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fortune. Happy, the pious man returned home with the fortune. Three days later the stone called to him and said: “If you light a candle before me, I will give you an even greater fortune.” When the pious man heard these words he knew that he was a demon who was trying to deceive him. What did he do? He fetched his axe and went to shatter the stone. A demon appeared from out of the stone and said to the man: “If you do not shatter this stone, I will give you a fortune so great it can not be measured.” The pious man said to him: “Even if you give me all the riches in the world, I will not cease until I have shattered this stone.” When the demon saw that the pious man refused him, he ran off straight away. The man shattered the stone, and the Holy One Blessed Be He rewarded him. The next year when the man was digging his land he found a large treasure. When the Sages heard of this they said: He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him.

[Hikher ha-Ma'agitto tsher-Mishket tsher-Haggadah, Venice, 1559, Story 16; English: Sara Kitai]

FOLK LITERATURE AMONG SEPHARDIC BOURGEOIS WOMEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*

Paloma Díez-Mas

Abstract

Folklorists, philologists and ethnornomologists have emphasized the important role of women for the preservation of Sephardic folklore and traditional literature in the twentieth century. Many scholars accept that Sephardic women who knew and performed folklore where almost illiterate and belonged to lower classes. This article intends to show that at the beginning of the twentieth century, some bourgeois, middle-class Sephardic women, although they had a very Western, modern RS style, knew and appreciated the intangible heritage of Sephardic folklore that they had received handed down from their mothers and grandmothers. These recollections are based on the information and comments about folklore and folk songs contained in the letters of affluent Sephardic Jews who maintained correspondence with Angel Poblete, a Spanish doctor and senator who in 1904 started a political campaign to strengthen ties and relations between Spain and the Sephardic Jews.

First Approaches to Sephardic Folk Literature

At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century, several Western academic scholars started to pay attention to the Sephardic Jews and to their culture. Those first interested were philologists specializing in Romance languages, who felt attracted by the study of the Judeo-Spanish or Ladino, a Romance language of special interest for linguists because it has survived and evolved for centuries in environments of non-Hispanic or non-Romance languages, in isolation and far from the country of its origins, and in contact with other languages (Turkish, Arabic,

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Greek, Balkan languages, and was influenced by those languages and by the religious language of Hebrew.

The first philological studies on Judeo-Spanish were based overall on field surveys where researchers gathered language samples from the speakers who were still using it. As a consequence, the "discovery" of Judeo-Spanish led to the discovery of the Sephardic folk literature, due to the fact that most of the materials obtained from these surveys were samples of orally transmitted literature: folktales, ballads, popular songs, traditional wedding songs, sayings and proverbs, popular medical remedies, descriptions of uses and customs, etc. For the same reason, over decades, Sephardic literature represented for Western scholars in the main folklore literature, anonymous poetry or prose transmitted orally from generation to generation. Not until the 1960s was attention given to the learned literature in Ladino produced by the Sephardic Jews that had been transmitted since the sixteenth century (primarily during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) through ajiamido books, printed in Judeo-Spanish with Hebrew letters.


2. Michael Mosko paid some attention to learned Sephardic literature in his Literatura sefardía de Oriente (Madrid-Barcelona, CSIC, 1960). One of the first articles devoted to a topic connected with learned Judeo-Spanish literature was published by Moshe Artzi, "The Work in Ladino of Rabbi Abraham Takeda," Shorter Studies in Modern Jewish History 4 (195:3): 116-135. Some years before, David Gonsalves Macedo and Paulo Pires Reis started publishing a translation of the most significant rabbinic commentary to the Bible in Judeo-Spanish, Me'am lo'ez. See their Me'am Lo'ez, El gran comentario bíblica sefardí. Prolegomenos (Madrid-Crevos, 1960); Me'am Lo'ez: Ba na (Genisa) (Madrid-Crevos, 1961); Me'am Lo'ez: Be hal (Genisa) (1962); Me'am Lo'ez: Be ha (Genisa) (1964); Me'am Lo'ez: Be ha (Genisa) (1965); Me'am Lo'ez: Be ha (Genisa) (1966). From the 1970s, such as Jacob M. Hasain and Dr. Elena Romano, from the CSIC in Madrid, gave a significant impulse to the study of learned Jewish literature; some of their main contributions are: Jacob M. Hasain and Elena Romano, "Quinientos paráfrasis: Edición y variantes," Estudios Sefardíes 1 (1976): 5-37; Elena Romano, El libro de los paráfrasis sefardíes (Madrid: CSIC, 1979); Elena Romano, with an introduction by Jacob M. Hasain, Capítulos adiós (Córdoba: El Almendro, 1988); Elena Romano, Andamán y la proclama de Yo’s-Sard (Madrid: CSIC, 2002); Elena Romano and Manuela Valero, Secc. capítulos "La catrina" de Harón Torreblanca (Madrid: CSIC, 2003); and Elena Romano, La cancionario en lengua sefardí (Madrid: Maples, 1992). Elena Romano, Entre dos o más Juegos. Fuentes poéticas para la historia de las sefardíes de los Bajos andaluces (Madrid: CSIC, 2008).

The most exhaustive and systematic attempt to collect Sephardic folkloric literature samples was made at the beginning of the twentieth century by Ramon Menéndez Pidal, one of the founders of modern philology in Spain. In his studies about the epic and the Hispanic ballad, Menéndez Pidal always took the Sephardic tradition into account as a fundamental piece to understand the whole set of Hispanic ballads. But when he started his studies on this topic, the available texts of Sephardic ballads were scarce: some that have been compiled by the field surveys whose goal was the language study, or that were published by the Sephardic Jews (raised in the Western way, but who knew the folklore tradition transmitted in their family and community environment and who were able to appreciate its value) such as, for example, Abraham Dounon or Abraham Galante.

Menéndez Pidal had the idea of sending one of his collaborators to the most important Jewish communities of the Mediterranean East (in Turkey, the Balkans, Greece, the Mediterranean Islands and Middle East) and of Morocco interviewing Sephardic Jews who spoke Judeo-Spanish and who knew old ballads (most of them of medieval Hispanic origin) orally transmitted from generation to generation since the time of expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492.

The ideal person to perform this task was Manuel Manrique de Lara, a military man of aristocratic origin with an excellent musical knowledge (he was a composer, an author of several symphonies). That rendered him specially suitable to perform this type of survey, as ballads are singing poetry and he was able to take note of the text and of the music. The Junta para Ampliación de Estudios, a progressive Spanish institution dedicated to the encouragement of research and researcher training, granted a scholarship to Manrique de Lara for him to travel in 1911 to the countries located in Eastern Mediterranean and in 1915-16 to the North of Morocco.4


The Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas-JAE (Board for the Studies Expansion and Scientific Research) was founded in 1907 and ceased
Manrique de Lara visited the Sephardic communities of Sarajevo, Belgrade, Sofia, Istanbul, Salonica, Smyrna, Rhodes, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and El Cairo (all in 1911) and Tangier, Tetuan, Larache and Kasr-el-Kebir (in 1915–16), sometimes under very difficult conditions not only caused by the logical troubles from such a trip but also due to the political and social conditions of that area. For example, his trip in 1911 took place at the same time as the Italian-Turkish war (Manrique visited Rhodes briefly before the island was occupied by Italian troops). Cholera epidemics were raging in many of the cities he visited, including Salonica. In spite of all difficulties, Manrique de Lara was able to compile more than 1,500 versions of ballads and Sephardic traditional songs that were passed on to him by almost 150 informants. It is significant to verify that most of the people who sang or recited ballads and songs for Manrique de Lara were women. There is a list of almost 120 women as survey informants while there are about 30 men. In some locations, such as Jerusalem or Rhodes, only the women were able to sing or recite ballads to him. Even if the family relationships among the informants only appear occasionally in Manrique’s notes, if we take the summaries into account, we can reach the conclusion that on some occasions Manrique interviewed several generations of women belonging to the same family. For example, in Tangier he interviewed Simha Bennaïm, aged 96, Hanna Bennaïm, aged 79, and Clara and Estraella Bennaïm, aged 24 and 16.

The fact that the best informants of Manrique de Lara’s surveys were women probably did not surprise Ramon Menéndez Pidal, as his activity in 1938, during the Spanish Civil War. For JAE’s history and activities, see José Mª Sánchez Ruiz (ed.), 1907–1987. La Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Canadienses 80 años después (Madrid: CSIC, 1985), and now Miguel Ángel Pag-Quintero Muñoz (ed.), Tempus de investigaciones JAE-CSIC, con árboles de escuela en España (Madrid: CSIC, 2005); see also the web page http://www.csic.es/red/web3aja [last accessed February 2009]. One of the most important JAE enterprises was the foundation of the Centro de Estudios Históricos (Center for Historical Research) directed by Meritxell Pidal; more information in José Mª López Sánchez, Historiadores españoles. El Centro de Estudios Históricos (1919–1936) (Madrid: Marcial Pons-CSIC, 2006).


he had confirmed the same phenomenon in his field surveys for the purpose of compiling ballads in Spain where the best informants who had a broader repertoire of ballads and songs and who remembered them better. They were generally women, especially women belonging to rural environments and to a lower social class. It was also found that in field surveys on folklore in Spain down to in the 1980s or among the Sephardic Jews currently settled in Israel, the best informants (and sometimes in fact the only ones) are women. We will deal with this in greater depth below.

Angel Pidal’s Campaign and the Sephardic Middle-Class Women at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

In order to introduce himself to Jewish communities, Manrique de Lara used the contact of some Sephardic Jews who, years before, had kept up correspondence with Angel Pidal Fernandez, a Spanish physician and senator who in 1904 had started a political campaign in order to strengthen ties and relations between Spain and the Sephardic Jews.

Angel Pidal (1852–1932) was a liberal advocate of Regeneración, a movement founded in the late nineteenth century to cure a number


7 Pidal started his campaign by publishing several articles in Spanish journals and delivering a speech to the Spanish Parliament in November 1903. Soon he published his first book on the topic, Intereses nacionales. Las inmigraciones españolas y el afán colonial (Madrid: Sociedad de Cuyadores, 1904), and in 1905 Pidal’s second book on Sephardim appeared, Españoles sin patria y la nación española (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de E. Tormo, 1905). For more than thirty years, Pidal voiced interest in encouraging closer relations between Spain and Sephardic Jews in further publications, for example the contributions some published together in El afán colonial en España. La economía de la lengua española y las inmigraciones (Madrid: Eruditora Ediciones, 2006). For Angel Pidal’s activities, see Pidal’s biography by his son Angel Pidal Martín, El duque Pidal y su época (Madrid: Imprenta E. Domenech, 1945).
of Spain’s perceived problems, and his position in favor of the Sephardic Jews is well understood as a component in his political militancy. Rohr writes that the “originality of Pulido’s argument lay in his assertion that the repatriation of a number of Sephardic Jews to Spain and their fusion with the Spaniards would revive the Spanish ‘race’ and remedy Spain’s decay.” As a liberal, he was for religious freedom and against the anti-Semitic attitudes growing in strength on the European right at the time. As a Regeneracionista, he saw the rapprochement and narrowing of the relationship between the Sephardic Jews and Spain as a double opportunity of regeneration. From his point of view (which did not lack certain prejudicial elements), Spain could regenerate its economic and commercial life thanks to the industrial skills and capacity for business he attributed to the Sephardic Jews. While for the Sephardic Jews, the relation with Spain was supposed to broaden their links to Western Europe—links that they already had established mainly through France and the French culture.

Pulido launched a very active campaign in order to make Spanish politicians and intellectuals aware of the need that Spain had to intensify its relations with the Sephardic Jews and to convince the numerous Sephardic Jews throughout the world to return in a new way to Spain. Some Spaniards believed that racial enhancement was necessary for national regeneration. Pulido, in tune with a growing current of philo-Semiticism, argued that the return of the Jews would promote the “reconstruction of the Spanish race and improvement of the fatherland.” During the course of one year (from the publication of his first book in 1904 and until the publication of his second book in 1905), Pulido exchanged letters with almost 150 Sephardic Jews around the world, from Turkey to Brazil, from Vienna to Tangier, from Damascus to Paris. A selection of his correspondence was published in his second book.

Although it has been established that Manrique de Lara used some of Pulido’s correspondents as a contact to introduce himself into the Sephardic communities that he visited, it is significant that he barely used them as informants for Sephardic folklore samples. In a previous article, I attempted to analyze this situation by comparing

9 Ibid., pp. 14 ff.
10 Ibid., p. 16.
Two of Pulido's correspondents, Fina Haim and Mirco Alcalay, provided him with various pieces of information of folkloric content, drawn from that wellspring of Sephardic folklore which they had known directly during their childhood and teenage years when they still lived within the traditional environment of their communities of origin and in a world almost exclusively composed of females, mothers and grandmothers. The information they give is more valuable because we do not have many Sephardic women's testimonies from that period. That is why these women's observations help us to better understand the profound cultural changes taking place in Sephardic Jewish society between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It gives us insight into the female attitudes of women from a younger generation toward the folkloric tradition, and what role folklore, especially folk literature, played in the life of Sephardic women belonging to different social classes at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Fina Haim, Pulido's Correspondent in Berlin

In his 1905 book, Pulido says the following about Fina Haim:13

Nuestra adorable amiguita pertenece a una distinguida familia española oriunda de Oriente. Sus padres poseen el mejor almacen de alfombras y tapices que hay en Berlín, y tienen otras tres hermanas, no menos encantadoras que Fina, llamadas María, Clara y Rosa, con cuyos retratos embellecemos este libro. (290)14

And certainly, on pp. 289, 287–288, he reproduces the photographs of Fina Haim and her sisters, all of them wearing elegant up-to-date clothes of the time. Daughters of wealthy businessmen, the Haim sisters had been educated in "un acreditado colegio de Berlín" ("a prestigious school in Berlin", 295) led by Mrs. Celeste Seydel, wife of the Spanish professor Pedro de Magio, who was friends with Miguel

13 "Fue miembro de varios grupos de estudio en el Instituto de la Mujer de Berlín, y entre ellos su hermana, Fina Haim, con quien se interesó mucho por la literatura popular y folclórica de su país."

14 "Our adorable friend belongs to a distinguished Spanish family native to the East. Her parents have the best carpet and tapestry store in Berlin, and she has another three sisters, not less enchanting than Fina, called María, Clara and Rosa with whose portraits we embellish this book."

"Fue miembro de varios grupos de estudio en el Instituto de la Mujer de Berlín, y entre ellos su hermana, Fina Haim, con quien se interesó mucho por la literatura popular y folclórica de su país."
de Unamuno.15 Fina Haim provided Pulido with information about the little Sephardic community in Berlín that "se constituyeron en hermandad de comunidad, según nos refiere Fina, hace poco tiempo" ("constituted brotherhood or community little time before in accordance to Fina"), 294.) But he also sent an Eastern version of the ballad Vérgel on which Pulido makes the following statement:

La sienza de la Sra. Fina Haim nos nombrié el siguiente romance. Nos lo mandó escrito según le había dicho a su abuela, quien pidió le cantara leyendo las españolas. Bien se advierte que está corrompido.16

On pp. 296-297, the text is reproduced and we can note that the Sephardic young woman from Berlin had enough sensitivity to truly reproduce the version sung by her grandmother, without attempting to arrange it or modify it, keeping all the characteristic features of the Eastern Judeo-Spanish (which prompts Pulido to observe that the text is "corrupt").17

Tración a Don Vergelo por los Palacios del rey por amar una dureola que le llamaba Sade: Ni mas alta ni mas baja, sobrina era del rey. Que lo meten a Don Vergelo a las carceles del rey. Pasó tiempo y vino tiempo sin se acordan del; su madre la desechada cada día lo iva a ver. Debajo del pecho rezaguando le llevaba a socorro. El rey estando en la misa vido pasar una mujer; demandó el rey a su gente. —¿Quién es esta mujer? Que de pretos va vistiendo de cabeza hasta las pies. —Madre es de Don Vergelo porque en las carceles tenés. Acaemos pronto la misa y allí lo zemos a ver. Salto la reina y dijo: "Va sin él no comeré".

15 The influence of the writer Miguel de Unamuno’s correspondence with Pedro de Mágica concerning the introduction of the ideas of Schopenhauer into Spanish thought has been shown by Pedro Riba, "Unamuno y Schopenhauer: el mundo ortodoxo," Anales de Literatura Española 12 (1990), 101-113. Unamuno’s letters to Mágica and other correspondents were published by Sergio Fernandez Larrain, Cartas nobles de Miguel de Unamuno (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1962).

16 The refinement of Ms. Fina Haim providing us with the following ballad. She sends us in writing what she has heard from her grandmother, whom she asked to sing Spanish legends. It is evident that the ballad is "corrupt".

17 Some information about other versions of the same ballad can be found in Armestead El romancejo español en el Archivo Menéndez Pelayo, number 11; see also Manuel de Luna Perez, O Sonetos Portugues e Brasileiros, Index Topico e Bibliographia (Madrid: Hispanic Seminar of Medieval Studies, 1997), number 19. In Pulido’s book the text is copied in eight-syllable lines, here we edited it in its original syllable lines with commas, respecting the original stresses and punctuation but indicating the change of speaker through a long dash.

Mica Alcalay de Gross and Bostom Sephardic Folklore

More intense was the lengthy correspondence between Ángel Pulido and his correspondent in Trieste, who was known as María (Mica) Gross de Alcalay or Señora de Gross Alcalay. Actually, in the society of Trieste, it should be Mica Gross, using Spanish onomatopoeias for married women it would be Mica Gross de Alcalay. Since Alcalay was her maiden name and Gross should be the name of her husband, an Ashkenazi Jew.

It seems that Mica Alcalay contacted Pulido on her own initiative, after having read an article of his in one of the famous magazines of the era, La Ilustración Española y Americana. From that point forward, they established an intense correspondence and forged a bond of...
mutual sympathy. In Pulido’s case, this took the form of admiration for the cultured, intelligent and enchanting Sephardic woman, as demonstrated by the brief portrayal he made of her.

Hija esta dama de una señora servía y de un afeto empleado bosnian, quien desempeñó la Dirección de Adriana en Bosnia antes de que dicha provincia fuese incorporada al Austria, casó muy joven con un honorable sirvienta alemán, y trasladó su residencia a Trieste. Habiendo de esta suerte emparentada con distinguidas familias de Bosnia y Servia, tiene hoy hermanos en Belgrado, y recuerda siempre con orgullo que desciende de españoles, que vivieron en Alcalá, de donde procede su apellido Alcalay. Es pues, una herencia descendida de madrileños, y por su raza muy bien puede pasar como una madrileña neta.

Pose, y extrae, por lo menos, que sepanos, cuatro idiomas aleman, italiano, francés y español; tiene una ilustración general hierba equilibrada, es de un espíritu progresivo y altruista, vive y cultiva su hogar con la serenidad de una buena burguesa, le mucho, juzga con perfecto sentido social, y no tiene prejuicios de literatura, cuanto menos de publicidad; siendo esta una tarea que nunca realizó. (321-322)19

In the excerpts from her correspondence that Pulido provided, Mica Alcalay expresses her opinions about various topics with the utmost grace. She demonstrates how a cultured woman who read culture magazines (such as the Ilustración Española y Americana) and learned Jewish studies ("La historia de los judíos la conozco por el doctor Kaysering, el cual me hizo regalo de un libro "Die Juden in Portugal [los judíos en Portugal]" p. 324; "I know Jewish history thanks to Doctor Kaysering, who gave me his book as a present "Die Juden in Portugal" [the Jews in Portugal]. She also read Spanish literary works, which was less common among the Sephardic Jews, such as El Quijote or the dramatic works of José de Eschegaray (a very well known dramatist in his era who won the Nobel Prize for literature in

1940), and Benito Pérez Galdós, the foremost Spanish representative of literary realism (pp. 325-326).

Mica Alcalay wrote her letters in a Judeo-Spanish that was deliberately rendered more Hispanic, but which contained certain dialectic features. However, her language seemed to draw ever closer to the Spanish of Spain, as her exchange of letters with Pulido progressed, and he stated expressly:

En la correspondencia de esta distinguida y muy inteligente señora, hemos advertido con toda claridad un fenómeno interesante y expresivo, siempre de muy muy natural; y es que al mediodía que iba escribiéndonos cartas, iba mejorando en estilo con una facilidad sorprendente. Sus últimas cartas contienen ya un español bastante más corriente que las primeras. (76)20

Mica Alcalay was also a dedicated supporter of Sephardic Jews adopting the norms of modern Spanish, as she expressly stated in her letters telling of her efforts to adapt her language to the "pure" Spanish that was spoken in Spain. She read literary works and looked for the relationship to Spanish speakers (such as a Valencian woman who had resided for a time in Trieste, whose pronunciation she had tried to imitate). She also illustrated well some of the difficulties that Sephardic Jews encountered in general when they tried to learn the "real Castilian" well, through education or reading literary works in Spanish (325).

As someone who was concerned about the correction of her language, Mica Alcalay was very conscious of the linguistic characteristics of Oriental Judeo-Spanish, including the presence of archaisms from the medieval language, as demonstrated in this attitude observation about the speech of farmers (this was already becoming archaic in the seventeenth century) in Quijote:

Cuando le leido el Quijote me ha sorprendido que hable siertos adustos como hablan en mi país "hacer" [hacer], "ahora" [ahora], etc., por eso me parece que algunos familias han emigrado directamente de España a Bosnia pasando antes la Turquía. (75)21

20 In the correspondence of this distinguished and very intelligent woman, we have noticed with great clarity a very interesting and significant phenomenon, although it is very natural, as we have been writing letters to each other, her style has improved with surprising ease. Her last letters were written in a Spanish that is much more correct than her first ones.

21 "When I read Quijote I was surprised to find that some of the villagers in the work spoke like people in my country, saying "hacer" [hacer]—to do, to make], agree
Her fine sensitivity allowed her to notice the differences between the various dialects and social strata of Sephardic Spain, such as the difference between the speech of the Sephardic Jews of Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia, and the specific speech characteristics of women. 

In previous generations, features of the traditional language had been preserved with greater integrity in women’s speech, because they had kept very much to themselves, preventing the introduction of external influences.

Los otros (integrantes de la comunidad sefaradi de Trieste) son mis compatriotas de Sarajevo, Bosnia, los que hablamos diferente de los belgradeanos; por ejemplo: fader, farina, fiha, chiva (chica). (323)

Mi pregunta Vd. si en Sarajevo se habla bien el castellano "magari" como decimos por aqui, no, Doctor, no lo hablamos bien. Antes de la Ocupación se hablaban, aunque corrompiéndolo, pero más genuino que ahora; sobre todo las mujeres que trabajaban siempre en casas; no penetraba ninguna influencia ajenas, ni buscábamos expresiones ajenas, porque no las conocíamos; pero ahora ya están influyendo los 2 lenguas predominantes: aleman y slavo. Con todo se habla en uso familiar exclusivamente este idioma, o mejor dicho dialecto. (326)

The rich correspondence of Micca Alcalay was also filled with information about customs, sayings and proverbs, and popular songs. Here is an example, referring to the use of proverbs and blessings, especially amongst the women:

Ounted me dice que habla algo de nuestra costumbres, que teamos algo de cerca femenino. Ante todo quiero hablarle de las bendiciones, que son usuales. Es uso que la joven salude a la mas anciana con decir:

"beso sus manos". Si la joven es una moza, la besote la anciana.

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"dicha y merte buena tengas". En vez si es una casada, "uros dichosa", o simplemente "dichosa y alegre", si está incinta: "bien parido de un hijo". A las / hijas nos quieren cuando ya nacimos: "forza magjor", dice el italiano. (326)

She also offers insight into children’s games, especially girls’ games, amusingly pointing out their didactic character, preparing them for the most pertinent aspects of what would be their adult lives:

No sé si tendrás algún interés en canciones para niñas pero las cantamos en jugando, las niñas más adultas; y el hecho que escogimos y en la época que le jugábamos no es priva de poesía; con todo que yo lo llamo el “preparandum” del matrimonio, porque caída de nosotros no sabia ya que un día tenia que venir el mar a menos "caballero" a pedir la mano de la "hija del rey morno". Le jugábamos el "aquí me manda el señor rey" en verano, en los jardines; entre las mochachitas se elegía un caballero y su padre guardían, las demas nos sentábamos en falso dentro un noticho que nos servía de "montastros". Con mucho donaire ya oíamos cantar el caballero como sigue:

CABALLERO 1
Aqui me manda el señor rey
De las hijas que teñas
A la más bella que me deis.

PADER 2
Ni las tengo ni las doy
Ni vos me las mentisteis.
Con el pan que yo comiera
Comerán ellas también.

CABALLERO 3
Tan alegre que yo iba
Tan allegado que me voy
A la hija del rey morno
No me la dar por mujer.

PADER 4
Torna rond tortured caballero
Verás buen forastero

(above—now, etc. This is why I believe that some families emigrated directly from Spain to Bosnia, passing through Turkey beforehand.)

31 ”The others (members of the Sephardic community in Trieste) are my compatriots from Sarajevo (Bosnia), who speak differently from people from Belgrade, for example, we say, tsera, tsera, fiha and shina (peepa—small).

32 This refers to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, at the end of the Russo-Turkish war.

33 You asked me if in Sarajevo Spanish is spoken well. As we say here, sayig, no, the people do not speak it well. Before this occupation, it was spoken, although quite corrupted, but still it was more authentic than now, mostly it was the speech of the women, as we always spoke amongst ourselves, and no external influences entered into our language, nor were we interested in foreign expressions, as we weren’t familiar with them. Now there is influence from the two predominant languages, German and Slavic. Despite this, this language (or, that is to say, dialect) is spoken exclusively in the bosom of the family.

34 "You ask me to tell you of a custom of ours that is tender and feminine. I will tell you about our blessings, which are used a lot. The custom is that when a young woman greets an elder, they say, "I kiss your hands." If the young woman is single, the elder usually blesses her, saying, "May you be very lucky and fortunate," but if the young woman is married, the elder will say "May you remain fortunate," or simply "Fortunate and happy." If she is pregnant, the elder will say, "may you bear a son." As for daughters, apparently, we were only wanted after we had been born, forza magjor, as they say in Italian."
Paloma Díaz-Mas

Subid arriba al monasterio
Excergad cuala queréis.

Caballero 5
A esta me llevo por hermosa
A esta me llevo por esposa
Que me pare una rosa
Acabada de nacer.64

Luego la elegida para esposa la poblaron con flores, y con frutas y hollín se celebraban las bodas. Cuando recuerdo con cuanto anhelo llamaban los padres de ocasión a los caballeros que se los lleve alguna hija me rio, porque en la realidad no es de otro modo, tosador, travieso caballero y luego se ajusta: no pide a mucho dinero." (78-79)72

At other times, she showed the parallels between popular Sephardic poetry and what she knew (through reading) of popular Spanish poetry:

A las resaldas se las llamaban entre nosotros 'saungiras' es decir simpaticas; tienen sangre dulce, y las cantan como sigue:

Morena sola dama
como la pimienta,
vuestra sangre dulce
en mi alma entre, etc.

folk literature among sephardic bourgeois women

Aquí tiene Ud una canción picarda a la que se canta en Asturias. (328)77

She also makes note of some canto del coro (a chant for a children's circle game) that were sung by the girls playing games, which were of Sephardic origin and consisted of allusive satirical stanzas and anecdotes of real events in the community:

Lo mas de las canciones del coro lo parecen ocasional 'que extraño! Lo mas de las canciones también, que no eran romances, cantadas en mi país, eran ocasionales. Me acuerdo de una muchacha de muy rica familia de nombre Ana (Ana) pero lea como la noche y encantadora hasta ser antipática; le "levantaron canicas," como dicen en Sueco; y, para mas acentuar la ironía, la apostrofaron Sultana [reina de hermanura]; empezaba la canción:

Sultana bien del padre,
Y también de la su madre,
A su padre le parece;
Oro fino y un diamante,
A su madre le parece;
Perlas cancás y joyleras, etc.

Luego, otra, lúpida hermosa, que hizo mucho para alentar la atención de un moso muy bonito de nombre Dano, siendo el de ella Sara, empezaba la canción:

Sarí se merece por Dano,
Pero Dano no la puede ver,
Aunque su padre de gran doce,
Y un ajur del por ahi.

El "por allí" significaba Viera, ó otras ciudades de Europa, porque nosotros estábamos poco que en el fondo de Asturias; tan ignoramos de progreso y civilizaciones, no solo las intenções, sino todos los movimientos de la Boasa. Aqui quisiera que viera Viera ó mis compatriotas que bien atiñidas que van, como las de "por allí," y entre los hombres hasta ser encantadoras. (327)77
We also find information about habits and customs in Mica Alcalay's letters, especially those that affect women, such as the manner in which marriages were agreed upon, the customs for weddings and the songs that went with them:

"Esas cosas de pasiones y grandes amores son buenas para cuentos y romances. Son una fábrica. En realidad no existen en la vida. Es and como se hace los matrimonios: cuando la niña llega en la edad que sus padres deciden casarla, un día os entra el papa más serio que de costumbre, en vuestro cuarto, uido de dolces sueños, y os dice: Hija, fulano te pide por esposa, ¿de quieres? La niña se quiere; pues que es buena costumbre, os vais uno, o otro... Es diferente. Responde al padre: "como a Vd. mejor parezca." Yo no sé que yo le diga lo que gasta la niña en el matrimonio, o mejor lo que pierde: el ideal del hombre, el Dios de sus sueños, llega a ser un objeto material. (32)"

To make gold and diamonds / and to her mother she accedes / as if she were made of precious pearls and jewels. Later, there was another woman, who also wasn't pretty and did everything the Teko could to attract the attention of a young man who was very handsome. He was called Dano, and she was Sara, and the song begins like this: "Sara would die for Dano. But Dano does not even see her, even though her father will give him a large dowry / and a treasure made 'over there.' " "Over there" meaning Vishen or another city in Europe, because we lived worse than if we had been at the end of Asia, ignorant of progress and civilization, and this is not just the Jews, but all the inhabitants of Benin. You should see my companions now, who see so much make up and well dressed, just like the people from 'over there.' The men have even taken up going out too, strictly dressed."

"Pamela and great love stories are good for stories and ballads. They are only fiction and do not exist in real life. Many agreements are given to them. When a girl reaches the age for marriage, one day her father will come into her room where she will dream her dreams, and in a manner a bit more serious than usual, he will say to her: "Daughter, so-and-so wants to marry you, do you love him?" The girl thinks: "It is true that I need to get married, but I can't do so without my father. The girl replies to her father: "Father, do as you think is best." I cannot explain what is it that the girl gains by marrying. Maybe she loses the ideal image she has of a man, who hopes being a god in her dreams and becomes a mere material object.'

FOLK LITERATURE AMONG SEPHERIDIC BOURGEOIS WOMEN

In the fieldwork done from the beginning of the twentieth century down to the present it is the women who are the ones who have the best knowledge of folkloric tradition. This has perhaps created the false impression that folkloric literature (ballads, romances, folktales and proverbs) is oral women's literature, while men's literature would be transmission through writing. However, from the statements we know that, from the Middle Ages, in societies that had a traditional way of life (and among these, in the Sephardic communities until well into the nineteenth century) ballads, songs, folktales, sayings and proverbs formed part of the daily life of both men and women, and fulfilled a communicative function. It was a resource for leisure, an instrument to transmit ideas and values to the next generations, even a ritual element for significant moments in the cycle of life (this is the case for wedding songs and funeral dirges), and also found in religious festivals (the case of orally transmitted songs for holidays such as Passover, Purim, Tish'ab, Shavuot, etc.).

In general, the reason why women (especially from rural environments or lower social classes) have better knowledge of the folkloric tradition probably has to do with the different level of instruction women had compared to men, and the lesser degree of..."
prominence that women had in the public sphere, driving them to seek refuge in private and family environments. In the case of the Sephardic Jews, the educational revolution occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. Access to education in Western schools and the formation of new ideas affected the men first and only later the women. Of the women, the first to take advantage of modern Western education were from the affluent class, while the lower social class became part of this educational system later on and only partially, or never at all.

For these women who did not have access to education, who had little public visibility and whose lives were spent in a domestic environment, oral transmission of knowledge continued to be of great importance. This was similar to previous eras, in the times of their mothers and grandmothers. For men, on the other hand, especially those from the affluent class, from the second half of the nineteenth century on, culture was primarily learnt in school, transmitted through writing, sustained by books and official cultural cannon.

Ángel Pulido's correspondents Fina Haim and Mieca Alcalay de Gross give testimony to the cultural changes which occurred among the Sephardic Jews in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which was also primarily social change. The emerging Sephardic middle class first incorporated the mores of modern society: a Western education, a lifestyle that was no longer determined and directed by family and community religious practices, but by the rules of behavior of the European middle class, the speaking of different languages, integration in civil society (which at times led to assimilation or conversion), politicization, and the physical uprooting from their homes through immigration (and therefore, the bankrupting of community organization and family tradition as a consequence). All of these phenomena were first experienced by men of the affluent class of Sephardic Jews. They began when the men reached their new homes in the countries that arose from the break-up of the Ottoman Empire or in the European or American countries to which they emigrated. However, soon after these bourgeois men came their wives, who adopted the same lifestyle.

Women such as the Haim sisters and Mieca Alcalay had spent their childhoods and adolescence in the traditional world of the mothers and grandmothers, a feminine universe dedicated to the domestic and family sphere, in which the oral transmission of knowledge and the use of ancestral customs and folklore still played an important role. However, the new generation was seen as being destined to go from the hands of their parents and spouses to a new life. There, the language of their mothers, the customs and the folklore would only be a memory to which, significantly, they would frequently refer to in the past tense: "What we did, what we sung, was custom, we used to say, I remember that..." However, some women of the emerging Sephardic middle class had the good sense to value this Sephardic folklore, which had already begun to disappear, and they preserved, if not its use, at least its memory.