

Reconstructing 'Jewish Spain': The Politics and Institutionalization of Jewish History in Spain, 1845-1940¹

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Resumo:

Este artigo consiste numa breve exposição de iniciativas para reconstruir o passado judaico em Espanha de 1845 a 1935. Descreve o modo como esse passado se tornou central aos esforços de construção e reivindicação de uma pátria espanhola através da sua apropriação e integração na história oficial, ou *história pátria*. A construção desta história foi muito controversa, na medida em que historiadores e políticos trouxeram o passado judaico para os debates sobre reforma política, para discussões sobre identidade nacional e religiosa, e para a elaboração de diversos movimentos religiosos e culturais. Em todos estes contextos, as tentativas de reivindicar o passado judaico espanhol – por mais apaixonadas e comprometidas – permaneceram fraturadas e ambivalentes, fazendo com que esses esforços de “reconstruir” a “Espanha judaica” se revelassem tão parciais quanto comprometidos.

Palavras-chave: Espanha, história judaica, historiografia, *história pátria*, sefardismo, hispanidade

Abstract:

This essay is a brief exposition of initiatives to reconstruct the Jewish past in Spain from 1845 to 1935. It describes the ways the Jewish past became central to efforts to construct and claim a Spanish *patria*, through its appropriation and integration into official history, or *historia patria*. The construction of this history was highly contentious, as historians and politicians brought Spain's Jewish past to bear in debates over political reform, in discussions of religious and national identity, and in elaborating diverse political and cultural movements. In all of these contexts, attempts to reclaim Spain's Jewish past—however impassioned, and however committed—remained fractured and ambivalent, making such efforts to “reconstruct” ‘Jewish Spain’ as partial as they were compromised.

¹ This is a revised version of an essay that first appeared in German as “Die Wiederentdeckung des ‘Jüdischen Spanien’: Die Politik der Rekonstruktion der jüdischen Vergangenheit und die Entstehung Sefardischer Studien in Spanien (1845- 1949),” in *Das neue Sefarad - Das moderne Spanien und sein jüdisches Erbe*, Michael Brenner ed. *Münchener Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, 5 (2), 2011, 41-58. I thank Dr. Michael Brenner, for giving me permission to republish it in English and to the editors of *Hamsa* for making this piece accessible to a wider audience.

Key Words: Spain, Jewish history, Historiography, *historia patria*, Sephardism, Hispanidad

The contributors of this issue share an interest in examining historical developments in the historiography and institutional emergence of modern Jewish and Arabic studies in Iberia, as well as in other places until now peripheral to research on the emergence of these fields of study. My own research on this topic seeks to fill lacunae in this area by documenting incipient Spanish initiatives to recover Spain's Jewish legacy and the emergence of Spanish Sephardic Studies in the modern era². I also emphasize the importance of considering the intersection as well as divergence of the modern projects of recovery of Jewish and Muslim histories in Iberia, a focus at the core of this journal issue and *Hamsa* more broadly. Such an examination would necessarily place scholars of the history of Muslim and Jewish studies in modern Iberia, as well as Latin America, in dialogue, even as it enhances our understanding of historical and contemporary appropriations the peninsula's Muslim and Jewish histories in these disparate national and transnational contexts. Following is an overview of some of the main questions and issues my written work seeks to address, which I offer in the hope that this brief exposition will stimulate further dialogue on the topic³.

Historians of the Jews have long emphasized the appeal of the modern historical enterprise for Jews engaged in the struggle for political emancipation and particularly how the Iberian-Sephardic past loomed large in this pursuit⁴. My study expands on such work by discussing the importance of modern Spain and modern Spanish historiography in the

² Michal Friedman, *Recovering 'Jewish Spain': Historiography, Politics and Institutionalization of the Jewish Past in Spain, 1845-1940*, New York, Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation, 2012; and idem, "Jewish History as *Historia Patria*: Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews of Spain," in *Journal of Jewish Social Studies*, 18-1 (2011), pp. 88-26. Nitai Shinan has also written on this topic. See Nitai Shinan, *Korbanot o Ashemim: Toldo ha-Yehudim b'rei ha'historiografia ha'sfaradit ba'shaniim 1759-1898*, Jerusalem, Mahon ben-Tzvi, 2011 and his preliminary study of the new edition of José Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España: Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios*, Pamplona, Ugoiti Editores, 2013.

³ My work is also in close dialogue with the recent wave of critical scholarship exploring the relationship of modern Spain with the Jews and its Jewish past. See for example Anna Lena Menny, *Spanien und Sepharad: Über den offiziellen Umgang mit dem Judentum im Franquismus und in der Demokratie* (Judische Religion, Geschichte Und Kultur (Jrgk), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013; Daniela Flesler, Tabea Alexa Linhard and Adrián Pérez Melgosa (eds.), *Revisiting Jewish Spain in the Modern Era*, Oxford, Routledge, 2013 (based on a special issue of the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12- 1 (2011); Maite Ojeda Mata, *Identidades ambivalentes: Sefardíes en la España Contemporánea*, Madrid, Sefarad Editores, 2012; Michael Brenner (ed.), *Das neue Sefarad - Das moderne Spanien und sein jüdisches Erbe*, *Münchener Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, 5- 2, (2011); Danielle Rozenberg, *La España contemporánea y la cuestión judía*, Madrid, Marcial Pons Historia, 2010.

⁴ See for example Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010; Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: the Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, Hanover, N.H., University Press of New England, 1994, especially chap. 4 - "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy", pp. 71-92; Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1993; Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle, Washington University Press, 1982, especially pp. 81-103.

emergence of modern Jewish studies. In addition to elaborating, as well as de-mystifying, what historian Ismar Schorsch termed the “Sephardic Mystique”⁵, my project illuminates some of the ways nineteenth-century Jewish and Spanish historians and intellectuals both built on each other’s work and came into conflict. As for the field of Spanish history, while there are several excellent studies on the construction of the Spanish nation and the importance of history and historical writing in this process⁶, these works in the main refer to the place of the Jewish past only in a cursory way.⁷ The institutionalization of *Arabismo* (the modern study of Arabic language and literature and the Muslim past in Spain) on the other hand, has been well documented and received the significant scholarly attention⁸.

In the main, scholarship on the relationship of modern Spain with the Jews has intended to focus on Franco and the Jews, positing this relationship in positive or negative terms. Generally, Spanish antisemitism and philosemitism have been studied in a similar vein⁹. Much attention has also been directed to the well known historiographical debate on the place of the Jewish and Muslim past in Spanish history centering on the figures of literary historian Américo Castro and historian Claudio Sánchez Albornoz in the 1940s¹⁰. In my study I demonstrate the

⁵ Ismar Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy”, in *From Text to Context...*

⁶ See for example Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria. Politics, History and National Identity in Spain 1875-1975*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997; José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: la idea de España en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, Taurus, 2001; Martín Peiró, *Los guardianes de la historia*, Madrid, Institución Fernando el Católico (CSIC), 1997; Eduardo Manzano Moreno y Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón (eds.), *La gestión de la memoria*, Madrid, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 2000.

⁷ A notable exception is Aurora Rivère Gómez, *Orientalismo y Nacionalismo Español: Estudios árabes y hebreos en la Universidad de Madrid (1843-1868)*, Madrid, Universidad Carlos III: Biblioteca del Instituto Antonio de Nebrija de Estudios sobre la Universidad, 2000.

⁸ See for example James Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship*, Leiden, Brill, 1970; Manuela Manzanera de Cirre, *Arabistas españoles en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, Instituto Hispano Árabe de Cultura, 1971; Manuela Marín, Maribel Fierro and María Teresa Marín Penelas (eds.), *Los estudios árabes e islámicos en España*, Murcia, Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia, 1996; Aurora Rivère Gómez, *Orientalismo y Nacionalismo Español...*; Eduardo Manzano Moreno, Gonzalo Fernández Parilla, Manuel Feria García and alii (eds.), *Orientalismo, exotismo y traducción*, Cuenca, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000; Manuela Marín, Cristina de la Puente, Fernando Rodríguez Mediano and Juan Ignacio Pérez Alcalde (eds.), *Los epistolarios de Julián Ribera Tarragó y Miguel Asín Palacios: Introducción, catálogo e índices*, Madrid, CSIC, 2009; Bernabé López García, *Orientalismo e ideología colonial en el arabismo español, 1840-1917*, Granada, Universidad de Granada, 2012. On Spanish Arabism and Orientalism from a cultural and performance studies perspective see Susan Martín Márquez, *Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity*, New Haven, Yael University Press, 2008.

⁹ Federico Ysart, *España y los judíos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, Barcelona, DOPESA, 1973; Chaim Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews and the Holocaust*, New York, Ktav Pub. Inc., 1984; Haim Avni, *Spain, the Jews and Franco*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1982; Antonio Marquina and Gloria Inés Ospina, *España y los judíos en el siglo XX*, Madrid, Espasa Universidad, 1987; Bernd Rother, *Spanien und der Holocaust*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001; Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España: la imagen del judío (1812-2000)*, Madrid, Marcial Pons Historia, 2002; Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898-1945: Antisemitism and Opportunism*, Eastborne, Sussex Academic Press, 2007.

¹⁰ See Américo Castro, *España en su historia: Cristianos, moros y judíos*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Losada, 1948; and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España: un enigma histórico*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Losada, 1956. For discussion of the debate see the classic article on the topic, Henri Lapeyre, “Deux interprétations de l’histoire d’Espagne: Américo Castro et Claudio Sánchez Albornoz,” *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 20-5 (1965), pp. 1015-1037 and for a more recent consideration of the debate and its broader

deeper roots of this relationship and the debate over the question of the 'Jewishness' of Spain. Moreover, I illustrate that the recovery of the Jewish past in Spain was significantly more ambivalent than has generally been portrayed, suggesting how this ambivalence originated out of debates over the nature of a Spanish liberal polity.

Interest and debate regarding the place of the Jews in Spain and Spanish history certainly predated the nineteenth century¹¹. In the late medieval and early modern period, Iberian universities dedicated chairs and professorships to the teaching of biblical Hebrew, in support of Christian theological training. Historical narratives published before the nineteenth-century claiming to document the origins of the Jews in Spain presented accounts largely based on medieval and early modern Christian mythology. Where the Jewish past appeared as a topic of historical or political debate, however, it served as an occasional point of reference in works addressing wider issues, rather than a central theme¹².

The emergence of Jewish history along with the study of Hebrew as modern subjects only came about beginning in the late eighteenth century extending through the last quarter of nineteenth-century Spain¹³. This forging of what one may consider modern Jewish or Sephardic studies in Spain thus took place within the context of the emergence of history and literary studies as scientific disciplines in Spain as corollaries to the construction of a modern Liberal Spanish nation-state¹⁴. It is in this context that I have examined scholarly initiatives (including published histories, journals, public speeches, sponsored research expeditions to Jewish archeological sites and their restoration, correspondence between Jewish and Spanish scholars and institutional developments) at Spain's Royal Academy of History and its affiliated

implications, Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Qurtuba: algunas reflexiones críticas sobre el Califato de Cordoba y el mito de la convivencia," *Awraq: Revista de análisis y pensamiento sobre el mundo árabe islámico contemporáneo* 7-1 (2013), pp. 225-346.

¹¹ I am not referring here to representations of Jews and conversos in Spanish literary works, a rich topic of study in its own right, but rather to historical and political studies and debate regarding the place of the Jewish past.

¹² Examples of such earlier debate appear as early as the seventeenth-century in *arbitrista* literature suggesting the expulsion of the Jews may have factored as one of the causes for the alleged decline of Spain. In the eighteenth-century, a few works discussing the persecution of Jews and their descendants by the Church and Inquisition (the most famous one being Antonio Llorente's work on the Inquisition) appeared as part of wider efforts to champion Liberalism and disenfranchise the Church and other structures of the *ancien regime*. The flip side of such writings may be found in a few tracts from the same period by Catholic reactionaries who hailed such persecution, in defense of religious intolerance. For further discussion of this literature see Nitai Shinan, *Korbanot o Ashemiim...*

¹³ In 1781, José Rodríguez de Castro published a bibliographic study, *Biblioteca española*, Madrid, Imprenta Real de la Gaceta, Tomo primero, que contiene la noticia de los escritores rabinos españoles desde la época conocida de su literatura hasta el presente, documenting Spanish-Jewish as well as converso authors as part of a broader project cataloguing authors and works he considered 'Spanish.' His work drew upon Nicolás Antonio's study *Biblioteca hispana*, Rome, N.A. Tinassi, vol I, 1672. Both works would become an important resource and reference for future scholars of Jewish Spain. While these authors may have set a precedent by attempting a reconfiguration of the concept of 'Spain', later Spanish scholars would embrace these newly conceptualized boundaries and extend them beyond bibliographical research to create the first modern social and cultural histories of Spanish Jewry.

¹⁴ On the emergence of Hebrew as a modern rather than theological subject in Spain see Pascual Pascual Recuero, "Gramáticas hebreo españolas en el siglo XIX", *Miscelánea de Estudios Arabes y Hebraicos* XVI-XVIII – 2 (1977-1979), pp. 67-80; Rivère Gómez and David Wacks, "Is Spain's Hebrew Literature 'Spanish'?" in *Spain's Multicultural Legacies—Studies in Honor of Samuel G. Armistead*, ed. Adrienne L. Martín and Cristina Martínez-Carazo, Newark, DE, Juan de la Cuesta – Hispanic Monographs, 2008.

institutions, as well as some of Spain's major universities and research centers, concluding with the establishment of the Arias Montano Institute of Sephardic Studies in 1940 at Spain's premier academic research institute, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.

On a deeper level, I have explored the ways the Jewish past became central in efforts to construct a Spanish *patria*, through its appropriation and integration into the nation's official national historical narrative, or what I refer to as *historia patria*. The construction of this history was hotly contended, as historians and politicians brought Spain's Jewish past to bear on the struggle for and over the establishment of a Liberal constitutional polity, debates over religious and national identity, and ideological and political anxieties generated by the loss of Spain's colonial Empire. Moreover, I consider how the recovery of the Jewish past also connected—via what one may consider a Spanish variant of the so-called “Jewish question” albeit paradoxically in the absence of a significant Jewish population—to some of the major nationalist political and cultural movements and ideologies which took hold in nineteenth and twentieth-century Spain, from Orientalism, Regenerationism, Neo-Catholicism, and *Hispanidad* to Spanish Fascism. My discussion of scholarly initiatives is thus contextualized through a study of parliamentary debates, local and national government sponsored Sephardist and philo-Sephardic campaigns designed to expand the political and cultural borders of Spain, exemplified in government reports, public commemorations of Sephardic historical figures, periodicals and film.

A seminal figure in any discussion of the emergence of the recovery of the Jewish past in Modern Spain is the prominent nineteenth-century Spanish historian and literary scholar José Amador de los Ríos (1818-1878), author of the first modern history of the Jews of Spain, the *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios de los judíos de España* (1848), later expanded as *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España* (1875-1876)¹⁵. Through a close textual reading of de los Ríos' work on the Jews in the context of the Spanish political and cultural landscape of his times, I illustrate how Amador de los Ríos pioneered a process of recovering Spain's Jewish legacy, and how Spain's Jewish past became an object of debate in nineteenth-century Spain, as Spanish scholars and politicians placed historiography at the service of rival political causes, particularly in the struggle over *libertad de cultos* (freedom of religious worship) in Spain, in their efforts to construct a Spanish *patria*. Amador's work moreover, helped foster the expansion and institutionalization of the recovery of the Jewish past in Spain and its incorporation into Spain's *historia patria*.

Deeply influenced by the surrounding political turmoil, often turned violent, of struggle over the nature and identity of Spain's Liberal constitutional polity raging throughout nineteenth-century Spain, Amador de los Ríos's work on the Jews reveals a deep seated ambivalence inherent in this incipient process of recovery. Such ambivalence, I argue, may be located within the emergence of Spanish Liberalism, and particularly in the close attachment of

¹⁵ Between 17 November 1845, and 16 February 1846, several years before the publication of the *Estudios* (Madrid, 1848), Amador published a series of articles entitled, “De los judíos en España” in the weekly *Revista del Español: Periódico de Literatura, Bellas Artes y Variedades* 25-30 (1845), 1-5, 4-8, 3-9, 4-9, 1-6; 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39 (1846): 4-9, 1-6, 5-9 which served as the foundation for his later more comprehensive study. Before the appearance of the *Estudios* Adolfo de Castro, a Radical Liberal published a brief history of the Jews of Spain, *Historia de los judíos de España*, Cádiz, Imprenta de la Revista Medica, 1847, which Amador suggested borrowed from his work on the Jews published in the *Revista*. See also Michal Friedman, “Jewish History as ‘Historia Patria’: José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews of Spain”, *Jewish Social Studies* 18 - 1 (2011), pp. 88-126, Nitai Shinan's essay in this volume and his preliminary study of the new edition of *Estudios* and his essay in this volume, all which discuss de los Ríos' approach to the Jewish past in greater detail.

various strands Spanish Liberalism to a Christian vision of the Patria, a vision Amador de los Ríos as a *moderado* liberal firmly adhered to. How did the Jews figure into an idealized Christian Patria, and how did their presence or absence shape the nature of this vision? Moreover, how could an understanding of the Jewish past be reconciled with such a vision? These are some of the questions Amador asked himself and his readers, and sought to answer through his scholarship in ways that perhaps best captures the nature of the ambivalence which would continue to characterize Spanish efforts to recover the Jewish past.

What emerges from the *Estudios* and the *Historia* is Amador's particular vision of a united Catholic Spain contingent upon recovery of the patria's Jewish past. This vision is constructed and upheld through a Christian redemptive narrative, in which the Jews and the Jewish past were used by Amador as a vehicle through which to redeem Spain from its afflictions. In turn, Amador's understanding of the relationship of the Jews with the patria paralleled Christian conceptions of the place of the Jews in Christianity. While the emergence of Christianity involved a radical break with Judaism, the Jews continued to hold an important place in its development and self-perception as the Jews were imagined in the role of witnesses to the truth of Christianity who could serve as a buttress to the new-founded faith, as well as to ultimate Christian redemption. Thus, for Amador, just as a Christian redemption was predicated on the Jews and Judaism, the Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula supported and sustained the Spanish *Patria* and had the potential of redeeming it from its perceived decay. Amador aimed to render Jewish history essential to the task not only of writing, but of redeeming Spain's *historia patria* for Christian Spain, in the same way the Jews and Judaism were deemed essential to the story of Christianity. This position is best exemplified by Amador de los Ríos' understanding of the exiled Sephardim as the bearers and transmitters of Spain's cultural legacy, and as witnesses and advocates of a greater Spanish patria beyond Spain's national borders. Such an understanding bore great similarities to the ideas that inspired the Spanish Sephardist and philo-Sephardic campaigns, which took shape at the turn of the century and endured well into the twentieth-century¹⁶.

The reach of Amador de los Ríos' scholarship also extended to the Jewish world. We owe much of the initial modern Jewish historiography on the Jews of Spain to his early research into the topic, as Amador de los Ríos had significant engagement with the German-Jewish *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars. Such engagement was brought to the fore most dramatically when Amador de los Ríos' scholarship on the Jews became a focal point of the influential appeal presented to the Spanish Constituent Cortes in 1854 by prominent leader of German Jewry and editor of the distinguished *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Ludwig Philippson¹⁷. The petition, tendered in the name of German Jewry, demanded that Spain

¹⁶See for example Isidro González, *El retorno de los judíos*, Madrid, Nerea, 1991; José Antonio Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad: La política de España hacia sus judíos en el siglo XX*, Barcelona, Riopiedras, 1993; Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain, 1870-1930*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State UP, 2009, pp. 182-206; Isabelle Rohr, "Spaniards of the Jewish Type: Philosephardism in the Service of Imperialism in Early Twentieth-Century Imperialism in Early Twentieth-Century Spanish Morocco", *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12-1 (2011), pp. 61-75; and Michal Friedman, "Reconquering 'Sepharad': Hispanism and Proto-Fascism in Giménez Caballero's Sephardist Crusade", *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12-1 (2011), pp. 35-60 (both reprinted in *Revisiting Jewish Spain in the Modern Era*, New York, Routledge, 2013).

¹⁷ Philippson reckoned the moment of 1854 as a promising one for his endeavor, as he anticipated the recent Progressive Liberal coup which took place two months before the presentation of the petition, would bring about new liberalizing measures and create an auspicious climate for greater religious tolerance.

institute the principal of *libertad de cultos* (freedom of religious worship) and that it repeal the expulsion decree of 1492¹⁸.

In his appeal, Philippson recalled Spain's Jewish past in order to illuminate Spain's presumed indebtedness to the Jews, as well as exemplary precedents of religious tolerance. Interestingly, Philippson did not draw upon the works of Jewish or foreign writers in his reconstruction of this historical narrative. Rather, he cited an "entirely impartial" Spanish work of, none other than Amador's *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España*. In Germany, Philippson was at the fore of Jewish attempts to achieve political emancipation and, like many other German Jews of his time, viewed the Sephardic past as an ideal model of Jewish acculturation into the non-Jewish environment¹⁹. Philippson's initiative in Spain was unique, as it connected scholarly engagement with an idealized Spanish past, to the contemporary political reality of the modern Spanish nation-state, by placing concrete demands on Spain, while serving as a possible foil for his efforts on behalf of German Jewry.

Philippson's appropriation of the *Estudios* however, displeased Amador de los Ríos on more than one level, and he promptly issued a response to Philippson²⁰. Amador defined Spain as a Catholic nation above all, and as such he suggested only a Catholic Spaniard like himself was qualified for the task of engaging with Spanish history and its contemporary implications. He argued that unlike himself, Philippson, "a man who does not even bear a Castilian surname", and "who does not even speak in the name of the descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492", was unfit for engagement in such an endeavor. Moreover, in this case, as in expressing his disgruntlement with Jewish scholars writing on the Sephardic past at a later stage, Amador insinuated that Philippson's Jewishness represented an impediment to a balanced rendering of Spanish history²¹. Such comments serve to further highlight the underlying ambivalence regarding the place of the Sephardim and Jews in general, past and present, in an imagined Spanish Patria²².

During the 1850s, as a result of extensive Liberal educational reforms, the study of Hebrew, traditionally the domain of theological schools was accorded the patronage of the state and its study officially became a central subject in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Madrid and a mandatory part of the curriculum of the major in Letters²³. This change in the status of Hebraic studies paralleled the importance now placed on Arabic studies, which included the study of the literature and history of Muslim Spain²⁴. In fact, the emphasis on the study of both subjects, though mainly on Arabic, was to a great extent connected to the state's renewed interest in the recovery of Arabic and Hebrew sources as part of Spain's

¹⁸ Philippson's appeal was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, on 28 August 1854.

¹⁹ For Philippson's activity on behalf of the German-Jewry and his interest in "Sefarad" see Carsten Schapkow, "The Debate on Sephardic Jewry in German-Jewish Literature in the 19th-Century", *Les sépharades en la littérature. Un parcours millenaire*, ed. Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, Paris, PUPS, 2004, pp. 11-15.

²⁰ "Consideraciones histórico-políticas sobre la exposición elevada a las Cortes Constituyentes de la nación española por los judíos de Alemania," *Revista española de ambos mundos* 3 (1855).

²¹ Consideraciones histórico-políticas... ", pp. 211, 190. Notably, this tension would resurface in Amador's dealings with other Jewish historians who were to engage with his work (See Amador, *Historia...*, pp. 258, 728, 759).

²² For a more in depth discussion of Amador de los Ríos and his work on the Jews of Spain see my article "Jewish History ..."; and Nitai Shinan's preliminary study to *Estudios...*

²³ Hebrew, along with Arabic language instruction was relegated nine weekly hours in the new curriculum. See Riviére Gómez, *Orientalismo...*, p. 15.

²⁴ For sources on Spanish *Arabismo* see footnote 8.

national patrimony and reorientation of its colonial aspirations towards North Africa around the time of the African war of 1859²⁵. In addition to their teaching duties at the University, Hebraists and Arabists thus became involved in state sponsored research to recover Arabic and Hebrew sources. A royal decree of 21 March 1855 appointed Arabists and Hebraist based at Madrid's Universidad Central as members of a commission formed by the government to examine Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts at the National library, and in 1860 Arabists and Hebraists at the Universidad Central in Madrid founded the first Spanish oriental society, the *Sociedad Histórica y Filológica de Amigos del Oriente*²⁶.

By the late nineteenth-century, in its attempts to construct a national heritage, the Spanish liberal state would deepen its collaborations with scholars and politicians dedicated to such acts of recovery. The recovery of the Jewish past thus became central to the scholarship and mission of the RAH, a major staging ground for Restoration cultural nationalism. It was also during this time that knowledge of Hebrew increasingly came to be perceived as a means of gaining access to a critical part of the wealth and cultural patrimony of the *patria*.

The renewed focus on Hebraism, as well as Arabism, connected directly to and reflected Spain's attempts to redefine and reorient its colonial aspirations towards North Africa, providing for a context for the training and privileging of Orientalists dedicated to the study of Semitic languages. The Restoration State actively supported projects to collect and transcribe Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts and inscriptions, as well as excavations and the restoration of Jewish and Muslim archeological sites. While much of the academic training of scholars involved in these efforts took place in the Spanish universities, the majority of the work produced and disseminated on the topic was published by the Real Academia de la Historia. In fact, during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, Spain's Jewish past was one of the most frequently addressed topics in the Real Academia de la Historia's official publication, the *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*. Thus, from the time Amador de los Ríos published his *Estudios*, developments in Hebraic and Arabic studies in Spain granted a new generation of Spanish scholars access to a wealth of sources with which Amador had acknowledged his own study could not engage.

Such efforts entailed close collaboration between the Restoration state and Jesuit Hebraist and director of the Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, Fidel Fita y Colomé (1835-1917), along with other scholars of the Real Academia de la Historia (RAH). RAH scholars obsessively gathered, deciphered, translated and published hundreds if not thousands of Hebrew inscriptions and documents, as well as participating in the reclamation and preservation of Jewish archeological monuments²⁷. These developments depended on close collaboration with Jewish European scholars many of whom for the first time in the history of the RAH, became honorary members of the institution and frequently published articles in the Boletín. Fita himself fielded various invitations to join Jewish scholarly societies and conducted extensive correspondence with various Jewish scholars.

The Hebraism during this period was part and parcel of attempts to modernize and professionalize the historical discipline in Spain, as part of a broader continental trend. In the case of Spain however, the modernization of the discipline of history, largely influenced by French and German positivism, converged with attempts by Conservative Restoration officials to preserve the traditional legacy of moderado Liberal historians. In turn, a seemingly hegemonic

²⁵ See Riviére Gómez, *Orientalismo...* and Martín Márquez *Disorientations...*

²⁶ Riviére Gómez, *Orientalismo...*, pp. 47-48.

²⁷ Fita served as director of the BRAH from 1883-1893.

official historical narrative of Spanish history which affirmed an image of Spain as an eternal Christian entity, based on deterministic and teleological interpretations of the past, emerged.

For those dedicated to recovery of the Jewish past in late nineteenth-century Spain, like Fidel Fita, however, such convergence of traditionalism and modernization would be marked by an ambivalent positivism—one that would allow scholars like Fita ways to circumvent polemics and operate at a level of presumably a political subtlety as it bespoke potential fissures in hegemonic conceptions of official *historia patria* in Restoration Spain and beyond. In examining this shift to what I term positivistic Hebraism—initiated by Fidel Fita—at the Real Academia de la Historia I have explored the further institutionalization of the study of the Jewish past in Spain and its incorporation into Spain's *historia patria oficial*, the historiography generated under the auspices of Spain's Restoration Regime (1875-1918)²⁸.

Fidel Fita's dedication to epigraphy and the transcription and translation of hundreds of Hebrew documents with scarce analysis, reflected one way the project of recovering the Jewish past moved towards a more empirical and seemingly objective or "scientific" approach grounded in Hebraism. For some of his contemporaries at the Real Academia de la Historia such as the Orientalist Francisco Fernández y González (1833-1918) a Liberal Krausist (and perhaps not entirely coincidentally, the son-in-law of Amador de los Ríos), however, the move towards Hebraism encompassed a much more far-reaching elaboration and engagement with the nation's Jewish past. Such engagement connected directly to the rise of a liberal Arabism constructed in large part in opposition to conservative Arabism grounded in the idea of Iberian Christian purity. Through its glorification of Muslim Spain and emphasis on Iberian hybridity, the former presented a more ambivalent and distinct narrative to what is often presented as the hegemonic or 'official' version of national history elaborated in nineteenth-century Spain²⁹.

Examination of the pioneering Hebraic Orientalism of Francisco Fernández y González and the responses to his work, thus builds on the discussion of the Restoration regime's Orientalist projects by discussing the central place the Jews and Jewish past came to hold in the construction of a national historical narrative based on the notion of Iberian hybridity. Primarily known as an Arabist, Fernández y González, a chaired professor in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the university of Madrid, had become well known for his claims regarding the importance of the "Semitic" influence on the formation of Spanish culture and how such racial and cultural mixing had greatly benefited and left an imprint on Spain's "great history, on its customs, on its language and even on its bloodline."³⁰ Such ideas also connected to the rise of racist thought in nineteenth-century Spain as many racial theorists in Spain forged an identity centered on Spain's history of interethnic contact, claiming that the "racial strength" of Spain was rooted in the ability of the "Spanish race" to fuse the different groups that coexisted on the Iberian Peninsula³¹.

While most work promoting such ideas on Iberian hybridity remained confined to the history of Muslim Spain, by the 1880s, Fernández y González turned his focus almost exclusively

²⁸ For further discussion of the recovery of the Jewish past at the RAH and Fidel Fita's efforts in this regard see my dissertation chapter, "Between *Historia Positivista* and *Historia Oficial*: The Recovery of the Jewish Past at the Real Academia de la Historia (1876-1918)", in *Recovering 'Jewish Spain'...*

²⁹ For further discussion of this topic see my dissertation chapter, "*Orientalismo Hebraico* as Spain's 'Other' History: The Place of the Jewish Past in Theories of Iberian Racial Hybridity (1880-1918)," in *Recovering 'Jewish Spain'...*

³⁰ *Plan de una biblioteca de autores árabes españoles o estudio biográficos y bibliográficos para servir a las historia de la literatura árábica en España*, Madrid, Manuel Galiano, 1861, p. ix. Also cited in Martín Márquez, *Disorientations....*, p. 32.

³¹ See Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood....*, pp. 1-19.

to Jewish Spain. Under the auspices of the Real Academia de la Historia, he undertook sundry translations of manuscripts pertaining to the Jewish past, published articles in the BRAH, authored several monographs, and delivered public speeches on the topic³². Like Fita, he also kept abreast of the work of European Jewish scholars with whom he maintained contact, fostering the dissemination of their work in Spain. Like his predecessors, he viewed the work of recovering the Jewish past as a patriotic duty which required scientific objectivity on par with the highest standards of contemporary scholarship and in his case, an even deeper knowledge of Hebrew and an attempt to understand Jewish history on its own terms.

Fernández y González identified Spain's Jews as the patria's most ancient and 'authentic' citizens and Judaism as forming the foundation of what we know as Western European 'civilization.' This conceptualization, coupled by the idea of a unique Spanish tolerance during the middle ages, fostered a notion of parallel cultural and racist Jewish and Spanish exceptionalism which aimed to place Spain in a privileged position over the rest of Europe vis a vis the historical and cultural legacy of the Jewish past. I argue that this positioning of the Jews as a chosen people, rooted in a Jewish history prefigured by destiny, took on a secular providential form that bespoke of Fernández y González's Liberal Krausist and *institucionalista* (a reference to the Krausist *Instituto Libre de Enseñanza*)³³ background, while it was also couched in deterministic biological and racist language. This conceptualization of the Jewish past by Fernández y González has remained largely unacknowledged, even though it clearly served as an important precedent for the better known twentieth-century Republican leftist visions of Spanish history focused on "convivencia," as well as Liberal, proto-fascist and Franquist philosephardist and hispanist projects³⁴. Moreover, what I term Fernández y González's "Hebraic Orientalism" suggests how exchanges with Jewish scholars contributed to the later development of a connected, if more disturbing, Spanish elaboration of "Sephardic" versus "Jewish" tropes in which the Sephardic Jew was clearly presumed superior to other Jews due to his contact and in some cases mixing with Spaniards.

Such conceptions did not escape criticism by fervent detractors, principally in the form of incipient neo-Catholicism based on the revival of notions of Iberian Christian purity. Neo-Catholic interpretations of Spain's Jewish past would be further elaborated and incorporated into official Spanish history in the late nineteenth century, mainly due to the labors of one of Spain's most celebrated scholars, historian and literary critic Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo. In examining his major work *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (1880–1886) and his rise to prominence in Spanish academe, one may draw connections between neo-Catholic views of the

³² For some examples see his monograph *Instituciones jurídicas del pueblo de Israel en los diferentes estados de la península ibérica: desde su dispersión en tiempo del Emperador Adriano hasta los principios del siglo XVI* (Tomo I, único publicado). *Introducción histórico-crítica*, Madrid, Imprenta de la Revista de Legislación, Biblioteca Jurídica de Autores Españoles, vol. 10, 1881; his translation and study of the Takkanah of Valladolid, *Ordenamiento formado por los procuradores de las aljamas hebreas, pertenecientes al territorio de los estados de Castilla, en al asamblea celebrada en Valladolid el año 1432. Texto hebreo rabínico mezclado de aljamía Castellana traducido, anotado e ilustrado con una introducción histórica por el doctor Don Francisco Fernández y González, Abogado, Individuo de número de las Reales Academias de la Historia y de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Decano de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras en la Universidad literaria de esta Corte, y ex-Senador del Reino por la Universidad literaria de Valladolid. Publicada por primera vez en el "Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia,"* Madrid, Imprenta de Fortanet, 1886; and his article on "San Vicente Ferrer y la Judería de Valencia en 1391", *Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia* 8 (1886), pp. 358-398.

³³ On Spanish Krausism and the Instituto Libre de Enseñanza see Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria...*

³⁴ On the philosephardic campaigns see footnote 16.

Jewish past and official history in Restoration Spain, as well as in later right wing elaborations of Sephardism and *Hispanidad*. While originally constructed in opposition to each other however, conceptions of Iberian purity and hybridity were similarly grounded in racist views of the Jews and the Jewish past. This commonality may perhaps in part help explain the shifting and blurring of political affiliations and positions of many dedicated to recovering the Jewish past in Spain.

The philo-Sephardic campaigns and institutional developments in Sephardic studies during the early twentieth century further expose the ambivalence present in such acts of recovery, as well as the far reaching influence of earlier Spanish scholarship and debate over the Jewish past. The work of Ernesto Giménez Caballero, a pioneer of fascism in Spain and founder and editor of *La Gaceta Literaria*³⁵, Spain's leading vanguard literary and cultural journal, perhaps best demonstrates the central role of "Sepharad" in the efforts of Spain's political and intellectual vanguard to elaborate a vision of a New Spain and Hispanic identity in the wake of the loss of Empire in 1898 and shortly before the outbreak of Spain's devastating civil war in 1936. In addition to the many writings on the topic by different authors of all political leanings featured in the *Gaceta Literaria*, Giménez Caballero's Sephardist project encompassed several state sponsored voyages to the Sephardic Diaspora between 1927-1931, documented through official government reports, articles in the *Gaceta* and a propaganda film³⁶. The coexistence in Giménez Caballero's Sephardism of cosmopolitanism, Catholic nationalism and antisemitism, along with his convoluted trajectory towards fascism, allows us to begin to infer the possible connections between these positions in the context of Spanish fascism. Such positions connect to the deeper history of Spanish discussions of the question of the "Jewishness" of Spain; a history that owes much to the idea of a united Catholic Spain, an idea that reached its apogee under Spanish fascism³⁷.

As the all encompassing Sephardism of the *Gaceta Literaria* indicates, however, cultural and political Sephardism was certainly not the exclusive province of any one political faction. So much is clear through the Spanish Republican government's central role in organizing the widely publicized official commemoration of the eighth centennial of the birth of Maimonides in Córdoba in 1935. The commemoration provided a context for redeeming and reclaiming the Spanish Republic, as it faced the twin threats of political disintegration and rising fascism, through the re-envisioning of a greater Spanish Patria, beyond Spain's national borders, specifically through the reintegration of the Sephardim into its fold. What is interesting about this particular commemoration, beyond a mere study of the politics governing public commemorations is that it involved multiple actors from within and without the "nation" (including Sephardic Jews from abroad), in the imagining of Spain as a patria that might once again include the descendants of the Jews expelled in 1492. These disparate visions of the Patria merged over the course of this event, as Spaniards and Sephardim seemed to grasp at a shared vision of Spain, one that coincided, in some ways, with the patria envisioned and publicized by government officials in a time of crisis.

Cultural and political Sephardism also connected to developments in the academic study of the Sephardic past in early twentieth-century Spain. In 1914, Jewish Jerusalem born scholar, Abraham S. Yahuda (1877–1951), was appointed as the First Chair of "Rabbinical Language and

³⁵ *La Gaceta Literaria (ibérica-americana-internacional)* (1927-1929), re-issued in 1980 by Ed. Turner (Spain) and Topos Verlag AG (Lichtenstein), the edition I reference in this paper.

³⁶ *Nuevas informaciones sobre los sefardíes del próximo oriente*, 1931; *Judíos de la Patria Española*, 1931.

³⁷ For more about the Sephardism of Giménez Caballero see Michal Friedman, "Reconquering 'Sepharad' ..." , pp. 35-60.

Literature and the History of the Jews of Spain” at the University of Madrid. Yahuda was the first Jew to be appointed to such a prestigious position at a modern Spanish university and while his appointment was initiated and endorsed by the Spanish government in conjunction with influential scholars of the RAH and the university of Madrid, his Jewishness also became an issue of debate and discontent in other less welcoming quarters. In 1920 after a series of academic intrigues in opposition to his continued of the position, Yahuda publicly tendered his own resignation from the Chairmanship. In exploring this episode and the work of A.S. Yahuda as an advocate of Sephardic studies in Spain, I consider the continued tensions and ambivalence over the question of the identity of those who became involved in the task of recovering the nation’s Jewish past³⁸.

I conclude my historical study with the establishment of the Instituto Arias Montano de estudios hebraicos, sefardíes y de Oriente Próximo (the Arias Montano Institute of Hebraic, Sephardic and Near Eastern Studies) in 1940 and its official journal *Sefarad* in 1941, at Spain’s principal research center, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, immediately after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) under the government of Francisco Franco and with its support. This formal institutionalization of the recovery of the Jewish past, however, coexisted with the Franco regime’s habitual declarations of a “Judeo-Masonic conspiracy” allegedly plaguing Spain³⁹. The conjuncture of the establishment of Sephardic Studies as a formal discipline of scholarly inquiry in Spain with the rise of National Catholicism and the anti-semitism of the Franco regime accentuates the highly ambivalent relationship of modern Spain to its Jewish past. These and other related developments at some of Spain’s major universities, would signal the official incorporation of Sephardic Studies into Spanish scholarly endeavors and the nation’s *historia patria*; a history which continues to be the object of much debate in the context of a supranational Spain grappling to define itself amidst a major economic crisis, and within an increasingly multiethnic European Union and contending nationalist claims by its autonomous communities.

In my work, I hope to have exposed some of the ways the Jews and Jewish history figured into the emergent question of defining Spain and Spanishness, just as they did in emerging debates over national identity and the so-called ‘Jewish Question’ elsewhere in Europe. In the case of Spain, however, the paradox of the existence of such debate in the absence of a contemporary Jewish population seems to suggest an enduring presence of Jews in the Spanish national imaginary, even four centuries after their expulsion in 1492. Moreover, the debates generated over questions of Jewish ‘absence’ and ‘presence’ in Spain proved unique in the contemporary European setting of secularized national ideologies; in Spain, by contrast, they were marked by a firmly Catholic nationalistic ideology and religious rhetoric even when written in opposition to clerical stances. It is thus in this context that we may see in Spain the interplay of medieval and early modern debates over Jewish conversion to Christianity, Enlightenment debates over Jewish emancipation and re-admittance to European territory, and the more nefarious modern debates over the presumably inassimilable racial character of the Jews. It is perhaps from within this uniquely Spanish Catholic interplay of historically disparate debates, that one may begin to understand the ambivalence that has always marked the recovery of the Jewish past in Spain—a history which owes much to the idea of a united Catholic Spain, and which reached its apogee under Spanish

³⁸ For an account of this episode see my Columbia University dissertation chapter “Between *Sefardismo* and *Hispanidad*: The Jewish Past in Spain’s Sephardist Campaigns (1898-1935).”

³⁹ See Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right...*; and Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España...*, for discussions of the antisemitism of the Franco regime.

fascism. Only through recovering this longer and deeper history, may one fully comprehend how attempts to recover Spain's Jewish past, from the nineteenth-century to the present, may be marked by similar ambivalence—one linked, perhaps, to deeper political and cultural fractures in Spanish national identity. My examination of these efforts suggests that no such act of historical recovery, neither in the past nor in the present, is innocent of the politics that drives it.