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# The Sacred and Secular Musical Traditions of the Sephardic Jews in the United States

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For almost a century and a quarter (1654–1776), Jewish religious and cultural life during the colonial period was dominated entirely by the Sephardim. The liturgical practices followed were those established in the early part of the seventeenth century by Portuguese conversos in the emancipated congregations of Amsterdam,<sup>1</sup> and which also served as the model for synagogues in London (Sahar Asamaim, also known as Bevis Marks),<sup>2</sup> Bayonne (Nefusoth Yehudah), Bordeaux (Sha'are Rachamim), and Hamburg (Beth Israel).<sup>3</sup>

The year 1654 marked the arrival in Nieuw Amsterdam of twenty-three Jews who had fled from Recife (Pernambuco), Brazil, when the Portuguese conquered this vital port—held since 1630 by the Dutch, under whom it had become a refuge for Portuguese Marranos. More than a decade earlier, in 1642, the Haham Isaac Aboab de Fonseca (1605–1693), leader of the Amsterdam Sephardic community, and Hazzan Moses Raphael de Aguilar (d. 1679) had sojourned in Recife for the purpose of ministering to “the spiritual needs of the large community of Marranos who had recently declared their Jewish identity.”<sup>4</sup>

The twenty-three men, women, and children who survived the perilous sea journey were undoubtedly among those instructed by the learned rabbi and hazzan in matters of Judaism and the liturgy. In the year following their arrival in Nieuw Amsterdam, they formed their own congregation, naming it Shearith Israel, and it was here that the Amsterdam liturgy was transplanted on North American soil.<sup>5</sup> In succeeding generations, other Sephardic communities were established on the East Coast, all of which have continued to practice the Amsterdam rite up to the present time.<sup>6</sup>

Documentation is sparse concerning the music and manner in which the varied Sephardic synagogue services were conducted during the colonial period, even though we have learned from historical

sources that the liturgy was almost entirely dominated by music, either intoned, chanted, or sung to strophic and non-strophic melodies. The role and responsibilities of the hazzan are explicitly documented in the minutes of the trustees of each congregation, wherein the changing attitudes toward music during the Sabbath and holiday services, as well as toward social events—particularly weddings—in the synagogue, are also reflected. While it is difficult to reconstruct the earliest worship services of the New York congregation and of the other Sephardic congregations that evolved in colonial times, we must assume that their traditional melodies were totally of Old World origin.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest musical compendium containing the so-called “traditional melodies” was that of a sister congregation, Bevis Marks in London, which was published in 1857.<sup>8</sup> Of the seventy melodies printed therein, sixty-nine of which are harmonized, D. A. de Sola (1796–1860),<sup>9</sup> hazzan and preacher at Bevis Marks, had the temerity to date two of them “prior to the settlement of the Jews in Spain” and forty-seven as “melodies composed in Spain, and subsequently introduced by the Israelites into the various countries in which they took refuge from the persecution in the Iberian Peninsula.”<sup>10</sup> Jacob Hadida, who was entrusted with the task of revising the melodies in 1948, made reference to de Sola’s classification of “the so-called traditional tunes,” stating that the “only truly traditional melodies . . . are those interpreted from Tangameem [*te’amim* (“tropes”)] for the Parashah, Haftarah, Megilot, and the Tehilim.”<sup>11</sup>

Apart from the traditional songs which they sang during synagogue worship services for the Sabbath, High Holidays, and festivals, the Sephardim maintained a rich repertoire of paraliturgical melodies for use in the home on Sabbaths, holidays, and feasts—Sukkot, Simhat Torah, Hannukah, Tu b’Shvat, Purim, Passover, Lag b’Omer, Shavuot, and including the elegies (*kinnot*) chanted on Tisha b’Av and during the week preceding it. Strophic hymns sung in Hebrew, Portuguese, and, in recent times, Judeo-Spanish also played an important role in both the synagogue and home.<sup>12</sup> In addition, there were numerous paraliturgical songs that accompanied the circumcision and wedding ceremonies, as well as special dirges (*endechas*) connected with death and burial rites.

An example of the musical links between Amsterdam's K.K. Talmud Torah, London's Bevis Marks, and Shearith Israel can be found in the *zemer* for the High Holidays, *Et sha'are ratzon* (see Ex. 1).<sup>13</sup> However, here, taking the London example (1a) as the earliest published melody, we can compare it with the tune that was known in Amsterdam (1b). Examples 1c and 1d are presently sung on the High Holidays at Shearith Israel. Comparisons such as this will yield greater insights into the transmission of tunes among the three dominant communities (London, Amsterdam, and New York).<sup>14</sup>

Example 1: *Et sha'are ratzon*

- a. Bevis Marks (D. A. de Sola, *The Ancient Melodies*, no. 30).  
 b. Talmud Torah (transcribed by M. R. Kanter, *Traditional Melodies* p. 569).<sup>15</sup>  
 c. Shearith Israel (D. and T. de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith*, p. 150).<sup>16</sup>  
 d. Shearith Israel (A. L. Cardozo, *Sephardic Songs of Praise*, p. 68).<sup>17</sup>

Example 1: *Et sha'are ratzon*

a. Et sha - - a - re rat - son le - hi - pa - te - - ach

b. 'Et sha - 'a - rei ra - zon le - - hi - - pa - te - - ah

c. Et sha - - a - rei ra - tzon l' - hip - pa - tei - - - ah

d. Et sha - - a - rē ra - - tzon l' - - hi - pa - tē - - - ach

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a  
yom e - hey - - eh cha - - pai le - el sho - te - - - ach.

b  
yom e - hě - yeh kha - pai le El sho - te - - - ah.

c  
yom e - hě - yeh hap - pai lě - eil sho - - - te - - - - ah.

d  
yom e - fe - ye cha - pai l' ěl sho - - te - - - - ach.

a  
A - nah Ze-chor nah li be-yom ho - che - - ach

b  
A - na ze-khor na li be-yom ho - - hei - - ah

c  
A - - - - - na zě-chor na li bě - yom ho - - hei - - ah

d  
a - - - - - na z'-chor na li b'-yom ho - - chě - - ach

a  
o - ked ve - ha - neng - kad vě - ha - - - - - miz - - - be - ach.

b  
o - ked vě - ha - me' - - kad vě - ha - - - - - miz - - - - - be - - - ah.

c  
o - keid ve - han - ne - e kad ve - - - - - ham - - - - - miz - bei - - - ah.

d  
o - kěd v' - ha - ne ě - kad v' - - - - - ha - - - - - miz - bě - - - ach.

(N.B. The cadential portion of the first melody phrase is seen immediately in the Shearith Israel examples. In phrase 2, the initial portion of the London tune, and its ascent to *a'*, sets it apart from the others. At the beginning of phrase 3, the text "Ana [O God]" is rendered with a melisma, whose axis appears to be the tone *g*; yet oddly enough the Shearith Israel version [1*c*] concurs with London's cadential tone, while the other [1*d*] concurs with the Amsterdam. And in the last phrase, 1*c* differs in the opening portion, while the three [1*a*, 1*b*, and 1*c-d*] differ remarkably in their final cadences.)

Among other examples exhibiting differences between the musical liturgies of Shearith Israel and Bevis Marks are *Haskivenu*, *Adon Olam*, and *Az yashir Moshe* (from the Sabbath liturgy); *Ki eshmera shabbat*, a variant (a *zemer* for Shabbat); *Adonai bekol shofar*, a variant (sung during the High Holidays); *Schachar Abakeschka* (sung on weekdays before the morning service); and *Beruchim atem*, a variant (sung at circumcision ceremonies).

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The earliest phonograph recordings of Judeo-Spanish songs made in the United States were produced by Kaliphone Records, Mayesh Phonograph Record Co., Me Re Records, Metropolitan Recording Co. and Polyphon. The latter dates back to the early 1920s. Kaliphone, Mayesh, Me Re, and Metropolitan were popular labels among the Sephardim in the early 1940s. The recorded repertoire featured lyric, wedding, and Zionist songs, *romances* ("ballads"), etc., and even Hebrew songs by such popular vocalists as Victoria Hazan and Jack Mayesh. Many of these recordings were advertised, together with their contents, in the popular Judeo-Spanish newspaper *La Vara*.

However, the first scientific attempt in the United States to make field recordings of Judeo-Spanish songs occurred at Columbia University in 1930. Under the advice of Professor Franz Boas of the anthropology department, Zarita Nahón, a graduate student from Tangier, undertook a study of the Moroccan Sephardic dialect (*haketía*). Upon returning from a six-month field trip to Morocco, she enlisted the aid of her sister, Simy (Suzanne) Nahón de Toledano, to sing a goodly number of the ballads and songs she had collected. The recordings were made under the supervision of Professor Boas.<sup>18</sup>

Later that year Professor Federico de Onís of the Spanish department invited Simy to record some of the ballads at the Casa de las Españas. Subsequently de Onís himself recorded informants from the Sephardic communities of Salonika (Mentesh Amiras, Elvira Ben David, Ishak Sustiel, Maria Vivas) and Rhodes (Clara Turiel) for the purpose of archiving specimens of Judeo-Spanish from the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> Also in the early 1930s, Emma Adatto Schlesinger recorded ballads, songs, and folktales among Turkish and Rhodian informants residing in the Sephardic community of Seattle, Washington.<sup>20</sup>

It was not until the 1950s that academic interest in Judeo-Spanish folklore and music was renewed. Informants from Rhodes residing in Atlanta, Georgia, supplied the sung texts for two important studies that contain the earliest musical transcriptions of Judeo-Spanish songs made directly from field recordings. In the first, published in 1951, Daniel D. Stanley transcribed five ballad melodies and two lyrical songs directly from gramophone recordings.<sup>21</sup> In the second study, actually a master's thesis, Isaac Jack Lévy enlisted the aid of Garret Laning, Harry Kruger, and Robert M. Arnett respectively, to provide musical transcriptions for three of his collected song texts.<sup>22</sup>

A third study, published in 1960, lacked the musical component but merits mention because it was the first of a collaborative effort aimed at studying systematically the ballad corpus (*Romancero*) of Judeo-Spanish informants from the Balkan region who had recently immigrated to the United States (Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, and New York).<sup>23</sup> Professors Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, who initiated this study in August of 1957, soon realized the importance of an interdisciplinary link with musicology, whereupon Israel J. Katz joined their endeavor in 1959.<sup>24</sup>

The trio had completed three decades of collaborative research by the time of Professor Silverman's death on March 23, 1989. The first of their multi-volume series, bearing the title *Judeo-Spanish Ballads from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), was published before he died, and his wisdom and untiring dedication will continue to inform subsequent volumes.<sup>25</sup>

Numerous musical transcriptions provided by other researchers have been published since 1971. They too were made directly from field tapes and comprise material collected in San Antonio, Texas

(1971),<sup>26</sup> Los Angeles (1972–1973 and 1984),<sup>27</sup> Seattle (1973),<sup>28</sup> and New York (1979).<sup>29</sup>

We know very little about the traditional secular songs that the Sephardim of the Western European communities—primarily Amsterdam and London—brought to the United States. However, since the turn of this century, immigrants from the diverse Sephardic communities of the Eastern Mediterranean region have carried with them a rich storehouse of song. Its relics comprise such genres as *romances* (“ballads”), *muwashshahat*, *zejeles*, *coplas* (“couplets”), and *endechas* (“dirges”), which date from pre-expulsion times on the Iberian Peninsula.

We are fortunate that many traditional song texts have been preserved in manuscript and printed sources from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain and Portugal, yet very few of them contain musical notation. A goodly number of their opening verses were cited as tune indicators in Judeo-Spanish songsters, chapbooks, and broadsides (utilizing Rashi characters), as well as in Hebrew songsters and hymnals that enjoyed wide circulation among the Mediterranean Sephardic communities from the sixteenth century on.

In spite of these invaluable textual links, we lack evidence upon which to reconstruct earlier musical practices. Nonetheless, there are other stylistic links that bear relevance to the Iberian tradition, namely formal structure, modes, traditional cadences, and regional melodic traits that were known to exist prior to the sixteenth century.

In two previous studies, recently republished as one, I examined the musical aspects of the Judeo-Spanish *Romancero*, wherein I distinguished two basic styles which separate the sung repertoires of the Eastern Mediterranean from those of the North African Sephardic communities, and postulated a third which emanated from Greece.<sup>30</sup> Inasmuch as the Eastern style was the more dominant among the Sephardic immigrants who came to America during the first half of this century, it is truly sad to report that this tradition will not survive beyond the second generation that was nurtured by them.

The greater part of all the material gathered to date in the United States, and most recently from Canada,<sup>31</sup> which still awaits both textual and musical transcriptions, will enable present and future scholars to study the entire repertoire brought to these shores. Moreover, it

will eventually be linked to the vast material recorded throughout Latin America, North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Israel.

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Of the eleven representative textual examples provided by my colleague, Professor Samuel G. Armistead, seven were sung (see his essay in this volume). All were recorded from informants who immigrated from the Eastern Mediterranean region. While Armistead's comments relate specifically to the linguistic, literary/thematic, and folkloric aspects of their contents, it should prove interesting to examine the sung examples from the standpoint of their actual performance, and to provide published tunes of Eastern Mediterranean provenance for those which were recited. While room does not permit a complete transcription of each, I have notated either the initial or subsequent strophe of each example, indicating, in the latter case, the specific one. As mentioned above, the Eastern Mediterranean examples conform to stylistic principles which differentiate them from those practiced among the Sephardic communities of North Africa (mainly Morocco and Algeria). Hereon I shall follow the order of my colleague's presentation (enclosed in parentheses).

Example 2 (= Armistead 1.1): *Gaíferos jugador*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$

Por los pa- la - - - - - sios de Car - - - - -  
 lo \_\_\_\_\_ y non \_\_\_\_\_ pa - - - - -  
 san \_\_\_\_\_ si- non \_\_\_\_\_  
 gu- ga - - - - - re\_.

The musical notation consists of four staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked as approximately 120 beats per minute. The melody is written in a style characteristic of Sephardic folk music, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The lyrics are: "Por los pa- la - - - - - sios de Car - - - - -", "lo \_\_\_\_\_ y non \_\_\_\_\_ pa - - - - -", "san \_\_\_\_\_ si- non \_\_\_\_\_", and "gu- ga - - - - - re\_." The final note of the fourth staff is a half note with a fermata.

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Y non pa - san si non gu - ga - [a]

rey non gu - gan

pla - ta ni o - - - - ro

si - no ví - a - - - - sy siv - da - - [a] - des.

The highly melismatic rendition of the ballad *Gaiferos jugador* ("Gaiferos the Gambler") clearly exhibits a style that was foreign to the Iberian Peninsula. Here, in the span of eight melody phrases, the informant, from Salonika, has completed four textual hemistichs, the second of which is repeated:

1  
Por los palacios de Carlo

2 3 4  
y non pasan sinon gūgare

5  
y non pasan si non gūgare

6 7  
y non gūgare plata ni oro,

8  
sino vias y sivdades.

Notice the similarity between the second and sixth and between the initial and fifth melody phrases. The range comprises an octave. The dotted bar lines indicate the singer's accentuation of the sung text. I have avoided a discussion of mode, due to the nature of the informant's erratic intonation. To my knowledge this is the only published musical example for this ballad.

Example 3 (= Armistead 1.2): *El pozo airón*

Ya se van los sie-teher-ma - - - - nos\_\_\_,  
 ya se\_\_\_ van\_\_\_ pa - ra\_\_\_ La - - hor\_\_\_,  
 Y guay qué do - lor\_\_\_!  
 Ya se van\_\_\_ pa - ra\_\_\_ La - hor\_\_\_.

The version edited by Armistead was recited. Tunes for *El pozo airón* ("The Bottomless Well") from the Eastern tradition have been collected by Manrique de Lara (in Sofia) (see Ex. 3), Michael Molho (Salonika), and Isaac Levy (Jerusalem and Turkey).<sup>2</sup> Molho's tune is a close variant of Manrique de Lara's. Both comprise a quatrain strophe ABCD, with C carrying the refrain burden "¡Y guay que dolor!" and D, the repeated second textual hemistich. They are also based on a Major hexachord, ending on the third degree. Levy's Jerusalem tune encompasses a Major pentachord (b to f-sharp), and that from Izmir, an octave (e-flat to e-flat; based on *finalis f*). The former bears the strophic structure  $A^{w+x}A^{w+y}A^{w+z}BC$ , wherein melody phrases B and C each carry the fourth textual hemistich. In the latter tune, the relationship between the melody phrases and textual hemistichs can be depicted as

ABABCDCD.  
 a b a b c d c d

Example 4 (= Armistead 2.1): *La moxca y la mora* (from Rhodes)

$\text{♩} = 132$   
 S'e - stá - va - se la mo - ra en su be - l[e]- star\_\_\_.  
 Ve - ní - a la mox - ca por a - zer - le mal\_\_\_.

Se - stá - va - se'l so - het en su be - le - star.

Ve - ní - ael ma - la - ha - ma - [a] - ve por a - zer - le mal.

Ma - la - ha - ma - veal so - het, so - het al buey, el buey al a - gua, el a - gua al fue - go, el fue - go al pal, pa - loal pe - rro, el pe - rro al ga - to, el ga - to el ra - tón, el ra - tón - la ra - na, la ra - na a l'a - bez - ba, la bez - ba a la mox - ca, la mox - ca a la mo - ra, mes - qui - na la mo - ra en su cam - pos mo - ros.

The cumulative song *La moxca y la mora* ("The Fly and the Moorish Girl") can also be found among Alberto Hemsí's tunes from the tradition of Rhodes.<sup>33</sup> Here we give the initial and final cumulative strophes. It is sung in a simple duple meter (2/2), whereas the Hemsí variant is notated in a compound duple meter (6/8). Both are based on a Major pentachord.

Example 5 (= Armistead 2.2): *Un cavretico*

$\text{♩} = 192$

a Un ca - vri - i - co, un ca - vri - ti - co, que lo mer - có mi pa - dre

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 44-84$

b Un ca - vri - ti - co, que lo mer - có mi pa - dre

a por dos as - [pros] por dos le - va - nim.

b por dos as - pri - cos por dos le - va - ni - cos.

It is unfortunate that Armistead’s informant recited this well-known allegorical Passover song, *Un cavretico* (“A Little Goat”), for which Léon Algazi cited three melodic versions (1958: nos. 25–27), the latter of which is reproduced here (see Ex. 5a), and for which both Isaac Levy and Abraham A. Schwadron collected many other examples.<sup>34</sup> Among the numerous tunes from the Eastern Mediterranean region that accompany this text, it should prove instructive to compare a rendition from Salonika (Algazi, no. 27), recorded by Constantin Brăiloiu and Léon Algazi in Paris, with that from Monastir, recorded by Abraham Schwadron in Brooklyn, New York, in 1976 (see Ex. 5b).<sup>35</sup>

Though both tunes share the same *ambitus*, a Major 6th, and basically the same meter, the former comprises a Dorian hexachord (based on the *finalis* *d*), while the latter, a Major hexachord (based on *f*).

Example 6 (= Armistead 3.1): *Cantiga de parida* (from Salonika)

*J* = ca. 53

Second strophe: Ya vie-neel pa-ri - - - do

con los con-vi - - da - - - dos

Qu' - ye - va' la ma - - - no

re - sta de pex - - ca - - - do

por la o - tra ma - - - - no

sien - to yun du - ca - - - - do

Ya es, Ya es buen si - mán

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es - ta - a - - - - le - grí - - - - a.  
¡Ben - di - cho! que mo - sa - - - - ye - gó  
a ye - res - - - - te - dí - - - - a!

Our *cantiga de parida* ("Birth Song") comprises yet another melodic version which can be added to those collected by Edith Gerson-Kiwi, Isaac Levy, and Susana Weich-Shahak.<sup>36</sup> Here I have transcribed only the second textual stanza.

Example 6 conforms to the basic musical characteristics discussed by Susana Weich-Shahak, who studied this genre. It is in duple (2/4 meter), and its melodic movement is mainly diatonic (with occasional intervals of a minor 3rd). However, its range, comprising a minor hexachord (d-e-f-g-a-b-flat), is an exception to her inclusion of wide ranges (exceeding a 7th and above) in her breakdown of characteristics. The tune's structure, ABCB'DE, mirrors the textual stanza, while the refrain strophe, *Ya es . . .*, is rendered as FGHI. Notice the singer's use of ornamentation as well as the recurring motive "x" in melody phrases A, B, and G.

The version collected by Weich-Shahak carries the same refrain as our Example 6; those of Lévy (Izmir and Turkey), only its initial verse "*Ya es ya es buen simán esta alegría* [var. `criatura' (Izmir)]." Yet Gerson-Kiwi's example includes an entirely different refrain text comprising three verses: "*Fino fin' e florido / todo bien complido / che viva el parido.*" Only Lévy's example (from Jerusalem) was sung without a refrain. All were rendered in duple meter (2/4); however, marked differences among them can be seen in their text-tune relationships, *ambitus*, and mode.

1. Gerson-Kiwi (Salonika):  $\begin{matrix} ABAB'CDE, \\ a\ b\ c\ d\ e\ f\ g \end{matrix}$  Major 7th, Minor mode ending on the third degree. It should be mentioned that melody phrase E carries bears basically the cadential figuration as phrase B'.

2. Lévy (Jerusalem):  $\begin{matrix} ABCDAB, \\ a b c d e f' \end{matrix}$  minor 7th, Major mode ending on the third degree, or it may be analyzed as the E mode ending with a Phrygian cadence.
3. Lévy (Izmir):  $\begin{matrix} ABABCBCD, \\ a b c d e f e f' \end{matrix}$  minor 7th, same modal analysis as previous example.
4. Lévy (Turkey): two strophes,  $\begin{matrix} ABABAB'CD / EFGHIJKL, \\ a b c d e f g h \quad i j k l m n g h \end{matrix}$  diminished 12th, bi-modal characteristics (Major/minor), falling into same analytical category as the two previous examples.
5. Weich-Shahak (Salonica).  $\begin{matrix} ABABCDEF GH \\ a b c d e f g h i j \end{matrix}$  Major 9th. The analysis rendered in her article (p. 101) favors the E mode, also bearing the Phrygian cadence, and which she places in the *maqam Huzam*.

Thus, compared with textual counterparts from the Eastern Mediterranean region, our example can be documented as authentic, even though its modality is basically minor (*finalis d*). Note also that only its melodic phrase B is repeated.

Example 7 (= Armistead 3.2): *Canto de boda* (from Salonika)

Hi - ja - mí - a, si te va - - - - -

[e]s mi-ra - bie - [e] - ny a - pa - - - - ra mi - - - - - en - tes.

Por los - ca - mi - nos que tú vas - - - - - , no - hay pri - - - - - mos

ni pa - ri - - - - - en - te - - [e]s.

La - se - stra - - - - - fias son - tu gen - - - - - te; no - te ha -

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ga - sa - bo - rre [e] - ser

¡Hi - - ja de un buen pa - - - re - - ser!

The wedding song *Hija mía, si te vas* ("My daughter, if you are departing") (Ex. 7) hardly conforms to the highly spirited and tuneful songs that are known in Sephardic communities throughout the Mediterranean region.<sup>37</sup> The text, which Armistead alludes to as fragmentary, and whose second verse appears to belong to another nuptial song, bears an uneven number of verses in each stanza. No other tunes have been discovered for this text.

The initial melody phrase appears to hover around the tonal axis  $\underline{a}$ ' before descending to the cadential tone  $\underline{f}$ , which accounts for four of the phrasal cadential tones, while the remaining three end on  $\underline{e}$ . Upon reaching the cadential tone of the third melody phrase, the informant raised her actual pitch level a semitone higher—which is not reflected in the notation. Such fluctuations have been encountered in renditions of this type—particularly among aged singers—when either concentration on the text or faltering memory tends to provoke erratic intonation.

Here the style, lacking a basic rhythmic pulse, corresponds to that exhibited in the ballad rendition of *Gaiferos jugador* (see Ex. 2). Yet, unlike the latter example, here our informant absorbed the first eight hemistichs in seven melody phrases:

1  
Hija mía, se te vas

2  
mira bien y apara mientes.

3  
Por los caminos que tu vas,

4  
no hay primos ni parientes.

5  
Las estrañas son tu gente;

6  
no to hagas aborreser.

7  
¡Hija de un buen pareser!

Example 8 (= Armistead 3.3): *Endecha* (from Rhodes)

*J* = 69

Y me vie-go con po-ca fue - - - [e]r-sa

e-cha - do'n ca-ma ha-zi - - no

Ya fin di la me - - dia no - - - - - che

Y la puer-ta me - - - ba - - tió.

*Endechas* (“dirges”) have become, in the course of centuries, a kind of regionally-bound communal repertoire, which enabled the bereaved to share their burden of grief.<sup>38</sup> Following an ancient custom, it was natural that the mourner’s personal thoughts were borne out in spontaneous song. *Y me viego con poca fuera* is a unique text among Judeo-Spanish *endechas*, for which our transcription records for posterity an example of this practice. The genre also carries special significance as a body of song with which to commemorate the destruction of the Second Temple (in the year 70 C.E.) on and during the week preceding Tisha b’Av.

The tune comprises a quatrain strophe (ABCD). Encompassing a range that surpasses an octave (Major 9th), the informant rendered it in the Major mode (*finalis f*). Its final cadence on  $\underline{c}$  conveys a feeling of circularity. Notice the ornamental cadences in the initial and third melody phrases.

## Example 9 (= Armistead 4.1): Lyric song (from Rhodes)

$\text{♩} = 95$

Second strophe: Ca-va-ye - - - - ro me  
 en - - ga - - fia - - - tes, pur la ġu - - ra  
 [a] que me ġu - ra - - - tes.  
 ¡Pur la ma - - dru - ga - - - da!

The Sephardic tradition abounds with lyric songs. The two texts contributed by Professor Armistead are rare specimens, and here, for the first time, are registered the melodies to which they were sung. The first, *Morena de rufios caveyos* (Ex. 9), bears a transcription of the second textual stanza. The tune is unmistakably Mixolydian (here base on *finalis c*), disregarding the intentional lowered third degree that the informant rendered in nearly every strophe. Here we have yet another example of a disjointed text-tune relationship. The text comprises a distich and a refrain, "Por [var.' pur'] la madrugada." The tune, a quatrain strophe (ABCD), accommodates the text in the following manner:

——— A ——— ——— B ———  
 Cavayero, me engrañates  
 ——— ——— C ———  
 pur la gura que me gurates.  
 ——— D ———  
 ¡Pur la madrugada!

The melodic repetitions, designated "x," are a most peculiar feature of this tune. The latter repetition constitutes melody phrase C, while the former functions as the cadential portion of A, continuing as the opening portion of B.

## Example 10 (= Armistead 4.2): Lyric song (from Rhodes)

*J* = 118

E - - - cha a - gua en la tu puer - ta

y pa - - - sa - réy mi ca - - i - ré

y tu pa - ré u - na chi - ca ca - va A - má - [án]!

en - tra - ré y te hav - - - la - ré

A second lyric song, *Echa agua en la tu puerta* (Ex. 10), for which only the first textual stanza was collected, was sung as a simple quatrain strophe in the minor mode (*finalis d*). Notice the Turkish interjection, ¡Amán! (“alas, mercy”), which bridges melody phrases 3 and 4.

## Example 11 (= Armistead 5.1): Prayer for rain (from Rhodes)

*J* = 116

A - gua, O Dios! Que la tie - rra la de - man - da.

Chi - cos, chi - cos y pi - que - ños

pan que - re - mos; a - gua no te - ne - mos.

A - bre los sie - los, a - rre - ga - los cam - pos.

A - rre - ga - dor, a - rre - ga - dor, e - cha tri - go al mon - tón.

Although bearing intermittent and intricate metric changes, this otherwise simple, yet animated, tune appears to revolve around the tonal axis  $\underline{f}$ , spanning a minor penatchord ( $\underline{d-e-f-g-a}$ ), and ends with a strictly metrical incantation. The rendition is totally syllabic.

\* \* \*

This survey has touched upon the sacred and secular musical traditions of the Sephardim, whose history in the United States has been exemplary. In particular, the secular musical examples that have been notated here, together with those that have been and continue to be contributed by musicologists throughout the Western Hemisphere, bear testimony to an Old World tradition transplanted on American soil. It was the tenacious nature of the Sephardim, particularly those from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, to retain in their oral tradition textual vestiges from their centuries-long existence on Iberian soil. Much work lies ahead in linking, where possible, their post-exilic Old World tunes to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as reconstructing their musical practices.<sup>39</sup>

### Notes

1. The earliest congregation, founded in 1597, was Bet Ya'akov, named after its founder, Jacob Tyrado. Neveh Shalom (1608) and Bet Yisrael (1618) followed, and ultimately merged as a unified congregation, named Kahal Kodesh Talmud Torah (1639). The latter inaugurated its present building on Rapenburgerstraat, the so-called "Great Synagogue," on August 2, 1675.

Regarding the musical life and musical liturgy of the Amsterdam Jewish community, see Israel Adler, *La Pratique musicale*, and Maxine Ribstein Kanter, "Traditional Melodies," wherein she discusses the "High Holiday Hymn Melodies of the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam," pp. 303-373. David Pinna contributed four pages of musical transcriptions for the Pentateuch and Prophets modes as rendered according to the tradition of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam in D. E. Janowski, *Biblia Hebraica*, Introduction, fol. d4.

2. Sahar Asamaim, modeled upon the "Great Synagogue" in Amsterdam and erected on the street named Bevis Marks, was inaugurated in 1701.

Specimens of its liturgical music can be found in (1) E. Aguilar and D. A. de Sola, *The Ancient Melodies*; see the more recent edition by Elias Jessurun, *Sephardi Melodies: Being the Traditional Liturgical Chants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, London* (London: Bevis Marks and Oxford University Press, 5691/1931), as well as the recording *Music of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue*, supervised by John Levy (New York: Folkways Records and Service Corp. Record Album no. FR8961, 1960); (2) Franz Reizenstein transcribed 103 liturgical items from recordings made by Hazzan Eliezer Abinun and Hazzan Joseph Papo (of the London and Paris synagogues, respectively) in Obadiah Camhy, ed., *Liturgie séphardie* (London: World Sephardic Federation, 1959); and (3) M. R. Kanter "High Holy Day Hymn Melodies," pp. 12-44;

3. H. P. Salomon, "Hispanic Liturgy Among Western Sephardim," provides background information concerning liturgical practices of the Sephardic communities founded in Western Europe and the Americas during the seventeenth century. See also A. L. Cardoso's short essay "The Music of the Sephardim," which deals mainly with liturgical music. Among the published sources of liturgical music from these and other Western European Sephardic communities, we cite the following:

A. *France*: (1) Paris (Temple Israélite): Emile Elihu Jonas, comp. and ed., *Shirot Yisraël: Recueil des chants hébraïques anciens et moderne exécutés au Temple du Rite Portugais de Paris* (Paris: A. Durlacher, 1854); (2) Emile Jonas, comp., *Shire Yisrael; Chants hébraïques exécutés dans les temples consistoriaux et au temple du rit portugais de Paris*; (3) Paris (Bérith Halom): Lein Algazi, *Chants séphardis*; see also O. Camhy, *ibid.*; (4) Comtat Venaissin (comprising the four communities: Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon, and l'Isle-sur-Sorgues): Jules Salomon and Mordochée Crémieu, comps., *Zmirot Yisraël: Chants hébraïques, suivant le rite des Communautés Israélites de l'ancien Comtat Venaissin* (Marseille: Delanchie, 1885); and (5) Southern France (synagogues of Bayonne and Bordeaux): M. J. Benharoche-Baralia, comp., *Chants traditionnels hébraïques en usage dans la communauté séphardie de Bayonne* (Biarritz: Zadoc Kahn, 1961).

B. *Germany* (Hamburg): Fourteen traditional Sephardic melodies are included in the *Sammlung von gottesdienstlichen Gesängen nach der Ordnung des Hamburger Tempel-Gebetbuches* (Hamburg, 1852), compiled by Gerson Rosenstein (1790–1851) of the Reform Temple.

C. *Italy*: (1) Livorno (= Leghorn) (Comunità Israelitica): Federico Consolo, comp. and ed., *Libro dei canti d'Israele. Antichi canti liturgici del rito degli Ebrei Spagnoli* (Florence: Bratti, 1892); and (2) Rome (Tempio Maggiore on the Lungotevere Cenci): Elio Piattelli, comp., *Canti liturgici ebraici di rito italiano* (Rome: Edizione de Santis, 1967).

Sources for liturgical and paraliturgical music of Sephardic communities in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean region can be found in:

A. *North Africa*: (1) Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, *Gesänge der marokkanischen Juden* (Berlin and Vienna: Benjamin Harz Verlag, 1929) (= vol. 5 of the *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*); (2) Robert Lachmann, *Jewish Cantillation and Song in the Isle of Djerba* (Jerusalem: Archives of Oriental Music, Hebrew University, 1940); and (3) Arcadio de Larrea Palacin, *Canciones rituales hispano-judias* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Africanos, 1954).

B. *Eastern Mediterranean*: (1) Romania: Bucharest: M[auricu] Cohen-Linaru, *Tehillot Yisrael* (for Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur), 2 vols. (Paris: A. Durlacher, 1910); (2) Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, comp., *Gesänge der orientalischen Sefardim* (Jerusalem, Berlin, and Vienna: Benjamin Harz Verlag, 1923) (= vol. 4 of the *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*); and (3) Isaac Levy, comp., *Antología de liturgia judéo-española*.

4. M. R. Kanter, "Traditional Melodies," p. 319.

5. For a more detailed account of the founding congregation, see David de Sola Pool and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World*, especially pp. 3–36. Relations between Shearith Israel and London's Sahar Asamaim are discussed by S. Gaon, "Some Accounts," pp. 1–13.

Portions of the musical liturgy of Shearith Israel have been preserved in: (1) Leon M. Kramer and Oskar Guttmann, comps. and eds., *Kol Shearith Yisrael: Synagogue Melodies of Congregation Shearith Israel* (New York: Transcontinental Music, 1942) [containing melodies for the Shabbat service only]; and (2) A. L. Cardozo, *Sephardic Songs of Praise*.

6. The following sister congregations were established during the colonial period: Mikveh Israel (Savannah, Georgia, 1735), Beth Elohim (Charleston, South Carolina, 1749), Yeshu'at Israel (Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1750), Mikveh Israel (Philadelphia, 1771), and Beth Shalome (Richmond, Virginia, 1789). In 1768, a group of Sephardim from New York's Shearith Israel established

a congregation in Montreal, Canada, retaining the same name. For information concerning the subsequent development of American Sephardic communities, see the excellent and concise overview by M. D. Angel, "The Sephardim of the United States," pp. 77–137. Regarding ritual practices among both Western and Eastern Sephardim residing in the United States, see H. C. Dobrinsky's most useful *A Treasury of Sephardic Laws and Customs*.

J. Reider, "Jewish Music in Pennsylvania," presents interesting material concerning Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia. See also D. A. Jessurun Cardozo, "Sephardic Music in America since 1654."

7. This assumption is based on the fact that during the early Colonial period the majority of hazzan-ministers in the early American congregations were sought from sister Sephardic congregations overseas, particularly Amsterdam and London. For a chronological survey of the religious leaders of Shearith Israel, beginning officially with Saul Pardo (d. 1702/1703) from Amsterdam, see D. and T. de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith*, pp. 158–210.

8. E. Aguilar and D. A. de Sola, *The Traditional Melodies*.

9. Cf. Abraham de Sola, *Biography of David Aaron de Sola, Late Senior Minister of the Portuguese Jewish Community of London* (Philadelphia: Wm. H. Jones & Sons, 1864). Abraham, the sixth child of D. A. de Sola and Rebecca (Rica) Meldola, had distinguished himself as minister, hazzan, lecturer, and biblical scholar of Shearith Israel from 1846 until his death. For an interesting account of his professional life, see Evelyn Miller, "The 'Learned Hazan' of Montreal: Reverend Abraham de Sola, LL.D.: 1825–1882," *American Sephardi* 7–8 (1975–76): 225–243.

10. D. A. de Sola, "The Ancient Melodies," p. 16.

11. From his prefatory remarks to the index of tunes in S. Gaon, ed., *Book of Prayer*, p. 243.

12. An excellent anthology, *Sephardic Songs of Praise*, compiled by Rabbi A. L. Cardozo, contains many hymns. For a compilation of the more popular Hebrew texts, see Nosson Scherman, *Zemiroth: Sabbath Songs*, to which Macy Nulman contributed information on the Sephardic songs (pp. 287–305). For examples of Judeo-Greek hymns, see Rachel Dalven and Israel J. Katz, "Three Traditional Judeo-Greek Hymns," pp. 191–208. The latter were recorded at the Sephardic Home for the Aged in Brooklyn.

13. For an interesting commentary on this *piyyut*, attributed to Yehuda Semuel Abbas (ca. 1163), see H. P. Salomon, "A Magnificent Sephardic Song," pp. 7–21. D. A. de Sola, "The Ancient Melodies" (p. 16), placed its tune in the category of "melodies composed in Spain."

14. Here, Jacob Hadida's remarks, alluding to the melodic changes which he discovered in his revision, begun in 1948, of the tunes associated with daily and occasional services at Sahar Asamaim, are most appropriate:

An earnest endeavor has been made to eliminate as many errors as possible that have crept into the tunes during the past century—errors in notes in time—and today we are as near as we shall ever get to the rendering of de Sola's régime. That these errors have crept in is a direct result of a delightful feature of our services—the Congregational singing. This must naturally lead to an everlasting conflict between choir and Congregation. But if the melodies are to be preserved from further distortion, the efforts of the choir must prevail over the efforts of the less musical members. The melodies are the heritage of the Congregation, in the care of the choirmaster; to be guarded and cherished fiercely. Perhaps the worst case of distortion of a melody is to be found in our Rosh Hodesh Hallel. The version as it appears on page 24 of the de Sola–Aguilar book is truly delightful; and it must have suffered some very rough treatment to have developed into what we sing today.

(Solomon Gaon, ed., *Book of Prayer*, p. 243).

15. In the early 1970s, the entire liturgy of its Sephardic community was recorded by Hazzan Solomon Nunes Nabarro (b. 1920). Nabarro's rendition was transcribed by M. R. Kanter. For

additional information concerning these recordings, see Kanter, "Traditional Melodies," pp. 356–358.

16. Our example was taken from chapter 4 of D. and T. de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World* (pp. 145–151), which contains thirteen musical transcriptions from the Shearith Israel liturgy. Both Siegfried Landau and Margo Mendes Oppenheimer were acknowledged by the authors (p. ix) for these transcriptions.

17. Rabbi Cardozo distinguished himself as hazzan at Shearith Israel from 1945 to 1985.

18. According to Zarita Nahón, in S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, *Romances judeo-españoles de Tánger* (p. 9), George Herzog, then of Columbia University's anthropology department, made the musical transcriptions. Unfortunately, to date they have not been located. However, the Moroccan examples recorded by Professor de Onís were studied by S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, *ibid.*, and with I. J. Katz in "Judeo-Spanish Folk Poetry from Morocco," pp. 59–75.

19. Earlier, during the 1922–23 academic year, Mair José Benardete collected ballads in New York among Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic immigrants for his master's thesis, entitled "Los romances judeo-españoles en Nueva York" (Columbia University, 1923). This was subsequently edited by S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman and published under the title *Judeo-Spanish Ballads from New York*. A redacted version of Benardete's comments can be found in the latter edition, pp. vii–viii.

20. See E. A. Schlesinger, "A Study of the Linguistic Characteristics."

21. R. R. MacCurdy and D. D. Stanley, "Judeo-Spanish Ballads from Atlanta," pp. 221–238. A critical analysis of Stanley's transcriptions can be found in I. J. Katz, *Judeo-Spanish Traditional Ballads* 1:96–102.

22. I. J. Lévy, "Sephardic Ballads and Songs." Lévy recorded additional items in private residences in Atlanta and Los Angeles, and at the Sephardic Old Age Home in Brooklyn. See I. J. Katz, *Judeo-Spanish Traditional Ballads*, 1:99, n. 1 and 114, n. 1. The bulk of Lévy's musical examples were taken from Isaac Levy's *Chants judéo-espagnols* and Vicente T. Mendoza, *El romance español y el corrido mexicano: estudio comparativo* (Mexico City: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1939).

23. S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, "Hispanic Balladry" pp. 229–244. See also their survey, "Judeo-Spanish Ballad Collecting in the United States," pp. 156–163.

24. For a discussion of their interdisciplinary collaboration, see I. J. Katz, "The Musical Legacy" pp. 72–85.

25. The first volume contains, in its introduction (pp. 5–33), a history of their collaboration.

26. Transcriptions of five Judeo-Spanish songs were made by Isaac Salinas and Rosa Samuelson in W. Samuelson, "Romances and Songs of the Sephardim," pp. 527–551.

27. J. H. Mauleón contributed thirty musical transcriptions to R. Benmayor's study, *Romances judeo-españoles de Oriente*, and C. Merrill-Mirsky, "Judeo-Spanish Song from the Island of Rhodes," included ten.

28. Mauleón, *ibid.*

29. R. Greenstein, *La Serena*. The collection, containing eight musical transcriptions, was made at the Sephardic Home for the Aged in Brooklyn, New York.

30. I. J. Katz, "The Musical Legacy," pp. 45–58.

31. See J. R. Cohen, "Judeo-Spanish Song in the Sephardic Communities of Montreal and Toronto: Survival, Function and Change" (Ph. D. diss., University of Montreal, 1988).

32. Manrique de Lara's unpublished example is cited in S. G. Armistead, *Romancero judeo-español en el Archivo Menéndez Pidal*, no. X13.1; M. Molho, *Usos y costumbres*, p. 330; and I. Levy,

*Antología* 4:nos. 210–211, pp. 325 and 328, respectively. In all three sources its incipit is given as “Ya se van [var. = fueron] los siete hermanos.”

33. A. Hemsí, *Coplas séfardies*, Op. 8, no. 5 “Estávase la mora en su bel estar . . .”

34. L. Algazi, *Chants séphardis*, nos. 25–27; I. Levy, *Antología* 4:nos. 292 (Izmir), 293, 295–296 (Sarajevo), 299 (Istanbul), and 10:no. 130 (Salonika). See A. Schwadron, “Un Cavritico: The Sephardic Tradition,” *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* 5 (1982–83): 24–39. See also his definitive study of the multiple tunes he collected in “Chad Gadya: A Passover Song.” He also produced a recording, *Chad Gadya [One Kid]*, based on diverse examples from his collection, Folkways Records Album no. FR 8920 (New York, 1982), side 1, bands 3b (from Salonika), 6 (from Istanbul), 7d–e (from Rhodes), and side 2, band 4d (from Tangier).

35. The Braïloïu and Algazi example can be found on a recording issued as a series, World Collection of Recorded Folk Music, by the Archives International de Musique Populaire, UNESCO (Paris, 1951), 9A1 62, side 2, no. 3, and that notated by A. Schwadron in “Un cavritico en la tradición sefardi” (ex. 13).

36. E. Gerson-Kiwi, “The Legacy of Jewish Music,” p. 164 (from Salonika); I. Levy, *Antología*, 4:nos. 239–241 (pp. 374–377) (from Jerusalem, Izmir, and Turkey, respectively); and S. Weich-Shahak, “Childbirth Songs,” ex. 3 (p. 3) (from Salonika).

The customs surrounding birth and circumcision in the Sephardic community of Salonika are described by Molho, *Usos y costumbres*, pp. 49–90.

37. For important background material, M. Alvar, *Cantos de boda*, pp. 3–39; Molho, *Usos y costumbres*, pp. 15–47.

38. See M. Alvar, *Endechas judeo-españolas*, pp. 9–70; Molho, *Usos y costumbres*, pp. 17–201.

39. Taking the tunes of the extant Sephardic *Romancero* as their point of departure, Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak have provided a good start in their recent contribution, “The Spanish and the Sephardic Romances.” I. J. Katz discusses the popular practice of “Contrafacta and the Judeo-Spanish Romancero.”

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