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Judeo-Spanish proverbs as an example of the hybridity of Judezmo language

The Jews, who in 1492 were expelled from the Christian Spain, took as part of their Sephardic – meaning both Hispanic and Jewish – legacy the language they used to speak in their former motherland. This was a Jewish variety of medieval Castilian, which in the following centuries evolved into a new dialect (Bornes-Varol 2003:113, Sephiha 1991:14–15) or language (Geller 1994:16, Gold 1987:69–80) called by the scholars Judeo-Spanish. This new language, along with other Jewish languages, is a fusion language (Bunis 2003:193). In its tissue there are intertwined Ibero-Romance, Hebrew-Aramaic, Arabic and other (e.g. Turkish, Greek or Slavonic) elements. To some degree the same factors are entwined in the linguistic world view embedded in this language and in the texts written in it. The structure of the language reflects both the co-existence of the components coming from different stock languages and the history of its speakers with the unique characteristics of their culture. In other words, it records the history of their relationships with non-Jewish neighbours and reveals the fields of their life and culture open or closed to foreign influence. Diachronic study of Judeo-Spanish and its varieties also lets us get to know the dynamics of the transformations inside the Sephardic culture (e.g. intensity of acculturation processes).

The aim of this paper is to present some selected features of Judeo-Spanish – particularly of its Turkish-Balkan (also called Ottoman) variety – that reflect the hybrid condition of the language of the Sephardim.¹ Its different components will be described with the help of Sephardic proverbs, treated as samples both of the popular culture and speech of the Jews in Diaspora. Proverbs as well as other texts forming part of the oral tradition of Sephardic Jews were amongst the first items

¹ In Polish I have presented the general description of the vernacular and calque variants of Judeo-Spanish as well as different approaches to the names of this language in August-Zarębska 2009:85–102.

of their spoken language collected and recorded by the scholars, who in 1960s–1970s realised that Judeo-Spanish was getting moribund. The term ‘hybridity’ is understood here as a linguistic property of being compound of the elements coming from various contact languages and cultures. All these components are equally important and all of them determine the specific character of the language; in consequence, they also determine the identity and the world view of its users.² In case of Judeo-Spanish, hybridity concerns such aspects of the language as phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, orthographic systems and even the names of the language itself.

In this paper Sephardic proverbs were chosen to present the elements derived from the main contact languages of Judeo-Spanish. There were several reasons to do so. To start with, these proverbs can be considered as samples of the speech being on the border of the colloquial and literary language. Although there happen some dialectal influences – reflected in the co-existence of a few variants of the same saying – generally, the proverbs, in opposition to other texts, seem to be representative of the whole Ottoman Diaspora language. In addition, their usage was typical of all the social classes (Lévy 1969:88). Therefore, they permit to observe general regularities of the Turkish-Balkan variety.³

The sayings bare testimony to the hybridity of Sephardic culture not only with reference to their language. The Judeo-Spanish paremiological lore contains proverbial phrases originating in different traditions. Isaac Jack Lévy divides Sephardic proverbs into two groups: “proverbios” and “refranes”. Although in Castilian both terms are exchangeable, he calls *proverbios* maxims that occur in medieval Jewish writings. They are mainly items of Biblical and Talmudic wisdom, but also some of them are of ancient Greek and Roman origin. Lévy considers *refranes* as typical of the oral legacy, whose greatest part derives from the Hispanic root. He even compared the high frequency of using them in contemporary everyday conversations amongst Judeo-Spanish native speakers to that of

² The term ‘hybridity’ is very often used in the context of postcolonial studies with reference to the condition of “subaltern” cultures being dominated by Western conquerors. For just this reason, Rosman finds it difficult to apply hybridity theory to Jewish cultural history. He shows flaws of treating Jewish culture / cultures by analogy to the colonised cultures – due to the fact that the Jews have never been colonised by the Europeans, in modern times, in the sense the other (African, American, etc.) countries have (Rosman 2007:94–104). In this paper the term ‘hybrid’ is not used with its postcolonial connotations, implying superiority–inferiority and hegemony–subjection dichotomies.

³ The hybridity of the language can be also observed in other Judeo-Spanish texts such as “coplas”, modern poetry, 19th- or 20th-century press texts and so on. Nevertheless, for my purpose I found them less appropriate than proverbs. Old Sephardic coplas, mostly based on the Biblical poetry model are, first of all, a reliable sample of Hebrew-Aramaic influence. The 20th-century secular poetry constitutes a convenient fragment to study modern transformations of Judeo-Spanish, for instance the impact of French – its vocabulary and syntax – on the language of Jewish intellectuals. What is more, in its analysis the individual features of each author should be taken into consideration. As to the press texts, a strong French influence is also seen in them as well as much more dialectal differences within Judeo-Spanish in the post-Ottoman countries (especially after WWII).

the Spanish Golden Age. Moreover, certain number of refranes come from Jewish religious sources and one can find translations of Greek or Turkish sayings as well. He adds to the list much less numerous 19th-century purely Sephardic proverbs and translations of the French or Italian ones, learned in travels or studies (Lévy 1969:88–99).

The main features of the Turkish-Balkan variety of Judeo-Spanish,⁴ exemplifying its hybridity

With reference to the phonetics Judezmo preserves the medieval Castilian pronunciation. To give an example, the letter <j>, which in Modern Spanish is pronounced as [x], (e.g. *pájaro*), in Judeo-Spanish is pronounced as [ʃ]; <s> before consonants in Modern Spanish is pronounced as [s] (e.g. *casca*), while in Judeo-Spanish it is also pronounced as [ʃ]; <j> and <g> at the beginning of the words (like in *juntos* or *gente*) in Modern Spanish are pronounced as [x], whereas in Judeo-Spanish as [ʒ]; <j> in *mujer* or *hijo*, which in Modern Spanish is pronounced as [x], in Judeo-Spanish is pronounced as [ʒ]; <s> between vowels (e.g. *casa*) in Modern Spanish is pronounced as [s], while in Judeo-Spanish as [z]. Furthermore, Judeo-Spanish sometimes preserves the initial <f> coming from Latin which in Modern Spanish evolved into the silent <h> (e.g. *filius* → *fijo* → *hijo*). In some Castilian pronouns such as *nos*, *nosotros*, *nuestro* in Judeo-Spanish the initial <n> turns into <m> (*mos*, *mosotros*, *muestro*). Moreover, the metathesis of the letters <rd> can be observed, for example the Spanish word *verdad* (truth) is pronounced by Sephardic Jews as *vedrá*, the verb *acordarse* (remember) – *acodrarse*. On the level of phonetics there are also traces of Arabic influence, for example Judezmo speakers tend to pronounce the sound [x] in a more guttural way, mainly in the words of Arabic origin. Sometimes they do pronounce the silent <h> of Modern Spanish, which may be observed in the word *alhad* / *aljad* (Sunday). The second orthographic variant emerged precisely as a result of this Arabised pronunciation.

Although in the analysis of Judeo-Spanish proverbs I took into consideration only their written forms available in anthologies (Cantera Ortiz de Urbina 2004, Carrecedo / Romero 1981, Lévy 1969, Saporta y Beja 1978), many of the phonetic phenomena mentioned above are impressed in them, because the phonetics has an influence on the orthography. Before some examples will be quoted, a few remarks on the orthographic systems of Judezmo should be made. In the previous centuries Judeo-Spanish texts used to be written in Hebrew alphabet (so-called Rashi script), however, until now several books printed in Latin alphabet or even in Cyrillic (Bulgaria) have been preserved. Reading Hebrew letters was widespread, because until the second half of the 19th century almost all the Jewish boys were

⁴ This description is based mainly on Díaz-Mas 1986:104–112.

subject to religious education based on the study of Bible and Talmud. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries as well as in the first decades of the 20th century, secular schools were complementary to the traditional Talmud-Torah education. After WWII the knowledge of Hebrew alphabet in Diaspora became considerably less common and presumably its use in print would have limited its audience. Therefore, the use of Latin alphabet in contemporary publications – aimed at drawing the attention both of the Sephardim living out of the State of Israel and of non-Jewish Hispanophone readers – became a standard. Nevertheless, one orthographic system does not exist (Busse 2001:19–22). There are still scholars who are in favour of writing Judezmo as it was used traditionally, i.e. in Hebrew alphabet.⁵ The ways of transcribing Judezmo in Latin alphabet depend on the first language of the editors and the target audience of the texts as well as on the phonetic particularities of the Judeo-Spanish spoken by the informants or the authors. The review “Vidas Largas,” published in France by Sephiha, follows the pattern of French orthography, whereas the Judeo-Spanish pages of “Shalom,” printed in Istanbul, are based on Turkish orthographic rules. Two most well-known systems are the ones proposed by an Israeli review “Aki Yerushalayim” and by Iacob M. Hassan (1978:147–150) from Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Madrid and its review “Sefarad” devoted to the studies on Judeo-Spanish culture. Moshe Shaul, chief editor of “Aki Yerushalayim,” wanted to introduce the “simplest” system without a long list of special rules and diacritical marks (Busse 2001:20). Hassan’s principal aim was to transcribe texts for the Spanish audience (first of all Spanish philology students). Thus, he based his system on the orthography of Modern Spanish with a few diacritical marks pointing out phonetic particularities of Judezmo.

In the anthologies of proverbs on which this study is based different orthographic systems were applied. The divergence concerns above all the sounds whose pronunciation in Judeo-Spanish (J-S) and in Modern Spanish (MS) differs.

mujer: MS pronounced [x]; J-S pronounced [ʒ]

Cwando⁶ el ombre enriqueese, topa la muzher fea y la caza shica (COU 77).⁷

La mujer sabia fragua la casa, la loca con sus manos la deroca (C, R 521).

Mužer sin ombre, komo kavra sin pastor (L 202).

Cuando el hombre enriqueece topa la mujer fea y la caza tchica (SB 102).

casa: MS pronounced [s]; J-S pronounced [z]

⁵ For instance, David L. Gold, Shmuel Rafael and Erella Gattegno in a handbook “*Primeros Pasos para el Estudio del Ladino*,” as well as Davis Bunis in “*Lashon Djudezmo*” (see Busse 2001:19).

⁶ Cantera Ortiz de Urbina is the only one who writes the diphthong ‘-ua-’ as ‘-wa-’.

⁷ Proverbs are quoted after four anthologies whose following abbreviations are used here: COU (Cantera Ortiz de Urbina 2004); C, R (Carrecedo / Romero 1981), L (Lévy 1969) and SB (Saporta y Beja 1978).

Cwando el ombre enriquece, topa la muzher fea y la caza shica (COU 77).
La mujer sabia fragua la caša, la loca con sus manos la deroca (C, R 521).
Kaza sin tečo no vale (L 196).
Cuando el hombre enriquece topa la mujer fea y la caza tchica (SB 102).

The above examples also show that Lévy tends to use the letter <k> instead of the <c> (where the <c> is pronounced as [k]). Cantera Ortiz de Urbina and Saporta y Beja apply the <k> only in non-Hispanic words.⁸

chico, techo: both in MS and J-S pronounced [tʃ]
Cwando el ombre enriquece, topa la muzher fea y la caza shica (COU 77).
Quen muncho core se caye (C, R 540).
Kaza sin tečo no vale (L 196).
Cuando el hombre enriquece topa la mujer fea y la caza tchica (SB 102).

judío, gente: MS pronounced [x], J-S pronounced [dʒ]
Esclavo jhidió no ay.
Quen mira a la gente non vive contente (C, R 539).
Ĝidió bovo no ay. / Ĝudió ki nu ayuda a otro (ĝudió) non ay (L 195).
Gidió bovo no hay (SB 94).

hablar / heder: MS silent <h>, J-S pronounced [f] or silent <h>
Favlar quiere y no pwede, el garón le dwele.
De la cabeza fiede el peče (C, R 503).
Fabla la mosa lo ke no deve dizir la madama (L 194).
Más vali kayar, ki mal avlar (L 168).
¡Guay! cuando el amares favla lachén ha kodech (SB 7).

Generally, the Saporta y Beja's version is the most Hispanised, while in the Lévy's anthology one may observe attempts to put down the particular pronunciation of the informants. The differences mainly concern the vowels:

Entre kol i kol lečuga (L 134). / *Entri padre i ižos no te entremetas* (L 135).
Una mano lava la otra i las dos la kara (L 187). / *Todos los dedos de la manu no son iguales* (L 186).
El Dió apreta, má no aoga (L 130). / *Il Dió no aharva kon dos manos* (L 138).
El ke espera, alkansa (L 138). / *El ki de aženo si viste en la kay lo dismudan* (L 131).

⁸ *Pan y pan y baño, y rosh akodesh todo el año* (COU 259); *¡Guay! cuando el amares favla lachén ha kodech* (SB 7).

El komer i el raskar todú al empesar (L 131). / *Komi para bivir i no por kumer* (L 157).

Más vale bien de lešos ke mal di serka (L 167). / *Más vali kayar, ki mal avlar* (L 168)⁹.

Examples of the metathesis¹⁰ rd → dr in Judeo-Spanish:

Quien bwen mazal tiene, nunca lo piedra.

El corazón no está nunca de acodro con el meollo (C, R 501).

Cuando subirá el ašno de la escalera, terná amistad esfuegra con nuera (C, R 501).

Il Dió mi guadri di aguas mansas, ki di las fuertis mi guadro yo (L 139).

De Amán a Modrohay (SB 7).¹¹

On the morphosyntactic level Judeo-Spanish as compared with Modern Castilian preserves some medieval forms of conjugation. For example, for verbs *ir* (go), *dar* (give), *estar* (be) in Present Tense it uses forms *vo*, *do*, *estó* (1st person sing.) instead of modern *voy*, *doy*, *estoy*; in Past Tense (Pretérito Imperfecto) in the 2nd conjugation (e.g. *querer* – want) the form is *queriba* (1st person sing.) instead of *quería*; in Past Tense (Pretérito Indefinido) in the 1st conjugation (e.g. *ordenar* – arrange) the forms are *ordení* / *ordenimos* (1st person sing. and pl.) instead of *ordené* / *ordenamos*. I have found few examples of these phenomena in the analysed proverbs.

As to forming the Plural of nouns and adjectives, Judezmo applies both Castilian and Hebrew endings. Naturally, in the words of Hispanic origin the Spanish morphemes *-s*, *-es* are used, whereas in Hebrew-Aramaic vocabulary the Plural is often formed by the Hebrew morphemes *-im* (masculine) and *-ot* (feminine): e.g. *hajam* (wise man) → *hajamim*, *meguillá* (scroll) → *meguillot*. Nevertheless, sometimes a double form is used: e.g. *quiná* (lamentation) → *quinot* (non-integrated form of the borrowing) or *quinas* (integrated form).¹² Also in case of some

⁹ According to M.L. Wagner (1930:21–22) the pronunciation of the final “-e” as “-i”, “-o” as “-u” and “-a” as “-e” was typical of the western regions of the Ottoman Empire (Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia and western Bulgaria).

¹⁰ In the word *prove* (MS *pobre* – poor) metathesis br / vr → rb / rv occurs.

¹¹ This example proves that metathesis occurs not only in the words of Hispanic origin but also in the Hebrew ones.

¹² On the integrated and non-integrated forms of the borrowings see Bornes-Varol 2003:119–121. The author, who does the research on contemporary Judeo-Spanish spoken in Istanbul, claims that nowadays the speakers in many cases choose consciously between the Spanish or the Hebrew suffix. She gives the example of the words *ladrón* (thief), *haham* (rabbi) and *keila* (synagogue). The Plural *ladrones* means “thieves,” *ladronim* – although the word is of Spanish origin, it receives here the Hebrew suffix – means “a group of thieves.” Also double Plural *ladronimes* is possible with the meaning “some members of a group of thieves.” The choice between *hahames* and *hahamim*

words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin only the Spanish suffix is possible: e.g. *balabay* (host, master of the house) → *balabayes* (Hebrew *בעל הבית* → *בעלי הבית*). What is more, the word *balabay* has its feminine equivalent *balabaya*, formed according to Spanish rules by the feminine morpheme *-a*, although it is derived from the Hebrew word *בעל* (husband, master) opposite to *אישה* (woman, wife), which seems to be illogical. In word formation Hebrew (or Turkish) roots happen to form new words by adding a Spanish suffix: e.g. *דָּרַשׁ* → *darsar* (preach). One may also find words derived with the help of Turkish suffixes, e.g. diminutives formed with *-achi*, *-acha*: *Bejor* → *Bejorachi*, *Ester* → *Isterulacha* (names). Moreover, in many cases Spanish patterns of word formation are followed to derive new words, which replace or co-exist with already existing old Castilian equivalents (e.g. *sodredad* / *sodrera* – deafness, *provedad* / *proveza* – poverty, *aznedad* / *tontería* – nonsense, *shikés* / *pequeñez* – childhood, etc.) (Wagner 1930:25–26).

Examples in proverbs:

El ganar y el perder son javerim (COU 116). The Plural of the Hebrew noun *חֵבֵר* (friend) was formed according to the Hebrew pattern with the morpheme *-im*.

Arrova pitas y beza mezuzás. / Roba pitas, beza mezuzot (COU 38). In different versions of the same proverb the Plural of the Hebrew word *מְזוּזָה* is formed both with the Spanish morpheme *-s* and the Hebrew one *-ot*.

Dos ġudiós, tres keilots (L 192). Here a double Plural of the Hebrew word *קְדִילִיָּה* occurs, formed with the Hebrew morpheme *-ot* and the Hispanic one *-s* at the same time. The use of two morphemes of the Plural is a kind of redundancy.

Tan buena ez mi iža ki al guerku si la dó (L 205). In this proverb the ancient form of the 1st person sing. of the verb *dar* in Present Tense is preserved.

Por lo que fizites ennadar, te farán ennadar (SB 88).

Comites, no comites, en la meza estuvites (SB 50). Here the ancient forms of the 2nd person sing. of the verbs *fazer* (MS *hacer*), *comer*, *estar* in Past Tense (Indefinido) occur.

Darsa, jajam, cwando ay quien te oiga (COU 85). The verb *darsar* (preach) derives from the Hebrew root *דָּרַשׁ* by the help of the Spanish morpheme *-ar*.

depends on “individual style” of the speaker, whereas *hahamimes* means “some members of the group of rabbis.” As to the word *keila*, one of the informants tended to use the non-integrated form *keilots* in order to stress her piety and respect to Hebrew. Moreover, she found the integrated *keilás* rather “banal.”

Meldar mantiene el esprito (COU 214).

La ventura en la palma se melda (COU 183). The verb *meldar* (read) derives from the Hebrew root מָלַךְ (learn).

Quien beclea la udá, come la shorbá (COU 279). The verb *beclear* (care) is derived from the Turkish word *beklemek* (of the same meaning) by the help of the Spanish morpheme *-ar*.

Quien al Dió llama, no se engaña (COU 277). In the word *Dios* (God) the final *-s* was removed, because in Castilian it is usually associated with the Plural. Although in this case it is not a Plural form, Jews removed *-s* in order to stress the monotheistic character of their religion as well as to cut themselves off the Trinity dogma.

Purim, Purim lanu, Pesaj en la mano (COU 273). At the beginning of this saying the Hebrew syntax is kept.

Onde ay mamón, ay cavod. / Yesh mamón, yesh cavod (COU 251). The first version of this proverb is translated from Hebrew, however, the Hebrew version was also in use.

El séjeludo lo pensa, el borrasho lo dise (COU 129). The adjective *sejeludo* (intelligent) derives from the noun מַלְאָכָה (intellect, brains) of Hebrew origin by Spanish suffix *-udo*.

Judezmo vocabulary as compared to that of Modern Castilian preserves many archaic words (e.g. *avagar* – slowly, *agora* – now, *camareta* – room, *mercar* – buy, etc.) as well as vocabulary coming from other Iberian languages and dialects such as Portuguese, Catalan, Aragonese, etc. (e.g. *lonje* – far, from Portuguese).¹³ Moreover, it has a great number of words of Arabic origin which also occur in Spanish but are less numerous. This fact can be explained by the similarity of Arabic and Hebrew-Aramaic: both Semitic languages. Modern Spanish replaced part of Arabic vocabulary with their Romance equivalents, whereas in Judeo-Spanish its use became well established. In many cases the Judezmo speakers know both Romance and Arabic equivalents, which either are exchangeable or their use depends on the context.¹⁴ Díaz-Mas gives an example of the word *almenara* (lamp),

¹³ I only mention here the Romance components of Judezmo. Their detailed analysis and exemplification would exceed the size of this paper.

¹⁴ Bornes-Varol shows that currently, Turkish Sephardim know several synonyms of the same word, coming from different stock languages (Spanish, Turkish, Biblical Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, French, etc.). Their choice depends on the context: some of the synonyms are typical of spontaneous speech, some belong to formal or literary language, some make up the passive competence of the users. Sometimes slight differences in meaning occur (Bornes-Varol 2003:134–136).

which could be preserved by resemblance to the Hebrew מנוחה. The Arabic word *alhad* / *aljad* (Sunday) supplanted the Castilian word *domingo* due to its religious connotations. *Domingo* can be associated with the “day of the Lord,” whereas in Judaism Sabbath is a holy day. Jews adopted the word *alhad* also because of its resemblance to Hebrew: in Hebrew אחד means “one,” and “Sunday” is יום ראשון literally translated as “the first day.”

Examples of Arabisms in proverbs:

El prove y el jazino no son aparentados (COU 127). *Jazino* – ill, Arab. حزين – sad.

El rey está jazino, al vizir¹⁵ le eshan la ayuda (COU 128).

La proveza es la más grande jazinura (COU 180). *Jazinura* – illness, derived from *jazino*.

Sabá lo ajarvaron; aljad lloró (COU 324). Arab. الأحد – Sunday, the first.

Sabá, menujá; aljad, la cufa (COU 324).

El papo no lleva al cadí, sino al betajayím (COU 125). Arab. قاض – judge.

Hebrew-Aramaic vocabulary involves all these fields that the Jews did not share with their Christian or Muslim neighbours both in Spain and in other countries after the exile. These are words connected with religion (e.g. *menorah*, *kipá* – Jewish cap, *meguillá* – scroll, *berit milá* – circumcision, names of festivities: *Purim*, *Pesah*, etc.), organisation of the communal life (e.g. *quehilá* – *kehilla*, community, *hajam* – wise man, rabbi, *rav*, *rabi* – rabbi, *betahayim* – cemetery), history of the Jews (e.g. *Bet hamicdásh* – the Temple, *Mitsráyim* – Egypt, *Yerushalayim* – Jerusalem), language (e.g. *lashón hakodesh*¹⁶ – holy language) as well as part of vocabulary concerning everyday and close reality (e.g. *benadán* – man, *mazál* – luck, *balabáy* – host, *javer* – friend). As many of the proverbs reflect the traditional world view, based on religion and special (theological) approach to Jewish history, one can find plenty of Hebrew-Aramaic words in them.

Examples of Hebraisms in proverbs:

Vocabulary connected with religion

Ayúdate i Adonay / el Dió vendrá en tu ayuda (L 191).

Bendícho el ombre a ken Eloim / el Dió gía (L 191).

Quien a ÉI / al Dió llama, no se engaña (COU 277). Hebr. אל, אלוהים, אדוני are names given to God in Judaism. In all these proverbs the Hebrew names can be replaced by the Spanish word *Dió*.

¹⁵ The word *visir* is of Arabic origin but it also exists in Modern Castilian.

¹⁶ In the expressions *lashón hakodesh* or *Bet hamicdash* the definite article – ה, which in Hebrew is written as one word with the noun – transcribed in Latin alphabet is written either separately or not.

Cada día no es sabá (COU 57). Hebr. שבת – Shabbath.

Purim, Purim lanu, Pesaj en la mano (COU 273).

De Sucot a Janucá es el bwen velar (COU 93). (פורים, פסח, סוכות, חנוכה – names of Jewish festivals).

Beza la mizuzá i métite a kaminar (L 191).

Cada cosa en su tiempo, y la mazá en Pesaj (COU 57). Hebr. מזוזה – mezu-zah and מצה – matzah are objects connected with the cult.

Cwando ganedén está aserrado, guehinam está siempre abierto (COU 78). Hebr. גן-עדן – paradise, גיהנום – hell.

Si neviim no somos, de neviim venimos (COU 333). Hebr. נביאים – prophets.

Un darush por un altramús (COU 357). *Darush* – sermon, from Hebr. דרוש – homiletic literature, sermon.

La sedacá balda la guezerá (COU 182). Hebr. צדקה – charity, גזרה – decree, damnation.

Tomad en la mano y decid berajá (COU 352). Hebr. ברכה – blessing.

No ser / No pareser casher (COU 246). Hebr. כשר – kosher.

Gallina sin fiel es trefú (COU 155). Hebr. טרפה – not kosher.

Barato, bwen y bal Torá (COU 46). Hebr. בעל תורה – man of Torah.

The words analysed in this section come from the Bible language or allude to the rules and precepts of Judaism.

Organisation of the communal life

Para la queilá no tengo sapatos; para la clisa tomo emprestado (COU 261).

Derrocar una queilá para tomar un clavo (COU 96). *Queilá* – synagogue, from Hebr. קהילה – kehillah, community.

Darsa, jajam, cwando ay quien te oiga (COU 85).

Ambeza il haham lo ke no kere el talmid (L 190). Hebr. חכם – wise person, rabbi, תלמיד – pupil, student.

Cada uno es jajam de su ofisio (COU 59). In this proverb *jajam* is used in figurative meaning: expert.

Los fizhos al rabí, el marido al sharshí (COU 197). Hebr. רב, רבי – rabbi.

Cada uno save su salmo, ma el jasán save dos (COU 60).

Más vale el jasán que todo el cal (COU 208). Hebr. חזן – hazzan, cantor in a synagogue, here religious leader, קהל – assembly, governing board of Jewish community, here may be also equivalent of *quehilá*.

*Lo quitó de jayim, lo metió en **betajayim*** (COU 195). Hebr. בית הקיים – cemetery.

*Mano que se corta con ley / **din**, no dwele* (COU 204). Hebr. דין – law.

The words connected with the communal life concern not only the organisation of religious observances but also the sphere of administration, judiciary and education in which for centuries Jews were autonomous.

History of the Jews

*El **Bet Amigdás** se destruyó, la keilá kedó* (L 192). Hebr. בית-המקדש – the Temple.

***Galut** y **mabul**, y la privada lezhos* (COU 155). Hebr. גלות – exile, diaspora, מבול – delude.

*A **Misraim** arrozhan la piedra, a mí me cae en la cavesa* (COU 20). Hebr. מצרים – Egypt.

Language

*¡Gway cwando el ammaaretz favla **lushón ha kodesh*** (COU 157)! Hebr. לשון הקודש – language of holiness.

Hebrew is often called *lashon ha kodesh* because of its special status in Jewish culture. It used to be the language of the Bible, rabbinic literature, synagogue service and prayer as opposed to Judezmo (or Yiddish) and other local languages which were spoken in everyday life. Jews would stress the holiness of Hebrew.

Close reality

*Por menester se va al **bidaquisé*** (COU 270). Hebr. כיסא – chair, בית הכיסא – here means toilet.

*Por musho que traiga el mosafir, más quiere el **balabait*** (COU 271). Hebr. בעל הבית – master of the house.

*Cada ombre es patrón de su **mazal*** (COU 58). Hebr. מזל – luck, fate.

*La maza y el crío, en **tamuz** y **ab** les fase frío* (COU 173). Hebr. אב, תמוז – months of Jewish calendar.

*Osho de león que te coma, osho de **benadam** no* (COU 256). Hebr. בן-אדם – man, human being.

*No jhugues a tu **javer**, si no llegas a su lugar* (COU 241). Hebr. קבר – friend.

*Mizhor al **garón** y no al frigón* (COU 219). Hebr. גרון – throat.

*Lo quitó de **jayim**, lo metió en **batajayim*** (COU 195). Hebr. חיים – life.

*Jhohá y su **mispaña*** (COU 164). Hebr. משפחה – family.

*El dotor y el ratón bozean al **jhasbón*** (COU 114). Hebr. חשבון – bill, account.

*En cada **dor** y **dor** acontese una gran dolor* (COU 133). Hebr. דור – generation.

On the level of the lexis, Turkish-Balkan component consists mainly of Turkish loanwords and, depending on the region, also of Greek and Slavic borrowings. They involve vocabulary concerning elements of local everyday reality, places or material things such as animals (e.g. *bilbil* – nightingale), plants (e.g. *chichek* – flower), food (e.g. *jalva* – halva, *rakı* – vodka), things used in the household (e.g. *filýán* – cup, *tenýere* – pot)¹⁷, but also local customs and festivities as well as institutions of non-Jewish administration (e.g. *hukiumet* – government), army (e.g. Turk. *askerlic* – army; Bulg. *polk* – regiment, *polkovnik* – colonel, *kapral* – corporal), secular education (e.g. Bulg. *dóskel* – teacher, *dictovka* – spelling test), etc. In the analysed proverbs and sayings many Turkish borrowings and a few Greek ones were found. Moreover, two Italian words occurred.

Turkish loanwords

*Esto no estaba escrito en **tefter*** (COU 146). Turk. *defter* – notebook.

*Las **nalshas** antes del caballo* (COU 185). Turk. *nalça* – little horseshoe.

*Ay **parás**, ay onor* (COU 43). Turk. *para* – money.

*Cada **tenjhere** topa su **capac*** (COU 58). Turk. *tencere* – pot, saucepan; *kapak* – lid.

*Locos y bovos, a la **timbarana*** (SB 114). Turk. *timarhane* – mental hospital.

*Los fizhos al rabi, el marido al **sharshí*** (COU 197). Turk. *çarşı* – market place.

*Pan y **jalva** para no jadrar ni encañar* (COU 258). Turk. *helva* – halva.

*Quien beclea la **udá**, come la **shorbá*** (COU 279). Turk. *oda* – room; *çorba* – soup.

*Quien se quema con la **shorbá**, aspola sobre el **yagur*** (COU 306). Turk. *yoğurt* – yogurt.

*Cwando se fuyó el cavallo de la **ajir*** (COU 80). Turk. *ahir* – stable.

*Derroca un **saray** por tomar una **tezha*** (COU 96). Turk. *saray* – palace, court.

*Cwando la **viezha** demandó caldo, degollaron al **shobán*** (COU 78). Turk. *çoban* – shepherd, cowherd.

*¿Cwál **meyanadzhi** dise que su vino es vinagre?* (COU 76) *Meyanadzhi* – owner of a wine bar; Turk. *meyhane* – winery, wine bar.

Greek borrowings

*Cada uno con **gana**; y la **viezha** con la **érrema** tallarina* (COU 58). Gr. *έρημος* – abandoned, lonely, poor.

*Ninguno no conose el mal de la olla sino la **érrema** cushara que la manea* (COU 235).

¹⁷ The orthography of these words is quoted after Díaz-Mas 1986:110.

*Gwadra el **aspro** para el día malo* (COU 156). From Gr. ἄσπρον – penny (Pascual Recuero 1977:19, Cantera Ortiz de Urbina 2004:381).

*Ni séjel ambezado, ni **aspro** contado* (COU 233).

*Por descanso, el **papu** en brazos* (COU 269). Gr. παππός – grandfather.

*La mwerte me sería closha de **sirma*** (COU 176). σίρμα – a kind of cloth, however, the exact meaning and the origin of this word is not clear. According to Cantera Ortiz de Urbina (2004:410), it comes from Greek and means “silk,” whereas Pascual Recuero (1977:129) translates it as “brocade, a kind of golden or silver cloth” and claims that the word is of Turkish origin.

Italian borrowings

*Cada uno con el shapeo*¹⁸ *que tiene fase **bongiorno*** (COU 58). It. *buon giorno* – good morning.

*Rey sin jhente, no vale **niente*** (COU 322). It. *niente* – nothing.

Italian loanwords in Judeo-Spanish, as well as the French ones, are usually considered as a sign of modernisation of the Jews in Turkish-Balkan Diaspora. Their appearance in the second half of the 19th and in the 20th century is connected with the creation of two chains of secular schools for Jewish children: the schools managed by Alliance Israélite Universelle,¹⁹ where French was taught, and less numerous Dante Alighieri schools, whose pupils had Italian language lessons. Former pupils of these schools, who in adulthood often became Jewish intelligentsia (many of them studied in France or other countries), used to speak Judezmo with French or Italian borrowings and also with the syntax strongly influenced by these languages. Moreover, the development of Sephardic press contributed to the spread of this tendency. Its opponents ironically called a new ‘variant’ of the language *judeo-frañol*. The majority of loanwords named elements of modern reality, which had not existed earlier or had not been a part of Jewish experience (press, theatre, modern entertainment, etc.). Sometimes foreign vocabulary would also replace existing Judezmo equivalents. However, in the analysed proverbs these phenomena were not observed (apart from two Italian words, which in other variants of the sayings are replaced by original Judeo-Spanish ones). It can be concluded that this is because the majority of proverbs came into being before French and Italian influence appeared. Furthermore, using them in speech is not aimed at stressing the modern, just quite the opposite, at evoking traditional wisdom and traditional worldview.

¹⁸ *Shapeo* (hat) comes from French *chapeau*, but it also exists in MS as *chapeo*.

¹⁹ Alliance Israélite Universelle was created in 1860 in Paris. Its aim was to defend the oppressed Jews all over the world as well as to promote modernisation and improve life conditions of the Jews in Eastern Europe, North of Africa and the Middle East. One of their initiatives was the foundation of secular Jewish schools in these areas.

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