

Proceedings of  
The Sixth International Congress for  
Research on the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage

**LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES  
OF  
SEPHARDIC AND ORIENTAL JEWS**

*Editor:*

David M. Bunis



The Bialik Institute • Jerusalem



Misgav Yerushalayim

*Language Editing:*

English: Evelyn Katrak

French: Judith Grumbach

Hebrew: Avraham Ben-Amitay

Spanish: Florinda F. Goldberg

This book was published with the support of  
The Israel Science Foundation  
and the Dora Schwartz Fund, The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies,  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

ISBN 978-965-342-985-7

©

Copyright by Misgav Yerushalayim  
and the Bialik Institute, Jerusalem 2009

Typesetting: Judith Sternberg

Printed in Israel

# Contents

<b>Editor's Preface</b>	*1
-------------------------	----

## **A. Jewish Languages: Comparative and Theoretical Approaches**

Moshe Bar-Asher	Aspects in the Study of Jewish Languages and Literatures	*25
Hayim Y. Sheynin	In Search of a Common Transliteration for the Cataloging of Jewish-Language Publications in Academic Libraries in the United States and other Libraries Using Marc Format	*42

## **B. Judeo-Spanish (Judezmo, Ḥaketía, Ladino) and other Jewish Languages in Iberia**

### **1. Language**

Sarah Bunin Benor	Lexical Othering in Judezmo: How Ottoman Sephardim Refer to Non-Jews	*65
Meritxell Blasco Orellana	La poliglotia de los judíos de la Corona de Aragón reflejada en un manuscrito de la Biblioteca Nacional de Cataluña	*86
David M. Bunis	Judezmo Analytic Verbs with a Hebrew-Origin Participle: Evidence of Ottoman Influence	*94
Elaine R. Miller	The Debate Over Pre-Expulsion Judeo-Spanish: Status Quaestionis	*167
José-Vicente Niclós Albarracín	Contribución a la descripción de palabras en romance castellano y catalán en la obra hebrea de S. T. Ibn Shaprut	*188

Gladys Pimienta	Le «Registre des Actas» (comptes-rendus des réunions) du premier Comité de la Communauté de Tanger, de 1860 à 1875: Analyse de la langue	*211
Aldina Quintana	Aportación lingüística de los romances aragonés y portugués a la <i>coine</i> judeoespañola	*221
Marius Sala	Pour un atlas linguistique du judéo-espagnol	*256
Marie-Christine Varol (-Bornes)	Morphosyntactical Calques in Judeo-Spanish: Mechanisms and Limits	*260

## 2. Literature, Folklore, Music

Tamar Alexander	“Cast Thy Bread Upon the Waters”: Between Sephardic Proverbs and the Hebrew Canonic Source	*277
Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin	Uriel Da Costa, J. M. Da Costa, M.D. — What’s Freud Got to Do With It? Or How Ladino and Sephardic Culture Inform Psychoanalysis and Trauma Studies	*306
Almuth Münch	Šəlomo ben Yiṣḥaq Hakohen: <i>Hešeq Šəlomo</i> ( <i>Me‘am lo‘ez, Qohelet</i> ), Yərušalayim 1893: Aspectos retórico-poetológicos de la obra	*319
Hilary Pomeroy	Herbs and Spices in the Sephardic Ballad	*341
Pilar Romeu Ferré	La tolerancia religiosa como motivo literario en una novela sefardí de principios del siglo XX: <i>Los dos melizos</i> (Jerusalén 1908)	*350
Messod Salama	Judeo-Spanish <i>Romances</i> as a Source of Women’s Spirituality	*362
Julie Scolnik	Tras las huellas de la novela detectivesca de lengua sefardí	*380
Sarah Abrevaya Stein	Language Politics and the First Judeo-Spanish Daily of the Ottoman Empire	*386
Susana Weich-Shahak	Children’s Repertoire in the Sephardic Oral Tradition	*398

### **C. Jewish Elements in Spanish Literature**

Ruth Fine	Lo hebreo, lo judío y lo converso en la obra de Cervantes: Diferenciación o sincretismo	*411
Florinda F. Goldberg	El neo-sefardismo en <i>Los gauchos judíos</i> de Alberto Gerchunoff	*419
Luis Landa	La imagen del judío y el cristiano nuevo según <i>Los baños de Argel</i> y <i>El retablo de las maravillas</i> — dos obras teatrales de Cervantes	*434

### **D. Jewish Elements in French Literature**

Steven Bowman	The Languages of Albert Cohen	*445
David Mendelson	Le Français en tant que «langue juive» d'après <i>Le Livre des Questions</i> d'Edmond Jabès	*452

### **E. The Literature of Georgian Jewry**

Constantine Lerner	<i>An Old Hebrew Romance of Alexander</i> as One of the Sources for Ancient Georgian Historiography	*465
--------------------	---	------

<b>English Abstracts of the Articles in the Hebrew Section</b>		*470
--	--	------

<b>Contributors</b>		*483
---------------------	--	------

# Lexical Othering in Judezmo: How Ottoman Sephardim Refer to Non-Jews<sup>1</sup>

Sarah Bunin Benor

## 1. Introduction

Throughout the millennia, Jews around the world have lived in the midst of non-Jews. To various extents, they have both aligned themselves with and distinguished themselves from their non-Jewish neighbors. One window into these processes is the ways in which Jews discuss non-Jews and non-Jewish symbols. Do they use words from the co-territorial non-Jewish language or from their own Hebrew-Aramaic component? Are they respectful or condescending? This paper examines the lexical practices of “othering” in one Jewish group, the Sephardim of the former Ottoman Empire. It focuses on how Judezmo<sup>2</sup> speakers name such Jewish and non-Jewish referents as ethnic and religious groups, houses of prayer, religious leaders, and rituals.

Any ethnic or religious group is bound to have a specialized lexicon to refer to non-group members. These terms often stem from understandings of the group’s appearance, references to their language or place of origin, and proper names or other concepts associated with the group.<sup>3</sup> Hawaiians of several ethnic backgrounds refer to Caucasians as *Haole* (lit. ‘foreigner’), and Hindus and Sikhs call non-group-members *Malechh* (lit. ‘impure’). When a group lives as an underprivileged or persecuted minority, having a distinctive—and even secretive—lexicon to discuss non-members is often useful. African-Americans, for example, have

1 Much of this paper was written while I was a visiting student at the Center for Jewish Languages and Literatures of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1998. I would like to thank the Judezmo speakers who made this paper possible. Also, thank you to David M. Bunis for supplementing the data and offering useful suggestions and to Yoram Bitton, Ghil’ad Zuckerman, Melissa Klein, and Tsuguya Sasaki for their valuable comments.

2 Judezmo, the primarily Hispanic-based language of Ottoman Jews, is also known as Judeo-Spanish or Ladino.

3 Winkler.

several terms for white people, including “cracker,” “peckerwood,” “whitey,” and “honkey.”<sup>4</sup> This paper sheds further light on the phenomenon of “lexical othering” through an exploration of Ottoman Judezmo.

## 2. Methodology

Research on ethnonyms can be done in three ways: (1) analysis of documentary evidence (including primary and secondary sources), (2) interviews, or (3) a long-term ethnographic study. The ideal study would combine all three of these methodologies. However, since most native Judezmo speakers now use Hebrew, English, Turkish, and other languages for primary communication, ethnographic observations today would not yield nearly as much data as even half a century ago. The methods used in this study were (1) and (2). I analyzed a limited number of Judezmo documents and a large number of lexicons and research studies on related topics. Then I interviewed native Judezmo speakers who I found through various Judezmo organizations in Israel. Some of the consultants were involved in these organizations, and others were not.

While all “Ottoman” Jewish groups lived under Ottoman rule at some time during the history of their communities, the various communities experienced very different circumstances. Bulgarian Jews lived in a Christian society and were in contact with Ashkenazim. Turkish Jews lived in an overwhelmingly Muslim society. And Salonikan Jews lived in a cosmopolitan city with, at times, a majority of Jews. Not only does each community exhibit regional variation in phonology and morphology, but there are also lexical differences caused partly by societal conditions.

To uncover this variation, I interviewed six consultants who have roots in ten different former Ottoman communities. They are listed in Table 1 (using pseudonyms) with their city and country of origin, their parents’ place of origin (if different), and their date of immigration to Israel:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Place of origin</b>	<b>Parents’ place of origin</b>	<b>Date of aliyah</b>
Sara	Istanbul, Turkey	Çorlu and Ankara, Turkey	still in Turkey
Aharon	Sarajevo, Yugoslavia		1991
Regina	Milan, Italy	Aydin (near Izmir), Rhodes	1960
Yitzhak	Sofia, Bulgaria		1948
Stella	Izmir, Turkey		1943
Yehuda	Salonika, Greece	Monastir (Bitola), Yugoslavia	1924

**Table 1: Consultant Information**

4 Smitherman.

Interviews were conducted mostly in Hebrew and Judezmo. Consultants were asked for the Judezmo equivalents of Hebrew (or sometimes English or French) words, such as *lo yehudi* (non-Jew) or *ha'ima šel Yešu* (Jesus' mother), and open discussion about the terms ensued.

The interviews were vital to the study for two reasons. First, they yielded a number of words that are not in the Judezmo dictionaries or are listed there with different meanings. Second, they enabled a more nuanced understanding of what I call “Jewish level”—whether words like cemetery, house of worship, and religious leader were used only for Jews, for both Jews and non-Jews, or only for non-Jews—an important aspect of lexical meaning often not specified in dictionaries.

This methodology also had some shortcomings, which might be remedied with the addition of ethnographic observations. First, it is impossible to determine the accuracy of the speakers' self-reports. This problem is compounded by the fact that several of the informants do not use Judezmo as their everyday language. It is possible that their memories of their own previous language use are inaccurate.

Second, I am not able to determine which types of Jews used these words, how frequently, and in what contexts. While I did pursue this line of questioning to some extent in the interviews, the information presented here is certainly only partial.

Third, speakers sometimes avoided particular words or pronunciations because of their ideologies of Judezmo and language purity. One consultant tried to cover up any Judezmo features that differ from Castilian. For example, he said they called their language *espanyol* and then reluctantly told me that they had actually “corrupted” the word and called it *shpanyol*. He seemed slightly ashamed of the “corruptions” (i.e., deviations from Castilian) in Judezmo, and he did not accord words from Hebrew and co-territorial languages the same status as Hispanic words. Another consultant avoided using Hebrew-component words in his responses to my prompts. When he could not produce any Judezmo words for ‘pork’ or ‘convert,’ I suggested *hazir*<sup>5</sup> and *meshumaq*. This consultant responded, “*No es spanyol—es ebreo*” (That’s not Spanish [i.e., Judezmo]—it’s Hebrew). When I asked him if he used those words in his Judezmo speech, he admitted that he did.<sup>6</sup>

A Judezmo speaker’s “component awareness” likely increases when he begins to use Hebrew as an everyday language. It is possible that in a linguistic interview about their Judezmo speech, Israeli informants make more of an effort to avoid the Hebrew element, for fear of Modern Hebrew interference.

5 Note the I.P.A. values of the following symbols used here in the transcription of Judezmo: *ch* = [tʃ], *d̄* = [ð], *dj* = [dʒ], *g* = [ɣ], *h* = [χ], *j* = [ʒ], *ny* = [ɲ], *sh* = [ʃ], *y* = [j]. Unless otherwise indicated by means of an acute accent, words with a final consonant other than *-n* or *-s* receive final stress, and other words receive penultimate stress.

6 Previous research on Judezmo has found similar ideologies (e.g., Gold).

A final problem had to do with Israeli Hebrew transfer to the Hebrew component of Judezmo. When using Hebrew-origin words, informants sometimes used Modern Hebrew pronunciations, such as *brit* instead of *berí(θ/-t)*. This issue of Hebrew language transfer may arise in any research conducted in Israel on Diaspora languages.<sup>7</sup> Despite these shortcomings, the methodologies yielded dozens of terms for non-Jews and non-Jewish items, enabling analysis that increases our understanding of lexical othering.

### 3. Historical Background

Sephardic Jews had lived among Christians and Muslims for centuries before their expulsion from Spain in 1492. At the dawn of the sixteenth century, because of persecution and expulsions, they migrated to North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Eastern and Western Europe. In the Ottoman Empire, Jews remained a distinct national/ethnic/religious group, considering themselves different from Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Turks, etc. Those national identities were seen as intertwined with Christianity or Islam: as one Bulgarian Jew said, “If you’re a Jew, can you be a Bulgarian? No, you can’t go and make something like this [sign of crucifix].”<sup>8</sup>

However, due partly to their involvement in trade, Jews were never completely isolated from the Christians and Muslims in their midst. For example, a late-nineteenth-century calendar from Salonika (edited by Y. Kovo, 1892–93) shows how important the surrounding cultures were in the lives of the Jews. This calendar gives dating systems and holidays of the many different peoples living in Salonika at the time. It includes Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian, Muslim, Italian, and Austrian holidays, and even the day on which ‘our sultan was born’ (*nasyó mwestro sultán*).

By the twentieth century, Jews in many places were beginning to integrate more into the local cultures. Yitzhak, a Bulgarian Jew, told me that in his grandparents’ generation, many Jews in Sofia began to dress, speak, and behave like Bulgarians, and some even saw themselves as Bulgarian nationalists. His grandfather was an officer in the Bulgarian standing army, and his father also served in the military. But Yitzhak’s family did not feel completely integrated into Bulgarian society. His parents and many relatives were active in the Zionist movement. His grandfather escorted Herzl when he visited Sofia. Yitzhak’s parents forbade him to go into churches for fear of missionaries. Inter-marriage was frowned upon. Members of

7 See also Held on the interplay between Israeli Hebrew and the Hebrew component of Judezmo among women storytellers in Israel.

8 Haskell, p. 78.

Yitzhak's family occasionally made fun of the Christians, but—of course—only in private.

The simultaneous integration and separateness of the Jews within non-Jewish society can be seen also in language ideology and practice. Yitzhak grew up speaking Judezmo with his grandparents but only Bulgarian with his parents. They considered Judezmo a *jargón*—the same word as was used by some Yiddish speakers to describe the low status they ascribed to their Jewish language. At their Zionist meetings, Yitzhak said, the Jews would conduct business in Bulgarian and then socialize in Judezmo over tea and cakes. This state of diglossia can be interpreted as a simultaneous effort to integrate within the host society in formal contexts but to maintain independent Jewish language traditions in intimate in-group contexts.

No matter how integrated they were within the society of the non-Jewish majority in their countries of residence, the Jews felt they had an independent identity, and they often had occasion to talk about non-Jews. The remainder of this paper examines which words they used in such conversations. Section 4 discusses a number of patterns I found in the lexical practices of othering, and Section 5 explains how the Hispanic, Semitic, and Turkish-Balkan components of Judezmo interacted in these terms for non-Jews.

#### 4. Patterns in Words for Non-Jews

Based on my interviews and review of lexicographical and other research on Judezmo, I found over a hundred words for non-Jews and the symbols of their religion and culture. My analysis of these words reveals a number of patterns, including indirectness, metonymy, humor, derisiveness, and diminutive forms.

##### 4.1 Indirectness

In Judaism, a biblical injunction commands: “Make no mention of the name of other gods; do not let it be heard from your mouth” (Exodus 23:13). This prohibition was created with pagan gods in mind, but it still has repercussions in monotheistic societies. Although the actual names of non-Jewish religious figures are sometimes used in Jewish languages, Jews often prefer circumlocutions. Thus, in addition to (*el*) *Mohámet*, Judezmo speakers refer to Muhammad as *el peygamber* ‘the prophet’ (of Persian origin, through Turkish); and, instead of using Hebrew-origin *Yeshu*, Greek-origin *Hristós* or French-origin *Jezukristo* for Jesus, they may refer to him as *el enklavado* ‘the nailed one’ or *otó aish*<sup>9</sup> ‘that man’

9 See section 5.3 for details on the Hebrew words, including textual origin and use in other Jewish languages.

(from Hebrew). Semantically close to *otó aish* is Hispanic-origin *il esti* ‘that one,’ which was used when it was clear from the context that the reference was to Jesus. Accordingly, in addition to her Hebrew name, *Miryam*, the mother of Jesus was also called *la madri di esti* ‘that one’s mother.’ Turkish Jews also refer to Mary as *Ana*, literally ‘Mother,’ an adaptation of the Turkish appellation of respect added to the names of women saints (e.g., *Meryem Ana* ‘Mother Mary’); but this use is probably very new in Judezmo, perhaps reflecting greater influences of Muslim culture on contemporary Turkish Jewry.

Aside from the terms for religious leaders, we see indirectness in the terms for ‘conversion to Islam’: *aboltarse* (literally, ‘to turn’) and ‘crucifix’: *la de kwatro (puntas)* (literally, ‘the one of four points’). The use of the latter expression is extended to denote people who ‘cross themselves’; thus one can say of a Christian, “*Es de las kwatro puntas*” (He/she is of the four points). Other examples of indirectness can be found among the words discussed in the sections on Metonymy (4.2) and Humor (4.4) and in the Hebrew Words section (5.3).

Why do Jews often use indirectness, or euphemism, when discussing non-Jews and their symbols? Why do they not limit themselves to the existing Judezmo variants of the same words the non-Jews use, such as *Mohámet*, *Hristós* ‘Christ,’ *kroche* ‘crucifix’ (from Italian *croce*), or *Miryam*? In addition to the prohibition mentioned above, an important reason is secrecy. To minimize the possibility that non-Jews would realize they were being discussed, Jews could use a term like *otó aish* or *la de kwatro puntas* and feel reasonably sure that non-Jews would not understand them. (This does not apply to a word like *el peygamber*, which, while enabling the Jews to avoid saying the prophet’s name, is readily understood by the Turks as a non-disrespectful reference to Muhammad.) Another reason is the attempt to maintain distance: by avoiding the terms that Christians and Muslims use for their saints and symbols, Jews emphasize their difference.

#### 4.2 Metonymy

Metonymy is a literary device by which the author refers metaphorically to a person, object, or concept by naming something related to it. An example is identifying a king as “the crown.” This technique is used a good deal in Judezmo names for non-Jews, sometimes for euphemistic or humorous effect.

A common name for Muslims is *los vedres* (or *lus verdís*), meaning ‘the green ones.’ This refers to the symbolic color of Islam, which is also the main color on the flags of several Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Libya. Similarly, a nickname for Muslims in Sarajevo is *karpásis* (cf. Hebrew *karpás* ‘a green vegetable eaten symbolically on Passover’ + Turkish [from Arabic] adjectivizing *-î* + Hispanic-origin pluralizing *-s*). Also in Sarajevo, Jews refer to Muslims as *almeshas*, ‘plums,’ the main ingredient in *rakí* (Turkish *rakı*), an

alcoholic beverage favored by Muslims. Thus, Muslims are referred to metonymically with words for a color and a fruit associated with them.

Three names for Armenians are also examples of metonymy. The nickname *ha-cho* comes from the Turkish word *haç* (from Armenian) meaning ‘cross,’ a symbol closely associated with Armenians. The nicknames *garabed* and *los de al yan* ‘those [whose names end in] *-ian*’ refer to common Armenian naming practices: *Garabed* is a common first name; and Armenian surnames tend to end in the patronymic *-ian*, e.g., *Kalajian*, *Yossarian*. *Arnaut*, the word usually used in Judezmo to denote an Albanian, also carries the connotation ‘cruel’; while *Cherkés* means both ‘Circassian’ and ‘thief’<sup>10</sup>—indicating that the relations between the Jews and these two groups were at times troubled.

In Modern Judezmo, the word *papaz* ‘priest’ (of Greek origin; also used in Turkish) arouses associations with the unshaven faces and uncut hair of Greek Orthodox priests. One informant said, “When my hair was too long, my mother would say, ‘*Estás komo un papáz*’ [You look like a priest].” However, an older word for priest, *galah*, originated from opposite associations: meaning ‘shaven one’ (a nominal form of Hebrew *legaleah* ‘to shave’); *galah* came to mean ‘priest’ when Catholic clergymen practiced tonsure, or shaving the head.

For Jews, a definitive characteristic of Christians is that they do not circumcise their sons. Indeed, *arel*, a biblical word for ‘uncircumcised,’ is a Judezmo name for a Christian. A characteristic of non-Jews in general is that they eat non-kosher meat. Because of this, Jews use the dichotomy of *kasher* ‘kosher’ and *trefá(n)* ‘non-kosher’ metonymically to distinguish between themselves and non-Jews. The expression *karne kasher* (literally, ‘kosher meat’) can refer to Jews, as in the expression “*Ke no token a karne kasher*” (Let them not touch “kosher meat,” i.e., Let nothing bad happen to the Jews).<sup>11</sup> *Trefá(n)*, the opposite of *kasher*, can be used to designate something as not Jewish, as in *ganéder trefán* ‘non-Jewish heaven’ and *rosaná trefán* ‘Christian New Year.’<sup>12</sup>

I also found two examples of metonymy in which a symbol is referred to by the object it represents, not vice versa. Instead of calling Jesus “the cross,” three informants referred to the cross as *el Hristós* ‘the Christ,’ as well as *la panaya* (cf. Greek *Panagía* ‘The Blessed Virgin’).

### 4.3 Diminutive forms

Diminutive forms of names and other nouns are extremely common in Judezmo<sup>13</sup>, used especially for children but also as terms of endearment for adults. The

10 Marcus, pp. 80–81.

11 Cf. Nehama, p. 272; Schwarzwald, p. 260.

12 Bunis, *Lexicon*.

13 See Bunis, Diminutives.

few times diminutives appear in words for non-Jews, the intention is usually not tenderness or endearment but rather condescension: *turkito* ‘muezzin; little Turk; low class Muslim,’ *gregito* ‘priest; little Greek; (pejorative word for) Christian,’ *arapiko* ‘dark skinned, little Arab,’ and *santa mareka* ‘little Saint Mary.’

#### 4.4 Humorous and derogatory names

In addition to the condescending use of diminutive forms, Jews had several other terms that made fun of their non-Jewish neighbors. As already mentioned, a Muslim may be called an *almesha*, the literal meaning of which is ‘plum.’ This is an ironic jibe at Muslims for flouting the prohibition against alcohol, as plums are the principle ingredient in *rakí*, a kind of plum brandy. Both rats and mice are used as nicknames for non-Jewish groups: *ratonis* (rats) for ‘Christian Serbs’ and *ahbar* for ‘Armenians,’ the latter relying on double entendre: Armenian *ahphar* ‘brother’ is a common term of address among Armenians, but the word is also reminiscent of Hebrew *axbar*, meaning ‘mouse.’ Two other nicknames for Armenians, *amalekim* and *pelishtim*,<sup>14</sup> can also be seen as derogatory, in that the Amalekites and the Philistines were among the worst enemies of the biblical Children of Israel. These nicknames were probably not used in recent years when Jews generally had good relations with Armenians.

Christian and Muslim religious figures are sometimes targets of Jewish humor. Jesus can be called ‘the bastard,’ as in two terms used in Istanbul: *bastadro* (of Hispanic origin) and *piç* (from Turkish). In Sarajevo words for ‘crazy person’ are used for Jesus (*atavanadu*, literally, ‘as if hung from the ceiling,’ cf. Turkish *tavan* ‘ceiling’), as well as for Muhammad (*meshugá*, of Hebrew origin). Mary is sometimes called *la zoná* ‘the prostitute,’ an ironic appellation for a woman who is supposed to have been a virgin.

In Yiddish, a widely used word for ‘church’ is *tifle*, also meaning ‘obscenity.’ Derived from the Hebrew word *tifla* (‘impurity, obscenity’), this is a play on the word for Jewish prayer, *tfile* < Hb. *tefilla*. Bunis offers the following meanings for the Judezmo cognate, *tiflá*: ‘impropriety, obscenity’; (iron.) ‘prayer’; derisive name applied to people who pretend to pray but interrupt the prayers with chatter.’<sup>15</sup> One of the citations brought to illustrate the use of the word is from a Yugoslavian Judezmo rabbinic text: “*Si akavidi di non uyir boz di tiflot porki si inkonan sus orejas*”<sup>16</sup> (One should take care not to listen to prayers from the churches because

14 Marcus, pp. 80–81.

15 *Lexicon*. Note that the consultant from Sarajevo also translated *tiflá* as ‘extreme drunkenness.’

16 E. b. Š. T. Papo, *Sefer Dameseq 'Eli 'ezer*, volume 1 (‘*Orah hayim*’), Belgrade, 1862.

his ears become defiled [my emphasis]). From Bunis's translation, we can infer that *tiflot* (plural of *tiflá*) was also a pejorative Judezmo term for 'non-Jewish prayers,' implying that they are 'obscene.' The use of *tiflá* to refer to non-Jewish prayer is an example of a process called "phono-semantic matching."<sup>17</sup> Zuckermann defines this as a "multisourced neologism" in which two words (often from different languages) are matched together because of semantic and phonetic similarity. Using the word *tiflá* for non-Jewish prayer works because Jews associated non-Jewish prayer with obscenity, and the Judezmo words *tefilá* 'prayer' and *tiflá* 'obscenity' are quite similar phonetically. This is also the case with the designation of 'Armenians' as *ahbar* (a word phonologically similar to the Armenian greeting *ahphar*, which also enabled the Jews to equate Armenians with mice).

It is likely that Judezmo speakers infused many other words with secondary meanings for humorous or derogatory effect. This general phenomenon can be observed more in everyday speech than in literature and periodicals. For example, in contemporary Jewish English (especially among Yiddish-speaking immigrants and Orthodox Jews), a word for 'Christmas' is *kratsmax*, homophonous with the Yiddish phrase meaning 'scratch me'—in this case the similar-sounding expression is used to express a dismissive stance about the major Christian holiday. This humorous term rarely occurs in the Jewish English press but is more common in everyday speech, reminding us that it is crucial that scholars make use of living informants (preferably through ethnographic methods) to learn the off-color usages and shades of humor in Jewish languages.

## 5. Linguistic Components in Words for Non-Jews

All of the components of Judezmo are represented in words for non-Jews and their religions, especially Semitic (Hebrew and Aramaic) and Romance (mostly Hispanic), but also Balkan (mostly Turkish, Greek, and Serbo-Croatian). In fact, several referents have names from all three components:

17 Zuckermann, *Borrowing; Othering*.

Semitic	Romance	Balkan	Gloss
<i>arel</i>	<i>k-/hris(t)yano</i>	<i>blahu</i> (Sb-Cr.)	‘Christian’
<i>galah</i>	<i>monago</i> ; <sup>18</sup> <i>prete</i> , <sup>19</sup> <i>ministro</i>	<i>papáz</i> (Gk.); <i>hodja</i> (Tk.) <sup>20</sup>	‘priest’
<i>Oto aish</i>	<i>Jezu(kristo)</i>	<i>el Hristós</i> (Gk.)	‘Jesus’
<i>sélem</i>	<i>kroche</i>	<i>hacho</i> (Tk.); <i>panaya</i> (Gk.)	‘crucifix’
<i>hagá</i>	<i>fyesta</i>	<i>bayram</i> <sup>21</sup> (Tk.); <i>yurtí</i> (Gk.)	‘non-Jewish holiday’
<i>hazir</i>	<i>pwerko</i>	<i>domíz</i> (Tk.)	‘pork’

**Table 2: Use of Three Components to Denote Non-Jews and Elements of their Religions**

Sometimes the choice among these components, in the designation of non-Jewish as well as Jewish referents, was influenced by sociolinguistic factors, such as the speaker’s regional dialect, age, religious background, and education. For example, the young informant Aharon said that only old people use *El meshugá* for ‘Muhammad,’ and young people use *Muhámed/-t*. Regina said that to designate ‘Hebrew,’ most Sephardim today use the Romance-origin word *ebreo*, while only very religious people use Hebrew-origin *lashón akódes̄h* ‘Holy Tongue.’<sup>22</sup> In addition, the various components were also used strategically by individual speakers to align themselves with or distinguish themselves from non-Jews. The following paragraphs analyze additional words belonging to the diverse linguistic components of Judezmo and how they serve these ends.

18 The use of *monago* is essentially restricted to the *Ladino* or ‘archaizing, literal, calque-translation’ variety of Judezmo used in translating the Bible and other Jewish sacred texts.

19 Judezmo *prete*, a reflex of French *prête* ‘priest,’ belongs to the variety of Judezmo heavily influenced by French, which has been designated by H. V. Sephiha as “judéo-fragnol.”

20 *Papás/-z* denotes a Christian, especially Greek Orthodox, priest; whereas *hodja* refers to a Muslim religious leader.

21 Turkish-origin (from Persian) *bayram* denotes a ‘Muslim holiday,’ while Greek-origin *yurtí* denotes a ‘Christian holiday.’ Judezmo also borrows names for specific non-Jewish holidays from the co-territorial languages; e.g., *Kurbán Bayram/-ryam* ‘the Muslim Festival of Sacrifice (on the Tenth of Zilhicce)’ (from Turkish *Kurban Bayramı*), *Hristunya* ‘Christmas’ (from Greek *Xristoúgenma*; *Nehama*).

22 This generational variation often reflects change in progress. For example, until two generations ago, *lashón akódes̄h* was the predominant term, whereas *ebreo*, apparently adopted from Western European languages, was rare.

**5.1 Distinguishing between Jewish and non-Jewish**

A few non-Jewish referents and their Jewish parallels exhibit a correlation between the component used and the religion referred to—Hebrew: Jewish, Romance or Greek: Christian, and Turkish: Muslim.

Hebrew (Jewish)	Romance or Greek (Christian)	Turkish (Muslim)	Gloss
<i>kal</i>	<i>eglisya</i> (Rom.); <i>klisa</i> <sup>23</sup> (Gk.)	<i>djami</i>	‘house of worship’
<i>haham</i>	<i>papás</i>	<i>imam</i>	‘religious leader’
<i>tevilá</i>	<i>baptize, baftís</i> (Tk. < Gk.)	<i>abdest</i> <sup>24</sup>	‘ritual use of water’

**Table 3: Exclusive Religious Correlation**

It is not surprising that Judezmo distinguishes among the various religions’ versions of these concepts; we see the same distinction in other languages (e.g. English: synagogue, church, mosque; rabbi, priest, imam; mikveh, baptism). The linguistic correlation with religion is also logical, considering that in Medieval Spain the Christians spoke Spanish while the Muslims spoke Arabic, and in Turkey the Muslim majority spoke Turkish while the minorities spoke various other languages. Jews in those lands spoke their unique version of Spanish, but their language of religious specificity was Hebrew.

For other referents, Hebrew words are used to specify Jewishness, Balkan words are used to specify Muslimness or Christianness, and Hispanic words are neutral:

Hebrew (Jewish)	Balkan (non-Jewish)	Hispanic (neutral)	Gloss
<i>moed</i>	<i>bayram</i> (Tk.); <i>yurti</i> (Gk.); <i>prazník</i> (Sl.)	<i>fiesta</i>	‘holiday’
<i>beriθ</i>	<i>sunet</i> (Tk.)	<i>sirkunsizyón</i>	‘circumcision’
<i>bedahayim</i>	<i>mezarlik</i> (Tk.); <i>nekrotáfio</i> (Gk.)	<i>sementériyu</i>	‘cemetery’
<i>bedin</i>	<i>mahkyemá</i> (Tk.)	<i>djuzgo</i>	‘court’
<i>teflá</i>	<i>namás</i> <sup>25</sup> (Tk.)	<i>orasyón</i>	‘prayer’
<i>berahá</i>	<i>duá</i> (Tk.)	<i>bindisyón</i>	‘blessing’

**Table 4: Correlation between Component and Religious Specificity/Neutrality**

23 Judezmo *klisa* derives from Greek *ekklesia*, through Turkish *kilise*.

24 Judezmo *abdest* or *aptés* ‘Muslim ritual ablutions before prayer.’

25 One informant said that *namás* can be used for Jewish prayer, as well, but this is probably a very recent development that is undocumented in Judezmo literature.

All of the words of Hebrew origin in Table 4 are commonly used in Judezmo for Jewish referents. The words of Hispanic origin are all neutral, as they can be used to denote both Jewish and non-Jewish referents, according to informants and printed sources. It is logical that the Spanish component would be used for neutral reference, as it is the primary basis of everyday communication. Similarly, it makes sense that the Balkan adstrata would be used for words specific to the groups who use the languages from which they derive.

Another way that a Judezmo speaker can use Hebrew to differentiate between Jewish and non-Jewish referents mentioned in succession is to follow them with the expression, “*Amavdil (amavdil)!*” Bunis (*Lexicon*) defines this Hebrew interjection as ‘distinguishing between sacred and profane things—or, figuratively, any widely differing things, esp. Jewish and Gentile practices—mentioned successively; *mutatis mutandis*.’ In one of the examples cited by Bunis, from the Constantinople periodical *El Djugetón* (1909), the author uses the interjection to inform the reader that he is not referring to Jews: “*Este preteksto falso, se yama ‘hazinura diplomátika, ‘al uzo, amavdil amavdil, delos grandes personajes*” (This false pretext is called “diplomatic illness,” as used—no reference to Jewish leaders intended—by the great persons).<sup>26</sup>

A Judezmo speaker’s use of this phrase serves to emphasize differences between Jews and non-Jews. The same results from the speaker’s use of the Hebrew component for Jewish ‘cemetery’ or ‘blessing’ and the Balkan component for non-Jewish referents. But the use of a neutral word of Hispanic origin to refer to specifically Jewish items may be understood as an act of alignment with non-Jews. Of course the speaker does not necessarily have in mind the goal of either alignment or distinctiveness and may have other reasons for using a particular component. For example, a non-religious Jew might not know the Hebrew term for a certain referent, or an assimilated Jew in Turkey might only know the Turkish term. Nonetheless, the choice of words from among the various components of Judezmo can serve both to align and to distinguish the Jewish speakers from their non-Jewish neighbors.

## 5.2 Non-Hebrew words for Jewish concepts

Aside from the neutral use of Hispanic terms, Judezmo uses them also for specifically Jewish referents, including some Jewish holidays: e.g., *las kavanyas* ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ (literally, ‘the huts,’ a calque of Hebrew *sukkot*), *las frutas* ‘Tu B’shevat’ (literally, ‘the fruits’), and *la nochada del sinyor* ‘Lag Ba’omer’ (liter-

26 Bunis, *Lexicon*, p. 176. In describing the use of the corresponding interjection in Yiddish, *lehavdl*, Max Weinreich writes: “In principle, the distance between Jewishness and the culture of the environment was signified by the expression *lehavdl* ‘to discern’ ” (Weinreich, p. 2205).

ally, ‘the evening of the master’—Shim’on Bar Yoḥai, a symbol of this festival). One way to say ‘Jewish holidays’ is actually a Hispanic phrase, *las paskwas*, the plural form of the word that is used in Christian Spanish for ‘Easter’ and in Judezmo as a name for ‘Passover.’

In many other Jewish languages, names for the Jewish holidays tend to belong to the Hebrew component and are often among the last few Hebrew words to remain in the language when it assimilates into the co-territorial language. For example, in some varieties of Jewish English with few Hebrew words, it is still common to hear “*hanika*,” “*roshashana*,” and “*yom kipur*,” rather than “Festival of Lights,” “Jewish New Year,” and “Day of Atonement.” Why does Judezmo, which employs so many Hebrew and Aramaic elements in everyday speech, sometimes use Hispanic words for uniquely Jewish holidays? A likely explanation is the calque tradition of translating biblical and rabbinic texts for the public, which continued through modern times. These “Ladino” texts mirrored the syntax of the original Hebrew but used almost solely Hispanic lexical elements. This tradition had an impact on the spoken Judezmo language, including some of its holiday nomenclature.

Aside from holidays, we see other Jewish concepts also referred to with non-Hebrew terms. Some of these entered the language before the Expulsion, e.g. *karaya* (< Arabic) ‘sabbath lamp (consisting of a wick floating in oil, suspended over the dining table),’ and the regional alternants *talega* (< Arabic) and *koracha* (of Hispanic origin) ‘cloth bag containing prayer articles.’ Others—some, ultimately of Arabic origin—were introduced through contact with Turkish, in which they are used for Muslim religious concepts. One example is (*h*)*adji* (Turkish [< Arabic] *hacı*), which is used in Judezmo to mean ‘Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; Jew who has made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and prayed at the Wailing Wall’ (Nehama).<sup>27</sup> Judezmo borrowed this word for ‘pilgrim’ and infused it with a specifically Jewish meaning.<sup>28</sup> There are several other examples of Turkish/Arabic loanwords that Judezmo speakers use for Jewish concepts while Turkish speakers use them for Muslim ones, including *sofú* ‘religious, observant,’ *dinsíz* ‘atheist,’ *ilái* ‘religious hymn.’ Some Turkish elements which lack a religious connotation among Muslims have acquired one in Jewish speech; e.g., *zulufyas* ‘sidelocks.’ On the other hand, terms that carry a religious connotation among Muslims may be used in a more general sense among Jews; e.g., Turkish *haram* ‘forbidden by Muslim religion, unlawful, wrong’ and *helal* ‘canonically lawful, legitimate’ vs. Judezmo *haram* ‘unlawful, wrong’ and *helal* ‘legitimate, honestly earned.’ Judezmo speakers have even combined morphemes from sev-

27 Passy translates *hadji* as ‘venerable old man, title of respect; nouveau riche.’

28 In contrast, the Yiddish equivalent is *oyle regel zayn* ‘make pilgrimage to Jerusalem,’ from Hebrew *ole regel* ‘go up on foot.’

eral non-Hebrew components to create neologisms bearing Jewish content; e.g., *lumbradjí* (< Hispanic *lumbre* + Turkish agent-forming *-ci*) ‘non-Jew who lights and extinguishes cooking fires in Jewish homes on the Sabbath and holidays.’

Judezmo uses a number of Turkish-origin expressions that mention the Arabic name for God, *Allah* (realized in Judezmo as [alláx]): *Allah sindik* (‘may God preserve us,’ ‘perish the thought’), *Allah versin* (‘may God give you charity [although I cannot]’), *Allah bim bim bereket versin* (‘a thousand thanks, God, for the abundance of food,’ a blessing recited by Jews and Turks at the end of a meal), *bismillá* (‘in the name of God’), *inshallah* (‘I hope so, I hope that’), *mashallah* ‘no evil eye!’ (Passy).<sup>29</sup> The more common Judezmo name for God is *El Dyo*, of Hispanic origin (cf. Christian Spanish *Dios*).<sup>30</sup>

Unlike a number of other religious concepts, God, one of the most central and holy tenets of Judaism, is *not* linguistically distinguished in Judezmo from the God of the non-Jews. In fact, this is the case in other Jewish languages as well. For example, Yiddish uses the Germanic-origin *Got* or the Slavic-origin *Bozhemóy* (‘My God’), and Judeo-Arabic uses Arabic-origin *Allah*. One explanation for this is that Muslims and Christians believe in the God of the Jewish Bible (albeit with some differences in attributes, children, and prophets). Another explanation is the Jewish prohibition against saying God’s name. Jews do not say the tetragrammaton, God’s biblical name, and strictly observant Jews tend to pronounce the names *Elohim* and *Adonay* in holy contexts only. The use of co-territorial non-Hebrew words for God allows Jews to avoid these holy words and still talk about the Creator. Of course, the less sacred Hebrew expressions *Ribonó shel olam* ‘Master of the Universe’ (also occurring in the Hispanic calque form *Patrón del mundo*) and *Amonay* (replacing the sacred form *Adonay*) are also used in Judezmo, as are similar expressions in other Jewish languages.

### 5.3 Hebrew words for Non-Jewish concepts

Generally, when a Hebrew word is used for a referent that could be either Jewish or non-Jewish, it refers only to the Jewish one. But sometimes Judezmo speakers use such words for non-Jewish referents, as well. For example, Aharon used Hebrew words for ‘imam’: *haham di los turkos* (literally, ‘rabbi of the Turks’) and for ‘Christian holiday’: *mwed di estus* (literally, ‘holiday of these’). Sara said that a Muslim cemetery can be called *bedahayim de los turkos* (literally, ‘“house of life” of the Turks’). In these cases, the speakers qualify their use of a Hebrew

29 For illustrations of the use of Turkish-origin blessings and other Turkisms in context, see Bunis, *Voices*, pp. 89–98.

30 To express the concept of ‘God’ Sara said she sometimes uses the Turkish-origin words *Halik* (of Arabic origin) and *Tanrı* in her Judezmo; but these are recent, perhaps idiolectal lexemes and are not part of the traditional Turkish component of Judezmo.

word by adding prepositional phrases indicating “other.” Regina, on the other hand, gave an unqualified response to ‘Muslim circumcision’ using a Hebrew word: *berit*. By not using any qualification, she made no linguistic distinction between Muslim and Jewish circumcision. In my data this is the only instance of an unqualified projection of a word normally used for a Jewish concept onto a non-Jewish one (although the use of *Miryam* for ‘Mary’ is similar). It is possible that this happened every now and then in spoken Judezmo, especially in humorous registers.

While it is not common to hear Hebrew words used for the same referent for Jews and non-Jews, it is quite common to hear Hebrew words for specifically non-Jewish concepts. Hebrew is used in semantically neutral or negatively charged words for: (a) non-Jews in general: *goy* ‘(biblical “people, nation”) non-Jew, Muslim,’ *arel* ‘(literally, “uncircumcised”) non-Jew, Christian,’ *umod̄ (aolam)* ‘(literally, “nations [of the world]”) non-Jews’; (b) names for specific groups, adapted from biblical peoples through phonetic or phono-semantic matching: *togar* ‘Turk’ (a back-formation from *Togarmá*, which came to denote the ‘Ottoman Empire’), *yaván* ‘Greek (related to “Ionian”),’ *edom* ‘(“Edom”) Christendom,’ *pelishtim* ‘(“Philistines”) Armenians,’ and *amalek* ‘(“Amalek”) Armenians/anti-Semites’; (c) names for groups of people adapted metonymically from biblical or post-biblical words: *ahbar* ‘(“mouse”) Armenians’ and *karpasís* ‘(“green vegetables”) Muslims’; (d) names for religious figures: *Yeshu* and *otó aish* ‘(“that man”) Jesus,’ *Miryam* and *la zoná* ‘(“the prostitute”) Mary,’ *el meshugá* ‘(“the crazy one”) Muhammad,’ and *galah* ‘(“tonsured one”) priest’; (e) things associated with non-Jews: *péger*, *nifgar* ‘(“corpse; animal carcass”) non-Jewish corpse,’ *sélem* ‘(“image”) cross,’ *hagá* ‘non-Jewish holiday,’ *tiflá* ‘(“obscenity”) non-Jewish prayer,’ and *reshaim* ‘(“evil ones”) anti-Semites’; and (f) words for conversion to or from Judaism: *shemad̄* ‘conversion (especially to Christianity); religious persecution,’ *meshumad̄* ‘born Jew who has converted,’ *maamín* ‘(“believer”) follower of the seventeenth-century false messiah Sabbatai Zevi,’ *ger* ‘proselyte.’ Most of these Hebrew words — and others — are found in several Jewish languages.<sup>31</sup>

Some of these loans retain their biblical or early rabbinic Hebrew senses, for example *arel* (e.g., Isaiah 52:1), *goy* (e.g. Tosefta, Peah 2:9), *umod̄ aolam* (e.g.

31 For example, Judeo-Italian: *aiša* ‘Madonna’ (< Hb. *ha’iša*), *galax* ‘priest’ (< Hb. *galah*), *tungevá* ‘church’ (< Hb. *to’eva*), *ngarel* ‘non-Jew’ (< Hb. *arel*), *goy* ‘non-Jew’ (< Hb. *goy*), *xagále* ‘Christian holiday’ (< Aram. *haga*), *shamdese* ‘to be baptized’ (< Hb. *shemad*) (Jochowitz, Religion; Judeo-Italian); and Yiddish: *axer* (< Hb. *aḥer*), *amolek* (< Hb. *amaleq*), *akum* (< Hb. *aku*’*m*, an acronym denoting *oved koxavim umazalot* ‘worshipper of stars and constellations’), and several other Hebrew words meaning ‘non-Jew,’ including *eysev* (< Hb. *’esau* ‘Esau’), *sheygets* (< Hb. *sheqes* ‘creeping thing’), *noytsre* (< Hb. *noṣri* ‘Christian’), *orel* (< Hb. *arel* ‘uncircumcised’) (Stutshkov).

Mishnah, Nedarim 3:11), and *ger* (e.g. Mishnah, Ḥala 3:6). Others reflect the semantic shades they acquired in medieval Hebrew. *Edom* ‘Edom; Christendom’ (also used in Yiddish) can be traced to the Babylonian Talmud (Megila 6:1), where it denoted ‘Christendom’ or ‘Rome.’ The use of Aramaic-origin *hagá* for ‘non-Jewish holiday’ (as opposed to Hebrew-origin *ḥag* ‘Jewish holiday’) arose in the Middle Ages, perhaps on analogy with the opposition of Hebrew-origin *pesaḥ* ‘Passover’ versus Aramaic-origin *pasha* ‘Easter.’<sup>32</sup> Reflexes of *haga* also appear in Yiddish (*khoge*) and Judeo-Italian (*xagále*). In the Bible and the Mishnah, *péger* refers to any ‘corpse,’ as in the blessing: “Blessed are you, God, who returns souls to corpses” (Berachot 60:2). Its more specific use as ‘animal carcass’ and, by extension, ‘corpse of a wicked person or non-Jew’ (also in Yiddish) seems to have come about in the Middle Ages.

The Hebrew names for non-Jewish religious figures also tend to be rooted in medieval rabbinic Hebrew. References to Mary, Jesus’ mother, as ‘the prostitute’ can be found as early as the sixth or seventh century (see *Pesikta Rabati* 21:100, where Jesus is called *bara d’zanita* ‘son of the harlot’). *Yeshu* is a common name for Jesus in the Talmud. A more indirect name for Jesus, *’oto ha’iš*, is found in midrashim and later rabbinic sources and is also reflected in Yiddish (*oysoish*) and Judeo-Italian (*odó, l’udó, dúiš*). The use of *meshugá* ‘crazy’ as an epithet for ‘Muhammad,’ known in both Judezmo and Judeo-Arabic, can be found in the Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic writings of Maimonides, likely based on biblical descriptions of a mad prophet (Hoshea 9:7).<sup>33</sup> The use of Hebrew *galah* (literally ‘the tonsured one,’ see section 4.2 above) in the sense of ‘Christian priest,’ as found in Judezmo, Yiddish and Judeo-Italian, has been documented in Hebrew since medieval times.<sup>34</sup>

Some Hebrew-origin terms used as metaphors for non-Jews seem to have taken on their secondary meanings only in Judezmo. The nickname *karpasis* ‘green vegetables’ for ‘Muslims’ is related to the more common name for Muslims, *los verdes*, ‘the green ones.’ And the use of *ahbar* for ‘Armenian’ has a joint etymology: Hebrew *axbar* ‘mouse’ and Armenian *aḥphar* ‘brother’ (see section 4.4 above).

The use of Hebraisms to refer to non-Jews begs the question: why are these words used, rather than Hispanic or Balkan words? One explanation is secrecy. In order to conceal information from non-Jewish eavesdroppers who might understand their everyday language, Jews often used the Hebrew component of Judezmo. While the Sephardim were still in Spain, where the Hispanic component of their language might have been understood by co-territorial non-Jews, using Hebrew words to refer to non-Jews would insure secrecy. Following the expul-

32 Zuckermann, *Othring*.

33 *Igeret Teyman*, p. 121; Freidman, p. 99, f. 71.

34 Klein.

sion, in the Ottoman regions, some non-Jews also understood the Jews' primarily Hispanic-origin everyday language, either from living in areas of dense Jewish population or because Spanish was, to some extent, an international language of trade. Thus there, too, the Hebrew component continued to supply most of the secret lexicon. Schwarzwald gives a number of examples of this phenomenon in the former Ottoman regions, especially as it crystallized in the market place. When a Jewish merchant entertaining non-Jewish clients saw another Jew approaching, he might say to his assistant: *bené amenu*, *yeudeha*, or *yeudí*.

If secrecy was used when talking about Jews, it would be even more important in discussions of non-Jews. Spats of violence against Jews were known to spark when a Jew, using the Hispanic component of Judezmo, insulted a non-Jew—the Jew wrongly assuming he would not be understood.<sup>35</sup> In 1939 a Salonika Judezmo newspaper published a short description of the secret language used by the Jews of that city,<sup>36</sup> including a few phrases used to warn fellow Jews that a non-Jew understood Judezmo. The writer asked the readers: “*Non tenesh sentido, kwando el un asosyado le dize al otro, ‘No diburees, ke yodeah lashón’? ... En las grutas del charshí ... kwando kyeren dezir ‘Kayado!’ dizen ... ‘Shetiká’*” (Haven’t you heard, when one business partner says to another [in the presence of a non-Jew], “Don’t talk [*diburees* < Hb. *dibur* ‘speech’], because he knows the language [Hb. *yodea* ‘*lašon*’]”? ... In the shops of the market [crowded with people of many ethnic groups], when the Jews want to say “Keep quiet,” they say “Silence!” [Hb. *šetiqá*]). Even if non-Jews were not fluent in Judezmo or Spanish, they could still understand certain sensitive words, such as *turko* ‘Turk’ and *muslimo* ‘Muslim,’ similar enough to the Turkish cognates, *Türk* and *Müslim*. Using Hebrew would reduce the likelihood that non-Jews would understand such words based on cognates and loanwords in their own language.

Another explanation for the preponderance of Hebrew-origin names for non-Jews is the Jews’ desire to maintain a distance from the profane symbols of other religions. Max Weinreich mentions this phenomenon when talking about the early stages of Yiddish: “Figuratively speaking, a border guard had to be established to keep away linguistic items which have specific Christian meanings or connotations.”<sup>37</sup> By not using the same words Christians used for ‘crucifix,’ ‘priest,’ and ‘Jesus’ (in Yiddish and in Judezmo), Jews effectively distanced themselves from the other religion. Also, by using words distinct from the base component of their language, they were constantly reminded that these symbols, practices, and religious leaders are distinct. This should be seen in the same light as the indirectness or euphemism discussed in section 4.1 above.

35 Bunis, personal communication.

36 Reproduced in Bunis, *Judezmo*, pp. 428–429.

37 Weinreich, p. 2209.

## 6. Ashkenazim as ‘Other’

In the many Judezmo words for ‘Ashkenazim,’ we find some of the same patterns as in words for ‘non-Jews.’ Words for Ashkenazim come from several components of Judezmo (see section 5 above); and they include examples of derision (section 4.4) as in *kweshkos* (< Spanish) ‘fruit pits; stingy’ and *ahbaroshim* (< Hebrew) ‘mice,’ and a good deal of metonymy (section 4.2), especially regarding the places of origin and languages of Ashkenazim (e.g., *lehlis* [< Turkish] ‘Polish,’ *tudeskos* [< Italian] ‘Germans,’ *shvabos* [< Serbian] ‘Swabians,’ *eshkenáz* [< Hebrew] ‘Germany,’ *mashemehas* [< Hebrew ‘What is your name?’—a Hebrew phrase commonly used by Sephardim to communicate with Ashkenazic refugees when they first arrived at Ottoman ports). The fact that we see the same trends in some references to Ashkenazim and non-Jews shows that, to an extent, Judezmo speakers considered both groups to be “other.” But when speaking about Jews in general, without regard to the linguistic or other cultural differences dividing the various Jewish sub-groups, Judezmo speakers regularly used more inclusive, collective terms, e.g., Hispanic-origin *dji-/djudyós* or Hebrew-origin *yeudim* ‘Jews,’ thus neutralizing their “otherness.”

## 7. Conclusion

This research sheds some light on how one minority group uses lexical resources to distinguish between in-group and out-group people and symbols. Ottoman Sephardic Jews use lexical practices of othering both to distinguish themselves from non-Jews—through derisiveness, humor, indirectness, and the prolific use of the Hebrew component—and to align themselves with non-Jews—through the use of Hispanic or Balkan words for non-Jewish referents and through the borrowing of traditionally Muslim and Christian religious terms for Jewish referents.

This paper has also called attention to some phenomena of interest to researchers of Jewish languages. It has identified commonalities in the ways that a number of Jewish languages refer to non-Jews. It has shown how Jews in diverse communities use Hebrew loanwords—mostly from biblical and rabbinic sources—with the effects of ensuring secrecy and maintaining distinctiveness from the non-Jews they are discussing. And it has pointed to the use of phono-semantic matching in the application of new meanings to Hebraisms.

While the current study analyzes data on Judezmo lexical practices of othering, it does not investigate issues of inter- and intra-speaker variation. How, when, and by whom were these words for non-Jews used? How did their use differ according to such factors as historical period, region, socioeconomic class, and religious and educational levels? Were the derisive terms used only in private set-

tings? Were they used only in situations where Jews had negative feelings toward non-Jews?

The ideal way to study this inter- and intra-speaker variation would be to analyze natural speech among native Judezmo speakers. Unfortunately, the dwindling number of speakers who use Judezmo as a language of everyday communication<sup>38</sup> would make this type of study difficult. A more feasible option for further research is to analyze references to non-Jews in written Judezmo sources from the sixteenth through twentieth centuries, including rabbinic literature such as the *Me'am Lo'ez*, the modern press, and belles lettres. This research would likely find that Judezmo writers made more of a distinction between Jews and non-Jews before the modernization and secularization that came about in the nineteenth century. This is illustrated by the fact that words like *péger* and *tiflá* appear only in the literature and not in the interview data. Additional evidence of this trend can be seen in the generational variation in words like *meshugá* ~ *Muhámed* 'Muhammad' and *lashón akódesh* ~ *ebreo* 'Hebrew' (see section 5 above). Future research of this type would likely add to our understanding of changes in modern Sephardic society.

Further research might also use a comparative lens and ask how universal these trends are. Do minority groups around the world use secrecy, humor, and derisiveness in their references to outsiders? What culture-specific resources do they have to distinguish linguistically between their own practices and those of non-group members? While the current study has added to our knowledge of this issue, comparative research would enable us to more fully understand how people make creative use of linguistic resources to construct their identity in relation to others.

## Bibliographical References

- Bunis, Diminutives D. M. Bunis, "Ottoman Judezmo Diminutives" in *Linguistique des langues juives et linguistique générale*, ed. F. Alvarez-Pereyre & J. Baumgarten, Paris 2003, pp. 193–246
- Bunis, *Judezmo* ———, *Judezmo: An Introduction to the Language of the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, Jerusalem 1999 (in Hebrew)
- Bunis, *Lexicon* ———, *A Lexicon of the Hebrew and Aramaic Elements in Modern Judezmo*, Jerusalem 1993
- Bunis, *Voices* ———, *Voices from Jewish Salonika*, Jerusalem & Thessaloniki 1999
- Freidman M. A. Freidman, *HaRambam, HaMašiaḥ beTeyman veḥašemad*, Jerusalem 2002

38 Harris.

- Gold D. L. Gold, "Recent American Studies in Jewish Languages (Review Essay)," *Jewish Language Review* 1 (1981), pp. 11–88
- Harris T. K. Harris, *Death of a Language: The History of Judeo-Spanish*. Newark 1994
- Haskell G. H. Haskell, *From Sofia to Jaffa: The Jews of Bulgaria and Israel*, Detroit 1978
- Held M. Held, "Ven, te kontare mi 'storia / Bo'i, asaper lakh et sipuri': *The Personal Narratives of Judeo-Spanish-Speaking Women Storytellers—An Interdisciplinary Study*, Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2004 (to be published by the Ben-Zvi Institute)
- 'Igeret Teman " 'Igeret Teman," in *'Igerot haRambam*, Jerusalem 1946
- Jochnowitz, G. Jochnowitz, "Judeo-Italian Lexical Items Collected by Zalman Yove-  
Judeo-Italian ly," *Bono Homini Donum: Essays in Historical Linguistics in Memory of J. Alexander Kerns*, ed. Y. L. Arbeitman & A. R. Bomhard, Amsterdam 1981, pp. 143–157
- Jochnowitz, ———, "Religion and Taboo in Lashon Akodesh (Judeo-Piedmon-  
Religion tese)," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 30 (1981), pp. 107–117
- Klein E. Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, New York 1987
- Kovo Y. Kovo (ed.), *Kalendarjo* [Calendar], Salonika 1892–93
- Marcus S. Marcus, *Hasafa hasefaradit-yehudit* [The Judeo-Spanish Language], Jerusalem 1965
- Nehama J. Nehama, *Dictionnaire du judéo-espagnol*, Madrid 1977
- Passy A. M. Passy, *Sephardic Folk Dictionary—English to Ladino, Ladino to English*, New York 1994
- Schwarzwald O. Schwarzwald, "Leshonot setarim 'ivriyot basefaradit hayehudit" [Hebrew Secret Expressions in Judeo-Spanish], *Lešonenu La'am* 33 (1982), pp. 258–262
- Sephiha H. V. Sephiha, "Le judéo-fragnol," *Ethno-psychologie* 2–3 (1973), pp. 239–249
- Smitherman G. Smitherman, *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*, Boston 1994
- Stutshkov N. Stutshkov, *Der oytser fun der yidisher shprakh*, New York 1950
- Weinreich M. Weinreich, "The Reality of Jewishness Versus the Ghetto Myth: The Sociolinguistic Roots of Yiddish," *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, vol. 3, The Hague 1966, pp. 2199–2211

- Winkler A. Winkler, "Ethnische Schimpfwörter und übertragener Gebrauch von Ethnika: Ein erster Überblick mit Glossar" [Ethnic Expletives and Their Figurative Use Respective to Ethnicity: An Initial Survey Including Glossary], *Muttersprache* 104/4 (1994), pp. 320–337
- Zuckermann, Borrowing G. Zuckermann, *Camouflaged Borrowing: 'Folk-Etymological Nativization' in the Service of Puristic Language Engineering*, Ph.D. diss., Oxford University 2000
- Zuckermann, Othering ———, "'Etymythological Othering' and the Power of 'Lexical Engineering' in Judaism, Islam and Christianity: A Socio-Philo(sopho)logical Perspective," in *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion*, ed. J. Fishman & T. Onomiyi, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 237–258