



Center for Visual
Culture of Balkans

THE TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
THE SOCIETY FOR SEPHARDIC STUDIES

Sephardic Jews between Religious, Ethnic, and National Identity

**BELGRADE,
27th – 30th
JUNE 2022**

**ABSTRACTS
OF PAPERS**

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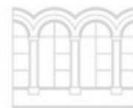
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החברה לחקר יהדות ספרד ומדינתה | סוסייטי פאר סטודיום ספארדיס
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Moshe David Gaon Center
for Ladino Culture



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CONFERENCE SECRETARY

AVISHAG BEN-SHALOM
Dr. VUK DAUTOVIĆ

ORGANIZED IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

THE MOSHE DAVID GAON CENTER FOR LADINO CULTURE OF BEN-
GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

THE CENTER FOR STUDIES OF JEWISH ART AND CULTURE AND THE
CENTER FOR VISUAL CULTURE OF THE BALKANS AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF BELGRADE'S FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

THE CENTER FOR SABBATEAN SEPHARDIC CULTURE IN ISTANBUL;

ONEG ŠABAT – JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER BELGRADE

Belgrade 2022

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FOREWORD

SEPHARDIC JEWS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Even our era of fluid and overlapping identities has not ended the age-old tension between different aspects and perceptions of Jewish identity. Is the principal determinant of Jewish identity a person's relationship to "Judaism", or should Jewishness be perceived primarily as an ethnic culture and identity? After all, the term *Iudaismos* (Judaism) is not a Jewish one; it was coined by the ancient Greeks to designate the laws and customs of the people of the Israelite state of Judah. The pre-modern Hebrew language did not even have a word for "religion". Classical rabbinic texts generally do not speak of "Jews", but rather of the collective "Israel", whose redemption would be communal and occur in history, within this world.

However, during their long Diaspora, the overwhelming majority of Jews lived in one of the two hemispheres, Christian or Islamic, and in both they were recognized as an ethno-confessional entity, with rare ruptures between the two components of this syntagm. Rupture in one of these components was usually accompanied by rupture in the other. However, the Hispano-Christian "crusade" against Judaism (led mainly by local clerics, theologians, and preachers), which led to the near-destruction of Castilian and Aragonese *aljamas* from 1391 to 1415, and to the concomitant problem of *judeoconversos*, subverted the validity of this syntagm. For the first time, the religion and ethnicity of tens of thousands of people once known—and still widely regarded—as Jews were at odds. The New Christians were Jewish in terms of their social and economic relations, their ethnic culture, and their social reputation; yet their religious identity was at least theoretically identical to that of the majority population. The Expulsion sought to end the Jewish subversion of the assimilation of New Christians into their new faith, but the "problem" endured well into our own days.

In subsequent centuries, while the overwhelming majority of their Ottoman brethren reembraced the securities of the double but mostly indivisible ethno-confessional identity, the Conversos played major role in shifts and changes in the ways that Jews and Christians understood the relation between religion, society, and state.

With the two Serbian revolutions of the early nineteenth century, followed by the Greek and Bulgarian uprisings, the Ottoman Jewish rabbinic elite (including such figures as Ribbi Yehuda Bivas and Ribbi Yehuda Alkalay) led a revolutionary change of Jewish identity, creating the Jewish national idea and the Zionist movement.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
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Dr. **VUK DAUTOVIĆ**
Dr. **KOTEL DADON**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

MONDAY, JUNE 27TH

Arrival of participants in Belgrade.

15:00: Meet in front of the Museum of Applied Arts (*Muzej primenjenih umetnosti*) at 18 Vuka Karadžića Street for a guided tour of the exhibition "Fashion World of the Kalef Family," given by the museum's advisor Draginja Maskareli.

16:00: Walk/Ride to the Cathedral of St. Sava (*Hram Sv. Save*) in Vračar, Belgrade (those joining us at this juncture are asked to meet the rest of the group at 16:30 by the main entrance to the church).

16:30: Guided tour of St. Sava and its crypt

18:00: Ride to Zemun

18:30: Tour of Zemun's Synagogue, the Herzl family house, and the Jewish graveyard

21:00: Dinner in Zemun (not sponsored by the organizers)

23:00: Return from Zemun to the Rectorate (Studentski trg) of Belgrade University

TUESDAY, JUNE 28TH

The day's events will be held at Belgrade University's Rectorate Kapetan Mišino zdanje, Studentski trg 1

08:00-09:00: **Registration**

09:00-09:30: **Opening Ceremony and Remarks:**

H.E. Yahel Vilan, Ambassador of the State of Israel
Danijel Sinani, Dean of the Philosophy Faculty, University of Belgrade
Nenad Makuljević, the Center for the Visual Culture of the Balkans,
University of Belgrade

Jelena Erdeljan, the Center for Studies of Jewish Art and Culture,
University of Belgrade
Eliezer Papo, Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture, Ben-Gurion
University
Bariş Telimen, Center for Sabbatean Sephardic Culture

09:30-10:10: **Session 1 – Keynote Lecture (Main hall)**

- **Shalom Sabar (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**, Spain of Three Religions through the Lens of Iberian Jewish Art

10:10-10:30: **Coffee Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

10:30-12:00: **Session 2 – Balkan Jewish Folklore (Main hall)**

Chairperson: **Krinka Vidaković Petrov**

- **Hanita Barbiro (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Identity of Djoha – the Comic Hero of the Sephardic Folk Tradition
- **Susana Weich-Shahak (Jewish Music Research Centre at Hebrew University)**, *Bavajadas i konsejikas* infantiles - Humor y disparates en el cuento infantil sefardí
- **Sanja Trifunović (University of Vienna)**, The Role of the Jews in the Production of the Ottoman Karagöz Shadow Theatre

12:00-13:00: **Lunch Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

13:00-14:45: **Session 3 – Sephardica Balcanica I (Main hall)**

Chairperson: **Jelena Erdeljan**

- **Damir Šabotić (University of Graz)**, Bosnian Sephardim between Modernization, Acculturation and Anti-Semitism
- **Avishag Ben-Shalom (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Multi-Faceted Loyalty of Bosnian-Sephardic Intelligentsia to their General Jewish, Partially Sephardic, Yugoslav and Micro-Local Sarajevan Identity
- **Gordana Todorić (Gaon Center, BGU)**, The Social Context of Bohoreta's Monograph *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia* – the Case of Jelica Belović Bernardzikovska
- **Ivana Vučina Simović (Belgrade University)**, Discourse of Modernization in the Memories of Belgrade Sephardim between the Two World Wars

14:45-15:15: **Coffee Break (Garden of the Rectorate Building)**

15:15-16:30: **Session 4 – Sephardica Balcanica II (Senate hall)**

Chairperson: **Eliezer Papo**

- **Ana Štulić (Université Bordeaux Montaigne-AMERIBER)**, Being Sephardic in Late Nineteenth-Century Serbia
- **Miloš M. Damjanović (University of Priština, Kosovska Mitrovica)**, The Status of Jews in Kosovo and Metohija and their Relations with Other Ethno-Confessional Groups amid the Final Decades of Ottoman Rule, 1876-1912
- **Eyal Ginio (Hebrew University)**, Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Balkans: The Jewish Community of Iştip/Štip during and in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars
- **Suzan Nana Tarablus (independent researcher)**, *Baba, bize neden Dönme diyorlar* (Daddy, Why do they Call us Dönme)?

16:30-17:00: Coffee Break (Senate hall)

17:00-18:45: **Session 5 – By the Waters of Virtual Sepharad (Senate hall)**

Chairperson: **Kotel Dadon**

- **Mladenka Ivanković (Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade) and Ana Ćirić-Pavlović (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)**, Sephardim in Early-Modern Mediterranean Trade: Daniel Rodrigues and “la Scala di Spalato”
- **Benedetto Ligorio (University of Rome)**, At the Service of the Citizens and the Common Good: The Republic of Dubrovnik's Jewish Consuls in Algeri, Genoa and Vlōre
- **Moisés Orfali (Bar-Ilan University)**, Livorno's Sephardic Jews as an Exemplar of Jewish Identity in the Broader Socio-Economic Space
- **Krinka Vidaković Petrov (Belgrade University)**, In a Foreign Harbor: The Turkish Jews of Zemun

19:30: **Transportation from the Rectorate to Dedinje, Belgrade**

20:00: **Reception at the Israeli Embassy**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29TH

Sessions at Oneg Šabat – the Jewish Cultural Center (Jevrejski kulturni centar) 16 Jevrejska Street (a 10-minute walk from the Rectorate)

09:00-10:30: Session 6 - Portraits

Chairperson: **Nenad Makuljević**

- **Kotel Dadon (University of Zagreb)**, Portraits of Dalmatian Rabbis in the Eighteenth Century
- **Marcos Silber (University of Haifa)**, At the Crossroads of Izmir: The Meeting of Rabbi Haim Falachi, Adam Mickiewicz and Armand Levy as a Missing Link in the Development of Proto-Zionism
- **Michael Studemund Halévy (University of Hamburg)**, One Life, Many Narratives of Belonging

10:30-11:00: Coffee Break

11:00-12:30: Session 7 – Sephardic Visual Culture

Chairperson: **Shalom Sabar**

- **Nenad Makuljević (Belgrade University)**, Multiple Identities in the Art of Leon Kojen and Moša Pijade
- **Vuk Dautović (Belgrade University)**, Zionism and Sephardic identity: The Oneg Shabbat Society's Building in Belgrade
- **Jelena Erdeljan (Belgrade University)**, From Iberia to the Balkans: Sephardic Art and Culture in the Pre-Modern Era and the Question of Comparative Study of Two Mediterranean Peninsulas

12:30-13:30: Lunch Break

13:30-15:00: Session 8 – Sabbatian Studies

Chairperson: **Bariş Telimen**

- **Jonatan Meir (Ben-Gurion University)**, Sabbatianism in Livorno: An Unknown Ladino Letter from Nathan of Gaza, 1665

- **Miquel Beltrán (University of the Balearic Islands) and Meritxell Blasco (University of Barcelona)**, Preservation of Sabbateanism and its Link to Kabbalah
- **Efrat Lederfein-Gilboa (Ben-Gurion University)**, Ishmael and the Messiah: A Sabbatian view of Islam and the son of Hagar

15:00-15:30: **Coffee Break**

15:30-17:15: **Session 9 - Text and Home**

Chairperson: **Susy Gruss**

- **Ora R. Schwarzwald (Bar-Ilan University)**, Developments and Changes in Ladino Haggadot
- **Gila Hadar (Haifa University)**, Why do Women Sing? From Sephardic to Socio-Political Identity
- **Hava Pinhas-Cohen (independent researcher)**, David Albachari's "Jerusalem": The Story on a Tablecloth of a Belgrade Kitchen
- **Iris Brown (Ono Academic College)**, The Modern Hebrew Debate in Argentina's Sephardic Community

17:15-17:45: **Coffee Break**

17:45-18:30: **Session 10 – Talk-Performance**

Chairperson: **Avishag Ben-Shalom**

- **Judith Cohen (York University, Toronto)**, *Ea, Judeus, a enfardelar*: Convivencia and Songs in Pre- and Para-Expulsion Spain – a Talk-Performance

18:30-19:30: **The Knighting Ceremony of the Yitzhak Navon Order of the Knights of Ladino**

Moderator: **Eliezer Papo**

2022 Laurates:

- **Dona (Prof.) Krinka Vidaković-Petrov**, Memorial Institution Staro sajmište (presented by Dona Jelena Erdeljan)
- **Dona Biljana Albahari**, National Library of Serbia (presented by Don Vuk Dautović)

THURSDAY, JUNE 30TH

**Sessions at Oneg Šabat – the Jewish Cultural Center
16 Jevrejska Street**

09:00-10:30: Session 11 – For Zion shall Come Forth from Zemun

Chairperson: **Vuk Dautović**

- **Yitzchak Kraus (Bar-Ilan University)**, R. Yehuda Alkalay – the First Visionary
- **Eliezer Papo (Ben-Gurion University)**, Prince Miloš Obrenović of Serbia as a Role Model for H. R. Yehuda Alkalay's Peculiar Development of the Classical Rabbinic Concept of *Mašiyah ben Yossef*
- **Branko Ostajmer (Croatian Institute of History)**, The Zionist Congress of 1908 in Zemun

10:30-11:00: Coffee Break

11:00-12:45: Session 12 – the Outer Perimeters of Virtual Sefarad

Chairperson: **José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim**

- **Hugo Martins (CH-UL / University of Potsdam)**, A World in Dispute: The Interaction between Jews, State and Imperial Jurisdiction in the Free City of Hamburg (17th - 18th Centuries)
- **Benjamin Brown (Hebrew University)**, With the Help of God and Ashkenazi Rabbis: The Struggle to Preserve Sephardic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Karlsburg
- **Eugenio A. Alonso Lopez (University of Miami)**, A Portuguese Crypto-Jewish Diaspora in Seventeenth-Century Cuba and the Circum-Caribbean Basin
- **Ian Pomerantz (independent researcher)**, Between Sefarad and Ashkenaz in Early Twentieth-Century Philadelphia

12:45-13:45: Lunch Break

13:45-15:15: Session 13 – the Written Word

Chairperson: **Ivana Vučina Simović**

- **Amir Banbaji (Ben-Gurion University)**, The Path of Medieval “Meliša”: Maimonides and Moses Ibn Tibbon
- **Silvina Schammah Gesser (Bar-Ilan University)**, Lives under Siege: Representations of Sephardic and Crypto-Jews in Iberia and Spanish America
- **José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim (Universidade de Lisboa)**, The Shekhinah in the West? *Menina e Moça* – they Took me from my Parents’ Home. . .

15:15-15:45: **Coffee Break**

15:45-17:30: **Session 14 – Between Local and Jewish Patriotism**

Chairperson: **Avishag Ben-Shalom**

- **Maria Fragkou (University of Vienna)**, Grey Areas and Blurred Boundaries: Sephardic Supra-Nationals in a World of Nation-States and Urban(e) Patterns of in Transitory Spaces, 1912-1930
- **Doğa Filiz Subaşı (University of Yozgat Bozok, Turkey)**, Repercussions of Zionism in Early Twentieth-Century Istanbul: The Case of the Press
- **Joana Bürger (University of Washington)**, A Zionist Contribution to the Making of Greek Jewry
- **Susy Gruss (Bar-Ilan University)**, *Forjando una conciencia nacional a través de grandes figuras del judaísmo sefardí*

17:30-18:00: **Coffee Break**

18:00-19:45: **Session 15 – Identity Struggles**

Chairperson: **Moisés Orfali**

- **Yitzchak Kerem (Hebrew University)**, Romaniote Jewry in Light of Sephardic Settlement in the Ottoman Empire
- **Dimitrios Varvaritis (independent researcher)**, Envisioning a Future for Greek Jewry in the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Case of Isaac Kambeli
- **Davor Stipičić (Institute for Recent History of Serbia)**, Jewish National and Religious Identity within the Framework of Yugoslavian Socialism

- **Nitai Shinan (National Library of Israel)**, From Pariahs to Cultural Icons: The Hispanization of the Jews and Conversos Culture in Modern-Day Spain

20:00-21:00: **Concert on the premises of the Cultural Center:**
The Shira Utfila Band, By the Rivers of Sava and Dunav –
Songs from the Musical Tradition of Balkan Jewry
(Courtesy of the Center for Sabbatian Sephardic Culture)

Vuk Dautović

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Zionism and Sephardic identity: The “Oneg Shabbat” Society’s Building in Belgrade

The complete civil emancipation process of the Sephardic community in Belgrade became noticeable during the early XX century. Visually speaking, this was expressed through the building of numerous public-private constructions, formed in accordance with the Orientalist visual culture cultivated throughout Central Europe. The appropriation of the Central European Orientalist model by the Sephardic community in Belgrade was a novelty that completely altered the manner of its representation. The adoption of Orientalism in the construction of public community buildings as well as in private instances marked the period of emancipation of Belgrade Sephardim until the beginning of WWII. This relationship of the Sephardim towards Orientalism represents an understudied phenomenon which can be observed and understood more closely through the example of the Belgrade Sephardic community. With the construction of a new synagogue Beth Israel in the neo-Moorish style (1908), Belgrade’s Sephardic community accepted the Orientalistic concept in the expression of its identity. The preference for this model was confirmed by the construction of public structures and monuments based on the designs of architect Samuel Sumbul. The Oneg Shabbat and Gemulit Hasidim Society was built first, followed by a memorial to Jewish soldiers killed in the wars from 1912 to 1919 at the Sephardic cemetery, and finally the House of the Jewish Church-School Community in Belgrade. The Oneg Shabbat building served as a new synagogue, communal

space, and cultural and political center in the old Sephardic neighborhood during the interwar period. In the Oneg Shabbat building were seated the first Zionist organizations, whose goals were to bring the political idea of Zionism closer to the Sephardic community. One of the most important steps in their mission was the use of the Ladino language. The paper will discuss the cultural and visual context of their role.

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