind of conversational language used by real-life counterparts of the social sectors represented by the dialogue’s characters. Here are just a few examples.

Our series opens with brief stage directions and an exchange between the brothers, wondering how they should pass their time on a long winter night. Here the main focus of the initial dialogues is revealed: a critique of the Community Council budget and what it should be used for:

(DOS ERMANOS SE ASENTAN A KONVERSAR. EL ĠRANDE SE YAMA REUVÉN,⁹⁵ EL CHIKO, SHIMÓN.) REUVÉN: Ke vamos azer esta noche, ke no mos vinyeron ninguno por pasar la ora, i la nocha⁹⁶ es de 14 oras? SHIMÓN: A si biva el basyá,⁹⁷ ke yo estava en este pensério. REUVÉN:⁹⁸ Kontamé,⁹⁹ ke sentites oy por el mundo? SHIMÓN:¹⁰⁰ Oy sentí de mis kolegas de la eskola ke avlavan por el Medjlís Gashmí. Apropósito de esta palavra, le rogo ke me de a entender ke kere ser Medjlís Gashmí, ke asta agora no me lo espyegó. REUVÉN: Medjlís Gashmí kere ser una djente eskoji^{da} del puevlo por riji^{do}res de la nasyón. Eyos se enbolsan de las entra^{das}, komo gabelas i otras kozas, i pagan las anyad^{as} de los sinyores hahamim¹⁰¹ i gastes de las eskolas i ta^lmu^{dé} t^orá^l¹⁰² ets^étra – en una palavra, los rijos del kole^l¹⁰³ están en sus manos.	[(TWO BROTHERS SIT DOWN TO CHAT. THE OLDER IS CALLED REUVÉN, THE YOUNGER, SHIMÓN.) REUVÉN: What are we going to do tonight, since no one's come by to help us pass the time, and the night's a long 14 hours. SHIMÓN: You're so right ["May you live thus"], older brother, I was thinking just that myself. REUVÉN: Tell me, what did you hear today about [what's going on in] the world? SHIMÓN: I heard from my chums at school that they were talking about the "Medjlís Gashmí." About that word – I'd like you to explain to me what the "Medjlís Gashmí" is, because up until now you didn't explain it to me. REUVÉN: "Medjlís Gashmí" means a group chosen by the people to lead the [Jewish] nation [of Ottoman Turkey]. They receive the income from the taxes on kosher meat and other things, and they pay the salaries of the rabbis and the expenses of the Jewish schools etc.—in a word, the leadership of the Jewish community is in their hands.']
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Further stage notations indicate the characters' movements and physical gestures. For example, hearing about a certain development in the Medjlís, Shimón starts to dance – and Reuvén grabs his arm and orders him to stop it:

(SHIMÓN SE ALEVANTA EN PYES I EMPESA A·BAYLAR.) SHIMÓN: Asibiva el basyá, esto parese a·lo ke djuḡavamós en el meldar uno kon otro[...]	[(SHIMÓN GETS UP AND STARTS TO DANCE.) SHIMÓN: By your life, big brother, that's like how we used to play together in the religious grade school[...]
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⁹⁵ J. *Reuvén* < H. *Rē'ūven*. Here the name is spelled in the text as in Hebrew (in the present article we employ the standard transliteration of Hebrew in Romanization), <r'wbn>; in referring to the remaining elements of Hebrew and Aramaic origin in the text, attention will be drawn only to those receiving non-standard spellings.

⁹⁶ '(Interval of an) evening.'

⁹⁷ 'Older brother' (discussed above).

⁹⁸ The character Reuvén is denoted in the rest of the text by the Hebrew-letter abbreviation, *r[eš]*: <r">.

⁹⁹ Or *Kóntame*; in modern Judezmo, the correspondents of elements with historically antepenult stress in Spanish tend to receive final stress.

¹⁰⁰ The character Shimón is denoted by the Hebrew-letter abbreviation, *š[in]*: <š">.

¹⁰¹ 'Rabbis, religious scholars' < H. *ḥakamim*.

¹⁰² 'Religious schools' < H. *talmude tora*; here the term is abbreviated as Hebrew-letter <t">.

¹⁰³ 'Jewish community and its governing offices' < H. *kolel*.

(Reuvén lo trava del brazo a Shimón.) REUVÉN: Asenta en un lugar, Shimón!	(Reuvén takes Shimón by the arm.) REUVÉN: Sit down in one place, Shimón!]
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A knock at the door is represented as “(En esto ke están avlando, Tak, tak a·la puerta)” ([‘While they [=the brothers] are speaking, Knock, knock at the door’]). Reuvén expresses exasperation by playing with his beard (“Reuvén se trava la barva” [‘Reuvén pulls his beard out’]). Emphasis, encouragement and repeated behavior are reflected in the reduplication of words: e.g., “Basta, basta, Shimón!” [‘Enough, enough already, Shimón;’] “Mashalá!¹⁰⁴ Mashalá!” [‘How wonderful, or May no evil eye be cast!;’] “Efl Efl!¹⁰⁵ Ke me sekas?” [‘Oh, oh, stop boring/annoying me!;’] “Oy fui a Balat, demandando demandando me mostraron la haham-hané” [‘Today I went to Balat, I kept asking directions and they showed me where the Chief Rabbinate was.’]

As occasionally occurs in natural conversational language, many of the points raised in the dialogues cause Reuvén to experience anger and heartache. His strong emotions lead him to express harsh and often ironic criticism of what he asserts to be dishonest factors occurring behind the scenes of the Medjlsh that have had a bearing on the budget calculation and the distribution of the communal funds, which, in his opinion, reflect the vested interests of certain members of the Communal Council, whom he also accuses of being anti-progressive. Along the way, Reuvén offers various suggestions for the improvement of the council, the distribution of the council’s funds, as well as other community issues, such as education.

As typical of natural conversational language, the dialogues show instances of ironic repetition of words and phrases, and examples of ellipsis, which leave the conversation partner to draw his own conclusions. For example, the following passage follows a discussion by Reuvén of the allocation of a large chunk of the community funds to just one member of the Council. When Shimón questions this irregularity, Reuven advises him not to discuss the matter further, but simply to keep quiet about it, expressed through the single word, “Kayaḏo” [‘Quiet.’] When Shimón asks “Porké kayaḏo?” [‘Why, quiet?,’] Reuven replies elliptically “Porké!” [‘Because!’] He adds the cryptic warning “It’s not for someone like you to ask questions about things that are not your concern. There are hidden secrets here.” And then, to reinforce this, he adds what here might be an adaptation of a phrase from the bible, a very common characteristic of the Judezmo spoken by Jewishly-educated Judezmo speakers. In this case the phrase appears in its Judezmo translation “I pasa adelante,” which can be compared with I Samuel 9:27 ‘wa-ya’avor’ [‘and he passed on’]; here it is used ironically as a command. Later on in the same dialogue, when Shimón wonders why another communal functionary appeared to be singled out to receive an especially generous salary, Reuvén asks Shimón if by chance any of the man’s relatives were Council members; hearing from Shimón that there were, Reuvén simply replies ironically, and this time using a Hebrew phrase, “Aleem tavó aberahá” [‘Upon them will come blessing,’] comparable to the expression “Tavo ‘alaw bēraḳa” [‘there will come to him blessing’] in Tosefta Taanivot 1:7, Bavli, Pesahim 32a and other classical Jewish sources, that phrase itself probably based on a phrase in Deuteronomy 28:2.¹⁰⁶

SHIMÓN: I kualo desharon para otros ġastes!	[‘SHIMÓN: And what [money] did they leave for the other expenses!
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¹⁰⁴ ‘May no evil eye befall X’ < T. *maṣallab* < A. *maṣʿallab*.
¹⁰⁵ ‘Oh, enough already’ < T. *öf öf*.
¹⁰⁶ *U-va’u aleḳa kol-ha-bēraḳot* ‘And all these blessings shall come upon thee.

REUVÉN: Te rekomando por otra ves de no avlar semejantes palavras, i kon esto, kayado. SHIMÓN: Porké kayado? REUVÉN: Porké! No es tu boy para demandar kozas ke no te enteresan. Akí ay sekretos enkuyertos. “I pasa adelante”. SHIMÓN: Salida de ekdeshot i yeshivot de 632,¹⁰⁷ groshes 2,422. REUVÉN: Bueno. SHIMÓN: A Moaram Yaesh A[Shem]” yi[shmereu] alvaa¹⁰⁸ 1,688. REUVÉN: Dime un poko, de la mishpahá¹⁰⁹ de Yaesh, se topa algún myembro del Medjlísh? SHIMÓN: Si, sinyor. REUVÉN: Aleem tavó aberahá.¹¹⁰	REUVÉN: I recommend, again, that you don’t say such things, and so – keep quiet. SHIMON: Why quiet? REUVÉN: Why! It’s not for a small-fry like you to ask things that aren’t of concern to you. Here there are hidden secrets. “And pass on.” SHIMÓN: An expenditure for the religious organization and study halls of [5]632, bringing it to 2422 piasters. REUVÉN: O.K.. SHIMÓN: To rabbi Yaesh, may God preserve him, a loan of 1,688. REUVÉN: Tell me a little about Yaesh’s family, is one of them a member of the Council? SHIMÓN: Yes, sir. REUVÉN: “Upon them will come blessing.”]
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There are also – amongst these two somewhat skeptical members of the tradition-bound Jewish society – ironic references to religious ceremonies in unlikely contexts:

REUVÉN: Va presto, lavaté las manos! SHIMÓN: Berahá kere dicho? REUVÉN: No! Alimpyaté byen i toma la salida del ermozo budjé.	[REUVÉN: Go quickly and wash your hands! SHIMÓN: Do I have to make a benediction [as if before eating bread]? REUVÉN: No! Wash your hands well and take out [for analysis] the beautiful budget [of the Medjlís published in the newspaper].’]
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Reuvén was also aggravated to learn that a large sum of money was being paid to a local Muslim Turk for secretarial work:

SHIMÓN: Al kyatib turko 3,600. Para kualo es este kyatib turko? REUVÉN: De ke te azes bovo? Kada día es menester de eskrivir takrires¹¹¹ a la Sublima Puerta i se eskriyen en turkesko. SHIMÓN: Por siguro ke es así, ma yo no demando esto, otro para kualo es turko, i no djudyó? REUVÉN: Ah! Otro dolor en el korasón. Ke djudyó vites ke save eskrivir turkesko bueno! I los ke saven ya están	[SHIMÓN: To the Turkish secretary, 3,600. What is this Turkish secretary for? REUVÉN: Why are you acting dumb? Every day it’s necessary to write memorandums to the Sublime Porte, and they are written in Turkish. SHIMÓN: Of course that’s so, but I’m not asking that, but rather, why is he a Turk, and not a Jew? REUVÉN: Ah! Another heartache. What Jew have you seen who can write Turkish well! And those who can are already employed by the government, with good pay. If there were more,
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¹⁰⁷ The Jewish year [5]632, corresponding to Gregorian 1871-72.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Loan’ < H. *hahva’a* (in the budget the word is spelled <hlw’h> instead of normative <hlw’h>).

¹⁰⁹ ‘Family’ < H. *mišpaḥa*.

¹¹⁰ H. *‘alehem tavo ha-bēraḳa* ‘Upon them there shall come blessing.’

¹¹¹ ‘Memorandum’ < T. *takrīr* < A. *taqrīr*.

empyegados al governo, kon sus buenas pagas. Si avía mas, i para eyos se topava empyegos. Por ezempyo, puedían servir por kyatib al kolel. SHIMÓN: Komo! En las patrikhanés,¹¹² kanchelerías,¹¹³ los kyatibes ke ay son turkos, o de sus propyas nasyón? REUVÉN: Guay! Ya me matates! Las patrikhanés, kanchelerías, avren eskolas, gastan moneḏa, los embezan, i después les syerven por kyatibes i dragomanes, i komen pan deskansado i onorado. Akí en nozotros, ke eskolas vistes¹¹⁴ porke embezen? Ya vites los gastes de la salida ande se fueron, i kon esto te baste por sekarme. SHIMÓN: Ya entendí. Por mankansa de buena administrasyón vamos kedando atrás de las otras nasyones.	work would be found for them too. For example, they could serve as the secretary of the Jewish Community. SHIMÓN: What! In the Christian patriarchates, in the foreign chancelleries, the secretaries are Turks? Or they're from the national groups themselves? REUVÉN: Ouch! Now you've really killed me! The patriarchates, the chancelleries, they open schools, spend money, they teach them, and then they serve them as secretaries and translators, and they earn their bread calmly and with honor. Here amongst us, what schools have you seen that teach [Turkish]? You saw the expenditures [of the community] and where the money went to—and with that, enough making me crazy. SHIMÓN: Now I've got it. For lack of good administration we keep remaining behind the other nations [of the empire].']
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At a time when each of the empire's religious-ethnic groups, or *milletler*, controlled its own educational and much of its social, cultural and political life, each group preferred to give work to its own members. It may be understood, when we compare Reuvén's remarks from 1873 with the passage from 1875 which was adduced above, announcing the teaching of Turkish at the newly opened Alliance school in Balat, that the Alliance practice was an innovation, or at least relatively rare in Jewish schools of this time. Perhaps Jews who could read and write Turkish before that time had studied the language privately, partly in answer to Sultan Abdülmecid's order that the Jews become literate in Turkish so they could work for the government. In the dialogue, the source of Reuvén's heartache is not so much that the community paid a non-Jew to do its secretarial work, but that the community was not training its own members in Turkish.

As characteristic of natural speech between intimates, the characters, and especially Reuvén, use rhetorical, frank, and even insulting language and slang to express their strong emotions. In one dialogue Reuvén warns Shimón not to allow the clerics he intends to speak with to fill his head with foolish ideas, threatening that if he does, Reuvén will not speak to him again. He also promises to explain to Shimón about the significance of various newspaper articles, which he claims the younger brother does not have any understanding of:

REUVÉN: Mira komo te akavido,¹¹⁵ no sea ke kon sus vanas ideas te inchan el meoyo de patranyas, ke si tal es ansí, endesparte ke no avlo mas kon ti. Te ago saver tambyén por los djornales, komo no tyenes una pará de meoyo.	['REUVÉN: I warn you, don't let them fill your brain with their foolish ideas, because if you do, I won't speak with you again. I'll also explain to you about the newspaper articles, that you don't have a bit of sense about.']
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¹¹² 'Patriarchate' < T. *Patrikhané* < G. *Patriárkhis* + P. *xáne*.
¹¹³ '(European) consulates' < I. *cancelleria*.
¹¹⁴ An older, especially literary 2sg preterite indicative form; *vistes* is followed by modern *vites* 'you (2sg) saw.'
¹¹⁵ *Akavidar* 'warn,' cf. P. *cavidar*.

Interactions with absent characters are recreated through dialogue within the dialogue. For example, Shimón recreates an exchange with people outside the Chief Rabbinate:

SHIMÓN: Les demandí, “Djente tyenen a ^d yentro los sinyores hahamim?” Respondyeron, “No! Solikos están a las moshkas! Veremos djente!” Demandí “Puedo entrar sin lisensya?” “Entra, no embarasa.” Ansí me prezentí delante los sinyores hahamim, los kualos eran tres, un sinyor zakén ¹¹⁶ en la kyushé ¹¹⁷ i uno por ka ^d a la ^d o. Les bezí las manos komo es el dover i me estuvi en pyes kon las manos ata ^d as. ¹¹⁸	[SHIMÓN: I asked them, “Do the rabbis have anyone with them now?” They answered, “No! They’re alone with with flies! Let’s see some people here!” I asked, “Can I go in without getting permission first?” “Go in, it won’t bother anyone.” So I presented myself to the rabbis, who were three, an old man in the corner and one on each side. I kissed their hands, as is required, and I stood in front of them with my arms folded.
(UNO DE LOS SINYORES HAHAMIM:) Ke kerésh, mansevo? Ke es el inyán? ¹¹⁹	(ONE OF THE RABBIS:) “What do you want, young man? What’s the matter?”
SHIMÓN: “Vini, si[nyores]”, a demandarles una demanda.”	SHIMÓN: “I’ve come, sirs, to ask you a question.”
(SI[NYOR]’ HAHAM:) “Demanda, ermano, vos sintiremos.”	(RABBI:) “Ask, brother, we’re listening.”]

Part of the natural quality of the dialogues lies in their elements of Hebrew and Turkish origin. Those elements had played a role in Ottoman Judezmo from its early origins – and until the influence of the Haskalah- and Western Enlightenment-induced, Latinocentric purism of the Alliance teachers and other revered Europeans, or Europeanizing locals, with whom the Judezmo speakers increasingly came into contact from the second half of the nineteenth century caused those speakers who were undergoing Europeanization to make efforts to purge their language of such elements, now considered undesirable.

Many of the words of Hebrew origin relate to the religious sphere (e.g., “haham” [‘rabbinical scholar,’] “kasherut” [‘kashruth,’] “maśá” [‘matzah’]) and the community structure (e.g., “kolel” [‘council,’] “arihá” [‘tax assessment,’] “neerahim” [‘tax-assessed individuals’]), but some do not (e.g., “alvaa” [‘loan,’] “zemán” [‘time period,’] “malshinuṭ” [‘spying, informing’]).

It should be noted that the words of Turkish origin that appeared in the texts and which are still typical of the popular conversational language of some Judezmo speakers did not enter the language during the community’s transition to Turkish in the Early Republican Period. Rather, as in the other languages of this region, Turkish had an increasingly profound influence on the Jews’ group language from the sixteenth century on. For example, the word “sirma” [‘lace, embroidery or cloth woven with silver or gold thread’] which appears in one of the dialogues is first documented in Judezmo in responsum no. 16, from Istanbul, 1612, in the collection *Pēne Yēbošua* (Istanbul, 1739) of Yēhošua ben Yosef Handali; while “djumert” [‘generous’] appears in the first volume of the *Me-‘am lo‘ez* bible commentary on

¹¹⁶ ‘Elderly man’ < H. *zāqen*.

¹¹⁷ ‘Corner’ < T. *kōše*.

¹¹⁸ Amongst the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, kissing the hand of an elder and standing before him with one’s arms folded was expected of a younger person as a token of respect.

¹¹⁹ ‘Matter’ < H. *‘inyan*; here the almost phonemic spelling is used, <‘nyyn>, rather than formal Hebrew <‘nyyn>.

Genesis (Hulí, 1730, 117b), and “karar” [‘amount,] in a religious text from 1749 (Asa, 1749, 203b).

READERS’ REACTIONS TO THE SERIES

In publishing his harsh critique of the Communal Council’s budget – and the Council members and their modes of operation – the anonymous author of the dialogues between the brothers sought to make heard the voices of the more progressive sectors of Istanbul Jewry at the time, with whom he obviously identified. In doing so he opened himself up to a counter-critique by the more conservative sectors of Istanbul Jewish society, particularly those who identified with the rabbinate and the city’s Jewish Religious Council. One of its supporters, calling himself “A Friend of the Council,” submitted to the editor of *El Tyempo* the following letter in defense of the Council and its members, in language closely akin to Rabbinic Judezmo. The letter appeared in the paper’s 18 February 1873 issue (p. 2), i.e., after the third *Novetades de la noche* dialogue had appeared:

Al si[nyor]’ estimado redaktor del djornal *El Tyempo*

*Im lo abshav ematáy*¹²⁰

Kon grande desplazer viđi en muchos números de su estimado djornal apareser unos artikolós muy ensayados kontra el Medjlís Gashmí A[Shem]”A[lav]”ya[gén]”a[mén].¹²¹ De una parte, unos sinyores se keshan de lo·ke no está kuđyando komo es el menester sovre los ta[lmuđé]”t[orá] i las eskolas; de otra parte otros topan ke avlar por el budjé ke kitó.

Sinyores kritikađores! Entendé byen ke los sinyores myembros del Medjlís no toman ninguna pađa por este sherut¹²² ke están azyendo al Kolel para ke vozotros puedásh kesharvos kontra eyos! Estos sinyores no están penando otro ke lihvođ A[Shem]”¹²³ i están bushkando behol mišmešé koham leakim degel atorá velomeđea.¹²⁴ La puja de los dos si[nyores]’ myembros (Moaram¹²⁵ Šonšin i Moarí¹²⁶ ‘Akrísh) al Be[t]”D[in] Ašéđek¹²⁷ no fue sin menester, sigún vozotros lo kereésh, otro ke fue muy menesterozo, i ke mior ke unos sinyores hahamim semejantes se topen al kisé atorá.¹²⁸ I tengo avtahá¹²⁹ ke Ashreem Yisrael,¹³⁰ milevađ¹³¹ ke no les embarasa este gaste, tambyén no se está indo la moneda de·la uma yisreelit levoroť nishbarim,¹³² sigún se iva mas antes, baavo[not]”ara[bim],¹³³ tođo para eskolas, i ya se viđo tođos los kumpliđos ke salieron de las eskolas. I kon esto, ya basta este karar¹³⁴ de demandar eskolas; i en luđer de esto, Ma tov umá naim¹³⁵ si el Medjlís Gashmí se

¹²⁰ ‘If not not, when?’ < H. *Im lo ‘akšaw ematay* (Ethics of the Fathers 1:14).

¹²¹ ‘May the Name protect it, amen’ < H. *Ha-Šem ‘alav yagen, amén*.

¹²² ‘Service’ < H. *šerut*.

¹²³ ‘For the honor of the Name’ < H. *li-kvod Ha-Šem*.

¹²⁴ ‘With every drop of their strength to raise the flag of the Torah and its students’ < H. *bě-kol mišmēše koham lē-haqim degel ha-tora vē-lomēdeba*.

¹²⁵ An abbreviation of Hebrew-origin *Mo[renu] hara[v] M*. ‘our teacher, the rabbi M.’

¹²⁶ Denoting Hebrew-origin *Mo[renu] hara[v] Y*. ‘our teacher, the rabbi Y.’

¹²⁷ ‘Religious Court of Justice’ < H. *bet din ha-šedeq*.

¹²⁸ ‘On the seat of Torah’ < H. *‘al kisse ha-tora*.

¹²⁹ ‘Confidence, trust’ < H. *havtaħa*.

¹³⁰ ‘Happy be Israel’ < H. *ašrehem Yisra’el*.

¹³¹ ‘Aside from (the fact that)’ < H. *mi-lēvad*.

¹³² ‘(From) the Jewish nation to broken wells’ < H. *umma yisrē’elit lē-vorot nišbarim*.

¹³³ ‘For our sins’ < H. *ba-‘avonot ha-rabim*.

¹³⁴ ‘Amount’ < T. *kadar* < A. *qadar*.

¹³⁵ ‘How good and how pleasant’ < H. *ma-ťov u-ma-na’im* (Psalms 133:1).

okupava mas de·lo·ke está okupando lehazek eṭ bédék abáyit¹³⁶ de kudyar en mahaziké torá,¹³⁷ ke de esto es lo ke se espera de salir fruto.

Ya mos akodramos el mašav shafel¹³⁸ ke estava la umá¹³⁹ antes ke entraran estos sinyores, i grasyas ke de ke entraron eyos, se enderechó la nasyón, koza ke no se lo tyene visto. I ke sale de ir kritikando? I hosheshani¹⁴⁰ ha[s]”ve[shalom]¹⁴¹ no sea ke se ağan tadjiz¹⁴² de tanto oyir, i seresh vozotros sibá¹⁴³ del derokamyento del Kolel.

Espero ke devarim ayošeim min alev¹⁴⁴ arán la peulá¹⁴⁵ en los korasones de todos estos sinyores myembros shezahuṭ arabim talúy baem.¹⁴⁶

Lo saludo kon amor de korasón,

Un Amigo del Kolel

[“To the esteemed editor of the newspaper *El Tyempo*

If not now, when?

With great displeasure I have seen appear in many issues of your esteemed periodical some articles expressing great anger at the Religious Council, may the Name protect it. For their part, some gentlemen have complained that the Council is not taking proper care of the Talmud Torah schools and the Western-style schools; and on the other hand, others have found things to say about the annual budget the Council has released.

Gentlemen Critics! Understand that the honorable members of the Council do not take payment for this service they are performing for the Council, that you should complain against them! These gentlemen are not struggling for anything except for the honor of the Name and they are striving with every drop of their strength to raise the flag of the Torah and its students. The addition to the Rabbinic Court of Justice of the two gentlemen members (Rabbi Soncin and Rabbi ‘Akrish) was not without there being a need, as you think, but rather was very necessary, and what is better than having such scholars sit on the seat of Torah? And I have faith that, happy be Israel, aside from this cost not bothering them, the money is also not going from the Jewish nation to broken wells, as it did before, for our sins, all for Western-style schools, and we have already seen the “perfect” students who graduated from those schools. And with this, this amount of asking for Western-style schools is enough; and instead of that, How good and how pleasant it would be if the Religious Council would preoccupy itself more than it has already in the strengthening and inspection of the house and the Upholders of the Torah, for it is from this that one can hope to see fruit born.

We remember well the deteriorated state that the nation was in before these gentlemen entered, and thankfully since they have entered the nation has corrected itself, something that had not been seen before. And what is gained from constantly

¹³⁶ ‘To strengthen the inspection of the house’ < H. *lē-haẓẓeq et bedeq ha-bayit*.

¹³⁷ ‘The upholders of the Torah’ < H. *maḥaẓiḡe ha-tora*.

¹³⁸ ‘Low condition, deteriorated state’ < H. *mašav šafel*.

¹³⁹ ‘Nation’ < H. *umma*.

¹⁴⁰ ‘I suspect’ < H. *hošešani*.

¹⁴¹ ‘Heaven forbid’ < H. *ḥas wē-šalom*.

¹⁴² ‘Disturbance, molestation, importunity’ < T. *taciṣ* < A. *ta’jiṣ*.

¹⁴³ ‘Cause, reason’ < H. *sibba*.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Words that were emitted from the heart’ < H. *dēvarim ba-yošē’im min ha-lev* (from a poem by Moše Ibn ‘Ezra).

¹⁴⁵ ‘Action’ < H. *pē’ulla*.

¹⁴⁶ ‘That the merit of the many depends upon them’ < H. *še-ẓēkut ha-rabbim taluy babem*.

criticizing? And I suspect, Heaven forbid, that from hearing this so much the people will become importuned, and you will be the cause of the destruction of the Council.

I hope that words that have been emitted by the heart will have their effect on the hearts of all those gentlemen members upon whom the merit of the many depends.

I salute you with the love of my heart,

A Friend of the Council']

The seventh dialogue appeared in the 28 March, 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (pp. 2-3). It ended with the statement: “Kontinuaremos” [‘We [Reuvén and Shimón] shall continue.’] When almost a month passed and no continuation of the dialogues appeared, some of the readers grew impatient and turned to the paper for an explanation, which *El Tyempo* then provided on the first two pages of its 22 April 1873 issue:

Algunos de nuestros abonados demandan kon despasensya, porké motivo, Reuvén i Shimón no se están okupando de darnos detalyos nuevos sobre los rijos de nuestro Kolel? Les dizimos ke estos dos ermanos misteryozos, donde ya es saviðo sus sempatía por nuestra nasyón, se fueron azer un viaje en Vyena, ande se están entremetyendo sobre las dezreglas ke se pasan en syertas komunitás i por enderecharlas, por lo kual, no mankarán de venir en poko tyempo otra ves akí en Kostán, por azer un shelihut¹⁴⁷ en Kurú-Cheshmé, Has Kyoí, Balat¹⁴⁸ i komo estos lugares.

[‘Some of our subscribers impatiently ask why Reuvén and Shimón are not preoccupying themselves with giving us new details on the actions of our Communal Council. We tell them that these two mysterious brothers, whose sympathy for our nation is well known, have taken a trip to Vienna, where they are concerning themselves with the irregularities occurring in certain communities and they are attempting to correct them, following which they will not fail to come to Constantinople again in a short time and undertake a mission in Kuruçesme, Hasköy, Balat and places of this kind.’]

Toward the end of the series’ publication, detractors of the dialogues and the ideas expressed in them in Istanbul and Vienna were said to have expressed satisfaction over the apparent “death” of Reuvén and Shimón, an impression caused by a pause in the appearance of the dialogues. But one reader then came to the defense of the brothers: in the 4 November 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 3) “Yosef el Afrikano” [‘Joseph the African’] directed the following letter to the paper’s editor, who then published it, with a comment of his own:

Al si[nyor]’ redaktor del djornal *El Tyempo*,

Galata, Yom besorá tová¹⁴⁹

Topandomé de pasaje akí en Kostán, veo ke dizde un syerto tyempo, se está asinyalando una sorte de *siniores* akí en Kostán ke, sirvyendosén de un folyo ke a eyos les konvyene, publikan unos artikolós sin kola i sin kavesa para kritkar kontra la djente onesta i kontra el progreso.

La semana pasada apareseyó de nuevo un artikoló kontra Reuvén i Shimón, los kualos fueron kapache de meter a ojos de toðo el mundo las dezreglas ke se akometían en nuestra komunitá, i los remedyos por adovarla.

¹⁴⁷ ‘A mission involving travel’ < H. *šēlīhut*.

¹⁴⁸ Kuruçesme, Hasköy, Balat are sections of Istanbul.

¹⁴⁹ ‘A day of good tidings’ < H. *yom bēšora ṭova*.

El parti^do kontraryo a R. i Sh. bushkó en to^da manera de tomar una vengansa por ke se avló la verda^d, ma asta oy no pu^do. El se sirvyó del dito folyo i empesó a kritikar a usted^d de una manera la mas basha. Usted^d, komo noble ke es, i sintyendo ke los artikolós tenían mucho guesmo de vino, no se entenyó por la muy djusta razón a responder. Esta kayadés suya metyó en grande rebuelta a sus kontraryos, eyos se ensanyaron, blasfemaron i al fin se atabafaron porke

Pi hesil mehitá lo!¹⁵⁰

Tambyén, to^da koza ke su simyente es falso, su kavo es por derokarse – sigún vimos ezempyo de eyo.

Vinyendo el artikoló ke aparetyó la otra semana, el kompozid^o aze ke Reuvén i Shimón se muryeron, i dan palmas ke ya eskaparon de estos ermanos. Estas palmas van a ser en baldes, syendo estamos siguros ke Reuvén i Shimón no se muryeron ni menos sarnu^daron.

Mesmo sigún mi idea es ke la personifikasyón de Re[uvén]’ i Shi[món]’ es un simboló (semejansa) de dos personas ke azen un dialogo de verda^d, i ke la djente nesya le parese ke efektivamente se trata de dos personas, por lo kual esta djente se ezvanese i no topa na^da.

En tanto, beata ermanos ke tal supyeron a meter en deskuvyertura los embarasos de nuestra komunitá i ke achakes de eyos pue^de ser ke se organizará nuestro Kolel.

Dunke, Reuvén i Shimón no se muryeron; eyos están espekta^dores (seyrandjís), ma si algunos los azen yamar, eyos arán kontentar a to^dos.

Yosef el Afrikano

La letra ke preside, eskrita de un emparsyal – syendo no se trata de un vyenéz, ma de un mora^dor muy leshano – aze ver nuestra djusta opinyón ke tuvimos en las polemikás ke se avyeron kuenta nos. Nozotros deshemos ezvaneser a una djente, ke su pendolá propya le es una buena satira a sus artikolós. En kuinto a Re[uvén] i Shi[món], para to^da koza ay su ora i ninguno se pue^drá resfuir de eyos.

La redaksyón

[‘To the honorable editor of the newspaper *El Tyempo*,

Galata [Istanbul], ‘The day of good tidings’

Finding myself en route in Constantinople, I see that for a certain time a kind of *sinjores* (gentlemen) here in Constantinople who, making use of a newspaper that is convenient for them, are publishing some articles lacking a head or tail in order to criticize honest people, and work against progress.

Last week there again appeared an article against Reuvén and Shimón, who were able to bring to the public’s eye the irregularities being committed in our community, and the remedies for repairing them.

The party opposed to R. and Sh. sought in every way to take revenge for the truth having been spoken, but to this day it was unable to. It made use of the said paper and began to criticize you in the lowest manner. You, who are noble, and hearing that the articles have a strong smell of wine, did not know how to reply fittingly. This silence of yours set your opponents to rebel, they grew angry, they blasphemed and in the end they choked because

¹⁵⁰ ‘A fool’s mouth is his ruin’ < H. *ki-kěsil mē-ħitta-lo* (Proverbs 18:7).

“A fool’s mouth is his ruin”!

Also, everything the seed of which is false will in the end be destroyed – as we have seen exemplified.¹⁵¹

Coming to the article that appeared last week, the author makes out that Reuvén and Shimón have died, and he applauds being rid of them. This applause will be for naught, because we are sure that Reuvén and Shimón have not died, or even sneezed.

As I see it, the personification of Reuvén and Shimón is a symbol (image) of two people in dialogue about the truth, and stupid people think they are actually two real persons who disconcert these people and thus they do not find any use for them.

Therefore, happy are the brothers who knew how to reveal these misdeeds in our community and, thanks to them, perhaps our Council will be reorganized.

So, Reuvén and Shimón have not died; they are observers (spectators) on the side, but if anyone calls upon them, they will satisfy everyone.

Yosef the African

The preceding letter, written by someone impartial – since he is not a Viennese but someone living very far away – exposes our true opinion about the polemics that arose against us. We let people become disconcerted, because his own pen is a good satire in favor of their articles. As to Reuvén and Shimón, everything has its proper time and no one can escape from them.

The editor’]

In the Viennese Judezmo periodical *El Trezoro de la Kaza* which he edited, Yosef Kalvo, or Josef Kalwo, of Timișoara and then Vienna published a satirical series of *Kartas bovas* [‘Silly letters’] partly directed against those who opposed progress; in some ways it is reminiscent of the *Novetades de la noche* series in *El Tyempo*. Kalvo’s series began in the 1 January 1871 issue of his paper and continued for another six issues. Despite what the editor of *El Tyempo* said about the author of the Reuvén and Shimón dialogues having been written by someone who was not Viennese but residing far away, one wonders if the references to Yosef and Vienna were actually hints that the author of these dialogues was actually Yosef Kalvo of Vienna. As was noted above, one of the features of the “brothers” dialogues is the spelling of words of Hebrew origin using a popular form, as Güllü Agop had done in his Turkish drama, and Kalvo in his Judezmo letters. Kalvo had edited Šem Tov Semo’s *Koreo de Vyena* but had to give it up in 1871, when Semo transferred the position to his son-in-law. Kalvo lived until the age of 75, dying in Vienna on 30 September 1875. Thus, it is conceivable that he wrote the Reuvén and Shimón series, or at least wrote the letter signed “Yosef el Afrikano” in its praise. But on the other hand, the language of the *El Tyempo* series is characteristically Istanbul Judezmo, and contains no Viennese features; so perhaps another author was responsible for it.

In any case, in defiance of their critics, the fictional brothers were made to reappear in an eighth dialogue in the 5 November 1873 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 3), as reproduced here in the Appendix as Text 8 – in which the matter of their having been in Vienna is touched upon. But the dialogue ended with an indication of its having been submitted from Edirne, which is odd. With that installment the series came to an end.

¹⁵¹ Cfr. Ethics of the Fathers 4:1, “Every gathering that is not for the sake of Heaven, its end is not to endure.”

THEATER-RELATED COMPLEMENTS

The first installment of the dialogue series in *El Tyempo* of 28 January, 1873 was immediately followed, on the same page (p. 3), by the following announcement:

AVIZO EMPORTANTE

Se aviza al respetavle puevlo ke la Sochetá de Enstruksyón i de Byen Fezensya (Hohmá Ugmlut Hasadim) de nuestra kapitala dará alhaḏ del 17 aḏar a la noche (noche de lunes) a las dos la ora a'la turka una representasyón teatral, en lingua espanyol oryental, en el teatro situadō en Ortá Kyoy, al benefisyo de la dita socheté.

Eya tyene la esperansa de seer onoradā i enkorajadā de todōs los si[nyores]' ke aman el progreso, i el byen azer.

Presyos:

Lodjas, prima fila, lira turka 1 ½

Sigunda fila, “ ” 1

Fotolyo “ ” 1/2

Entraḏa por platea i lodjas, medjid uno.

Todōs los si[nyores]' ke dezean tomar de dichos bilyetos se aderesen en Galata, Demir Kapı Han nu[meró] 5, en Estambol alaḏo de la kavané Karathané en la butikā de el dishchí, si[nyor]' Estehlin, nu[meró] 5.

[IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT]

The respectable public is advised that the Society for Education and Beneficence (Knowledge and Philanthropy) of our capital will, on Sunday the 17 of Adar in the evening (Sunday evening), at two o'clock according to Ottoman time, offer a theatrical presentation, in the Oriental Spanish language [=Judezmo], in the theater situated in Ortaköy, for the benefit of the said society.

The society has the hope of being honored and encouraged by all the gentlemen who love progress and beneficence.

Prices:

Loges, first row, 1 ½ Turkish liras

Second row, 1 Turkish lira

Armchair seats Half a Turkish lira

Entrance for the public and loges, 1 mecid.

All gentlemen who wish to purchase the said tickets should go to Galata, Demirkapı Han No. 5, in Istanbul near the Karathane coffeehouse in the shop of the dentist, Mr. Stechlin, No. 5.]

The publication of this theatrical announcement immediately following the first installment of the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues would seem to indicate that the editor drew a connection between the theater genre and the dialogues, with their dramatic format and conversational language. The announcement also appeared in numbers 5-7, and 10-11 of *El Tyempo*.

An article encouraging the more progressive-minded Jews of Istanbul to join the Society which was to present the drama, and to attend the event, appeared in the 7 March, 1873 issue of the paper (p. 3):

LA SOSYETÁ ENSTRUKTIVA I DE BYENFEZENSYA

Los buenos esforsos ke está azyendo la La Sosyetá Enstruktiva i de Byenfezensya, kompuesta en Ortá Kyoi, son dinyos de alavarsen. Toda su preokupasyón es de arankar la enyoransa penetrađa entre nozotros dizde muncho tyempo, i de livyanar la mizerya de algunos ke bushkan ǵanar sus pan kon la sudor de sus frente.

Esta sosyetá, ke no aze tres mezes ke se fondó, konta chirka syen abonaďos, entre los kualos se topan myembros de las mas onoravles famiyas de nuestra kapitala. El fruto de esta sosyetá es mucho, i la paǵa por ser abonaďa i tomar parte en sus buenas ovras no es ke de dyez ǵro[shes]’ el mez.

Ansi se puede dizir klaramente ke estos mansevos son de akeos ke sus esforsos no dan espalda al adelantamyento de la mansevés yisreelit, malgrado a munchas kontraryeďades ke somportaron de muchos partiďos. Oy mirando el atrazamyento ande se topa nuestra nasyón, la mansevés djudía se topa en dever de azer kuantu puede por kuďyar sovre la edukasyón de las kriaturas, tanto por los talmud torot, komo por las eskolas, por lo kual todo akel ke se abona en esta sosyetá akumple un ǵran dever de la umanidaď.

La sosyetá de la kuala estamos avlando va dar una representasyón teatral para el 17 koryente a la noche (sigún el avizo ke traemos mas abasho) a prófito de este sosyetá. El djuǵo ke se va dar va ser una tradjeďya en sinko aktos (perďés). Nos asiguran ke esta representasyón, ke se va djuǵar por mansevos djudyós i por la prima vez en lingua espanyola, va ser de la mas alavaďa ke puede ser. Estamos siguros ke la mansevés de Kostán se apresurará por tomar bilyetos de esta representasyón i de este modo enkorajar a esta ovra, donde el fruto es para el adelantamyento i el akudimyento al prove.

[‘THE SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION AND BENEFICENCE

The noble efforts which the Society for Education and Beneficence is putting forth in Ortaköy are worthy of praise. Its sole preoccupation is to extirpate the ignorance which has been rampant among us for a long time, and to lighten the misery of those who seek to earn their bread through the sweat of their brow.

This society, which was only founded three months ago, now numbers 100 members, amongst whom are to be found the most honorable families of our capital. The fruit of this society is considerable, and the cost of becoming a member and taking part in its good works is only ten piasters a month.

Thus it may be said clearly that these young men are amongst those whose efforts do not turn their backs on the advancement of the Jewish youth, despite the considerable opposition they have had from many quarters. Today, considering the backwardness to be found in our nation, the Jewish youth have an obligation to care for the education of our children, both in the Talmud Torah religious schools and in the Western-style schools, so that everyone who becomes a member of this society fulfils a great debt to humanity.

The society of which we are speaking will give a theatrical presentation on the 17th of the current month in the evening (as noted in the announcement below), for the benefit of this society. The play which will be given will be a tragedy in five acts (scenes). They assure us that this performance, which will be performed by Jewish young men and for the first time in the Spanish [=Judezmo] language, will be worthy of the greatest praise. We are sure that the young people of Constantinople will hasten to buy tickets for this performance and in this way they will encourage this society, the fruit of which will be used for the advancement and benefit of the poor.].

In the announcement the pioneering nature of the dramatical event to take place was emphasized: the first drama in the city to be performed “in Oriental Spanish,” i.e., Judezmo. On the one hand this evidently gave the reporter some joy; but on the other, he, as an apparent Eurocentric and Castilocentric, lost no opportunity to criticize the language used by the Ottoman Sephardim as it departed from Castilian which, ‘when pronounced well, seems a harmony’ – although one wonders if he had in fact ever heard modern Castilian spoken. The publication of the *Novetades de la noche* series actually preceded the announced dramatical performance, making it, too, a pioneering event.

The performance having taken place, a highly encouraging review (lacking any title) appeared on pages 2-3 of the 17 March 1873 issue of *El Tyempo*:

Anoche tuvo lugar, en el teatro de Ortakoi, la representasyón teatral dada al benefisyo de la Sosyetá Enstruktiva i de Byenfezensya.

La sala estava yena de espektadores (seyrandjís). El djuego, ke fue dado en lingua espanyola, reushó de una manera la mas alavada ke puede ser. Los aktores, todos djudyós, supyeron imitar kada uno su rolo kon muncha bravura, en el dito djuego entitolado “El Brigante.”

Munchos ke frekuentan los teatros, entre kristyanos i djudyós, ke estavan en esta representasyón, se enkantaron al ver komo por la prima ves estos aktores supyeron dar este djuego de una manera la mas kumplida, sea en la manera de la djusta presizyón, sea en la manera de la enerdjía, sea al fin en munchas kozas ke toka a un aktor ke, sigún es saviado, todo djugo de teatro, para reushir byen, deve ser ke pareska verdad, tanto en la ora del reir komo en la ora del yorar, i komo otras imitasyones. Es por esto ke en kada akto se vía aplaudisyones bruiyantes (palmas).

La lingua espanyola, aunke estuvo prononsyada akí a la manera oryental, kon todo no perdyó de su dulsor ni de su ekspresyón, por lo kual mezmo akeyos ke no konosen nuestra lingua estuvieron bastante kontentes al sentir todos estos dulces sonos de esta lingua ke prononsyada byen parese una armonía.

Los mansevos ke tomaron la inisyativa de dar esta representasyón meresen ser alavados, i siguro ke serán rekonosyentes de todo ombre djusto a tyempo ke tomó una grande parte el progreso, syendo sigún sintimos de lugar siguro, la Sosyetá Enstruktiva tuvo un buen i emportante fruto de esta representasyón.

Nozotros rengrasyamos a los mansevos aktores ke, sin ningún enterés partikolar otro ke por el amor del progreso, izyeron todos sus esforsos en dando este djuego teatral ke fue byen aplaudido, i en mezmo tyempo les rogamos ke nos ayan la bondad antes ke venga el verano de dar otra una representasyón, demandada ya del puevlo.

[‘Last night there took place, in the theater in Ortaköy, the theatrical performance given for the benefit of the Society for Education and Beneficence.

The hall was full of spectators (viewers). The play, which was given in the Spanish language, succeeded in the most praiseworthy way possible. Each of the actors, all Jews, were able to imitate their roles with great skill in this play, entitled “The Brigand.”

Many frequenters of the theaters, both Christians and Jews, who were present, were amazed to see how, for the first time, these actors were able to perform this play in a most perfect manner, both in their precision, in their control of their energies, and in many other things of concern to an actor who, as is known, in every theatrical performance, in order to succeed, must seem true to life, both when having to laugh

as well as to cry, and in portraying other emotions. It is for this reason that for every act one saw loud applause (hand clapping).

The Spanish language, although pronounced here in the Oriental manner, nonetheless lost nothing of its sweetness nor its expressiveness, with the result that even those who do not know our language were very pleased to hear all the sweet sounds of this language which, when pronounced well, seems quite harmonious.

The young men who took the initiative in giving this performance are worthy of praise, and certainly will enjoy the gratitude of every honest person who supports progress since, as we heard from a trustworthy source, the Society for Education enjoyed a good and important result from this performance.

We thank the young actors who, without any selfish motive other than a love of progress, put forth these efforts in performing this theatrical piece which was well received, and at the same time we ask them to do us the favor of staging another performance before the summer comes in, as is already requested by the people.']

In the 21 April 1873 (p. 4) of *El Tyempo* it was further announced that at Madame Arlaud's school for Jewish girls two teachers and their pupils re-enacted the Exodus from Egypt (presumably in Judezmo), followed by a short comedy in French, including songs.

Amongst the Ottoman Muslims, a pleasant component of the Ramadan month of fasting was attendance at theatrical performances. It was announced in *El Tyempo* of 28 October 1873 (pp. 2-3) that, later on in the same year of the publication of the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues and the performance of *El Brigante*, during the Ramadan season, the Society of Education and Beneficence did indeed plan to stage another performance, this time in partial support of a Jewish refugee from Persia in the capital, as well as of the Society. From the account we are able to learn about the Society's plans to stage a (presumably Judezmo) performance of *Romeo and Juliet* (as noted above). The article also informs us of the Society's library, available to members, with books in several languages, and of the names of the illustrious Jews of Constantinople who had recently joined the Society:

LA SOSYETÁ ENSTRUKSYÓN I DE BYENFEZENZA

Sigún trushimos en uno de nuestros números pasados, una reunyón uvo antiyer, en Ortakyoi, en el lokal de la Sosyetá Enstruktiva, de los myembros de esta ermandad.

Después de un diskorso del presidente, sinyor Djak Nesim [...] se trató por un forastero persano djudyó ke se topa akí en Kostán, el kual poko tyempo antes era uno de los primos rikos de Persya i ke detrás de las perzekusyones de este paés se topa agora sin ningún mamparo. La Sosyetá se determinó de azerle todo el remedyo posivle por rekojerle algún emporto i embiarlo a Evropa.

Se trató por el trezlado de algunos livros nesesaryos, se trató por azer algunas entradas a la Sosyetá, komo el djuço de teatro ke, si ninguna koza no empiđe, se djuará a la fin de ramazán una trajedía entitolada Romeo i Juilyet, en 5 aktos.

Se votó myembros nuevos por giar la Sosyetá, i se dechizó ke de akí endelante todos los myembros se pueden topar presentes a las sedutas ke avrán kada semana.

La biblioteka (kyitab hané) ke tyene agora la Sosyetá es kompuesta de livros kumplidos de torá, turko, fransés, espanyol i talyano. Esta biblioteka está a la dispozisyón de todo akel ke gosta a meldar.

La seduta se seró en nominando los sochyos nuevos ke entraron en la dita sosyetá i ke entre otros se kontan:

Los si[nyores]':

Kavalýer Imanuel F. Venesýani

Daniel Fernandes

Avram [Be]n' Zonana

Izake Molho Bey

Akili Venesýani

Estos nombres fueron resividos de todos los asistentes kon palmas.

Esperamos ke se la Sosyetá Enstruktiva será giada kon enerjía, tomará un buen lugar entre las otras sosyetás semejantes ke se formaron dizde mucho tyempo akí en Kostán entre las otras nasyones ke nos entornan.

[“THE SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION AND BENEFICENCE

As we noted in one of our past issues, a meeting of the members of this brotherhood was held the day before yesterday, in Ortaköy, at the locale of the Society for Education.

After a lecture by the president, Mr. Jacques Nessim [...] there was discussion of a foreign, Persian Jew who is in Constantinople at present, who a short time ago was one of the richest men in Persia and who, after the persecutions in that country, now finds himself without any support. The Society decided to do everything possible in order to collect a sum for him and send him to Europe.

Also discussed was the translation of some necessary books; and the means to raise some funds for the Society, such as a theater performance which, if nothing impedes it, there will be staged at the end of Ramadan a tragedy entitled *Romeo and Juliet*, in five acts.

New members were voted in to lead the Society, and it was decided that from now on all the members may be present at the meetings, which will be held each week.

The library (book collection) which the Society now maintains is composed of complete books of Torah (i.e., in Hebrew), Turkish, French, Spanish [presumably meaning Judezmo] and Italian. This library is at the disposal of all who like to read.

The meeting closed with the nomination of new members who have jointed the Society and who, amongst others, include:

Messrs.:

Cavaliere Immanuel F. Veneziani

Daniel Fernandes

Abraham [Be]n' Zonana

Isache Molho Bey

Achille Veneziani

These names were received by those in attendance with applause.

We hope that the Education Society will be led energetically, and will take a place among the other, similar societies that were created a long time ago here in Istanbul among the other national groups that surround us.']

In the following years, as *El Tyempo* testified, the theater genre and the adaptation into or creation in Judezmo of dramatic dialogues continued to play a role in the “progressive” culture of the Jews of Istanbul. For example, the 6 March 1874 issue of the paper (p. 3) spoke

of a staging of “Yosef vendido por sus ermanos” [‘Joseph sold by his brothers’] by the students of a Jewish school for girls in Galata, in which twelve girls played male roles, supplemented by five boys, aged seven to twelve. A repeat performance was promised, to be held in a theater in Pera (Beyoğlu) for the benefit of the boys’ school in Ortaköy and the girls’ school in Hasköy.

The same issue of the periodical also announced that girls and boys aged seven to ten would perform a second staging of ‘Joseph sold by his brethren’ for the benefit of a Jewish school in Galata; the first staging had taken place at the Oriental Theater.

Attempts to create fictional dialogues meant to represent true popular conversational language as used by the diverse social sectors of the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire began to appear in the Judezmo press toward the end of the nineteenth century. The language used in these short, fictional sketches diverged significantly from the language used in the same periodicals in their non-fictional reportage and commentary on local and world news and social issues; such writing was usually in the Western Europeanized variety of Judezmo heavily influenced by French and Italian and stylistically resembling analogous reportage in the European press. On the other hand, the short theatrical sketches which will be presented in the second part of this article much more closely resembled natural, spoken language.

To my mind, the clear parallels between the realistic, popular language and orientation of Ibrahim Şinasi’s *Şair Evlenmesi* and the *Novetades de la noche* suggest that, in the 1870s, some Jewish writers of the Ottoman Empire were aware of the innovative creativity and cultural trends of Turkish intellectuals of the Tanzimat period, including their original and translated Turkish works written in the Arabic-letter alphabet. If the Judezmo speakers did not read them themselves, they were aware of their contributions and their successes in the field of theatrical creativity through hearing about them in the broad cultural milieu of the Ottoman Empire of the time. In later decades, Judezmo journalists would call upon their readers to familiarize themselves with Ottoman literature, and even contribute to it. As Isaac Ferrera wrote, in an article entitled “De la literatura otomana” in the 27 February 1902 issue of *El Tyempo* (p. 505): “La literatura otomana se adelanta a pasos de djigante. Munchos de entre nozotros enyoramos los progresos realizados en todos los ramos syentífikos i literaryos de nuestro paés. Es kon grande regreto ke yo ago estas deklarasyones[...].”¹⁵² [‘Ottoman literature is making gigantic strides forward. Many of us [Ottoman Jews] are unfamiliar with the progress realized in all the branches of science and literatures of our country. It is with regret that I make these remarks[...].’]

In developing their natural Ottoman Judezmo, the Sephardim of the Ottoman regions had created a highly distinctive, original Jewish language which reflected their age-old Jewish traditions, their sojourn in medieval Iberia, and their long residence in the Ottoman Empire. The dialogues featuring Reuvén and Shimón which appeared in *El Tyempo* in 1873 are excellent examples of that language. It seems a pity that Judezmo speakers such as the author of the *Novetades de la noche* dialogues hardly continued to use an evolved form of their unique Ottoman Judezmo in extended literary works after the onset of ideological Eurocentrism and the resulting predominance of linguistic Latinocentrism. How nice that authors such as Eliezer Papo, Roz Kohen, Albert Israel, Aldo Sevi and others are now reviving the tradition.

¹⁵² Ferrera’s own contributions to Ottoman literature were discussed in an article entitled “El literado turko Izak Ef[endi]’ Ferrera” in *El Tyempo* (1902, January, p. 347).

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