Archives of the Sephardi Kitchen

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Abstract

Drawing on two distinct bodies of Sephardi food writing—Anglophone cookbooks and the long-running recipe column in the Judeo-Spanish periodical Aki Yerushalayim*—this paper explores the role of cuisine as a primary affiliative structure in contemporary Sephardi culture. I argue that these two divergent literary traditions, in their general ignorance of one another, constitute a framework for an archive of Sephardi cooking. In spite of these texts' common conception of cooking as a female practice of memory and identification as well as their shared interest in the intersection of the culinary and the linguistic, they are at odds with one another as to whether Sephardi culture exists only in the past, or may also be found in the present. Side-by-side consideration of both corpuses requires an understanding of Sephardi culture attentive to persistent continuities in spite of major historical ruptures.*

Introduction

Anglophone Cookbooks

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Conclusions

Introduction

The taste of Sepharad, the Jewish name for the Iberian Peninsula, can be found, according to most contemporary Sephardi cookbooks, in the flavors of almond and orange blossom. Over half a millennium of migration, these two ingredients have continued to evoke Iberia, alongside custardy, egg-based desserts and dozens of dishes that are known by Judeo-Spanish names even if they were only added to the Sephardi repertory in the years following expulsion. Like Judeo-Spanish, the everyday language of Sephardi migrants, food is a pillar of Sephardi identity. Recipes and language are two of the cultural artifacts that most easily accompany diasporic subjects over centuries of migration, yet both food and language are subject to accretive processes in which words and dishes from other cultures are added to ever-expanding linguistic and culinary vocabularies with each stop along Sephardi migration routes. Sephardi food, like Judeo-Spanish itself, represents a continually elaborated tradition built around a persistent medieval Iberian core.

Despite its major role in ballasting the integrity of Sephardi culture, Sephardi foods occupy an uncertain niche in constructions of contemporary Jewish cuisine. They plainly differ from the totemic Ashkenazi foods of the popular imaginary of Jewish cuisine; nor can they easily be grouped alongside the Arab and fusion dishes which have come to dominate the cuisine of contemporary Israel. As heritage foods, Jewish foods reflect the migratory itineraries of their makers. Sephardi itineraries are among the longest and most varied in Judaism, leading to an equally varied cuisine; some Sephardi dishes reach back to ancient Baghdad, while others evoke medieval Al-Andalus, and more still were picked up in the Maghreb, Italy, Egypt, the Balkans, and the Levant (the Eastern Mediterranean broadly, sometimes including the Balkans) over half a millennium of post-expulsion peregrinations outward from Iberia. Perhaps because of this unwieldy variety, Sephardi foods have often been regarded as generally, or generically, Mediterranean, rather than constitutive of a distinctively Jewish culinary tradition. In this paper, I examine two bodies of contemporary literature which attempt to codify Sephardi food culture. The first consists of seven Anglophone Sephardi cookbooks (published between 1984 and 2000), while the latter revolves around the long-running recipe column of the Jerusalem-based Judeo-Spanish periodical *Aki Yerushalayim* (1979-2016).[1]

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[1] Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture: Press, Belles Lettres, and Theatre in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012). The author alludes to the difficulty of properly naming and describing the language of the Sephardim, which is variously known as Ladino, Romance, Djudyó, Judeo-Spanish, and more. “In this book,” Borovaya writes, “I will call

Judeo-Spanish derives from the Castilian Spanish spoken by many of the Sephardim expelled from Iberia near the close of the fifteenth century. Over generations of migration, this language acquired vocabulary mainly from Hebrew and Italian, Greek, and Turkish, the languages spoken in important stations on Sephardi itineraries. The Judeo-Spanish and English sources I examine here overlap in time and subject matter but bring to bear different perspectives on Sephardi food and culture. *Aki Yerushalayim* implicitly understands Sephardi cookery as a vital, ongoing practice, while Anglophone Sephardi cookbooks often describe Sephardi recipes as elements of an obsolescing tradition in need of salvage and preservation. In spite of these divergent perspectives on the ontological status of Sephardi culture, the English cookbooks share with Judeo-Spanish recipes a single epistemology as texts engaged in the construction of an archive of Sephardi food. These divergent literary traditions describe the borders of a Sephardi culinary culture that is a major site of memory and identification for the Sephardi diaspora, yet their general lack of engagement with one another suggests a paradox at the heart of the discourse of contemporary Sephardi cuisine. Understanding the stories inherent in these various recipe collections requires thinking simultaneously of breakage and continuity, cultural rupture and the persistence of culinary memory. Anglophone and Judeo-Spanish sources, in this sense, uncannily double one another, each the other's ghostly partner in the archival process.

By the term "archive," I intend to describe Sephardi recipes as subject to a quasi-technological process of storage and retrieval, while leaving open the question of the precise nature of the access such as an archive provides. Are Sephardi recipes locked away in such a repository, or is it an open library available for continual

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[the language] 'Ladino'—the name preferred by most of its speakers after World War II—and its other names will appear only in direct quotations" (pp. 14-15). In the case of the present study, I have elected to use the term Judeo-Spanish to describe this language in deference to the subtitle of *Aki Yerushalayim*, originally *Revista [semestrala] de la Emission en djudeo-espanyol de Kol Israel-la Boz de Israel* (1-45) and, later, "*Revista kulturala djudeoespanyola*" (46-100). As in Borovaya, other names for the language will appear only in direct quotations. For a full discussion of the debates over the name of Ladino/Judeo-Spanish see Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture*, 13-16. On Ladino print culture, see also Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

access? Theorists Russell J. A. Kilbourn and Eleanor Ty describe the problem of archival access, writing,

> [we live] in a world in which it is now possible to walk around with a USB key or "flash drive" in one's pocket or briefcase, containing as much information as the Library of Congress... For most of us today this is what memory is, in a first-order sense, or rather in a sense that transcends any "natural"-technical binary: an external, prosthetic storage tool.[2]

A printed recipe is such a storage tool, and a collection of recipes forms the archive around which this paper is built. Anglophone cookbooks and Judeo-Spanish recipes imagine access to their contents under divergent conditions. Bringing these corpuses together permits the construction of a more expansive archive which reflects a broader vision of contemporary Sephardi food culture.

My interest lies not with the identification of the precise elements which these texts position at the core of Sephardi cuisine, but with an exploration of the narrative techniques by which these texts elaborate a picture of the Sephardi culinary universe. This is not to suggest that this study will entirely ignore culinary features such as the primacy of the eggplant in the Sephardi kitchen, but rather to indicate that the prominence of particular ingredients or dishes will be understood in the context of how such prominence plays into the stories these texts tell about Sephardi culture (rather than as evidence for claims about culinary history). While food and the discourse of food are the equal objects of this inquiry, I confine myself here to the ways in which this culinary discourse is elaborated in written sources. As Carol Bardenstein observes, "traditional" modes of recipe transmission presume the ongoing maintenance of links between mothers and daughters, nieces, and daughters-in-law, the former of whom transfer oral and embodied knowledge to their progeny via practical experience in the kitchen. Both *Aki Yerushalayim*'s recipe column and the Anglophone cookbooks I deal with here presuppose a lapse in this mode of transmission, and offer literary documentation of recipes as a substitute (or supplement) to the real or imagined loss of kitchen wisdom. The discourse of Sephardi food they offer is therefore shaped by a literary sensibility; oral histories have been important tools for historians of Sephardi Judaism, but are outside the scope of this study. The methodology, then, involves a close reading of recipes and the range of elements that surround them in these sources, including personal narratives, quasi-anthropological investigations of food and culture, and the photography and graphic design which shape contemporary cookbooks. Instead of exploring the history of Sephardi food or attempting to define what Sephardi food "is," my readings are attentive to how Sephardi history and food culture are narrated in literary contexts.

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[2] Russell J. A. Kilbourn and Eleanor Ty, "Developments in Memory Studies and Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Literature and Film," in *The Memory Effect: The Remediation of Memory in Literature and Film*, eds. Russell J. A. Kilbourn and Eleanor Ty (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013).

The axes of my analysis are my sources' relationships with history and memory, with language, and with gender, all within the context of the larger question of what the act of collecting Sephardi recipes signifies about how food writing constructs the state of Sephardi culture. History and memory are, in this analysis, largely indistinguishable from one another; my concern lies not with historical fact, but with the memorial narration thereof as it occurs on the Sephardi table. By "language" I mean Judeo-Spanish, specifically. Sephardi food and the Judeo-Spanish language reciprocally reinforce one another as core features of Sephardi distinctiveness. Experiences of consuming Sephardi heritage foods are often linked with memories of familial conversations in Judeo-Spanish, the dishes seeming inseparable from the vocabulary used to describe them. This simultaneous coding is evident in the merging of auditory and gustatory sense memories and in concrete linguistic features such as the characteristic use of diminutive suffixes in the names of Sephardi foods (not *börek*, but *borekita*, for example). The final axis, of gender, concerns the role of women as guardians and exponents of Sephardi food culture, as well as the ways in which women's cultural capital is shifted when recipes move from private kitchens to cookbooks and magazines. Such transpositions of culinary authority necessitate the creation of new ways of "maintaining communal structure, social ties, and cultural tradition," which move "women's efforts toward empowering themselves and the [domestic] spaces they inhabited" from the private sphere of the domestic into public view.[3]

Aki Yerushalayim's recipe column presents a unique resource for scholars of Sephardi food. For over thirty years, from 1979 to 2016, this Jerusalem-based journal distributed articles on Sephardi culture and history, reviews of Sephardi music and literature, short poems and stories, and news to an international readership. The magazine was founded and edited throughout its run by Moshe Shaul, an Izmir-born Israeli journalist. Beginning with the second issue, every issue of *Aki Yerushalyim* includes Sephardi recipes. No other similar archive of contemporary Sephardi foodways exists in Judeo-Spanish, making *Aki Yerushalayim* a natural locus of this study. The selection of Anglophone texts was, as a result of the recent efflorescence of English-language Sephardi food writing, more difficult. My choices were guided by a happy coincidence: my encounter with the cookbook collection of the Sephardi restaurant Gostijo, in Athens, Greece. When I visited Gostijo in 2013, the owners were kind enough to allow me to borrow their cookbooks, which include major texts that are exemplary of Anglophone Sephardi food writing as well as several lesser-known volumes which indicate the variety of approaches food writers have taken to this cuisine.[4] Focusing on these texts allows me, further, to grapple with a group of cookbooks that are already constitutive of a working archive of Sephardi food and are demonstrably in use in a contemporary Sephardi kitchen.

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[3] Andrea K. Newlyn, "Challenging Contemporary Narrative Theory: The Alternative Textual Strategies of Nineteenth-century Manuscript Cookbooks," *Journal of American Culture* 22, no. 3 (1999): 35.

[4] The seven English-language cookbooks in Gostijo's kitchen library were published between 1984 and 2000. In deference to the integrity of Gostijo's archive, all seven of these texts are discussed at length in this paper. Although Gostijo's library offers an artificial constraint on the plethora of Sephardi cookbooks published over the last 40 years, it has the virtue of containing both the major texts in the field as well as more esoteric volumes, enabling a fair, representative survey of the range of material available.

Anglophone Cookbooks

Gostijo, a Sephardi restaurant established in Athens, Greece, in 2011, is attached to the local Chabad center and run as a project of cultural ambassadorship by the rabbi and his wife, neither of whom is of Sephardi descent. The kitchen, the owners informed me, is managed by a Greek Christian woman who ensures that the dishes, derived from a number of English-language Sephardi cookbooks, are prepared in an authentic Greek style. Gostijo's website explains,

> We felt [Gostijo] had to do more than offer delicious and unique cuisine. It had to share an entire culture. The result is Gostijo, a culinary exploration of the Sephardic cuisine of the Mediterranean Jews… We chose the name Gostijo as it means "sharing food" in Ladino, the traditional language of Sephardic Jews. And this is the aim of the restaurant—to share the traditional Sephardic recipes and the rich and ancient culture of Sephardic Jews.[5]

The menu offers a mixture of Sephardi classics like *huevos haminados* (baked eggs) and *bourekitas* (little pies), Greek dishes (*moussaka*, *souvlaki*, *gyro*), and contemporary Israeli favorites (Palestinian *falafel* and *mujaddara*, Ashkenazi *chicken schnitzel*). At the same time, one notes that the menu labels Sephardi leek fritters in Spanish as *keftes de puerro* (using the Spanish word for leeks) rather than by their usual Judeo-Spanish moniker, *keftes de prasa*. While it is certainly not the case that only Sephardi Jews are authorized to cook Sephardi cuisine, such slippages highlight the complex relationships of Gostijo's operators and head chef with a Sephardi culture which they approach from outsiders' perspectives.

Located in the Psiri neighborhood of downtown Athens, Gostijo caters both to locals and to Jewish tourists (the website is, tellingly, available in English, Greek, and Hebrew). There are increasing numbers of Sephardi restaurants around the world, including such exemplars as Jerusalem's Barood, La Escudilla in Madrid, and La Vara in Brooklyn. The dishes offered by these establishments are often framed as the heritage foods of the restaurants' owners.[6] The variety of dishes on Gostijo's menu, on the other hand, suggests both an interruption of traditional familial lines of culinary transmission and the existence of alternative avenues for the propagation of recipes, through the doubled mediation of the cookbooks used in the restaurant's kitchen and the restaurant's own interpretations of Sephardi recipes offered to customers. I argue that the Greek and Israeli dishes on Gostijo's menu should not be understood as evidence of inconsistency in the restaurant's focus, nor as a consequence of the non-Sephardi origins of its managers, but instead as a characteristic feature of contemporary efforts to codify Sephardi food along Mediterranean lines.[7] The intermingling of categories like "Greek," "Israeli," and "Sephardi" on Gostijo's tables reflects an uncertainty about the precise location, in time and space, of the Sephardi world. Did it exist in Iberia, or the Levant? Is it all around us in modern Greece? Or has it, perhaps, migrated to Israel? This restaurant, a ten-minute walk from the Acropolis, operated by Ashkenazim with food cooked by a Christian, offers space for the (re)presentation of Sephardi food cultures. Gostijo's very existence suggests a response to the uncertain ontological status of a Sephardi cuisine—and a Sephardi culture—which, in the lachrymose view of popular narratives of Sephardi history, has been perceived to be in decline since the Iberian expulsions in 1492 and 1496. In such a conception of Sephardi history, the vibrant Sephardi world of the early twentieth-century Levant can only be a belated anomaly, always already doomed to deliquescence. The unexpected continuity evidenced at Gostijo recalls both the rupture of Levantine Sephardi culture with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the ravages of World War II, and the inevitable accompaniment of such ruptures by persistent, new manifestations of Sephardi culture.[8] In light of

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[5] "About," Gostijo Kosher Restaurant, accessed August 19, 2019, https://www.gostijo.gr/about/.

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[6] Authenticity in cuisine is, in any case, a bogeyman. El fogón Sefardi, in Segovia, for example, serves suckling pig in addition to *keftes de puerro*. Market considerations likely mandate the inclusion of this non-kosher Segovian specialty.

[7] On the construction of Mediterranean cuisine and its overlap with Sephardi cuisine, see Harry Eli Kashdan, "Anglophone Cookbooks and the Making of the Mediterranean," *Food and Foodways* 25, no. 1 (2017): 1-19; 4-6 on Claudia Roden.

[8] On the lachrymose view of Sephardi history and evolving counter-narratives, see Sarah Abreyava Stein, "Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries since 1492," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 327-329. As Stein details, most reappraisals of Sephardi history begin by deconstructing the "Sephardi Mystique" of the Golden Age of al-Andalus. My attention, instead, is on the slow rupture of Sephardi history in

Gostijo's menu of Sephardi, Israeli, and Greek dishes, any food eaten—or perceived to be eaten—by Sephardim might be, or become, Sephardi food. Dishes stand equally as exemplars of particular cultural traditions and avatars of a broadly constructed Mediterranean culinary and cultural zone.[9]

The seven cookbooks I borrowed from Gostijo's library reflect this ambiguity. Some, like Gilda Angel's *Sephardi Holiday Cooking: Recipes and Traditions* and Viviane Alchech Miner's *From My Grandmother's Kitchen: A Sephardic Cookbook*, describe their recipes exclusively as "Sephardi."[10] Others, like Joyce Goldstein's *Sephardic Flavors: Jewish Cooking of the Mediterranean*, Robert Sternberg's *The Sephardic Kitchen: The Healthful Food and Rich Culture of the Mediterranean Jews*, and Pamela Grau Twena's *The Sephardic Table: The Vibrant Cooking of the Mediterranean Jews*, treat Sephardi and Mediterranean as synonymous descriptors of a particular historical milieu; Sternberg allows a slippage between the cuisines of Sephardim and "other Jewish communities in the Mediterranean region," without specifying the (presumably Mizrahi) communities to which he refers.[11] Yet other texts focus on personal dishes local to particular countries or communities, as in Nicholas Stavroulakis' *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*.[12] Claudia Roden's *The Book of Jewish Food* embraces a much broader geography; the Sephardi half of this enormous cookbook includes dishes

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early-twentieth century Levant, from the decline of the Ottoman Empire to World War II to the establishment of the State of Israel and the rise of Arab nationalist movements.

[9] As Claudia Roden put it, "there is really no such thing as Jewish food... Local regional food becomes Jewish when it travels with Jews to new homelands. And even then it has only been regarded as such in certain circumstances." Claudia Roden, "Cooking in Israel: A Changing Mosaic," in *National & Regional Styles of Cookery: Oxford Symposium 1981. Proceedings*, ed. Alan Davidson (London: Prospect Books, 1981): 112-117.

[10] Gilda Angel, *Sephardic Holiday Cooking: Recipes and Traditions* (Mount Vernon, NY: Decalogue Books, 1986); Viviane Alchech Miner and Linda Krinn, *From My Grandmother's Kitchen: A Sephardic Cookbook* (Gainesville, FL: Triad Pub. Co., 1984).

[11] Robert Sternberg, *The Sephardic Kitchen: The Healthful Food and Rich Culture of the Mediterranean Jews* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), vii. See also Joyce Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors: Jewish Cooking of the Mediterranean* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000); Pamela Grau Twena, *The Sephardic Table: The Vibrant Cooking of the Mediterranean Jews: A Personal Collection of Recipes from the Middle East, North Africa and India* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

[12] Nicholas Stavroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece* (Port Jefferson, NY: Cadmus Press, 1986).

from Indian, Chinese, and Mizrahi Jewish communities alongside recipes from the Mediterranean.[13] Roden's *Book of Jewish Food* is by far the best-known of these texts and still, more than three decades after its first publication, enjoying a top-ten ranking in Amazon.com's kosher cookbooks subsection.[14] Stavroulakis' *Cookbooks of the Jews of Greece* is the only one of these volumes to have been translated, as *Cuisine des juifs de Grèce*, in the French.[15] Many of these texts narrate a culinary history that traces Sephardi cuisine to medieval Iberia, but others have a more immediate focus on a grandmother's or mother-in-law's kitchen. Weaving through these varied perspectives are a fascination with the Judeo-Spanish language, an uncertainty about whether to celebrate the role of women as stewards of Sephardi culinary culture or bemoan their relegation to the kitchen as a relic of patriarchal mores, and an unexamined Orientalism vis-à-vis the Sephardi world. What emerges from these elements is a sensation of "pastness"—what Rey Chow, writing about her experiences wandering through American Chinatowns, has described as "an epistemic status [as] ethnographic museums, where relics, including people as well as objects from the 'past' are put on display."[16] In Anglophone Sephardi cookbooks, food itself becomes an object from the past; these cookbooks invariably describe the Sephardi world as something already lost and in danger of being entirely forgotten.

The sources used at Gostijo can be divided into two groups. The first consists of what I, borrowing a term from David Sutton call "nostalgia cookbooks," by women and men who trace their ancestry to Iberia and mourn the decline of the cosmopolitan Levant around the mid-twentieth century, drawing comparisons between the demise of that world and the end of an imagined period of interreligious harmony in Iberia upon the expulsions at the close of the fifteenth century.[17] As Svetlana Boym eloquently put it, "Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy."[18] The fantasy, in this case, lies in both the imaginary of *convivencia* in Al-Andalus and the suggestion of unproblematic continuity between the Sephardi culture(s) of medieval Iberia and those of the early twentieth century.[19] The second group of texts includes cookbooks by non-Sephardim who treat the Sephardi world as an historical and anthropological object waiting to be discovered from the outside, and subsequently salvaged and preserved for ongoing consumption through the practices of cooking and eating. Both groups of texts describe a secret cultural space that can be entered through rites of discovery and initiation, offered as a gift first to cookbook writers—by childhood experience, marriage into Sephardi families, or anthropological investigation—and, subsequently, to readers like Gostijo's Ashkenazi owners.

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[13] Claudia Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand and Vilna to the Present Day* (London: Viking, 1987).

[14] "The Book of Jewish Food," Amazon, accessed October 22, 2019, https://smile.amazon.com/Book-Jewish-Food-Odyssey-Samarkand/dp/0394532589/.

[15] Nicholas Stravroulakis, *Cuisine des Juifs de Grèce*, translated by Mireille Mazoyer-Saül (Paris: L'Asiathèque, 1995).

[16] Rey Chow, "The Provocation of *Dim Sum*; or, Making Diaspora Visible on Film," *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* 9, no. 2 (2009): 210.

In *The Book of Jewish Food*, Claudia Roden approaches Sephardi food from the perspective of her nostalgia for her childhood in Cairo. She explains, "My own world disappeared forty years ago, but it has remained powerful in my imagination. When you are cut off from your past, that past takes a stronger hold on your emotions."[20] Roden's personal experience is, in her cookbook, a microcosm of the Sephardi experience writ large. "This centuries-old chapter of Jewish life has come to an end," she writes, "but we will always have traces of it on the table, for cooking is the part of culture that lasts."[21] Roden's sense that the Sephardi world ended around the middle of the twentieth century is repeated in all of the Anglophone texts I examine here, where authors figure themselves as redeemers of a culture on the verge of being lost, presenting culinary artifacts of Sepharad for an audience in search of foods that are both exotic and "authentically" Jewish. In Roden's case, the termination of the post-expulsion Sephardi world is precisely coincident with her own family's departure from Egypt in 1956.[22] This is typical of the nostalgic writings examined by Svetlana Boym, who asserts, "in the emotional topography of memory, personal and historical events tend to be conflated."[23] For Roden, there is little difference between the end of her childhood world and the end of the Sephardi world at large. Preoccupied with her own memories of Egypt, Roden turns to food because it is "a link with the past," with "the old life," but the precise temporal location of this "past" is hazy. *The Book of Jewish Food* embraces a transhistorical perspective in which "the past" to which Roden refers might be located anywhere, from her childhood home in Cairo to her Sephardi ancestors' homes in Spain.[24]

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[17] David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

[18] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), xiii. These cookbooks partake, in particular, in Boym's "reflective nostalgia," which "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and time" (p. 47).

[19] For reappraisals of the idea of *convivencia*, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "*Convivencia* in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea," *Religion Compass* 3, no. 1 (2009): 72-85; and, Jonathan Ray, "Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval *Convivencia*," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 1-18.

[20] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 3. For a discussion of the complexity of Roden's claims to an Egyptian identity. See Carol Bardenstein, "Transmissions Interrupted: Reconfiguring Food, Memory, and Gender in the Cookbook-Memoirs of Middle Eastern Exiles," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 1 (2002): 353-387.

[21] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 231.

This diachronicity makes the Sephardi world a space of the mind which can be eternally recreated on the table. When Roden writes, "Many of the grand dishes and refinements [of Sephardi cuisine] were acquired during the great periods in the Sephardi experience," she refers not only to the early modern Ottoman Empire and medieval Iberia, but to "the eighth to the twelfth century in Baghdad" and the world of the Sephardim's own ancestors, Jews who chose to stay in Babylonia after the Persian conquest.[25] Robert Sternberg joins Roden in narrating Sephardi history from both medieval Iberia and the medieval Middle East, while for Nicholas Stavroulakis, who considers Greek Romaniote and Sephardi dishes side by side, references to recipes that may date back "to antiquity" lend Sephardi food an ancient gravitas.[26] In many of these cookbooks, continuity is just as important as antiquity. The dishes do not simply have ancient roots, but are often presented as unchanged from their historical versions. Sephardi cuisine therefore provides a direct link with the past. Offering proof of this point, Roden notes that many of her inherited recipes "are very like dishes cooked in the Iberian peninsula today."[27] She describes the "thrilling" sensation of wandering through Seville and coming across "narrow winding streets which bore the names of relatives and friends of mine," suggesting intimate links between food culture and language.[28] Joyce Goldstein, in the rationale for her *Sephardic Flavors*, suggests something similar. She avers that she "needed to see what remains from the Spanish and Portuguese repertoire, or was derived from it, and how the recipes have changed and evolved as the Sephardim changed locale." Goldstein does not explain why she felt this need, assuming her readers, like her, intrinsically value the idea of maintaining an intact tradition. Her conclusion: "Not much has changed."[29] Unspoken, here, is the idea that older is better, truer, or more authentic. For these writers, a key part of the importance of Sephardi cuisine is its antiquity. Recipes of more recent origin are correspondingly less valuable.

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[22] In 1956 and after, the currents of Egyptian nationalism made life in Egypt untenable for many Jews, including both foreign and Egyptian citizens, as a result of economic pressures and outright expulsions. The complex of expulsions and nationalizations in late 1956 deserves some elaboration. Joel Beinin's excellent *The Dispersal of Egyptian Jewry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) explains the process by which many Jews were forced to leave Egypt in detail: "In response to the British-French-Israeli attack on Egypt on October 29, 1956, Egypt took harsh measures against its Jewish community. About 1,000 Jews were detained, more than half of them Egyptian citizens. Thirteen thousand French and British citizens were expelled from Egypt in retaliation for the tripartite attack, among them many Jews. In addition, 500 Jews not holding French or British citizenship were expelled. Some 460 Jewish-owned businesses were sequestered. Many Jews lost their jobs. The government nationalized the assets of all British and French citizens, and Jews holding those nationalities were affected in that capacity... When the hostilities were over, Jews were subjected to unofficial pressures to leave Egypt and renounce their citizenship" (p. 87).

[23] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 52.

[24] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 11 and 211.

According to these cookbooks, Sephardi culture is not just located in the past, but in a past that was itself unchanging. Per these texts, even when Sephardi culture thrived, it was somehow outside of time. In the modern Mediterranean it was still linked to Sepharad, in medieval Sepharad it remained tied to Baghdad, and in medieval Baghdad it was still linked to Jewish antiquity. It is for this reason that both Sternberg and Goldstein emphasize what Goldstein calls a "strange symmetry": When the Sephardim were expelled from Spain, "the last day for departure was the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av… the anniversary of the destruction of the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem."[30] The perceived importance of this historical coincidence lies in its echoing of what Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi calls the "cyclical quality of liturgical time."[31] The dates of several of these volumes' publications—Goldstein, 2000; Sternberg, 1996; Roden, 1987, reissued 1996; and Twena, 1998—suggest an affinity with acts of memory surrounding the 500-year anniversary of the expulsions of Sephardi Jews from Iberia in 1492 and 1496. While none of these cookbooks were translated into Spanish, they certainly capitalize on a wave of memorial activity for Sepharad at the end of the twentieth century. In Goldstein's telling, Sephardi history is, like Jewish ritual observance, subject to repetition. The Sephardim, then, always await the next disaster in a history marked by cataclysm. As Viviane Alchech Miner puts it, "Somehow I knew, even when I was very young, that our situation wasn't permanent."[32] This representation of Sephardi culture is an odd fusion of the static and the temporary: the only constant is the inevitability of disaster, against which is arrayed a set of recipes characterized by, as Boym might suggest, a nostalgic, romantic fantasy of an unchanged culinary culture.

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[25] Ibid., 212-213.

[26] Sternberg, *The Sephardic Kitchen*, xiv; Stavroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*, 6.

[27] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 223.

[28] Ibid., 218.

[29] Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors*, 25.

Robert Sternberg enters an Orientalist mode when describing the diachronic nature of the Sephardi world. "In the Mediterranean," he explains, "ancient history lives side by side with modernity. Mysticism, the supernatural, romance, and poetry appear in all facets of everyday life, including cooking."[33] Sternberg's Orientalist language insists on a vision of the Sephardi world as other to "normative" and "modern" (that is, Ashkenazi) Judaism. This perspective is shared by both Sephardi and non-Sephardi authors; Sternberg's figuration of a Mediterranean imbued with decadence and magic is only the most extreme example of a kind of facile exoticism in which many of these cookbook authors indulge. Roden describes Sephardi food as "sensual," and "refined and sophisticated," while the Sephardim themselves are "colorful," with "a sunny, hedonistic nature… sensitive to beauty and pleasure."[34] Miner tells us simply that Sephardi food is "an exotic blend," and Twena agrees, adding that Sephardi life offered a "simple, yet colorful existence."[35] Echoing evocations of a particular "Sephardi mystique" common in Ashkenazi writing, these cookbooks repeatedly describe the color and warmth of Sephardi culture in implicit contrast to the Ashkenazi world with which, these authors presume, readers will be more familiar.[36] Roden makes the comparison explicit: "The Ashkenazi world is a cold world… The Sephardi world is a warm one."[37] The dichotomy of Roden's construction offers a commercial rationale for the publication of the text: readers who believe themselves already familiar with Jewish food must still purchase Roden's book to acquaint themselves with the full range of Jewish cooking.

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[30] Ibid., 12.

[31] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 42.

[32] Miner and Krinn, *From My Grandmother's Kitchen*, 152.

[33] Sternberg, *The Sephardic Kitchen*, vii-viii.

Orientalist tropes aside, Roden and Miner's bias in favor of Sephardi food and culture can be described as a function of both the marketing of their cookbooks and their personal nostalgia for their childhoods in the Sephardi world. The other authors represented in Gostijo's cookbook library have different connections to Sephardi culture. Stavroulakis strikes an objective, scholarly attitude towards the Jewish cultures of his own Greece, but Goldstein, Sternberg, Angel, and Twena construct their interest in Sephardi food in romantic terms. For Angel and Twena, this is a literal romance; both married into Sephardi families. Twena describes an effort of many months' careful cajoling before Claire, her husband's "exotic Iraqi mother, […] finally allowed [Twena] into the kitchen."[38] She continues, "I felt like a guru's disciple, gaining enlightenment in morsels."[39] Goldstein and Sternberg, on the other hand, approach Sephardi cuisine as an offshoot of their interest in the Mediterranean zone.[40] They write of their love for and fascination with the contemporary Mediterranean, broadly. Goldstein explains, "Since 1957, the year of my first voyage to the Mediterranean, I have been in love with the food and flavors of the region."[41] Her love for the Mediterranean provides the basis for her culinary authority. "After many years of cooking Mediterranean food, I believe I have acquired a natural affinity for the seasonings of the region."[42] The oxymoron of an "acquired natural affinity" underlines Goldstein's perspective as an outside researcher of Sephardi culture. Sternberg shares Goldstein's love for an exotic Mediterranean. He writes, "I encountered Sephardic and other forms of Mediterranean Jewish cooking for the first time in Israel, where I lived as a student from 1972 to 1974. I was fascinated with the types of foods produced in the kitchens of some of my non-Ashkenazic Israeli friends and in the ethnic restaurants and kiosks of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv."[43] Implicit in his memories is the claim that Sephardi food is itself "ethnic." Ashkenazi food, by unspoken contrast, is normative Jewish food.

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[34] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 212 and 132.

[35] Miner and Krinn, *From My Grandmother's Kitchen*, 6; Twena, *The Sephardic Table*, 14.

[36] On the "Sephardi mystique," see John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Carsten Schapkow, *Role Model and Countermodel: The Golden Age of Iberian Jewry and German Jewish Culture during the Era of Emancipation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016); Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Year* Book 34 (1989), 47-66.

[37] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 16.

[38] Twena, *The Sephardic Table*, 10.

[39] Ibid., 22.

Love for Sephardi food, whether from the perspective of personal memory and affiliation or "acquired affinity," forms the foundation for an argument, repeated in all of these cookbooks, about the superiority of the Sephardi way of life. This argument, facilitated by the corollary assumption that Sephardi culture exists only in the past, not the present, is expressed most clearly in the way these texts narrate Sephardi history following the expulsions from Iberia. In each text, we learn how the Sephardi diaspora dominated local Jewish communities in the Mediterranean. According to Roden, "Iberians quickly overwhelmed the Balkan communities," while in Morocco, "the newcomers quickly came to play a central role in the development of the country... with their superior culture."[44] In the Levant, Stavroulakis echoes Roden's sentiments, noting that upon "the arrival of the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, Romaniote Jews were suddenly faced with a more sophisticated culture."[45] Goldstein adds, "Romaniote communities were eventually obliged to accept Sephardic cultural dominance and language."[46] Finally, Sternberg summarizes, "Sephardic culture became the dominant culture and Sephardic cuisine became the dominant cuisine."[47] While I do not contest the historical narrative of Sephardi cultural dominance over other Jewish communities in the Mediterranean, the language of these cookbooks reflects not just dominance, but a normative standard of cultural superiority. Absent are any explanations of what perceived inadequacies might have made the local Jewish communities of Morocco, the Balkans, or the Levant inferior to the newly arrived Sephardim.

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[40] For more on the elision of Sephardi and Mediterranean, see Joëlle Bahoul, "The Sephardic Jew as Mediterranean: A View from Kinship and Gender," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 4, no. 2 (1994): 197-207.

[41] Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors*, 7.

[42] Ibid., 26.

[43] Sternberg, *The Sephardic Kitchen*, 9.

[44] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 225 and 494.

The other normative statements repeated through all of Gostijo's cookbooks concern women's roles in the Sephardi kitchen. Describing her mother-in-law's culinary expertise, Twena writes, "Cooking was the only medium of expression available to women of her culture."[48] Marc Angel, in an introduction to his wife, Gilda Angel's, cookbook, writes that women's kitchen labor "reflected a love and devotion for family and guests."[49] Goldstein waxes nostalgic:

> Most women worked at home, feeding the immediate family or entertaining guests and extended family in a hospitable and generous manner… Most didn't work outside the home, so they did not have to rush to get a meal together for the family, as so many of us do today. It would be wonderful to return to the traditions of the Sephardic dinner table, to the joy of the family meal and the pleasure of extended conversation. I hope that these recipes will tempt you into the kitchen.[50]

Leaving aside these observations' apparent ignorance of the types of economically productive labor many Sephardi women did undertake in the home—dressmaking and tailoring, tatting lace, etc.—Goldstein's nostalgia here appears to be directed at a type of convivial family life enabled by the confinement of women to the domestic sphere.[51] Roden seems, at first, to parrot these sentiments, though a slightly ironic tone lends her observations greater nuance.

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[45] Stavroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*, 4.

[46] Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors*, 17.

[47] Sternberg, *The Sephardic Kitchen*, viii.

[48] Twena, *The Sephardic Table*, 11.

[49] Angel, *Sephardic Holiday Cooking*, 14.

[50] Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors*, 27.

> The men went to work, the women prepared the meals… It was labor-intensive, with a lot of pounding, hollowing, stuffing, wrapping and rolling into tiny balls and fingers. The women prided themselves on their skills and—so my father said—were happy to spend hours in the kitchen.[52]

In introductions and acknowledgments, a few of these authors express their gratitude to the "women" or "ladies" who taught them these recipes.[53] Yet for all these cookbooks' ethnographic bent, the actual voices of the women who provided these authors with culinary instruction are largely absent. The one exception comes from Twena, who relates a conversation with a woman she met while doing her research.

> [She] told me that her children had always asked for her recipes and that somehow there was never enough time. This was a common sentiment among the women I cooked with or interviewed—they did not know how to pass on their way of life; the pace had changed.[54]

The authors of these cookbooks, then, whether male or female, inscribe themselves within a salvage paradigm, rescuing from obscurity a culture that its own practitioners—Roden and Miner excepted—are seen as incapable of maintaining. This attitude is evidence of a kind of doublethink: even while ascribing superiority to the Sephardi culture that spread from Iberia throughout the Mediterranean, these texts assume that contemporary Sephardi culture is a degraded relic, divorced from its rhapsodic past.

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[51] On Sephardi women's work, see Ruth Lamdan, "Jewish Women as Providers in the Generations Following the Expulsion from Spain," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 13 (2007): 49-67.

[52] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 6.

[53] Twena, *The Sephardic Table*, 6; Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors*, 27; Stavroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*, xi.

[54] Twena, *The Sephardic Table*, 14-15.

The Sephardi language, Judeo-Spanish, is, like Sephardi food, generally asserted to be a major tradition in steep decline. Most of these authors content themselves with mention of the language's medieval Castilian roots and descriptions of the accretion of Levantine linguistic elements in the evolving Judeo-Spanish that was spoken in the eastern Mediterranean. Sternberg sprinkles *The Sephardic Kitchen* with Judeo-Spanish proverbs and folktales that similarly situate food within the broader practice of culture, and Roden further elaborates the linkages between language, food, and culture, recalling that, as a child, Judeo-Spanish "represented a mysterious lost paradise, a world of romance and courage and glorious chivalry which enmeshed us all in invisible threads of deep longing with its songs about lovers in Seville and proverbs about meat stews and almond cakes."[55] Roden's lambent nostalgia suggests that even in her childhood Judeo-Spanish was already experienced as an artifact of a lost past. Goldstein goes further, describing Judeo-Spanish as "spoken by an ever dwindling number of elderly Sephardim," seeming to anticipate the language's imminent demise alongside that of its last speakers.

The elements metering the collapse of Sephardi culture are remarkably consistent across these texts: wistful, romantic longing for the milieu of the early twentieth-century Mediterranean, attempts to account for the changing roles of women at home and in the workforce, and the death of the Judeo-Spanish language. Only Sternberg acknowledges "living Sephardic Jewish communities" around the world, "in Israel, France, Latin America, South Africa, and the United States," but these communities—with the possible exception of the Israeli one—are explicitly not the subject of his survey; the book's subtitle evokes *The Healthful Food and Rich Culture of the Mediterranean Jews*, not the global Sephardi diaspora. In this light, Sternberg, like the other authors discussed here, contributes to a recipe archive oriented towards the preservation of a dead culture, not the propagation of its still-extant forms. These texts evince an inconsistent understanding of history and time: in their view, while the expulsions from Iberia emphatically do not constitute a cultural break, the decline of the cosmopolitan Mediterranean as a result of the spread of Nazism to Greece and the fall of various imperial and colonial powers across North Africa and the Levant emphatically does.[56] This core assumption makes of Sephardi cuisine a relic, an artifact, something to be recuperated from an inviolable narrative of loss.

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[55] Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, 7.

Judeo-Spanish Recipes from *Aki Yerushalayim*

The very existence of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s recipe column tends to negate some of the major assumptions of Anglophone sources, though it is important to recognize that *Aki Yerushalayim* is itself something of an oddity, even before turning to the recipe column which sits, like an afterthought, at the end of all but the very first of the journal's one hundred issues (1979-2016). The major centers of the modern Judeo-Spanish press were in pre-World War II Salonika, Constantinople, Smyrna, and Sofia.[57] This press flowered along with Levantine Sephardi culture near the end of the nineteenth century, and scholars—like cookbook authors—generally agree that its heyday had passed by the middle of the twentieth. Though the descendants of many of the Mediterranean's Sephardi communities indeed moved to Israel, by the time of the journal's inauguration, Judeo-Spanish had for some decades been understood to be a language in steep decline. In historical terms, *Aki Yerushalayim* was already belated when the first issue went to press; the establishment of a new Judeo-Spanish periodical in late twentieth-century Jerusalem was a quixotic endeavor. Greek Thessaloniki, Turkish Istanbul and Izmir, and Bulgarian Sofia had taken the places of the Ottoman cities which had long been comparatively hospitable to Sephardi Jews, and Jerusalem was positioning itself as the center of a new, Hebrew literary culture ostensibly open to, and speaking for, all Israeli Jews.[58]

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[56] On the links between constructions of Mediterranean culture and memories of medieval Spain, see Tabea Alexa Linhard, *Jewish Spain: A Mediterranean Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 6-10.

[57] Olga Borovaya suggests only the first three sites in *Modern Ladino Culture*. Sarah Abrevaya Stein includes Sofia alongside the other cities in *Making Jews Modern*. Jerusalem was a minor player in the world of the Judeo-Spanish press until its rapid development after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. See Brad Sabin Hill, "Printing," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Jeffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

In founding *Aki Yerushalayim*, Moshe Shaul, editor-in-chief of the journal for the entirety of its run, aimed to both fill the Judeo-Spanish gap in Israeli journalism and to standardize the spelling of Judeo-Spanish written in Latin characters. This mission quickly expanded to include historical essays, literary materials, and reviews of recent publications in Judeo-Spanish or about Sephardi Jews. Recipes were first featured in the second issue of *Aki Yerushalayim*, where they were appended to two brief articles on food in Sephardi culture which, like Anglophone sources, assert an unchanging Sephardi culinary tradition preserved since the expulsions from Iberia. [59] They continued to appear, generally without connection to the journal's other content, in all subsequent issues, and were regularized in issue number five, April 1980, under the title "Gastronomia Sefaradi." The column was written by Kamelia Shahar until the fiftieth issue of *Aki Yerushalayim* (n.2, 1994), when authorship passed to Zelda Ovadia, who retained her position until the magazine, facing declining subscription numbers and decreased government funding from Israel's National Authority for Ladino, ceased publication with its one hundredth issue in 2016.[60] Alongside the regular recipe column, the journal only sporadically included articles on culinary topics—sixteen in total, including the two found before the recipes that debuted in the journal's second issue. These articles range from personal narratives about cooking with one's family to culinary histories examining the roles of Sephardim in the sugar and cacao trades. Twice, the journal printed poems about food. A handful of issues include a cookbook among the journal's regular book reviews. On four occasions general cooking advice is offered alongside the recipes in "Gastronomia Sefaradi." Much more common—twenty instances in total—is the inclusion of Judeo-Spanish *refranes* (short sayings or proverbs) on culinary themes interspersed among an issue's recipes. In its 37 years, *Aki Yerushalayim* provided recipes for about 350 dishes. About half of these were reproduced, unchanged, in 1995 in the volume *El gizado Sefaradi*, itself replete with *refranes* and interpolated literary selections.[61]

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[58] For a discussion of the question of whether Jerusalem is, or was ever, a Sephardi city, see Matthias B. Lehmann, "Rethinking Sephardi Identity: Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 81-109.

[59] "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki* Yerushalayim 2 (1979): 25; Matilda Cohen, *La Savor De La Tradision*, *Aki Yerushalayim* 2 (1979): 26-28.

[60] Thirteen issues of *Aki Yerushalayim* were released as double issues, meaning that only 87 separate editions of the journal were actually published.

Granted the unusual nature of this source, it is worth pausing to examine closely the forms taken by the "Gastronomia Sefaradi" column over the decades of its publication. The recipes themselves, extracted from their curious context, are generally unremarkable. Eggs, eggplants, and cheese are heavily featured, as are rolled, filled, and stuffed foods, which are variously baked or fried. One finds directions for composing salads, rice dishes, and soups, as well as instructions for baking all kinds of Sephardi sweets. To the culinary historian, a comparison between *Aki Yerushalayim* and popular Anglophone Sephardi cookbooks offers little that will alter our understanding of Levantine Sephardi cuisine. Instead of focusing on the dishes themselves, then, I direct my attention mainly to the form and framing of the "Gastronomia Sefaradi" column.

An article accompanying the first recipes featured in the journal, in the second issue of *Aki Yerushalayim*, offers a rationale for a discussion of Sephardi food by way of bemoaning the decline of matrilineal transmission and the vagueness of recipes passed down from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law over generations. The author, Matilda Cohen, goes so far as to lay blame for the decline of Sephardi cuisine on "the mothers," whose imprecise measurements and eagerness to cook for, rather than with, their children kept the current generation from learning to cook for themselves.[62] The recipes are offered as demonstration of the importance of preserving typical dishes. With Cohen's complaint about Sephardi mothers in mind, recipes in *Aki Yerushalayim* are invariably precise and easy to follow. After the second issue, the decline of Sephardi cuisine is never again mentioned, perhaps because, as we learn in a short piece introducing the newly-regularized "Gastronomia Sefaradi" column in the fifth issue, so many "female readers… sent us recipes" for inclusion in the journal.[63] The eager response of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s women readers belies the journal's early contention that Sephardi cuisine had declined. These women's submissions offer a clear demonstration that Sephardi food was, on the contrary, alive and well in Israel. The Sephardim gathered in Israel asserted the liveliness of their culture in direct contradiction to *Aki Yerushalayim*'s own adoption of diasporic and Zionist perspectives suggesting the gradual decline and disappearance of specifically Sephardi foodways, and of Jews in Muslim lands more broadly.

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[61] Moshe Shaul, Aldina Quintana Rodriguez and Zelda Ovadia, eds., *El gizado Sefaradi* (Zaragoza: IberCaja, 1995).

[62] Cohen, *La Savor De La Tradision*, 26. Matilda Cohen, whose name appears as both Matilda Cohen and Matilda Kohen in the second issue of *Aki Yerushalayim*, may be Matilda Koén-Sarano, a prolific writer and teacher of Judeo-Spanish, whose recent works include the bilingual Hebrew/Judeo-Spanish cookbook, *Gizar kon gozo: Rekolio de rechetas de kuzina de las Komunitas sefaradías* (Jerusalem: Sh. Zak., 2010).

In most issues of *Aki Yerushalayim,* the recipes are printed without introduction or explanation. On one occasion, recipes for traditional Passover dishes appear in an April issue, though, as usual, no narrative element accompanies the six dishes that are featured.[64] Two other issues also feature Jewish holiday recipes, this time alongside short blurbs about the festivities, though without calendrical links between the dates of publication and observance.[65] On eight occasions, the recipes that appear in "Gastronomia Sefaradi" are credited to published Sephardi cookbooks, including one instance that represents the only point of contact between the two corpuses examined in this paper: in issue 67 (September, 2001), three recipes are reproduced from Claudia Roden's *Book of Jewish Food.*[66] Issue 78 (October, 2005) is devoted to dishes of the Bulgarian Sephardi community. Issue 81 (April, 2007) again features recipes from Bulgaria, as well as Turkish Sephardi dishes. Issues 93 (April, 2013), 94 (December, 2013), 96 (December, 2014), and 97-98 (December, 2015) are devoted to specific ingredients: onion, *kashkaval* or white cheese, rice, and spinach, respectively, each with brief narrative introductions attesting to the importance of these ingredients in Sephardi cookery. This late pattern echoes a much earlier examples from issue 6 (July, 1980), which includes three recipes based on eggplant by Djina Kamhi, who writes about her mother's cooking in a full-length article in the same issue. Issue 19-20 (October, 1983-January, 1984) also focuses on the eggplant, perhaps the most characteristic ingredient of Levantine Sephardi cooking. The short explanatory piece accompanying the recipes offers the rationale, familiar to scholars of the Mediterranean diet, that the eggplant is a low-calorie, nutrient dense food worthy of greater use in the kitchen.

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[63] Kamelia Shahar, "Gastronomia," *Aki Yerushalahyim* 5, no. 15 (1980): 54.

[64] Kamelia Shahar, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 6, no.21 (1984): 46-48.

[65] Recipes for Rosh Hashanah, Shavuot, and Yom Kippur, Zelda Ovadia, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 16, no. 51 (1995): 85-87; recipes for Purim, Zelda Ovadia, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 22, no. 65 (2001): 84-86.

[66] Zelda Ovadia, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 22, no. 67 (2001): 77-79.

It is clear from this overview that Moshe Shaul, editor of *Aki Yerushalayim*, and Kamelia Shahar and Zelda Ovadia, the gastronomy column's authors, struggled to determine the role of "Gastronomia Sefaradi" within the journal. "Gastronomia Sefaradi," in spite of its inclusion for almost the entirety of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s history, often seems to have a tentative relationship to the rest of the text. At a moment in the history of food writing when narrative introductions had already begun to regularly accompany cooking instructions, *Aki Yerushalayim*'s recipes only rarely engage the reader through storytelling. Shahar and Ovadia remain largely mysterious figures throughout their tenures. Shahar pens a brief introduction to the first official "Gastronomia" column, while Ovadia authors one full-length article in 2006.[67] Otherwise, these women's histories, and the stories of their personal relationships with food, remain opaque. Even Ovadia's article, a discussion of historical changes in Sephardi food which might have been occasion for reflection on the changing role of food in Sephardi culture, instead focuses mainly on listing technical innovations in the kitchen such as food processors and refrigerators, without pause for reflection on the consequences of the adaptation of these technologies. In her introduction to the first official "Gastronomia" column, Shahar strikes a reactive posture, remarking that many female readers sent in their own recipes after the journal published some in earlier issues, and offering a space for the continued presentation of some small number of these submissions. In subsequent issues, however, guest contributors are only rarely credited, and the unclear sourcing of most of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s recipes only heightens the reader's sense, already aroused by the frequent changes in its format and focus, that the column is a somewhat *ad hoc* production subject to editorial whims.

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[67] Kamelia Shahar, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 5 (1980): 54; Zelda Ovadia "La Kuzina Sefaradi-Ayer I Oy," *Aki Yerushalayim* 26-27, no. 79 (2006): 56-58.

The place of the culinary in a "Judeo-Spanish Cultural Journal" appears to be the subject of ongoing negotiation. The place of the culinary in Judeo-Spanish culture itself, however, is never questioned. The creative team's struggles with the "Gastronomia" column reflect a shallow engagement with the assumed importance of food to culture; the translation of food, understood to be an important and organic element of Sephardi culture, into a journalistic frame therefore causes them ongoing editorial difficulty. It seems easy enough for Shaul and his team to produce pieces about Sephardi literature, history, and music, but finding a way of producing compelling journalism on the subject of food presents them an insoluble problem. In this light, the frequent intermixing of recipes and *refranes* indicates an attempt to somehow make food literary, not by the straightforward narrative means found in so many contemporary cookbooks (including the Anglophone Sephardi examples discussed above), but through the very *mise-en-page* of the journal. In the absence of a clear narrative perspective on Sephardi food, the juxtaposition of recipe and *refran*—many of which use culinary metaphors to make their gnomic points—not only indicates how food is naturalized within colloquialisms in the Judeo-Spanish language, but also allows the reader to understand Sephardi food as itself a vital idiom, coequal with Judeo-Spanish in expressing Sephardi culture. The positioning of food and language as the twin pillars of Sephardi distinctiveness reaches its height in an issue of *Aki Yerushalayim* that features recipes contributed by students studying to become Judeo-Spanish teachers.[68]

Two full-length articles in *Aki Yerushalayim* make explicit this connection between food and language. "Frutas I Plantas Komo Metaforas En Djudeo-Espanyol" offers a thorough list of vegetal metaphors commonly used in Judeo-Spanish, including a number of idiomatic gems: a "*ravano*," (radish), "*es una persona torpe, sin edukasion i sin intelijensia*," (a slow, uneducated, unintelligent person); "*echando bamyas*" (making okra), is lying; to say that something "*no es*

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[68] Zelda Ovadia, "Gastronomia Sefaradi," *Aki Yerushalayim* 22, no. 66 (2001): 90-91.

kastanyas" (is not chestnuts), means acknowledging the importance of what at first appears trivial.[69] These idioms place the culinary at the center of Judeo-Spanish expression. The other article on food and language appears at the midpoint of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s history. "Los terminos ajenos en la gastronomia djudeo-espanyola," by Aldina Quintana Rodriguez, uses the 50-issue corpus of "Gastronomia Sefaradi" columns published thus far as the basis for a linguistic investigation of the presence of foreign loanwords in Judeo-Spanish food writing. Quintana Rodriguez makes expected references to the incorporation of the non-variable foreign nouns that describe contemporary kitchen appliances, and ably describes how vocabulary from Turkish, Greek, and French—old sources of Judeo-Spanish loanwords—and even English—a more recent influence on the Judeo-Spanish lexicon—have become naturalized. Surprisingly, in spite of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s Israeli home, Quintana Rodriguez finds little evidence of a Hebrew influence in her corpus. "There are not many borrowings from Hebrew in this column," she writes. The only major exceptions are the use of Hebrew terms for milks with different fat contents, and the replacement of the Judeo-Spanish *masá* and *masás* by the transliterated Hebrew *matsa* and *matsot*.[70]

This linguistic analysis, especially, suggests the presence within Israel's borders of a Sephardi linguistic tradition that predates the Israeli nation, and is influenced by the languages of the Sephardi Mediterranean far more than by modern Hebrew. The same, of course, can be said of the recipes themselves, which form an increasingly self-conscious archive over the 37 years of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s publication. At regular intervals, the journal features an index of all the material published in it thus far, organized by categories and including both the recipes from "Gastronomia Sefaradi" and the other food writing in the journal. A researcher could not ask for a better guide to the material. The evolution of the "Gastronomia" column, towards the end of *Aki Yerushalayim*'s run, to focus on a single ingredient or the cuisines of particular territories in each issue seems, similarly, to anticipate a scholarly gaze, with the material neatly organized for later reference. In an interview on the occasion of the publication of the journal's final issue, Moshe Shaul acknowledged that *Aki Yerushalayim* was, in fact, particularly treasured by academics, who found it a valuable source on Sephardi culture.[71]

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[69] Rachel Amado Bortnick, "Frutas I Plantas Komo Metaforas En Djudeo-Espanyol," *Aki Yerushalayim* 22, no. 66 (2001): 58-60. Bortnick is a well-known evangelist for Judeo-Spanish, and founder of the Ladinokomunita online community for Judeo-Spanish speakers.

[70] Aldina Quintana Rodriguez, "Los Terminos Ajenos En La Gastronomia Djudeo-Espanyola," *Aki Yerushalayim* 16, no. 51 (1995): 46-49.

Aki Yerushalayim's self-conscious presentation of the persistence of Sephardi culture in a new context, decades after that culture supposedly found its demise, offers a vision of continuity in spite of disruption. The recipes which appear reliably within its pages attest to the power of new media of transmission to propagate—rather than merely preserve—old traditions, and powerfully evoke the entanglement of food and language. This archive troubles the narrative of the Sephardi world's total rupture, suggesting that foodways can offer important evidence of the persistence of cultures outside the environments that are, *post facto*, constructed as their natural homes. It is the journal's own readers who push back against the narrative of decline that accompanies the first recipes featured in the journal, demanding the creation of a female space within its pages for the kind of recipe exchange that, in earlier eras, took place either in neighbors' and relatives' kitchens, or in literary forms such as diaries and domestic manuals that were largely overlooked until feminist historians began to "redress the neglect of women's household contributions and roles" using precisely these kinds of sources.[72] The frequent dismissal of such writing as "ephemera" is inevitably "bound up with gender ideologies and the debasement of popular cultural material."[73] Yet, women's traditional control of food represents a "powerful channel for communication and a means to establish connection, create obligations, and exert influence."[74] The collection of recipes found in *Aki Yerushalyim* is the outcome of "collective… collaborative writing" through which women readers construct a public space for the continued sharing of culinary knowledge.[75] As a consequence of readers' demand for this space, the editors of *Aki Yerushalayim* gradually refine a vision of the "Gastronomia Sefaradi" column that offers both a public culinary forum and an archive of unambiguously living recipes for both popular and scholarly audiences.

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[71] Daniel Santacruz, "Oldest all-Ladino magazine in the world closes after 37 years," *Kolsefardim*, January 2017, accessed August 19, 2019, http://www.kolsefardim.net/oldest-all-ladino-magazine-in-the-world-says-adio-after-37-years.

[72] Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 2.

[73] Newlyn, "Challenging Contemporary Narrative Theory," 36.

[74] Carole M. Counihan, "Female Identity, Food, and Power in Contemporary Florence, *Anthropological Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1988): 53.

Conclusions

Cookbooks operating within the salvage paradigm necessarily figure the Judeo-Spanish language and Levantine Sephardi culture as a dead artifact; nostalgia cookbooks, for similar reasons, position Sephardi culture within their authors' own pasts. From the perspective of *Aki Yerushalayim*, on the other hand, Anglophone cookbooks writing from the perspective of either salvage or nostalgia—with the notable exception of the reproduction of three of Claudia Roden's recipes—are largely irrelevant to the journal's ongoing project of documenting contemporary Judeo-Spanish culture. Yet the rich interlinking of food and language immediately evident in both *Aki Yerushalayim* and Anglophone Sephardi cookbooks suggests a correspondence between these sources that invites a deeper examination of their opposite perspectives on Sephardi food cultures.

Judeo-Spanish itself, far from continuing to decline, is the subject of increasing numbers of study programs in the United States, Israel, and Spain. Sephardi cookbooks continue to be published for both commercial and Jewish communal audiences, and Sephardi cuisine seems equally to be enjoying a renaissance. Some of this resurgence is driven by tourist industries in Morocco and Spain that, beginning around the 500-year anniversary of the Iberian expulsions, have attempted to capitalize on nostalgia for Sepharad through cookbooks, restaurants, set menus, and the revival of specific dishes; another source of growing interest in Sephardi food comes from the flavors popularized by Yotam Ottolenghi at the Ottolenghi delis in London and in his cookbooks, especially *Jerusalem*, co-written with Ottolenghi head-chef Sami Tamimi.[76] This is not to suggest that the historicizing perspective offered by Anglophone cookbooks is simply "wrong," but to point to the necessity of an expanded vision of the possibilities for Sephardi food culture in the contemporary period. The breakages which nostalgia and salvage cookbooks dwell on are real; so is the persistence of Sephardi cuisine.[77]

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[75] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 8.

The juxtaposition of Anglophone cookbooks with *Aki Yerushalayim* sketches the outline of an archive of Sephardi recipes that does not differentiate recipes based on the varying motives behind their compilation. This archive offers both a preservation mechanism for a culture that defines itself through the repetition of its own rupture, as well as a living resource for the continued practice of Sephardi culinary tradition. It offers, simultaneously, a secure repository and a public library, suggesting that Sephardi cuisine can be conceived as a living tradition, with equal emphasis on both the "living"—changing and thriving—and "traditional"—ancient and precarious—of such a formulation. The lack of engagement between the two corpuses that make up the archive I have constructed here is an expression of the coexistence of temporal distance and affective intimacy between contemporary Sephardim and the memory of Sepharad. The inclusion of additional sources including, to name just a few of the many possibilities for expansion, contemporary Spanish and Portuguese Sephardi recipes from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, Hebrew Sephardi recipes from Israel, Judeo-Spanish recipes exchanged online in groups like Ladinokomunita, and embodied kitchen wisdom transmitted through practical lessons and oral testimony, can only deepen and enrich the archive of the Sephardi kitchen, which grows and changes in response to inputs and according to its own internal organizational logics and politics. It is never—or never only—a static repository into which recipes can be impersonally dumped, but rather offers a living resource for scholars of Sephardi foodways and, of course, for Sephardi cooks.

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[76] Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, *Jerusalem: A Cookbook* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2012). For Ottolenghi and Tamimi, the marketing of Sephardi food is a byproduct of the construction of a vision of possible culinary harmony between Israeli and Palestinians in contemporary Jerusalem. On uses of the Sephardi past in contemporary Spain, see Daniela Flesler and Adrián Pérez Melgosa, "Hervás, *Convivencia* and the heritagization of Spain's Jewish Past," *Journal of Romance Studies* 10, no. 2 (2010): 53-76 and "Marketing convivencia: contemporary tourist appropriations of Spain's Jewish past," in *Spain is (still) different: tourism and discourse in Spanish identity*, eds. Eugenia Afinoguénova and Jaume Martí-Olivella (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

[77] An especially prominent project documenting and reinvigorating medieval Iberian Jewish recipes is Ana Gómez-Bravo's *Converso Cookbook*, an online project featuring recipes and mini-essays on *Adafina* (Sabbath stew), Jewish ham (cured goose), and *almodrote* (a baked eggplant dish). "The Converso Cookbook," Stroum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Washington, accessed October 22, 2019, https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/converso-cookbook-home/.

The particular juxtaposition I offer here, between Anglophone cookbooks and Judeo-Spanish recipes, represents what I believe to be the outer borders of such an archive, which must exist along a continuum between conceptions of Sephardi cuisine as a dead artifact and as a living practice. The same tension between the static and the dynamic, the ancient and the contemporary, imbues Sephardi food itself. In the kitchen, a Sephardi cake made with royal navel oranges and commercial almond extract cooked in a modern oven must taste somewhat different from one made with Valencian orange blossom water and locally ground almond meal, but we may imagine, at least, a continuity of flavor and tradition in spite of evolving culinary practice. The production of such a medieval yet modern cake, like the writing down of its recipe, expresses both a break from the past and its persistence.

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