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**Aspects of Contemporary Jewish Music in Greece:
Case of Judeo-Spanish Songs of Jewish Community of
Thessaloniki**

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in Ethnomusicology**

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Abstract

When after their refusal to convert into Christianity the Sephardim Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, some of them migrated to north: France, England and Netherlands, others to Italy or Northern Africa. The majority of the deported Jews settled down in areas under the Ottoman Empire. A great number of them, around 20.000, settled in Thessaloniki, Greece. The Sephardic community of Thessaloniki is one of the most important communities of Jewry Diaspora, which has preserved the Castilian language (Ladino) as well as integrating many aspects of the Iberian culture into itself. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on the musical tradition of the Sephardic Community of Thessaloniki with main emphasis on the Judeo-Spanish songs.

The Judeo-Spanish songs are unique, as they are a synthesis of the European Middle Ages, Byzantine and Arabic-Persian traditions coexisting with the folk music of the Iberian Peninsula and the wider Mediterranean basin. They have existed for hundreds of years and survived in the new surroundings. In their entirety they are borrowed melodies, which were modified and incorporated in the Sephardic musical traditions. In the case of Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki, these, to a large extent, are versions of Greek and Turkish popular songs of the early twentieth century, including the Rebetiko (the Greek urban song), which was influenced by the Smyrna style.

Thus, the present study will concentrate on the case of the Sephardic musical tradition of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki and the approach will be based on historical and musicological references. The latter will be discussed in connection with other written sources.

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Introduction

This study focuses on the musical tradition of the Sephardic community of Thessaloniki, especially on the Judeo-Spanish songs, as preserved their Spanish heritage and adopted new elements as a result of their music contacts with other cultures. The assimilation of different musical influences on the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki composed a mosaic based on the co-existence of musical elements of the Greek and Oriental music.

The reason of my focus on the particular subject is my general interest to study the musical traditions of the Greek-Jews. Particularly, my experience is a result of my degree thesis as a graduate student in Music Department of Corfu, Ionian University, when I did my study on the synagogue music of two Greek-Jewish communities, in Corfu and Ioannina. My short research on that subject made me realise the significance of the transmission of the Jewish tradition, which formed and modified in the context of the co-existence with different cultures. The fact that the two communities, although they are not active any more, have already preserved recording material (Vinyls and tapes) with liturgical hymns was an important reason for me to appreciate their musical tradition and, with my own study, to take part in the process of transmission. This consequently motivated me to go further on the aspects of the Greek-Jewish music. Moreover, the choice of the present subject, as a dissertation for the purposes of the master course in Ethnomusicology in Goldsmiths College, University of London, is an important factor to help myself to understand the musical relationships that have been developed in the Sephardic repertory.

From the ethnomusicological perspectives, the studies of the Judeo-Spanish songs are recent and scarce. However, for the development of the present study, I was focused both on literature sources and recording material that I used for my transcriptions. Particularly, the historical references about the Jewish presence relied mainly on writings of Sephardim Jews historians from Thessaloniki; the most important are those of Alberto Nar and Rena Molho. In terms of the musical references, there are few written sources about the Judeo-Spanish Songs of

Thessaloniki where they are found as booklets of recordings and include the text and content of the songs and general conclusions about the music influences. However, previous studies (Katz 1968; Cohen 1989) about the Judeo-Spanish Songs were helpful for my understanding about the issue and my familiarisation with relative studies.

The aims of this study are to contribute to the understanding of the Judeo-Spanish songs not only in general, but also more specifically emphasising the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki as evidence of their continuity and validity. Furthermore, the selection of the repertory provides information about the Jewish life in the context of society and culture. In addition, the presentation of the musical characteristics is essential for the understanding of the ‘multicultural mosaic’, which the Sephardic tradition has developed. Therefore, the structure of the study includes the following chapters:

The first chapter contains historical references of the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki. The study of the Jewish music, in our case the Judeo-Spanish musical tradition of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, should be examined from various approaches. One of the approaches is the historical, which will help us to understand the music in the context of the changes and modifications that took place. Therefore, this chapter describes the presence of Jews in Thessaloniki from the ancient years to today.

The content of the second chapter concerns the Judeo-Spanish Song in general, focusing on the musical genres that form its repertory and some of the representative stylistic and musical features. In this chapter, references will be made on previous studies about the Judeo-Spanish song, including musical examples of the Jewish tradition of Thessaloniki, as other scholars have examined them. This chapter will build a general idea for our understanding about the Judeo-Spanish song and will lead to the following chapter, which is the main focus of the particularly study.

The third chapter is about the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki. The examined study is based on three different recording collections. Issues about the relationship of these songs with the Greek and Oriental music will be discussed. Additionally, musical illustrations of particular songs of the repertory followed by transcriptions with their corresponding audio tracks will be the main focus of the chapter.

The last chapter concentrates on the conclusions of the particular study. The phenomenon of the musical change as part of the process of acculturation will be discussed.

The bibliography contains the most important written and recording sources that I used for the development of the present study. Finally, appendices include lists of the examined Judeo-Spanish songs and the order of the songs as illustrated in the audio CD with the corresponding name of the recording that it is used.

At this point, before we proceed to the development of our main issue it is important to include at the introductory section the definitions of ‘Judeo-Spanish’ and ‘Sephardic’, as they will be used to the whole paper. ‘Sepharad’, as it is mentioned in the book of ‘Obadiah (1:20),¹ was initially a region in Asia Minor, where deported Jews settled when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Later, it was used, as a Hebrew term, to characterise the Jews from Spain and any descendant of the Spanish Jews who were forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, the Jews from Spain and generally from the Iberian Peninsula are called Sephardim.

Jews, who adopted the language, the rites and customs of the exile Spanish Jews with their settlement in different places, came also to be called Sephardim (Cohen, 1989: 7). Cohen (ibid.) points out that the Sephardic group includes all those Jews whom do not have an Ashkenazy origin. The non-Ashkenazy Jews may come from countries where the Judeo-Spanish language is not spoken at all. In the present study, indeed, the Judeo-Spanish or Sephardim community of Thessaloniki comes from Spain.²

Speaking about the Judeo-Spanish culture, it is worthwhile to refer to the language, ladino, as an important part of the Judeo-Spanish tradition. According to Séphiha (1979: 17-18) the term ladino³ ‘is not a spoken language, but a literal translation of Hebrew into archaic Spanish for didactic and liturgical purposes’⁴. In his terminology, he makes a distinction between the ‘judéo-espagnol calque’ (written) and the ‘judéo-espagnol vernaculaire’ (oral). For the Jews of Thessaloniki the Judeo-

¹ Cited in Sendrey, 1970: 68.

² About the Sephardic community of Thessaloniki see the respective chapter.

³ Other names that are used for the Judeo-Spanish dialect are *haketia*, *djudesmo*, *spaniolit* or *spaniol* (ibid.).

⁴ Cited in Cohen, 1989: 8.

Spanish language was not only an oral language but also a written one. It was used for daily newspapers, plays, folk songs, popular storytelling and communal archives.⁵

Chapter 1

History of the Jews of Thessaloniki

Years have I spent far away, years of wandering far and wide.
But for your soil, my homeland Greece, I will always yearn.
You're the land I first called home, you're the land I'll not forget,
You're the land I first called home, and for you I'll always yearn.

My home was in Rezi Vardar, that old familiar neighbourhood,
Where many fine young Jewish lads first beheld the light of day.
'I am a Thessalonician!': this is my boast, I shout it loud.
A true and faithful Greek I shall be until the end.⁶

—Jacob Levi

Thessaloniki for more than twenty centuries was a place of refuge for persecuted Jews all over Europe. This chapter illustrates a historical approach to their presence since the ancient years. The different Jewish groups that settled down in Thessaloniki, their occupations and relationships with the locals and their conveyance to camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau and the Jewish community today are described in this chapter. I have divided the historical description of the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki to the following sections:

1. From ancient years to Byzantine times
2. From the time of Crusades to the Eighteenth Century
3. Nineteenth century and the German occupation
4. The Jewish community today

1. 1. From ancient years to Byzantine times

Although there are no sufficient historical evidence for the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki, it is believed that Jews from Alexandria were among the first to arrive and settle there in 140 BCE (Benmayor, 2000: 31). During the Hellenistic period their synagogue, *Ets haHayim*, was the centre of their social and religious lives. It is

⁵ Cultural Forum of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki.

⁶ This is an autobiographical paean originally composed by Jacob Levi, a Sephardi Jew from Thessaloniki. He describes his life in Thessaloniki and he praises the place for its hospitality (cited in Nar, 2000: 47).

said that the apostle Paul preached for three consecutive Sabbaths in this synagogue (ibid.).

During the Roman and later the Byzantine period the Jews of Thessaloniki used Greek names and adopted the Greek language. That Jewish community from the ancient Greek years was known as ‘Romaniotes’ (Greeks). By the time of the Roman Empire the Jews of Thessaloniki were autonomous and were living in different parts of the city, instead of being concentrated around the port as they used to be in earlier years.

During the Byzantine Empire, Thessaloniki became, after Constantinople, the second most important city (ibid.). In their effort to ‘Christianise’ the Jewish communities the Byzantine emperors enforced anti-Jewish laws. Justinian the First prohibited the public fulfilment of the *mitzvot*⁷ and the recitation of the *Shemah*.⁸ He also banned the celebration of *Pessah* (Jewish Easter) following after the Greek Orthodox Easter. Basil the First, the Macedonian and Leo the Third, the Philosopher, forced the Jews to convert or leave the country. Alexius Comnenus the First, was one of the few emperors to act favourably toward the Jews. During the First Crusade, he alleviated the taxes that were imposed on them (Benmayor, 2000: 31).

Despite their sufferings during the Byzantine period the Jewish community of Thessaloniki flourished. Their main occupation was the silk trade. When Benjamin of Tudela, the famous Jewish traveller, visited Thessaloniki in 1169, there was a flourished community of 500 Jews in the city. He noted that ‘after a two-day sea voyage, we arrive at Thessaloniki, a big coastal town, built by Selefkos, one of Alexander’s four heirs. Five hundred Jews live here headed by Rabbi Samuel and his sons, well-known for their scholarship. Rabbis Sabetai, Elias and Michael also live there, as well as other exiled Jews who are specialised artisans’ (Nar, no date: 29).

1.2. From the time of Crusades to eighteenth century

By the second half of the Fourteenth Century, in 1376, Hungarian and German Jews settled in Thessaloniki. The so-called Askhenazim were different from the already existed Romaniotes (Greek-Jews). The Askhenazic group formed their own separate community, maintaining their own traditions, language and dress style (Benmayor, ibid.: 31). When, in 1423, Andromachos, the governor of Thessaloniki, sold the city

⁷ Holy duty of blowing the *shofar*, a ram’s horn (Heskes, 1994: 72).

⁸ The affirmation of the Jewish faith, ‘Hear oh Israel’ (Heskes, 1994: 70).

to the Venetians, the latter imposed heavy taxes on Jews. This had as its consequence the immigration of a small number of Jews to more hospitable areas (ibid.: 32).

When Thessaloniki was under the Ottoman occupation in 1430, Jews were in favour of the Sultan Murad the Second. The Hungarian-Jew rabbi Yitzchak Tsarfati, describes in one of his letters to his friends from Hungary the conditions of living under the Ottoman Empire (ibid.):

In Germany, my brothers, you cannot dress as you wish. They force you to be untidy and miserable. They beat you, they pelt you with stones, they convert you by force, they persecute you and take away all your belongings. In Turkey, on the other hand you can wear anything you wish, even gold or silver made. You are treated magnanimously, you can have anything you wish and everyone has a roof over his head. Oh Israel, abandon this cursed land, leave this Hell of yours and come here to reap the fruits of the heritage the Lord gave to us, come here to rest and live in peace.

In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella, the monarchs of Spain signed the edict of expulsion of all Jews.⁹ After their expulsion from Spain and Portugal, great number of Jews moved to the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Bayazid ordered the governors of the provinces to allow the Jews entry. The Italian Jewish writer, Yosef ha Kohen, writes about their expulsion from Spain (ibid.):

All the armies of the Lord left, the refugees of Jerusalem that lived in Spain, this cursed land, in the fifth month of the year 5252, that is 1492. From there they dispersed to the Four Corners of the earth. They left from the port of Cartagena in sixteen big ships full of multitude of men, on a Friday, the 16th of the month Av. And leaving the cities of the King, what did they do? They went where the winds guided them: to the lands of Africa, Asia, Greece and Turkey. And they live there until today.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth century expelled Jews from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sicily and France, and refugees from North Africa settled in Thessaloniki. The largest numbers of Jews came in 1492-93 and 1536. Thessaloniki also received Marranos, converted Jews from Spain and Portugal. The arrival of Marranos caused both religious and social problems in the Jewish communities in Thessaloniki. In fact they were considered inferior because of their conversion. However, the rabbinical authorities of Thessaloniki issued a special ruling by which the Marranos were regarded as Jew in every respect. Therefore, by mid of sixteenth century Thessaloniki became the Jewish centre of Europe where persecuted Jews from all over Europe

⁹ The edict imposed on all Jews to convert into Christianity or to abandon the country. It is estimated that around 50.000 Jews were christened and remained in the country. More than 250.000 Jews abandoned the country finding refuge around the Europe (Nar: 3, no available date).

came and settled in. Samuel Usque, a Jewish poet of Marrano descent, describes Thessaloniki as the 'city and mother of Israel' (Benmayor, 2000: 33):

Thessaloniki you are the city and mother of Israel. *Ir vaEm belsrael*. You are the faithful tree of Torah and labor, full of flowers and imposing trees to glorify Israel. Its land is fertile, since the rivers of compassion and hospitality water it. It is there that any deprived or poor, persecuted from Europe and other places in the world, will find refuge and consolation and she will receive them compassionately like a mother, mother of the people of Israel, like Jerusalem in the days of her glory.

Regarding their profession, the Jews of Thessaloniki engaged in the crafts, they were also Jews who were farmers and fishermen. The organisation of Jewish life had a special character. There were about thirty independent congregations, which would in times willingly unite with one another in favour of the common interests. The Rabbi was called *Rav of Marbits Torah* and was the ruler of the congregation. A seven-member council consisting of a president (*parnas*) and a treasurer (*gabai*) worked in collaboration with the rabbi. The members were called *parnasim*, *memunim*, *nivrarim*, and *anshei ma' amad* (ibid.: 34).

Thessaloniki became a centre of *Torah* learning.¹⁰ During the sixteenth century there were a great number of important rabbis whose influence spread beyond the borders of Thessaloniki and the Ottoman Empire. The city was also a famous centre of *Kabbalah*.¹¹ There were not only rabbinical schools that time, but also a *Bet midrash* (school) for *piyutim* (sacred poems) and singing, as well as for secular studies, such as medicine, natural sciences, astronomy and so on. Thessaloniki finally became a centre of religious studies and *Halakhah* (Law) as well as an international centre of Jewish printing (ibid.: 35).

Although Thessaloniki in the beginning of the seventeenth century, suffered from plagues and fires, causing some members of the Jewish community to emigrate, the Jewish population amounted to 30,000, i.e. half of the total population of the city. Trade was the main occupation of the Jews. They exported grain, cotton, wool, silk and textiles. Many were the Jewish women who worked in growing tobacco in industries. However, towards the end of the century there was a decrease in the commercial activities as a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

The appearance of the pseudo-messiah Shabbetai Zevi in the beginning of the seventeenth century influenced the Jewish community a lot. He arrived in

¹⁰ The reading of the Pentateuch (Heskes, 1994: 70).

¹¹ A Jewish religious movement concerned with God, creation and the part played by man in the Universe (Shiloah, 1993: 56).

Thessaloniki in 1657, after his expulsion from Izmir. Initially, he was well treated and preached in a synagogue. As soon as he declared that he was the real Messiah, he was expelled after a decision by the most important rabbis of the town. Later he converted into Islam and thirteen years after his death, in 1683, a group of about thirty Jewish families converted to Islam. This sect was called *Doenmeh* (turk. ‘Apostates’) and their religious centre were in Thessaloniki, from which they spread to Constantinople and other places. It is said that the turmoil that Shabbetai Zevi caused with his appearance united the community of Thessaloniki (Benmayor, 2000: 53). Therefore, in 1680, the thirty congregations merged into one headed by three rabbis and seven dignitaries in order to achieve better administrative control.

In the eighteenth century, the community’s financial situation worsened due to the Ottoman Empire’s decline. French merchants began to gain control of business interest. In 1720 Portuguese Marranos, called Francos, immigrated to Thessaloniki; they were in general well educated. Initially they did not pay taxes to sultan as they were considered interpreters of the consuls. They also refused to pay taxes to the Jewish community.

1.3. Nineteenth century and the German occupation

Toward the second half of the nineteenth century, a new port was built in Thessaloniki, which helped the development of the trade. European culture and technology began to flow into the city and the Jewish community participated in every kind of ‘westernisation’ (ibid.: 36). Therefore, in 1873, the Alliance Israelite Universelle established schools. The Jewish press made its appearance in 1864 with the most popular newspapers *El Lunar*, *la Epoca* and *El Avenir*. Until the beginning of World War II more newspapers, magazines and bulletins of various religious and Zionist organisations written in Judeo-Spanish (ladino), French, Hebrew and Greek continued to appear.

When Thessaloniki was incorporated into the Greek State in 1913, King George I of Greece declared that Jews and all other minorities should have the same rights as the Greek population (ibid. 37).

In 1917 a great fire destroyed the town. Some 50,000 Jews were homeless. The Greek Government made attempts to compensate the Jews whose houses were destroyed houses, but it did not allow them to return to those parts of the city where

they used to live. That made some of them to leave the country and immigrate to U.S, England, France, Italy and Alexandria.

In 1931 an entire Jewish neighbourhood in Campwell (Thessaloniki) was burned after a riot that took place. That incident has as a consequence Jews who lived in the Campwell neighbourhood to immigrate to Palestine. In 1935 the Jewish population in Thessaloniki was 60,000. Despite the fact that there was a decrease in the number of the Jewish community, the Jews maintained their status in the economic activity of the city.

Later on, in 1936, the coup d'état of Metaxas improved the Jews' lives. However this did not last for long time. The first German armed columns entered Thessaloniki on April 9, 1941. Soon after the German entry the Judeo-Spanish daily paper, *Messagero*, was suppressed and many houses and other public buildings were used for military needs, including the Jewish hospital. In the summer of 1942 all adult male Jews between the ages of 18 to 45 were gathered at Liberty Square where about 6,000 to 7,000 of them were kept and packed together surrounded by armed soldiers. Many of them were sent off to malaria stricken areas where they were working under hard conditions. Within ten weeks 12% of those taken had died. On February 6, 1943, an order was issued forcing all Jews to wear the yellow Magen David and even their shops and offices had to be similarly marked. It was the first time for the Jews in Thessaloniki in almost 2000 years to live in ghettos. By March 14 until the August 7 convoys with groups of Jews were deported to camps of Auschwitz and the adjacent Birkenau where the Jews of Thessaloniki were exterminated.

Thus, the 95% of the Jewish population had been deported within few months from Thessaloniki to Poland where they were exterminated. A few numbers of Jews of Thessaloniki found refuge in the surrounding countryside or in Athens where a significant proportion of the Jewish population was saved by the help of the Christian population. After the war, Holocaust survivors of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki and other smaller communities concentrated in Thessaloniki. However, because of the bitter memories and the harsh economic conditions in the post war Greece, the Jewish survivors immigrated to Israel and U.S (ibid.: 39).

1.4. The Jewish community today

Today the Sephardic Jewish community of Thessaloniki consists of 1.200 members. The community is very well organised having a Jewish primary School and two

synagogues in use where daily religious services and festivals take place. The community provides the members with different social and cultural events. The community has also established a centre of Judeo-Spanish language for the preservation of their language and culture.

Chapter 2 **Judeo-Spanish Songs**

This part of the paper concerns the Judeo-Spanish songs in general. It describes the most characteristic musical genres, their repertory and their structure. It also deals with some general musical and stylistic features that are common to most Judeo-Spanish songs, as they have been survived among the Sephardic communities in their new surroundings. Finally, it closes with some of the most representative public literatures about the *romance*, the most common Judeo-Spanish song genre, including some musical examples concerning the musical tradition of the Sephardic community of Thessaloniki, as were documented, transcribed and analysed by others researchers of this field.

2.1. The repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs

After the Jewish Expulsion in 1492 from Spain, the Sephardic Jews spread to other cultures. In their settlement to the new places, they took with them many secular songs and other forms of general music and poetry. The Jews developed a strong musicality especially in the areas around the Mediterranean and under the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, their music is a cultural interaction both with Arabic society, preserving their ladino heritage with elaborated and augmented melodies, as well as with melodies, preserving the cultural style, the folk music and literary legacies of the Iberian singers, trabadours and storytellers.

Therefore, the fact that the Judeo-Spanish melodic repertory has existed for hundred years and survived transplantation to new environments, it became among the richest and oldest of all Jewish musical literature. Shiloah (1992: 189) describes the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs as ‘a mosaic of sacred and profane, Jewish and non-Jewish, old and new’. The most important song genres are following:

Ballad or known as romance is the oldest genre. It is a lyrical epic that developed in Castille during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries (Shiloah, *ibid.*).

These narrative and epic songs based on medieval tales of heroes of the Spanish aristocracy and other glorious and knight tales transformed by the time into folk songs telling about love, jealousy and faithlessness. Their structure is built on sixteen-syllable lines, which is subdivided into two parts of eight syllables each (ibid.).

Complas or coplas are long asymmetrical stanzas and relate to the celebration of the Jewish holidays or accompanied important life-cycle events. Canticas are life-cycle songs, consisting of short stanzas, sometimes with a refrain. Endechas are dirges and other songs for mourning.¹²

The three latter genres became one of the basic components for liturgical use. Specifically, *complas*, as it was mentioned earlier, were used both in the context of paraliturgical activities,¹³ like Sabbath meals and liturgical ones for synagogue services, such as the reading of the scroll of Esther on Purim (Feast of Lots). *Canticas* were introduced in the texts of Sabbath, and other Jewish festival hymns, such as *Adom Olam*, *Yigdal* and *El Adon*. Finally, *endechas* were adapted during the services of the Ninth of Av (August) and in the story of the binding of Isaac that is chanted before the shofar (ram's horn) blowing on Rosh Hashanah (New Year).¹⁴

Dealing with the Judeo-Spanish repertory, Cohen (1989) classifies it into secular and paraliturgical songs in connection with their form and function. Therefore, according to his classification the form of the songs are distinguished to the genres that were mentioned above. With regard to their function there are songs that are used in domestic and recreational settings (secular) and songs that are about the Jewish religious and ritual life (paraliturgical).

2.2. Review of published material

Of all the types of orally transmitted Spanish literature, the Romance establishes the most indisputably fruitful connection with the Spanish (Hispanic) past-the Iberian heritage of the Jews of Spain. Indeed, it is for this reason that Western scholars, above all those making a special study of the Spanish language and culture, were the first to reveal particular interest in Spanish Jewry's repertoire of ballads. This repertoire

¹² Jewish Liturgics: Chant Development (Liturgica.com)

¹³ The term 'paraliturgic' refers to aspects of ritual that are part of ceremony associated with a given ordinance (Shiloah, 1992:159).

¹⁴ Jewish Liturgics, ibid.

offered a vital key to the corpus of ballads-the Romancero-of the Middle Ages and the 16th century, in that it solved mystery and filled in lacunae. (Armistead, 1982)¹⁵

It becomes clear from the above comment that, although there is much to say about the romance tradition from the perspectives of poetry, philology and history, only recent musicological studies did reveal the significance of this genre. Musical collections¹⁶ of the late sixteenth century, including romances, cancioneros, vihuelas and other Spanish folk songs roused the interest for further investigation in this area. Furthermore, the romance, as a genre that has survived through oral tradition among the Sephardic living communities around the Mediterranean basin, made some scholars to study more about the musical elements that compose the uniqueness of this poetic form in relation with its Spanish origin and the extraneous influences.

Therefore, it is worthy mentioning previous researches on the Judeo-Spanish romanceros for their important position within the Spanish ballad. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that Spanish scholars realised the folkloristic heritage of the Spanish-speaking Jews of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The most representative studies about the issue are from the following scholars:¹⁷

Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal was the first scholar to concentrate in manuscript from the Sephardic ballad tradition, as it had been documented by collectors and colleagues who had travelled in North Africa and the Balkans during the early years of the twentieth century. In 1906 he published his 'Catálogo del Romancero Judio-Español', which contains 140 ballads texts.

Moshe Attias, an Israel scholar, in the introduction to his 'Romancero Sefaradi', gives a detail analysis of the Sephardic/Judeo-Spanish songs concerning mainly with the texts.

In 1957 Samuel Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Los Angeles initiated a project by collecting the folkloric traditions of the eastern Mediterranean Sephardim.

¹⁵ Cited in Shiloah, 1992:190.

¹⁶ The following articles contain bibliographies of Spanish musical sources: Daniel Devoto: 'Sobre la música tradicional española', *Revista de Filología Hispanica*, V (1943), 344-366; 'Sobre el estudio folklórico del romancero español, Proposiciones para un método de estudio de la canción tradicional', *Bulletin Hispanique*, LVII (1955), 233-291; 'Poésie et Musique dans l'oeuvre des vihuelistes (Notes Méthodologiques)', *Annales Musicologiques*, IV (1956), 85-111 & Miguel Querol Gavaldá: 'Importance historique et nationale du romance', *Musique et Poésie au XVI siècle* (Paris, 1954), 233-324 (cited in Katz, 1962: 83).

¹⁷ See more details about literal resources of the investigation of the Judeo-Spanish romance in Katz, 1968:72-74 and Shelemay, 1987: 353.

The project was based on recording and editing of those Mediterranean Sephardim who live in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and New York. Their work contains a text-critical analysis of ballad texts from the oral traditions. According to their collections, they concluded about the Sephardic traditions that they are unique thanks to the use of the Judeo-Spanish language as it has been formed and preserved within the Spanish culture a long time ago. Particularly, they mention (1960:230):¹⁸

...the language and folk literature of the Sephardic Jews of today reflect with extraordinary fidelity the linguistic and literary circumstances of pre-sixteenth century Spain. Sephardic culture offers to the Hispanist a living archive, the unique and fascinating opportunity of experiencing at first hand an archaic stage in the development of the Spanish language and the oral manifestations of its folk literature. The speech of the twentieth century Sephardim allows us, as if by enchantment, to bridge centuries of history and to hear Spanish almost as it was spoken four centuries ago. (1960:230)

Israel J. Katz carried out a musical survey of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero. It is about a large collection, which includes ballads more than 1350 variant texts and 1000 melodies from Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Israel and Morocco. With regard to the music of the Sephardic ballad repertory, it reflects three musical style traditions (Moroccan, Turkish and Greek).

At this point, since the present study is about the Sephardic songs of Thessaloniki it is worthwhile some musical examples from this area to be mentioned as they have been examined by Katz. In his studies, he focused on the Sephardic song of the community in Thessaloniki and he examined the similarities with the Greek folk music and the Byzantine music. Here, two examples will be discussed according to his analysis:

1) 'Arvoleras' is one of the most popular romances of the eastern tradition. According to his analysis there are associations both with the Greek folk songs and the Turkish music. In terms of the Greek elements the song has similar form of that of the Greek folk songs, meaning that there is a strophic pattern based on a recurring distich into hemistichs of eight and seven syllables. As of the Oriental musical elements, the melody is in the makam *bayati*, with a flattened second.

¹⁸ Cited in Katz, 1968: 73.



2) ‘Morikos, mis morikos’ is another song, which brings relationship with the Greek style in terms of the poetic and musical metre. Primary, a common feature with the Greek songs is the quarter notes and eight-notes organised in a definite scheme of $\frac{7}{8}$. This form is known in Greek as *epitrite*.



2.3. Musical and stylistic features

The study of music of the Judeo-Spanish songs made scholars to speculate not only about its originality but also the new changes that may have appeared. Particularly, questions regarding the melodies of both sacred and secular songs if they are sung identically today with those sung before the Jews’ expulsion from Spain or in case of changes that have taken place if they are a product of particular circumstances that

affected the one generation after the other or they are part of a process that started along time ago and only now did become known, were the scholars' interest (Shiloah, 1992).

According to Etzion and Weich-Shahak's study about the musical links between the Spanish and Judeo-Spanish romances, the latter may have preserved some of the musical features of the Spanish ones in terms of melody, rhythm and modes (1988:1). However, it is not known to what extent the Sephardic communities assimilated, after their expulsion, these features into their new locations. Thus, in this context, the musical features of the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs should be considered in association with the changes that took place accordingly with the geographical location.

In this respect Katz¹⁹ believes that it is difficult to find the original source, as the exiled Jews from Spain were already a heterogeneous population, coming from different Spanish centres with its own distinctive poetic style and tradition (Shiloah, 1992). He concludes that even if the songs maintained elements in terms of words, grammatical construction and other linguistic attributes of the Spanish ballads, the melody may not remain the same (ibid.). Given the fact that the Jews moved to different countries, they absorbed in their repertory new melodies of their new settlements.

In Katz's musicological research about the romance, its musical features should be considered in association with the two distinct stylistic traditions: the eastern Mediterranean, which is the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, including Greece and the western Mediterranean, which is Morocco.

In order to summarise the stylistic and musical features and parameters of the two groups, he created a table (1968) concerning the melodic stanza, pitch, tempo, rhythm, phrase length, tessitura, and ornamentation and tone quality. Here is how he compares the two different Sephardic/Judeo-Spanish traditions:

	Western	Eastern
1. Melodic stanza	Is modal (including major and minor) and diatonic in movement. Some ballads have distinct triadic and pentatonic characteristics.	Adheres to the class of melody types in the system of Turkish-Arabic maqamat and are diatonic in movement.

¹⁹ See Shiloah, 1992: 193.

2. Pitch	Subscribes to the western Concept of pitch.	Has a greater amount of microtonal intonation.
3. Tempo	Is even flowing.	Varies from an under- lying pulsating tactus a parlando-rubato to rendition.
4. Rhythm	Is fixed according to the rendition of the melodic scheme. Irregularities are caused by the addition or omission in syllables in the versification.	Varies within the phrase length.
5. Phrase length	Is quite evenly distributed.	Varies according to the amount of vocal ornamentation.
6. Tessitura	Medium register.	Medium to high register.
7. Ornamentation	Slight degree of vocal ornamentation. This would correspond to our idea of neumatic ornamental style.	A great amount vocal ornamentation at the end of phrases.
8. Tone quality	Typical of indigenous Spanish ballandry.	Typical of Middle- Eastern vocal practices.

In respect with the similarities of the two traditions, he concluded the followings:

1. All ballads are sung monophonically without accompaniment. In those rare cases where accompaniment is present it will be harmonic for the western tradition and heterophonic for the eastern tradition.
2. The strophic form is paramount for all melodic stanzas, with the quatrain division predominating.
3. All melodic stanzas adhere to the principle of varied repetition.
4. The ambitus generally falls within the octave.
5. Tremolo is not part of the performer's practice.

Therefore, it can be said that the above musical differences and similarities of the romance repertory, as they were concluded by the Katz's musicological study, are representative for the understanding of the musical features based on the stylistic diversity of the two traditions. In this point it is worthy illustrating two musical transcriptions describing the characteristics that form the two different traditions.

Chapter 3

Judeo-Spanish Songs of the Sephardic Jewish Community of Thessaloniki

This chapter will concentrate on the Sephardic musical tradition of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki as developed through its coexistence with different ethnic groups in that city. Our main focus will be on the repertory of Judeo-Spanish songs in the context of the social, religious and musical life of the Jewish people. By the demonstration of samples of repertories of the songs and corresponding transcriptions, it will become clear that the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki are melodies 'borrowed' from Greek and Oriental folk songs. Therefore, for our understanding of the Jewish musical tradition of Thessaloniki, the following issues will be taken into consideration: the recording material used, the musical relations between the Judeo-Spanish songs and Greek music, the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki and examples of the musical transcriptions. Regarding the musical relations, influences from Greek and Oriental folk songs in the form of different musical parameters will be mentioned. In addition, music transcriptions of the particular repertory will be an important part of the present chapter. In so doing, several references will be made to the CD accompanying the current text. These will be indicated within parentheses where the name of the song will appear followed by the corresponding track number.

3.1. Recording material

The Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki have been for more than thirty years the focus of recording interest. Although few are the written studies concerning this type

of songs,²⁰ there are important commercial recordings, which include selections of them in their repertory. These recordings, to a great extent, come from musicians who have no relation with the Sephardic-Jewish community (Seroussi, 1998: 1).²¹ In the case of the present study three musical recording collections, typical of this type of songs are used. Additionally, the music transcriptions²² were based on that recording material.

Regarding the first recording (David Saltiel: *Canciones Judeo-Españoles de Tesalonica /Judeo-Spanish Songs of Salonica*), the singer David Saltiel is one of the representative folk singers of the Sephardic tradition in Thessaloniki. His repertory reflects the state of the Sephardic song after the World War II. He was born in 1930 in Thessaloniki and his relationship with singing started at his young age. The second recording (Savina Yannatou: *Primavera en Salonico /Spring in Salonica*) is a contemporary music production with Sephardic folk songs of Thessaloniki. The singer's performance is based on musical elements that reflect the coexistence of the different musical traditions that affected the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki. The last recording (*Voices of the Turtle: Music of the Spanish Jews of Rhodes and Salonica*) is one of the Series that includes music of the Spanish Jewish Diaspora since 1492. The particular selection represents the Sephardic musical traditions of the city of Thessaloniki and the island of Rhodes in Greece. The performance is based on authentic sources, such as field recordings of Sephardic Jews of these two communities. The songs come from the collections of Kol Yisrael and the National Sound Archives at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem (Weich-Shahak, 1994: 4).²³

3.2. Musical Links

The study of the Sephardic musical tradition of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki should be examined in the context of the music life in that city. Particularly, Thessaloniki was at the end of the nineteenth century a cosmopolitan city where its population consisted of Greeks, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Western Europeans,

²⁰ In his 'Greek Elements in Judeo-Spanish Traditional poetry' Samuel Armistead provides information about the borrowing of Greek folklore among the Sephardic Jews. Israel Katz in his paper 'Sephardic Balladry in the context of Greek Folksong Scholarship' associated a number of popular Greek melodies with tunes of Judeo-Spanish songs (cited in Dalven, 1990: 206).

²¹ Cited in David Saltiel, 1998 (CD).

²² The music transcriptions come from my own musical experience and include in the case of this particular repertory the text of the first verse of the song discussed in terms of the musical tradition of the Jewish community.

²³ Cited in Voice of the Turtle, 1994 (CD).

Rumanians and people from Balkan countries.²⁴ Café-amans²⁵ were the most popular entertaining places that provided music and dance in those time. After the resettlement of Greeks from Asia Minor in 1924, ‘rebetika’²⁶ were the most popular urban songs that were performed by musicians of different ethnic groups, including Jews around the seaport cities of Greece such as in Athens, Peraeus and Thessaloniki. Thus, in the context of the cultural cosmopolitanism in Thessaloniki and under the coexistence of several musical styles²⁷ performed in the café-amans, the oriental music making had flourished and broadened the eastern Mediterranean musical repertory. Consequently, both Jewish musicians and audiences played an active role in the music life in the city of Thessaloniki and the Judeo-Spanish songs shifted from home and family gatherings to the café-amans (Seroussi, 1998: 1).²⁸

Therefore, in dealing with musical links between the Judeo-Spanish repertory of Thessaloniki as illustrated in the following pages and the Greek music repertory, I will concentrate below both on some musical parameters in relation to the two musical traditions and the use of instruments. The parameters are concerned with modes/scales, range, intervals, rhythm, tempo, structure and metrical structure.

A. Musical Parameters

1. Mode

Greek folk songs: the songs that came from Asia Minor, the so-called ‘smyreika’ make use of Turkish makams. There is also the use of European scales ‘majore’ (major) and minore (minor) (Chianis and Brandle, 2001: 354).

Judeo-Spanish songs: they share in their repertory both Greek ancient modes, Turkish makams European scales and Medieval church modes:

²⁴ Tomanas, 1992, cited in Tragaki, 2002: 38.

²⁵ Café-aman (the Turkish version of the French *café chantant*) is a typical patron of an oriental coffee shop, which is described as an exponent of local music and dance traditions engaged in ‘national and greeksome [sic] aesthetics, who favours the flexible gutturalizations of the Asia Minor cantor from Smyrna and the overall harmonic sound of Arab and Turkish instruments’ (Efimeris newspaper 17-07-1874, cited in Tragaki, 2002: 24). The first café-aman opened in Smyrna. Since 1893 café-amans have existed in all seaports in Yalata, Thessaloniki, Ioannina and Arta in Greece (Chiannis & Brandl, 2001: 358).

²⁶ Rebetiko (‘rebetika’, plural) is an urban popular type of song originating in Asia Minor. It developed from the Smyrna style -‘Smyrneika’ songs, which emerged around 1820 with Makamat melodies (ibid.).

²⁷ According to written accounts about the musical genres performed in café-amans the programme included music from the entire Eastern Mediterranean area. Particularly, there are references about Turkish and Arab tunes, Greek urban folk songs, arvanitika (of the Arvanites ethnic group), Rumanian (of the Rumanovlachoi or the so-called Genidhes ethnic group), Bulgarian and Egyptian music (Tragaki, ibid.: 42).

²⁸ Cited in David Saltiel, 1998 (CD).

a. Greek Ancient Modes:

Musical illustrations 1, 5 and 7 are in the phrygian mode (E, Fsharp, G, A, B, Csharp, D, M).

Musical illustration 8 is in mixolydian mode (E, F, G, L, Bflat, C, D, E).

b. Turkish Makams:

Musical illustration 2 is in makam hüseyini (D, E, Fsharp, G, A, Bflat, C, D).

Musical illustration 9 is makam bayati (G, A, Bflat, C, D, Eflat, F, G).

c. European Scales:

Musical illustration 3 in D major scale (D, E, F sharp, G, A, B, Csharp, D).

Musical illustrations 6 and 10 are in A minor scale.

d. Medieval Church Modes:

Musical illustration 4 is in hypodorian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A).

2. Range

Greek folk songs: there is a limited compass up to 5th –6th (Michaelides, 1948: 9).

Judeo-Spanish songs: they are within the octave (see transcriptions).

3. Intervals

Both in Greek folk songs and Judeo-Spanish the intervals of second and perfect fourth are common (see transcriptions).

4. Rhythm

The phrases of the Greek music are well defined both by the shape of the melody and the internal rhythm. Most of them are symmetrical right. However, songs like the 'kleftika' have a very elastic and asymmetric rhythmical structure (Michaelides, *ibid.*).

The rhythmical structure of the particular Judeo-Spanish songs is symmetrically very clear. However, the song 'Fwente' (musical illustration 9) is rhythmically free and rich in ornamentation and melismas.

5. Tempo

The most distinctive tempos in the Greek folk songs are 7/8, 5/4 and 9/8.

Judeo-Spanish songs are in 2/4 and 4/4. 'La Maná Comprensiva' (musical illustration 8) is in 7/8 (2+2+3). As Seroussi mentioned (1998: 4),²⁹ the song is a Pontiac tune sung in the so-called rhythm 'tik'.³⁰

6. Structure

Greek folk songs: AABB, in which both parts are repeated,³¹ ABAB, ABB, or ABCABA.

Judeo-Spanish songs: ABB, with repetition of the second part (musical illustration 1)

AB (musical illustrations 2, 5 and 9)

AABC, with repetition of the first part. The third part is the refrain (musical illustration 3)

AABBCCBB, with repetition of all parts (musical illustration 4)

AABCC, with repetition of the first and third parts (musical illustration 6)

AAB with repetition of the first part (musical illustration 7)

AABB, with repetition of both parts (musical illustration 8)

ABA, with repetition of the first part (musical illustration 10)

7. Metrical structure

Greek folk songs: 15, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12-syllable song lines are very common. 13-syllable song is rare.³²

Judeo-Spanish songs: similar to the Greek songs (see musical illustrations).

²⁹ Cited in David Saltiel, 1998 (CD).

³⁰ Tik is a Pontiank dance (from the Turkish word 'dik', meaning 'up'). The most typical tempos for the dance 'tik' is 5/8, 9/16, 7/8 (see Baud-Bovy, 1996: 44).

³¹ This type is common with dance songs, in which the leader of the dance sings the first phrase and the whole group of dancers repeats it (Michaelides, 1948: 12).

³² See more in Chianis and Rudolph, 2001: 354.

B. Instruments

Cohen (1989) points out that the instrumental practice among Sephardim has reflected that of the host culture. In the case of the Sephardic musical tradition of Thessaloniki, as it can be seen from the accompanied CD, the songs are performed with the accompaniment of Greek traditional instruments, such as *frame drum, darabukka, tamboura, ud, psaltery, violin, nay, shepherd's flute, lyre, baglama, saz and so on*.

3.3. Repertory

The selection of the present repertory reflects aspects of the Jewish life in Thessaloniki. Having in mind Cohen's classification³³ I will present both paraliturgical and secular songs. Specifically, I will present the following categories:

A. Paraliturgical songs

1. Paraliturgical coplas: they refer to the religious Jewish festival and historical events within the community (musical illustrations 1 and 2).
2. Life cycle songs in the context of wedding (musical illustration 3).

B. Secular songs – Romances

1. Lullabies (musical illustration 4).
2. Local recreational songs (musical illustrations 5 and 6).
3. Lyrical songs in the context of love (musical illustrations 7, 8, 9 and 10).

3.4. List of musical illustrations³⁴

A. Paraliturgical Songs

Coplas

1. 'El incendio de Salónica' / 'The fire of Salónica' (audio track 1) refers to the fire of Thessaloniki in 1917, in which two Jewish quarters, Agua Nueva and Beyaz Kulé, were destroyed. The song recalls the bad living conditions of the Jewish community and the need for daily help and subsistence from the English Army.

³³ For the classification of the Judeo-Spanish songs see chapter 2.

³⁴ The illustrations contain only the first verse of the song. For the whole song see appendices in back pages.

Dia de Shabbat la tadre
 La horica dando dos
 Huego salió a l'Agua Mueva
 A Beyaz Kulé quedó.



[It was near the Shabbat evening, about two o'clock fire broke out near *Agua Mueva*. It spread up to the White Tower].

2. 'Dia de alhad' / 'First day of the week' (audio track 2) is a song about the ceremony for the conclusion of the Sabbath. It is one of the most popular coplas throughout the Ottoman Empire. According to Moshe Attias, the author of the poem is the 'coplero' Abraham Toledo (18th century) of Thessaloniki (Seroussi, 1998: 2).³⁵

A Dio alto con su gracia
 Mos mande muncha ganancia
 No veamos mal ni ansia
 A nos y a todo Israel.



³⁵ Cited in David Saltiel, 1998 (CD).

[May God with all His grace send to us a good. May we not see any evil or agony for us and all of Israel]

Life-cycle songs

3. 'La galana y el mar' / 'The bride and the sea' (audio track 3) is a wedding song, which was sung at the pre-nuptial ritual bath of the bride.

Ya salió de la mar la galana
Con un vestido vual y blanco
Ya salió de la mar.



[The bride just came out from the sea with a white and red bathing dress. She just came out from the sea].

B. Secular songs

Lullabies

4. 'Durme, hermoso hijico' / 'Sleep Sweet darling son' (audio track 4) is a very characteristic Castillian lullaby of the 15th century with some differentiation. It is also found in Constantinople and Israel.³⁶ It refers to the mother's ambitions to see her son doctor.

Durme, durme, hermoso hijico
Durme, durme sin ansia y dolor
Cierra tus lucios ojicos
Durme durme con sabor

De la cuna saliras
A la scola tu entrarás
Y allí, mi querido hijico,
A mieldar te ambezarás.

³⁶ See accompanied notes in CD 'Primavera en Salonico', p. 70.

A Dio a-al-to-m con su-gra-cia
 Mas ma-nde mu-ncha ga-na-ncia Na va-a-mo-
 mal ni a-nsia A nos ya to-do i-sra-
 el

[Sleep, sweet darling son. Sleep without fear without pain. Close your bright little eyes. Sleep sweetly].

Recreational songs

5. ‘Primavera in Salonico’ / ‘Spring in Salonica’ (audio track 5) describes the music life in one of the popular café-aman, ‘Abraham Mazlum’s café’, in which the owner was a Jewish man.

Primavera en Salonico
 Halli al café Maslum
 Una nina de ojos pretos
 Que canta y sona ud.

Pri-ma-ve-ra an Sa-lo-ni-co ha-lli al ca-fé Mas-lum
 u-na ni-ña da o-jos pre-tos que-ca-nta y so-na ud

[In spring in Salonica I found at Mazloun’s café a dark -eyed lass singing and playing the lute].

6. ‘La alegría de Jaco’ / ‘The joy of Jaco’ (audio track 6) describes one of the variety of professions³⁷ that the Jews of Thessaloniki used to exercise. Jaco is an itinerant musician who earns money by playing the violin and dancing in family celebrations such as weddings or circumcisions (‘beris’). Molho (1998)³⁸ notes that celebrations and other family occasions among the Jewish members of the community of the city provided work to many musicians and singers whom were Jews, Christians, Muslims or Doenme (converted Jews into Islam). The song is similar to a pre-war Greek ‘rebetiko’ song ‘Elenitsa mou’ (‘My Elenitsa’) or ‘Ta matakia sou ta dyo’ (‘Your two fair eyes’).³⁹

Alevanta Jaco en bodas y en beris
 No te mostres flaco
 Que tienes mushteris
 Chalgiji de meaná
 Yo les canto sin quedar
 Me meto como piola
 Para les llevar la bolsa.

[Come Jaco to weddings and berish. Don’t look faint, you’ve got costumers at hand. As a taverna musician I never stop singing. I stick to them like a flea to reach their pockets].

Lyrical songs

7. ‘La llamada de la morena’ / ‘The call of the dark-haired’ (audio 7) was originally sung in the wedding context. It is a lyric song that is also found in a sixteenth century

³⁷ Between 1878 and 1914 the Jews of Thessaloniki were engaged in flour-mills, brick factories, soap works and silk-worm nurseries, shoe making factories and tobacco workshops. They were also porters, boatmen, fishermen, peddlers, artisan or menial workers (Molho, 1997: 10).

³⁸ Cited in David Saltiel, 1998 (CD).

³⁹ See album ‘Oli i rebetes of dounia’ (All the rebetes of the world’), 2 Lyea 3016, 1977, cited in CD ‘Primavera en Salonico’, p. 60.

Spanish publication and in similar in Asturia (Seroussi, 1998: 5).⁴⁰ The song contains the Greek expression ‘mavra matia mou’ (‘my black eyes’). Here I illustrate the first two verses:

Morena a mi me llaman
 Yo blanca naci
 Y el sol del enverano
 Ya me hizo ansi.

Morenica - graciosa sos
 Tu morena y yo gracioso
 Mavra matia mu
 Tu morena y yo gracioso
 Mavra matia mu.



[Dark one they call me. I was born white. It was the summer sun that made me so. My little dark one. You’re so graceful. Dark am I and you’re so charming. My black eyes].

8. ‘La maná comprensiva’ / ‘The understanding mother’ (audio track 8) is a combination of two different topics that are sung within the same melody. In the first part of the song it is described the mother’s duty for her daughter to get married. The second part describes a father who lost his daughter’s dowry in gambling.

El comer de la manana
 La tadre lo lleva atras
 Que lo entienda la mi madre
 Que me quiero espozar.

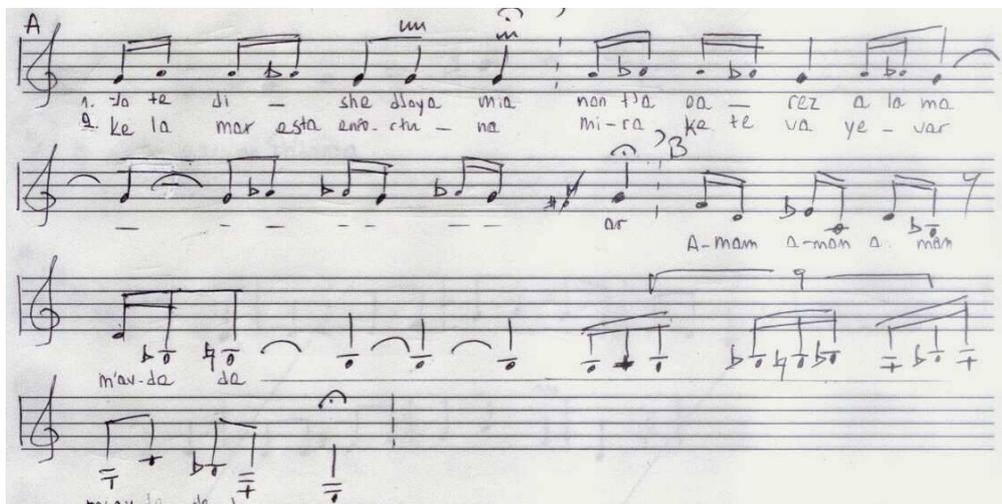
⁴⁰ Cited in David Saltiel, *ibid.*



[The breakfast is left over to the evening, so my mother can understand that I want to get married].

9. ‘Una fwente’ / ‘One fountain’ (audio track 9) is a lyric song constructed in quatrains (four line stanzas). There is no thematic connection: the first stanza is about the fountain, the second stanza is about the dangers of the sea. Here I illustrate the second verse

Yo te dishe djoya mia
 Non t' aparez a la mar;
 Ke la mar esta enfortuna,
 Mira ke te va yevar.
 Aman aman, m'ayde-ayde.



[I tell you, my jewel. Don't come to close to the sea; for the sea is so stormy. Look how it can carry you away. Aman].

10. ‘Por que llors, blanca nina’ (‘why are you crying my white flower’, audio track 10) is a romance. This version is an arrangement of the extensive medieval Spanish

Ballad ‘El conte Dirlos’ (1510).⁴¹ The songs consist of two parts. The second part is mixed with a narrative song; the mother has the leading role now.⁴²

-Por qué lloras, blanca niña,
Por qué lloras, blanca flor?
-Lloro por vos, caballero,
Que vos vas y me dejas.



[Why are crying, my fair one? Why are crying my white flower? I'm crying on your account, my knight. You're leaving and abandoning me].

Chapter 4 Conclusions

This study concerned with aspects of contemporary Jewish music in Greece focusing on the Judeo-Spanish songs of the Sephardic community of Thessaloniki. According to Werner (1968: 157) the study of Jewish music is ‘the systematic research of the subject, the significance and the relations of Jewish music to other civilisations’.

Therefore, in the present study, in order to examine the particular musical tradition in connection with elements of the Greek and Turkish folk music, I approached the subject making historical references to the presence of Jews in that city. Additionally, theoretical aspects concerning the Judeo-Spanish songs in terms of their repertory and their musical features were mentioned. Literature resources

⁴¹ See accompanied notes in CD ‘Primavera en Salonico’, p. 51.

⁴² See the whole song in the appendix, back page.

related with the two latter and especially those of Cohen (1989) regarding the repertory and Katz (1968), regarding the musical features play an important part for the understanding of this type of songs.

Concerning the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs the most common musical genres among the Sephardic communities are the ballad or romance, canticas and endechas. Cohen classifies the songs according to their form and function into paraliturgical and secular songs.

The synthesis of the two different stylistic musical traditions, the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean, has formed the musical features of the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs.

As said in previous chapters, the romance has had a continuous and vital traditional existence since the second half of fourteenth century. The musical Spanish origins of this genre and the extraneous musical influences after the Jewish dispersion of Spain have resulted in my interest in this investigation. According to scholars' views even where the romances preserved linguistic and grammar characteristics in their repertory based on the original source, the melody absorbed new musical elements as a result of the Jewish dispersion (Shiloah, 1992: 193).

In respect with the phenomenon of change, Merriam (1994: 303) stresses that 'change is a constant in human experience ... no culture escapes the dynamics of change over time. But culture is also stable... The threads of continuity run through every culture, and thus change must always be considered against a background of stability'. In dealing with cultural change, he describes it as 'achieved cultural transmission', which relates to the process of acculturation (ibid.). According to definitions of the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary⁴³ (1976) about the term acculturation, this is 'a process of inter-cultural borrowing marked by the continuous transmission of traits and elements between diverse peoples and resulting in new and blended patterns'. Therefore, acculturation is both the process and the result.

Regarding the musical change, Blacking (1986) suggests that 'musical change, like all aspects of cultural change, is neither subject to laws nor the inevitable consequence of happenings. Musical changes are not caused by culture contact, population movements ... they are the results of decisions made by

⁴³ See Kartomi, 1981: 231.

individuals'. Since music is an inseparable part of the people's life, Nettl (1964, 230-238) claims that the 'change is an ever-present component'. As we have seen from the previous chapter in dealing with the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki, music was associated with all aspects of the life of the Jewish community. The repertory describes religious Jewish occasions, historical events that occurred within the community and occasions in the context of wedding, recreation and love.

Moreover, from the illustration of the musical examples it became clear that the Judeo-Spanish songs are characterised as a contradictory mosaic, which has preserved a modal character of the Middle Ages on one hand and elements from the folk Turkish and Greek songs on the other. Melodies borrowed from popular songs of the twentieth century, particularly from the Smyrna style ('smyrneïko') are also included in the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki. Additionally, the use of the instruments that accompany these songs is a result of the coexistence of the different cultural influences.

A musicological approach to the particular songs using transcriptions has shown the similarities of the Judeo-Spanish repertory with the Greek folk music. The approach focused on some of the basic components of the music itself such as scale, rhythm, tempo and formal and metrical structure. What was concluded in terms of the scale is that the songs share in their melodic movement characteristics of the Turkish makams and the Greek ancient modes in which the Greek popular songs of the twentieth century were performed. Furthermore, European scales and medieval church modes are included in the repertory of the Judeo-Spanish songs. The latter can show the continuity and the validity of the Sephardic music tradition in association with its Spanish heritage.

Regarding the rhythm, the songs are performed in common beats of 2/4 and 4/4. However, there is a relationship with the Greek time beat of 7/8. This is an evidence of the 'borrowings' of the Judeo-Spanish songs in their repertory. As for the formal and metrical structure, it is common in both repertories (Greek and Judeo-Spanish).

Bohlman and Slobin write,

Style itself does not define community. Style is domesticated by the Jewish community as part of self-definition, an on-going process renegotiated in each generation. (1986: 1, in Shiloah, 1992: 226)

Therefore, the Judeo-Spanish songs of Thessaloniki, which were within the interest of commercial recordings of not only the Sephardic Jewish singers but also the non-Jewish musicians, are unique as they combine different musical elements in a repertory which have existed for hundreds of years originating from the Iberian Peninsula. The modification and the incorporation of the different musical styles in the song repertory of the Sephardic musical tradition of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki and the use of the typical language, Ladino, create a unique style that characterises the Jewish musical identity.

In this study I have made an attempt to give an overall view of the phenomenon of Judeo-Spanish songs, which has survived among the Sephardic communities. The Jewish community of Thessaloniki has preserved to a great extent its musical heritage and continuous to transmit the Judeo-Spanish songs through commercial recordings. It is indeed important that more musicological studies be done providing additional written documents on this issue. I wish that this short study would enable me in future to develop a more systematic approach on the music of the Jewish Diaspora in Greece. My intention, as a student in Ethnomusicology, is to contribute with my research to the transmission of the Jewish musical traditions in Greece.

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Savina Yannatou, 1995: *Primavera en Salonico, Spring in Salonika*, Greece: ML 4765 CD, with accompanying notes.

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Appendices

1. List of songs

1

EL INCENDIO DE SALONICA

Dia de Shabbat la tadre
La horica dando dos
Huego salió a l' Agua Nueva
A Beyaz Kulé quedó.

Tanto proves como ricos
Todos semos un igual
Ya quedimos arrastando
Por campos y por kishlas.

Mos dieron unos chadires
Que del aire se bolan
Mos dieron pan amargo
Ni con agua no se va.

Mos estamos sikleando
Mos vamos ande el Inlgés
Por tres grushicos al dia
Y pan para comer.

Dio del cielo, Dio del cielo
No topates que fazer
Mos deshates arrastrando
Ni camiza para meter.

THE FIRE OF SALONICA

It was near the Shabbat evening
About two o'clock
Fire broke out near *Agua Nueva*
It spread up to the White Tower.

Rich and poor alike
We all became one and alike
We were left out
In the fields and the barracks.

They gave to us some tents
That the wind could blow away
They offered us bitter bread
That wouldn't go down
even with water

We're complaining
We go to the English
We're begging for three pennys
And a bit of bread to eat.

Oh, God of the Heavens
What have you done to us
You've abandoned us
Even without a change of cloths.

2

DIA DE ALHAD

A Dio alto con su gracia
Mos mande muncha ganancia
No veamos mal ni ansia
A nos y a todo Israel.

Buena semana vemos venir
La salimos a recevir
Para que mos deshe el Dio bevir
A nos y a todo Israel

Bendicho el Abastado
Que mos dió este dia honorado
Cada Shabbat mijorado
A nos y a todo Israel.

Vinir todos adjuntemos
A Su nombre bendiciremos
Y de El demandaremos
La bendición de Israel.
Tu que sos padre rahmán
Mandamos al pastor Ne'emán
Que mos sea un buen simán
A nos y a todo Israel.

Mijael sar Israel
Elihayu y Gabriel
Mos vengán con el go'el
A salvar a Israel.

FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

May God with all His grace
Send to us a good
May we not see any evil or agony
For us and all of Israel.

May good week come to us
We came out to receive her
So God may let us live
For us and all of Israel.

Blessed may be the Highest
That gave us this honoured day
Every Shabbat will be better
For us and all of Israel.

Let us all unite
Let us bless His name
and from Him w shall ask
The blessing of Israel.
You the merciful father
Lead us to the Ne'emán
So it can be a god sign
For us and all of Israel.

Michael the head of Israel
Eliáu and Gabriel
Let them come with the Saver
To save Israel.

3

LA GALANA Y LA MAR

Ya salió de la mar la galana
Con un vestido vual y blanco
Ya salió de la mar

Entre la mar y el rio
Mos creció un arbol de membrillo
Ya salió de la mar

La novia ya salió del baño
El novio ya la está apserando
Ya salió de la mar

Entre la mar y la arena
Mos creció un arbol de almendra
Ya salió de la mar

THE BRIDE AND THE SEA

The bride just came out of the sea
with a white and red bathing dress
She just came out from the sea.

Between the sea and the river
A quince tree sprouted
She just came out from the sea.

The bride just finished her bath
The groom is already waiting her
She just came out from the sea

Between the sea and the sand
An almond tree sprouted
She just came out from the sea.

4

DURME HERMOSO HIJICO

Durme, durme, hermoso hijico,
durme, durme sin ansia y dolor.
Cierra tus lucis ojicos,
Durme, durme, con sabor.

De la cuna salirás,
A la scola tu entrarás,
Y alli, mi querido hijico
A meldar te ambezarás
Durme, durme, hermoso hijico,
durme, durme sin ansia y dolor.
Cierra tus lucis ojicos,
Durme, durme, con sabor.

De la cuna salirás,
Doctorico te haras.
Cierra tus lucis ojicos,
Durme, durme, con sabor.

SLEEP SWEET DARLING SON

Sleep sweet darling son
Sleep without fear, without pain
Close your bright little eyes
Sleep sweetly.

Out of your crib
you'll go straight to school
and there dear darling son
you'll learn to read and write
Sleep sweet darling son
Sleep without fear, without pain
Close your bright little eyes
Sleep sweetly.

And after you finish school
A little doctor you will become.
Close your bright little eyes
Sleep sweetly.

5

PRIMAVERA EN SALONICO

Primavera en Salonico
Halli al café Maslum
Una nina de ojos pretos
Que canta y sona ud.

No ne manques, tu Fortuna,
del café de Avram Maslum.
Tu quitas los nuestros dertes,
Que cants y sonas ud.

El ud tomas en la mano
Con g ilves y con sacas.
Los tus ojos relucientes
A mi me hacen quemar.

SPRING IN SALONICA

I spring in Salonica
I find at Mazloum's cafe
a dark-eyed lass
Singing and playing the lute.

Oh, Fortuna, don't be absent
From Abraham Mazloum's cafe
It's you who banishes our sorrows
Singing and playing the lute.

You take the lute in yours hands
With such airs and graces.
So bright are your eyes
They have set me on fire.

6

LA ALEGRIA DEL JACO

Alevanta Jaco en bodas y en beris
No te mostres flaco
Que tienes mushteris
Chalgiji de meaná
Yo les canto sin quedar
Me meto como piola
Para les llevar la bolsa.

THE JOY OF JACO

Come on Jaco to weddings and berish
Don't look faint
You've got costumers at hand
As a taverna musician
I never stop singing
I stick to them like a flee
To reach their pockets.

Alevanta Jaco en bodas y en beris
No te mostres flaco
Que tienes mushteris
Chalgiji de meaná
Yo les canto sin quedar
Me maneo como un barco
A mi ya me llaman Jaco.

Come on Jaco to weddings and berish
Don't look faint
You've got costumers at hand
As a taverna musician
I never stop singing
I rock like a ship
Jaco is my name.

Alevanta Jaco en bodas y en beris
No te mostres flaco
Que tienes mushteris
Chalgiji de meaná
Yo me mostro muy kornaz
Se las tomo al que beve
Les canto como se deve.

Come on Jaco to weddings and berish
Don't look faint
You've got costumers at hand
As a taverna musician
I'm quite smart
I get what I want from he drink's
I sing for him as he deserves.

7

LA LLAMADA DE LA MORENA

Morena a mi me llaman
Yo blanca naci
Y el sol del enverano
Ya me hizo ansi.

THE CALL OF THE DARK ONE

Dark one they call me
I was born white
It was the summer sun
That made me so.

Morenica - graciozica sos

My little dark one
you're so graceful
Dark I am and you're so
Charming
My black eyes
Dark I am and you're so
charming
My black eyes

Tu morena y yo graciozo

Mavra matia mu
Tu morena y yo graciozo

Mavra matia mu.

Morena a mi me llaman

Dark one they call me

Los marineros
So otra vez a mi me llaman
Me vo con ellos.

The sailors
If the call me once again
I'll go along with them

Morenica...

My little dark one...

Morena a mi me llama
El hijo del rey
Si otra vez a mi me llama

Dark one he calls me
The son of the king
It was the summer sun
If he'll call me once again
I'll go with him.

Me vo yo con él.

Morenica...

My little dark one...

Abajesh la morena
Si queresh venir

Come on my dark one
If you want to join

La nave ya está en velas
Y ya va partir.

Morenica...

The ship is already setting sail
And soon will leave.

My little dark one...

8

LA MANA COMPRENSIVA

El comer de la mañana
La madre lo lleva atrás
Que la entienda
La mi madre
Que me quiero espozar

No maldigas la mi madre
No maldigas sin razón
Ella cuando era hermosa
Hizo amor con mi señor

Una hora a la ventana
Otra hora en el balcón
Que lo sepa la mi madre
Que yo tengo una dolor

De mis chicos años peni
Por azer mi ashugar
Tino el mi señor padre
Ma la juga al kumar.

UNA FWENTE

Una fwente enfrente d'otra
Bevi agwa I me ferti.
Ninya de le a tu madre,
Ke te deshe para mi.

Yo te dishe djoya mia,
non t' aparez a la mar;
ke la mar esta enfortuna,
mira ke te va yevar.
aman, m'ayde –ayde

Ke me yeve, I ke me traiga
A loz syete tehomot
Encontrara miz amarez
Ke tanto lo espero yo,
Aman.

THE UNDERSTANDING MOTHER

The breakfast is left over
To the evening
So my mother can understand
That I want to get married.

Don't curse my mother
Don't curse her without reason
When she was young
She made love with my father

Stand one hour at the window
Then one hour at the balcony
So my mother can see
That I've got a pain

Since my childhood I suffered
to make up my dowry
My father took it up
And played it up in gamble.

9

ONE FOUNTAIN

One fountain after another
I drink water to fill myself up.
Young woman tell your mother
to save you for me.

I tell you my jewel,
don't come too close to the sea;
for the sea is so stormy;
Look how it can carry you away Aman
Please, let's go.

Carry me
Bring me
to seven depths of the sea
There I will find my loves
For whom I wait so much. Aman

10

Por qué lloras, blanca niña
-Por qué lloras, blanca niña,
Por qué lloras, blanca flor?

-Lloro por vos, caballero,
Que vos vas y me dejás.
 Me dejás niña, y muchacha,
 Chica y de poca edad
Tengo niños chiquiticos,
Lloran y demandan pan.
Si demandan a su padre,
 Qué respuesta les voy a dar?
Metió la mano en su pecho,
Cien doblones le fue a dar.
-Esto para qué me abasta,
 Para vino o para pan?
-Y si esto no vos abasta,
 Ya tenés d'onde tomar.
Venderés vinas y campos
Media parte de la ciudad.
Venderés vinas y campos
 De la parte de la mar.

Vos asperarés a los siete.
Si no, a los ocho vos casás.
Tomararés un mancevico
 Que parezca tal y cual,
Que se vista las mis ropas
Sin sudar y sin manchar.

Esto que sintió su madre,
Maldición le fue a echar:

-todas las naves del mundo
vayan y avolten con paz,
 y la nave de mi hijo
vaya y no avolte más.

Pasó tiempo y vino tiempo,
descariño le fue a dar.
Asentada en la ventana,
La que da para la mar:

-Asi viva el capitán,
que me duga la verdad:
 si verias a mi hijo,
 a mi hijo coronal?

Yo lo vide a su hijo,
A su hijo caronal:

Echado en aquellos campos,
La tierra tenia por cama

Y el cielo por cubierta.
Tres buracos él tenia:
Por el uno le entra el aire,
Por el otro le entra el sol,
y por el más chico de ellos
le entra y sale el lunar.

Esto que sintió su madre,
A la mar se fue a echar.

-Nos vos echés, la mi madre,
que yo soy tu hijo caronal.

Ya se besan y se abrazan
Ye se van a pasear.

- Why are you crying, my fair one, why are you crying my, white flower?
 - I'm crying on your account, my knight; you're leaving and abandoning me. You're leaving me behind and I'm so young. I've got such tots, they're crying and asking for bread. If they ask for their father, what should I say? Into the purse went the hand and a hundred doubloons it gave.
 - What will these cover, for bread or for wine?
 - If that isn't enough, you've got plenty to get from. You'll sell vineyards and fields, half of the land. You'll sell vineyards and fields near the edge of the sea. Seven years you'll wait. In the eighth year you'll get married. Take in a young gallant who'll be exactly like me, who'll wear my clothes that are free of sweet and stain.
- When his mother heard all of this, she cursed him bitterly'
-May all the world's ships come and go peacefully and my son's ship never return to port.
Year in and year out ruth grips her. At the window she stoops looking towards the sea:
-May the captain live who'll tell me the truth: by chance did you see my son, my heartfelt son?
- I saw your son, your heartfelt son: in foreign fields he lay, the ground was his bed and his blanket was the sky. He had three wounds in his body: the wind blows through one of them, through the other the sun enters, and from the smallest wound the moonlight goes in and out.
 - When his mother heard this she went to drown herself in the sea.
 - Don't do it, mother, and I'm your heartfelt son.
- They kiss and embrace and off they go for a stroll.

2. List of audio examples

Audio track 1: El incendio de Salonica -The fire of Salonica (David Saltiel)

Audio track 2: Dia de alhad – First day of the week (ibid.)

Audio track 3: La galana y el mar – The bride and the sea (ibid.)

Audio track 4: Durme hermozo hijico – Sleep sweet darling son (Savina Yannatou)

Audio track 5: Primavera en Salonico – Spring in Salonica (ibid.)

Audio track 6: La alegría de Jaco – The joy of Jaco (David Saltiel)

Audio track 7: La llamada de la morena – The call of the dark-haired (ibid.)

Audio track 8: La mana comprensiva – The understanding mother (ibid.)

Audio track 9: Una fwente – One fountain (Voices of Turtle)

Audio track 10: Por que lloras, blanca nina – Why are crying my white flower (Savina Yannatou).

