Hamsa

Journal of Judaic and Islamic Studies

1 | 2014

Islamic and Jewish Studies

Narrating the history of the others - José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews and the Muslims in Spain (1848-1874)

Nitai Shinan

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/hamsa/901>

DOI: 10.4000/hamsa.901

ISSN: 2183-2633

Publisher

CIDEHUS - Centro Interdisciplinar de História Culturas e Sociedades da Universidade de Évora

Electronic reference

Nitai Shinan, "Narrating the history of the others - José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews and the Muslims in Spain (1848-1874)", *Hamsa* [Online], 1 | 2014, Online since 31 December 2014, connection on 13 May 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/hamsa/901> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/hamsa.901>

Hamsa est mise à disposition selon les termes de la Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale - Pas de Modification 4.0 International.

Narrating the history of the others - José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews and the Muslims in Spain (1848-1874)¹

Nitai Shinan

Jewish National Library

nitais@savion.cc.huji.ac.il

Resumo:

José Amador de los Ríos é um dos mais prestigiosos intelectuais do Liberalismo Espanhol, durante a governação da rainha Isabel II (1833-1868). Entre todas as suas contribuições para a Literatura e História de Espanha, ele é mais conhecido pelos seus estudos pioneiros sobre a História dos Judeus e dos Muçulmanos na Espanha Medieval. Este artigo debruça-se sobre estes últimos estudos, especialmente acerca do seu livro *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España*, de 1884, explanando os métodos que usa e descrevendo os seus pontos de vista acerca da História dos Judeus e dos Muçulmanos na Espanha Medieval, no contexto do liberalismo historiográfico e das suas posições ideológicas.

Palavras-chave: José Amador de los Ríos, historiografia liberal, Espanha, judeus, conversos, muçulmanos, mouriscos, arquitetura mudéjar

Abstract:

José Amador de los Ríos was one of the most prestigious intellectuals of Liberal Spain, under the rule of Queen Isabel the second (1833-1868). From all his contributions to the Spanish literature and history he is most known for his pioneering studies about the history of the Jews and the Muslims in Medieval Spain. The article discusses these studies, especially his book *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* (1848), explains his methods and describe his viewpoints of the history of the Jews and Muslims in medieval Spain, in the context of the liberal historiography and his own ideologically viewpoints.

Key words: José Amador de los Ríos, liberal historiography, Spain, Jews, *Conversos*, Muslims, Moriscos, Mudejar architecture

¹ Amador literary legacy included two books about the Jews, *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* published in 1848 and *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal* published in 1875-1876. In the article we shall focus on analyzing the content and viewpoints of the first book, comparing them, somehow in an incomplete manner and more as an initiative to further study, to his evaluations of the history of the Muslims in Spain. For Amador's second book see: Michal Friedman, "Jewish History as Historia Patria: José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews of Spain", *Jewish Social Studies*, 18/1 (2011), pp. 111-118 and Nitai Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo, razón de estado y deber cultural: José Amador de los Ríos y la elaboración del discurso moderado sobre el pasado judío de España", in José Amador de los Ríos *Los judíos de España: estudios históricos, políticos y literarios*, Pamplona, Urogoiti Editores, pp. CXXXIX-CLI.

1. From the Inquisition to unity of cult

The annulation of the hierarchical old regime by the famous Cortes of Cádiz (1810-1813) could not leave intact the distinctions between the old and new Christians that lost their reason of existence. Although the Blood Purity Laws were not abolished until 1837, the liberal deputies were aware of the discrimination of the New Christians and for several times during the disputation about the Inquisition they criticized the Inquisition and the Spanish unjustifiable treatment of the descendants of Jews². Other reforms of the Cortes also paved the way to the gradual disappearance of the difference between the old and new Christians, for example the military and naval academies stopped demanding from possible candidates to prove noble ancestry or purity of blood as an indispensable condition of enlistment and the national guard created by the liberals received all kind of recruits regardless of their race. To judge by the example of the Chuetas of Mallorca the reforms were accepted with great hope by the discriminated population³.

However if the Cortes showed willingness to abolish the old differences between the Old and New Christians, no such tolerance was given to practicing Jews or Muslims who might consider taking advantage of the new constitutional rights and settling themselves in Spain. The constitution was clear cat on this religious issue, establishing Catholicism "the only true cult" as the only religion permitted in liberal Spain, excluding any other cult from being practiced in the Spanish dominions. Some liberal deputies were aware of the problem of maintaining religious intolerance in the Spanish Liberal state, explaining it more than ten years later as a temporary concession to the popular prejudice of the Spanish people who were dead set against religious toleration. The count of Toreno thought that only this concession to popular prejudices enabled the liberal deputies to abolish the Inquisition. He hoped however, that with time the mentalities will change and the Spanish People will get used to protestant churches like their fathers lived with synagogues and mosques⁴.

But notwithstanding the intentions of the liberal leaders of the 1812 revolution, the way of Spain towards religious toleration was halted. The reaction of 1814-1820 and 1823-1834, abolished all the liberal reforms, and the liberal revolution of the forth decade of the Nineteenth Century was conservative in nature, seeking support for its agenda less in the popular classes and more in the crown and the nobles. Thus, the three main political parties that governed Spain during the reign of Queen Elisabeth the Second (1834-1868) (the Moderate (Moderados), the Progressive (progresistas) and the Liberal Union (Unión Liberal) did not establish freedom of worship. The constitution of 1845, in force until 1869, influenced by the doctrines of the moderate conservative party established the Catholic Church as the religion of the Spanish nation. This constitutional article was a manifestation of a general belief of many liberal politicians, historians and thinkers alike who viewed Catholicism as the essence of the Spanish nation and as the only factor able to unite the various Christian kingdoms to fight for the national independence against the Muslims invaders. This connection made between the Catholic Church and the formation of the Spanish state, convinced the political leaders of the period no to take the risk of endangering this essence of the Spanish nation, by allowing free worship to other cults. The political leaders were also afraid from possible

² N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. xl-xliv; Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España: la imagen del judío* (1812-2002), Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2002, pp. 99-102.

³ Testimonies from Palma recalled the great banquet the chuta commercial Bartolomé Valenti y Forteza gave to all the citizens of Palma in 23 of august 1813 , Chuta and Unchuta alike, in honor of the constitution, Isidro González García, "Las Cortes de Cádiz y el problema judío", in *El Olivo* 13/29-30, (1989), pp. 159-164. Complete social emancipation however did not come in the Nineteenth Century, G. Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España ...*, pp. 78-83, 137-140.

⁴ Conde de Toreno, *Historia del levantamiento, guerra y revolución de España*, Pamplona, Urgoiti Editores, 2008, pág. 863; Francisco Martí Gilabert, *La abolición de la Inquisición*, Pamplona, Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1975, pp. 61, 331-332.

reaction to such a measure from the fiercely catholic Spanish multitude. Spain had to undergone another revolution in order to establish in the 1869 Constitution the principle of religious liberty⁵.

This unity of cult which made the Spanish regime unique in Europe, where religious toleration was established to a greater or a lesser degree in most European nation of the Nineteenth Century had to be justified historically. In the Spanish case finding this explanation was quite difficult; because of the contradiction this intolerance posed not only the European practice of the time but also to the Spanish history itself. The middle ages was praised by many liberal historians, who found the origin of parliament and of civil rights in the "fueros" and "cartas pueblas" granted by the Spanish kings to new settlers in the conquered cities. The religious policy of the middle was however totally contradictory to the unity of cult, because in that same period the Jews and Muslims lived quite freely practicing their religious among the Christians. Establishing unity of cult could be therefore considered as contradictory to the true historical essence of the Spanish nation.

The raise of the Spanish nationalism, a byproduct of the Napoleonic wars and the raise of the nationalism in Europe went hand in hand with a raising interest in the writing of the history of the nation. This interest culminated in the voluminous history books about the history of Spain published in the sixth, seventh and eight decade of the Nineteenth Century⁶. However this interest in the national history could not avoid the religious minorities, especially the Jews and Muslims because of their long stay and contributions to the development of the Christian society of the peninsula. The traumatic persecutions and final expulsion of the Jews, Muslims and the Moriscos, have long been utilized by foreign historians and some Spanish radical liberals alike in order to discredit the Spanish regime and its religious policy, if not a great part of its historical traditions⁷.

2. José Amador de los Ríos – Life and work

The Historian who tried to combine the liberal moderate view of the Spanish past with a modern investigation of the Jewish place in Christian Spain, and offer a suitable historical interpretation to the Moderate exclusive regime, was José Amador de los Ríos (1818-1878). Amador a moderate liberal was born in 30 of April 1818 in the city of Baena, not far away from Córdoba to the sculptor José Amador de los Ríos y Serrano y doña María del Carmen Serrano y Padilla. Due to the liberal tendencies of his father, the family had to move several times in his youth fleeing absolutist persecution. Amador that started his studies in his natural city, had to continue them in Córdoba at the cathedral school and later in Seminario Conciliar de San Pelagio. In 1832 the Family moved to Madrid where Amador enrolled in the most prestigious

⁵ Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España ...*, pp. 119-122, 131-135; Nancy A. Rosenblatt, "The Spanish Moderados and the Church: 1834-1835", *The Catholic Historical Review* 57/3 (1971), pp. 416-420; José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: la idea de España en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, Taurus, 2001, pp. 383-431.

⁶ Paloma Cirujano Marín, Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, Teresa Elorriaga Planes, *Historiografía y nacionalismo español: 1834-1868*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1985; J. Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa ...*; Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 76-98.

⁷ A year before the publication of Amador's de los Ríos book about the Jews, the Cádiz born liberal Adolfo de Castro y Rossi published his small book *Historia de los judíos en España*. The author although demonstrating certain knowledge of the Spanish Jewish Castilian literature, was mainly interested in the religious persecutions of the Jews. He represented them as innocent victims of Spanish religious fanaticism, while viewing their expulsion as one of the main causes of the decadence in Spain. Roberto López Vela, "La plebe y los judíos: la construcción de un mito histórico en la España del siglo XIX", in *Sefarad*, 64 (1), 2004, pp. 95-140; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. CXXI—CXXVII. About his relation to Amador de los Ríos work, see *idem*, pp. LXXXIV, CXXIV.

institution of Spain of the time Reales Estudios de San Isidro. Inspired by his father, he studied art and exercised his paintings skills in the Royal Academy of Fine arts of San Fernando. In 1837 the family moved to Sevilla where he frequented the Colombina Library to copy the creations of the painter Murillo. At the colombina he connected young scholars who regrouped around an informal Academy. In 1838 this academy gave birth to a magazine called *El cisne*, where Amador wrote his first essays and poems.

At Seville he could establish contact with influential politicians of the time like the Duke of Rivas, who assisted him later in his career. He also developed an interest in classical and Muslim archeology, taking part between 1839 and 1841 in the excavations of the roman city of Italica and studying in 1844 the architecture of the city of Seville. This interest culminated in his work "Sevilla Pintoresca" (Seville, 1844). A year before in 1843, receiving a petition from the provincial government of Seville, he narrated the story the rebellion and struggle of the city against the regime of the Spanish strongman of the time General Espartero. This book written with great passion and with fierce declamatory tone against Espartero and its alias, is not considered one of his best works, but it help him find a warm welcome in Madrid controlled now by the moderate party, the winners of the 1843 conflict.

Madrid of the so called moderate decade (1843-1854), was a very appropriate place for wise and professional young conservative intellectuals. The regime planed a set of administrative reforms whose aim was to centralize and strengthen the public administration of the state along the ideological lines of the conservative moderate liberalism. For the successful implementation of the reforms, the regime needed intellectual and loyal administrators and supporters that would aid in carry out the plans of the central government. In this environment we find Amador, just arrived in Madrid, receiving on June 19 from Pedro José Pidal, Minister of the Interior, and Antonio Gil Zarate, chief of public instruction, the secretary of the Central Committee for investigation of Historical and Artistic Monuments. In 1846 he was already an official of the Ministry of Commerce, Education and Public Works employed in the task of reforming the national education. In the years that followed Amador was nominated to numerous positions in the Spanish state bureaucracy. In 1848 the year he published his book *Estudios Históricos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* he was nominated to the Real Academy of History and was called to occupy the chair of Spanish Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters in the newly established Central University. This decision was justified in the literary merits of his book, but we can assume that his personal contacts with influential politicians and intellectuals of the regime had no little influence on the decision.

These early nominations were only a starting point to Amador's administrative career, in which he was nominated to a multitude of tasks, most important among them were Chairman of the Committee of Antiquities of the Royal Academy of History; Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (1856), Vice Chancellor of the Central University (1867), rector (1868) and director of the Archeological museum (1868). He was also a member of the inner circle of Queen Isabel the II and was considered a secretary of the royal household. The collapse of the Moderate conservative regime in September 1868 was disastrous for Amador which presented his resignation from his task as director of the Archeological Museum while his university chair was abolished. According to his son in law Francisco Fernández y González, he was threatened in his house by the mob soon after the revolution, probably for being considered a man of the old regime. Only thanks to his personal connections especially his friendship with the writer Juan de Valera he was able to regain his cathedra in 1870. The Restoration was received joyously by Amador, who dedicated two sonnets to the person of king Alfonso XII, However due to his deteriorating health condition he could not benefit much from the benevolence of the reestablished bourbon regime, he resigned from his university cathedra and following his doctors' advice moved to Seville where he died in 1878.

In his political and historical inclinations, Amador was faithful all his life to the ideology of the Spanish Moderate Party. He favored strong centralist royal administration, disliked the role of the nobles in the history of Spain, feared the power of the masses and

disdained democracy. His literary production included many writings in a great variety of subjects, history of the art, history of the Indies, history of the Spanish literature and poetry and archeology and architecture. But his perhaps most considerable contribution to the Spanish historical investigation of the Nineteenth Century were his investigations about the history of the Jews and Muslims in Spain. To the Jews he dedicated two studies, one at the outset of his academic career *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* (from now on *Estudios*) published in 1848 and the second the more famous *Historia Social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal* published in 1875-1876. Unlike the Jews Amador did not dedicate a special study to the history of the Muslims. However he referred sometime in his writings to aspects of their history in Spain, and was the greatest investigator of Spanish Muslim art in Spain of the Nineteenth Century. This art was named by him "Mozarabe" in the fifth decade of the Nineteenth Century and "Mudéjar" in the sixth decade. The last denomination is in use until today⁸.

Amador's first book *Estudios* was considered a great success in the middle decades of the Nineteenth century. Its fame endured until it was eclipsed in 1876 by the publication of the book *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal*. There are multiple praises of the publication in the Spanish contemporary media, which valued the monograph as a colossal contribution to the investigation of the history of Spain. Its historical version of events was preferred by the general histories of Spain written in the sixth, seven and eight decades of the nineteenth century, and it was echoed in the great debates about religion in the revolutionary Cortes of 1869. The book is therefore indispensable to comprehending the historiography of Nineteenth Century Spain. In the article we shall analyze the efficiencies and deficiencies of the said book, analyze its version of the history of the Jews in Spain attempting to understand the reason for its popularity. In order to understand better Amador's View of the subject we shall try to compare, although in a very unsystematic way, his views of the history of the Jews in Medieval Spain to his views about the history of the Muslims. Thus we shall be able to assess the one of the first attempts of contemporary Spain to address its intolerant past. We shall refrain from addressing Amador's second book because it belongs to another period with other historical considerations, the Restoration.

3. The Jews and Muslims and the Spanish civilization

a) Towards writing *Estudios, Históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* (1848)

Amador's interest in the history of the religious minorities, dates from his early studying period as a child in Córdoba. In his 1845 article about the monuments of Córdoba, he recalled the feelings of awe and respect he felt in presence of the Islamic monuments, preserved in almost every corner of the city. According to his testimony: "Many times when I got out of class, and encountered myself with that forest of marble that populates the ancient mosque (...) it seemed to me that the men who had raised this work were very worthy of world domination".⁹ But only years later in his 1844 Book *Sevilla Pintoresca*, he started to

⁸ Jesús Luis Serrano Reyes, "Baena: patrimonio humano y documental: II. Hacia una biografía de José Amador de los Ríos, su aportación al mudéjarismo", in *ITVCI: Revista de difusión cultural de Baena y su comarca*, 2 (1), 2012, pp. 89-103; M. Friedman, "Jewish History ...", pp. 92-94; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. LVII-LXXXI.

⁹ This childhood astonishment did not prevent him and his classmates, from developing feelings of anger for the Fall of Visigothic Spain to the Arabs. In fact these two contradictory feelings, strong Spanish nationalism on the one hand and vivid interest on the minorities on the other hand continue to accompany him all his life and is a clue to understanding his work. José Amador de los Ríos, "Recuerdos de Córdoba", in *El Laberinto*, 2 (20), 1845, p. 259.

deal systematically with Islamic architecture, an interest that culminated in 1845 in his book about Toledo *Toledo pintoresca*. In this book he divided the edifices described into two parts, those that belong to Christian Toledo and those belonging to "Arab Toledo", thus giving the Muslims equal part in the history of the city. In this early work he identified a special oriental architectural style beginning to develop after the fall of the city to the Christians (1085). He named it "Mozarabe" in the name that was given to the Christian minority in Islamic Spain. In this 1845 book the two medieval former Jewish synagogues El Transito y Santa Maria la Blanca were described extensively in the part of Arabic Toledo, what proves that his interest in the Jews until 1845, was an integral part from his interest in Islamic architecture¹⁰.

However in the same year 1845, he departed from this path and started showing and independent interest in the history of the Jews. In the years 1845-1846 he published a series of 12 articles about the Spanish Jews in one of the Moderate Party prestigious organ *Revista literaria de El Español*. These articles would form the nucleus to the first historical part of his book. In the last article of the twelve, published on February 1846 Amador declared his wish to end for the time being the publication of the articles, because the study of the literature of the Spanish Jews deserves a more suitable publication than a weekly journal. He promised his audience to address the subject in another format¹¹.

b) The scoop and interests of the work

Amador delivered on his promised in 1848, publishing his *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios de los judíos de España*. The book, more than 700 pages long, was divided into three essays. The first study was historical, intended to engulf the history of the Jews from the dawn of their presence in Spain to their expulsion in 1492. The two others were literary essays. The second described the literary production of the Jewish Spanish scholars until their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The third described the Spanish literature produced outside of the Iberian Peninsula by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, or by the conversos residing inside it from the expulsion until the beginning of the Eighteenth century. This grouping together of Jews and conversos, despite their different religious affiliation, showed that according to Amador both belonged to the same race. Hence the same Spanish pre-Nineteenth Century concept, which viewed Judaism as a race no less than as a religion, found its continuation in the work of José Amador de los Ríos well into the Nineteenth Century.

Amador explained the reasons for the publication of his work, in the impossibility of understanding the history of Spain and its literature output, without considering the presence there of the Jews: "You can hardly open up the history of the Iberian Peninsula, let it be political, social or literary, without finding on every page a name or memorable fact related to that race ... the Chronicles of the Kings, the history books of the cities, the annals of the families are full of events in which the exiled race has had a more or less active part"¹². But even taking into consideration all the aspects of the Jewish stay in Spain, its understanding will never be completed if theology is not taken into account. The Jews did not come to Spain by accident but as a part of the divine plan to exile them from their homeland and to repatriate them among the nations where they will suffer calamities as a punishment for the murder of

¹⁰ José Amador de los Ríos, "Influencia de los árabes en las artes y literatura españolas", in BRAH, 23, 1898, págs. 547-552. For his definitions of the "Mozarabe" and later "Mudejar" style, see: José Amador de los Ríos, *Toledo pintoresca*, Madrid, I. Boix, 1845, pp. 215-228; José Amador de los Ríos, *Discurso de D. José Amador de los Ríos leído ante la Real Academia de Nobles Artes de San Fernando en su recepción pública*, Granada, J. M. Zamora, 1859; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. lvii, lxxx.

¹¹ José Amador de los Ríos, "De los judíos de España. Artículo X y último", in *Revista literaria de El Español*, 38 (16 de febrero), 1846, p. 9.

¹² José Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España: estudios históricos, políticos y literarios*, Pamplona, Urgoiti Editores, 2013, p. 7.

Christ.¹³ The Jewish people appeared therefore, "two thousand years ago ... wandering amidst the world, without country, without home and without temple, so that the [prophecy of the] Holy Scriptures shall be fulfilled ... sometimes appearing with the torch of civilization in it right hand, still other times appear as object of fierce hatreds and always suffering the bitter fate". These considerations put the history of the Jews in Spain in a theological predetermined context, which can explain the failure of the Jewish present in Spain and absolve the Christians in part from responsibility on the calamities they inflicted on the Jews.

But whoever had the responsibility for the sad plight of the Jews in Spain, the Jewish presence in Spain in all of its dimensions, never interested Amador. His studies treated almost exclusively the Castilian literature written by the Jews ignoring almost completely, apart from sparse notes copied usually from Rodríguez de Castro *Biblioteca rabina*,¹⁴ the Hebrew and Arabic literature. The result was a sharp discrepancy between the Jewish scholars who wrote in Spanish and those who wrote in other languages. The great Maimonides for example is treated only in four pages and other distinguished rabbis even less, while the scholars who wrote Castilian are analyzed thoroughly some of them like R. Sem Tob de Carrión (Rabbi Don Santo de Carrión according to Amador) or the scholars from the family of Pablo de Santa María occupy great portion of his essays.

The reason for this neglect was explained by Amador on assumed connection between political independence and the power of literary creation. Given the political and economic situation of the Jewish people who lost their political independence, while living at the mercy of their rulers, be they Arabs or Castilian-"neither could [they] aspire to be original, nor could they refuse to admit the influence of the dominant people". Moreover their literary creation in the language of their rulers was a method employed by the Jews to survive and "win the goodwill of the Spaniards" and thus be considered useful to the state. Amador did not believe that there were much literary merit in the Hebrew literature, viewing it as only theological and intended for inner Jewish proposes. True the study of Hebrew is important "for all aspiring writer who wish to examine the elements of culture that stirred in our soil and resulted in modern civilization", but no such study is needed according to Amador for understanding the Spanish Castilian civilization¹⁵. In one of the rare cases in which he analyzed a Hebrew poem the poem of Abraham Ibn Ezra about the playing of chess, Amador apologized to his audience for the extension that was dedicated to this Hebrew poem, underscoring its importance for the history of the Spanish language itself: "We have stopped, he says, to make known ... this rare and witty poem ... because being metrified in lines of high art, such as those later used among our poets, it can serve to raise awareness of the influence that the Jews had in our literature"¹⁶. Amador marked so the difference between legitimate national culture, and the national cultures of the others (Jews and Muslims), which are set aside and not considered as a part of the national heritage unless they wrote in Castilian.

This trait of considering just the Castilian or other Latin literatures was also manifested in the third essay. The essay dealt only with the literature of the Jewish scholars from the great Sephardic centers of the European west especially the community of Amsterdam, while ignoring almost completely the creation of the Eastern communities in the Ottoman Empire who used a special Spanish dialect written in Hebrew characters (Jewish Spanish or ladino).

The continuation of the Spanish Jewish creation in the Castilian language more than two hundred years after the expulsion of 1492, seemed to contradict Amador's former

¹³ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ José Rodríguez de Castro, *Biblioteca española: biblioteca rabina*, I. Hildesheim & New York, Georg Olms, 1977.

¹⁵ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 9, 11-12. Amador did not estimate much Jewish "theology", comparing it to a "tree whose flower can dry up the wind who brings the rain", *idem*, p. 198.

¹⁶ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 179, 241-242 n. 189.

affirmation about the unavoidable connection between the loss of political independence and the dependence of the Jews on the national languages of their host countries. Following this rule the Castilian literary creation of the Jews outside Spain should have stopped. Amador attributed this phenomenon therefore, less to inner Jewish inclinations and more to providential intentions of the almighty who filled the exiles with a mission to "Proclaim the power of Spain and to bring to all the nations, the customs, the literature and the language, that will be immortalized by such sublime talents as Calderón and Cervantes"¹⁷. Thus The expelled Spanish Jews that were expelled from Spain, were now presented as cultural agents of Spain and its language.

But setting providence aside, Amador found a more profane explication for the phenomenon in the activity of the Spanish Inquisition. The fierce anti Converso persecutions convinced many of their intellectuals to adhere to their traditional former religion. Upon fleeing Spain the exiled encountered already established former Spanish Jews, to whom they transmitted "in memory of their past greatness, abundant material to renew their lamentations". These new exiles, with the story of their sufferings and the "description of the smiling places, from which their forefathers had been disposed", aroused among the Spanish Jews the longings to their former land, preventing the forgetting of the Castilian language.¹⁸ Only the complete extermination of the conversos in the end of the Seventeen Century, that finished with all the Jewish tendencies among them put an end to this constant emigration, and the Spanish Jews lacking this content source of constant memorization, lost their interest in the Spanish language. Thus, the unprecedented phenomenon that for two hundred years the exiled Spanish Jews had remained faithful to Castilian literary came to an end. According to Amador, the Castilian literature written by the Spanish Jews in the Eighteenth century had, only little literary value, being mostly pure theology¹⁹

c) The Mudéjar style in architecture and the Spanish Nation

The same evaluation Amador had of the Spanish Jewish Literature, considering it as unoriginal and as direct result of the loss of political independence was maintained by Amador while evaluating the Mudéjar architecture.

This style could develop, flourish and contribute to the Christian society only when the Muslims like the Jews lost their political independence "losing" because of that "No small part their pristine freshness and bravery". This loss of independence brought as an inevitable consequence, the loss of all originality of the Muslims architects and the "breaking dawn of their constituent elements ... no matter how much they presented themselves as "experts in geometry", and "very skilled in making fineries and other subtleties". What remained from the original Arabic art was only what was could be accommodated to Christian religious sensibilities. Only the Arab architecture of independent Granada, whose inhabitants never lost its independence until 1492, continued according to Amador to maintain its originality²⁰.

¹⁷ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España...*, p. 317; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. CXVII.

¹⁸ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, p. 323.

¹⁹ N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", p. CVII; J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España...*, pp. 435-436.

²⁰ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Discurso de D. José Amador de los Ríos...*, pp. 19-20.

4. Religious fanaticism and reason of state – Amador's vision of the history of the Jews in Spain

a) Jewish Christian relations

Amador's incapability to handle Hebrew sources determined to a larger extent the main characters of the first historical part of his *Estudios*. The narrative was based mainly on Castilian chronicles or secondary sources and reflected mainly their interests or preoccupations, which centered on the Jews relations to the Castilian crown. The *Estudios* therefore discussed only the relations between the Jews and the Christians from their dawn in medieval Iberia until the great expulsion of 1492, ignoring completely the inner history of the Jewish communities.

But if this limitation of the subjects studied was not enough, Amador restricted also the geographical scope of his narrative. Although using the term "Spain" in the title of his work he centered the narrative on the history of the Jews of Castile; ignoring almost completely the history of the Jews in the other Christian Iberian kingdoms and in Muslim Spain. He referred to the history of the Jews in the other kingdoms only when events which started in Castile spread to these kingdoms, and can be interpreted as a direct reflection or result of a Castilian phenomenon. For example the riots of 1391 in Barcelona and Aragon were described because they were the result of an anti-Jewish movement who started in Seville in the kingdom of Castille²¹. His only exception was the large description of the disputation in Tortosa in 1413-1414, which occurred in Aragon and involved the communities of that kingdom. But even then he obscured the aragonese character of the disputation describing it as a Spanish phenomenon.²² We can see that the conflict between the Castilian historians and the historians of the peripheral kingdoms on how to write the history of Spain was manifested also in writing about the history of the Jews²³.

Since the *Estudios* centered only on Jewish Christian relations, it is not surprising that a great part of his narrative was dedicated to the Jewish persecutions. Unlike Castro y Rossi or other liberal historians who developed pro Jewish sympathies, these were more difficult to find in Amador's *Estudios*. Amador refused to present the history of the Jews in Spain as a history of Christian persecutors and Jewish victims. On the contrary, for him the history of the Jewish presence was by and large a history of confrontation between two religious ideologies. The confrontation was sometime mitigated due to the realities of the time or to the efforts of illustrious monarchs, but sometime pushed to the extreme by religious fanatics on both side. A significant player in the Jewish-Christian relations was the Christian mob, composed of the lower classes of society, who inflicted on the Jews occasional massacre. Those actions especially the mascaradas of 1391 were viewed by Amador with real horror and disdain, typical of a Spanish nineteenth Century conservative liberal. This conflict reached its peak in the days of the Catholic Kings, which in order to save the Jews from the angry Christians and to pacify their kingdoms did not find other options rather than establish religious unity and expelling their Jews subjects.

²¹ J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 67-69. Amador almost exclusive attention to Castille was noted by the Catalan historian, native of Girona, Enrique Claudio Girbal who lamented the situation that: "many modern writers have given the sad pretense of believing they are writing the history of Spain when they write only the history of Castilla, forgetting the glories of extremes", Enrique Claudio Girbal, *Los judíos en Gerona*, Gerona, G. Cumané, 1870, p. VIII.

²² J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España...*, p. 77.

²³ See: Antonio Morales Moya, "La imagen de Castilla en la historia de España", in *La memoria histórica de Castilla y León: historiografía castellana en los siglos XIX y XX*, ed. P. Carasa, Salamanca, Junta de Castilla y León - Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 2003, pp. 359-368; Mariano Esteban de Vega, "La imagen de Castilla en las historias de Cataluña, el País Vasco y Galicia", in *La memoria histórica de Castilla y León ...*, pp. 376-391.

The Jews danger to Christian society was manifested first in the Visigothic period (Mid fifth century-711). Amador influenced by earlier accounts of the collaboration of the Jews with the Arab invaders of 711, found this later occurrence as an almost full justification for their persecution during all the seventh century. True he objected to some oppressive measures like the forced baptism of King Sisebut (613), because of it contradiction to the evangelical principle that baptism should not be excised by force. But usually he interpreted the oppressive Visigothic regulations as defensive measures carried out by the Christians in order to defend themselves from possible Jewish danger. The final collaboration of the Jews with the Muslims proved to Amador that the repeated royal enactments and the legislation of the visigothic ecclesiastical councils were not motivated by anti-Jewish bias but by a real necessity to defend the patria. Amador inverted therefore the rule between the oppressor and the victim, explaining all the anti-Jewish legislation as a reaction to seditious Jewish activity. He justified even the most extreme measures like forcing the Jews to become slaves of the Christians, because when the patria is in peril, no humanitarian interest can derail the carrying out of the necessary steps in order to defend it²⁴.

In the first days of the Reconquista, when the memory of the Jewish betrayal was still high, the Christians treated them as bitter enemies and like the Muslims they were exterminated in the cities conquered by them. But after the first fierce days of the conquest have passed, the Christians whose main occupations during the middle age, were tilling the soil or wielding the sword, discovered soon enough that they could not base their new state only on these occupations. The Jews therefore who possessed industrial and commercial skills were invited to settle in the Castilian state²⁵. These new settlers were despised by the Christians, and there occurred occasionally violent outbursts, that did not halt the settlement process.

This reality was perceived by the Castilian monarch Alfonso X who conceived a plan to integrate the Jews into the Castilian society. The king who was much praised by Amador for his moderate and elevated principles, regulated the Jewish status in the kingdom promising them free worship and security to their lives and properties. On the other hand he harshly oppressed proselytizing activities by the Jews, punishing such attempts by the death penalty and promised financial gains to converts in order to foster their conversion to Christianity. This policy, concluded Amador, which might have brought the Jews gradually to the baptismal font started already to reap its fruits in the times of the said king but it was discontinued by his successors, who had to postpone all planes of national unity due to the resistance of the belligerent and rebellious nobles²⁶.

The discontinuation of this policy and the internal strife and civil war which soon ravaged Fourteenth Century Castile was also felt by the Jews. Supporters of future King Enrique the Second (1333/4?-1379) used the protection that king Pedro I (1334-1369) had shown them, in order to excite the mob against them. The Castilian Mob gained therefore its vigor, lost the fear of the authorities and when possessed with a golden opportunity in Seville of 1391, incited by the sermons of Fernando Martínez, attacked the defenseless Jews of the city. From Seville the riots spread to all Spain, causing the Jews to convert in masses while killing the ones who stayed loyal to their Judaism.

The 1391 riots was a devastative blow to Castilian Jewry, nor only were innumerable lives and wealth lost, but Castile also slipped into economic recession, lacking the capital and the initiative of the Jews. The Jewish population has also lost its internal cohesion, splitting

²⁴ N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. XCII-XCV.

²⁵ N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. XCV-XCVII; J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 34-35

²⁶ On Amador's negative view of the Spanish aristocracy, not uncommon to Spanish conservative liberal thought, see: R. López Vela, "Judíos, fanatismo y decadencia: Amador de los Ríos y la interpretación de la Historia Nacional en 1848" in *Manuscrits*, 17, 1999, pp. 81-83.

into two groups. The first group was composed from those who accepted Christianity and later contributed heavily to Castilian society and letters, and the second was composed from those who remained loyal to the religion of their fathers. The second group lost because of the persecution that sometimes was manifested in violent outbursts, almost all cultural merits or even human dignity. But Amador refused to give the Jews the status of the ultimate victims. For him they were culprits as much as victims, for they did not content themselves with resentment in home, but committed crimes against weak members of Christian society including children, as acts of reprisals for the Christians massacres. Amador accepted therefore the truth of the famous cases of supposed ritual crimes like the holy child of La Guardia or the robbing of the holy bread at Segovia²⁷. The Jews also made matters worse for themselves for not refraining from proselytizing activity even among the old Christians despite the severe prohibition, a conclusion Amador learned from the expulsion degree of the catholic kings who accused the Jews of conducting proselytizing activities among the Christians not considering their origin (old or new). Thus, when the Catholic Monarchs rose to power at the end of the fifteenth century, the tension between the Jews and Christians reached its peak.

Conquered Granada, and being the Christian religious sentiment at its height due the conquest of the last Muslim enclave on Iberian soil, the Catholic monarchs feared that this exalted sentiment might express itself in outbursts of interreligious violence against the Jews. In order to ensure the safety of their Jewish subjects and the security of the kingdoms from possible internal strife the Catholic Kings did not find any other choice rather than to expatriate the Jews, considering the facts that other measures to solve the problem like installing the Spanish Inquisition did not succeeded. Thus the Catholic Monarchs showed themselves as real architects of states who understood that the best guarantee to ensure the security and greatness of a country is to base it on the element of religious unity.

Amador admitted that the Catholic Monarchs did not possess the legal right to expel the Jews but as governors of states they could transgress the law if the security of the state such demanded. To deny the Catholic Kings such a right is equivalent of denying them the right to govern²⁸. Amador was willing however to acknowledge that the measure was ungrateful to the Jews, for expelling them Just after utilizing their services in the conquest of Granada and admitted that in carrying out the orders of the catholic kings more severity then required was used²⁹. But these later considerations did not change his overall positive view of the 1492 edict.

b) The expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscos – similarities and differences

The same patterns, state security, religious unity and the possible chances of integration into Christian society, in which Amador judged the history of the Jews in medieval Spain, were also employed in his assessment of the history of the Moriscos in Sixteenth Century Spain and their final expulsion. Amador referred to this grave incident two times in his writings, the first time in his 1848 *Estudios* and the second time in 1854 while reviewing the French historian Adolphe de Circourt book *Histoire des Mores Mudejares et des Morisques ou*

²⁷ Amador seemed at one time to caution these believe. When describing the ritual crime of Sepulveda (1468) and its bloody Christian response he concluded that this crime let it be "truth or pretext, was made known shortly, appearing in the eyes of the crowd like a shocking crime" J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, p. 98. However in other cases he seemed to believe in the truth of such accusations, *idem*, pp. 93, 96 and 110, n. 93.

²⁸ This statement was written in 1855 in a reply to Rabbi Philipson's petition to the Spanish Cortes to abolish the decree of expulsion and let the Jews enter Spain, José Amador de los Ríos, "Consideraciones histórico-políticas sobre la exposición elevada a las Cortes constituyentes de la nación española por los judíos de Alemania", in *Revista Española de Ambos Mundos*, 3, 1855, p. 210

²⁹ M. Friedman, "Jewish History ...", pp. 100-101; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. civ-cvi; J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 125-139, 144.

des Arabes d'Espagne sous la domination des chrétiens, (Paris 1848) in the pages of the Journal *Revista Española de Ambos Mundos*. In these two times he demonstrated a notable difference between the conclusions reached although not in the parameters analyzed.

In 1848 Amador condemned the Moriscos expulsion of 1609 for being an act of religious fanaticism, which was directed against a minority that by converting to Christianity showed its willingness to abandon all distinctive trait of nationality and to fully integrate itself into Christian society³⁰. In 1854 however he approved the measure for the opposite reason he early condemned it. The failure of the attempts to integrate the Moriscos into Christian society by sincere conversion originates their tragedy.

Amador refused to make a complete comparison between Castilian Christian toleration of the Muslims (Mudéjares) and Muslim toleration of the Mozarabes. The Muslim toleration was a practical measure employed by the conqueror in order to appease the fear of the occupied population and preserve his conquests, without harboring hatred towards it. But Christian toleration was much difficult to achieve, for being directed towards a usurper that conquered Visigothic Spain in 711, and deprived the Christians from their land. Therefore "the existence of the Mudejar was not a result of the need to preserve the conquest territory, such as was directed towards the Mozarabes, but the result of tolerance of the Castilians, demonstrating the nobility of their character by not acting with savage cruelty and exterminate those men whom they considered, however, as usurpers of the provinces and the lands"³¹. For Amador the only way to integrate the Muslims, whose national spirit was still alive after the conquest of Granada, within the Spanish nation was by convincing them to convert peacefully and voluntarily to Christianity. The proselytizing effort organized slowly and patiently by Fray Hernando de Talavera between 1492 and 1499, failed in 1499 because of the intolerance of Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros. Cisneros incited the Muslims (Moros in amador's language) to revolt by the employment of intolerant measures like ordering forced mass conversions. After the crushing of the rebellion, the union endorsed by Hernando de Talavera between Christians and Muslims who were called Moriscos after their forced conversion in 1502, was no longer possible. This failure has fuelled again "the war of religion, which had troubled for eight hundred years the Spanish society"³², a war that could end only by the extermination of one of the both contenders what made the expatriation of the Moriscos inevitable.

But in spite of his support of the expulsion, he nevertheless criticized the Policy of King Felipe III for fuelling intolerance and fanaticism that aggravated the situation, and for not spearing from the edict the descendants of the Mudéjar minority. Since the Mudéjars unlike the Moriscos, were part of Christian society before 1492 they were much more integrated into Castilian Society and did not participate in the rebellious schemes of the Moriscos³³. The expulsion of their descendants was therefore an act of gross injustice. The reason Amador's change of mind from the *Estudios* to his 1854 article is not known, but might be explained by a close reading of Adolphe de Circourt's book about the Muslims and ex Muslims under Christian rule.

³⁰ This way of thinking was also manifested in the case of the Conversos, who were valued by Amador as legitimate members of Christian society upon converting to Christianity. He never questioned the Sincerity of the Conversos Christianity, for him the converso problem was more a question of Christian religious fanaticism than the survival of real Jewish tendencies among them. Only the Inquisition with its cruelties motivated many conversos to return to the practices of their fathers, R. López Vela, "La plebe y los judíos ...", p. 85; N. Shinan, "Ingratitud y fanatismo ...", pp. c, cvii; , J. Amador de los Ríos, *Los judíos de España ...*, pp. 98-99, 317.

³¹ J. Amador de los Ríos, "Estudios históricos: mozárabes, mudéjares y moriscos", in *Revista española de Ambos Mundos*, 2, 1854, p. 1017.

³² J. Amador de los Ríos, "Estudios históricos ...", p. 1020.

³³ J. Amador de los Ríos, "Estudios históricos ...", pp. 1025, 1028

Conclusion

Amador's vision of the History of the Jews in Spain was the first systematic narrative of their history offered to the Nineteenth Century Spanish public opinion. Motivated by nationalistic considerations of the nineteenth century he was ready to admit the Jews or the Muslims as full members of the Spanish Patria only upon their conversion to Christianity. He was also ready to see the Jewish literature as part of the national creation only if it was written in Castilian or other Latin languages. By ignoring or despising the Hebrew Literature and sources, Amador could never grasp the multi-dimensional situation of the Jews in the Spain. He also discouraged his countrymen from studying their Hebrew literature for considering it only as theological and conceived for inner reasons, and so he denied the Jewish Hebrew literature a place in the cultural heritage of the Spanish Nation and as much as to the Jewish people if maintaining their former Hebrew tongue.

The popularity of his version in Spain that under the rule of Queen Isabel the Second (1833-1868) was not only due to its expository merits. His version found a way to tone down possible feelings of guilt due to Spain intolerant past by attributing to the Jews and Moriscos equal responsibility like their Christians persecutors for their plight. More ever His presentation of their expulsion as inevitable consequence of religious fanaticism especially among the Christian mob, stressing on the other hand the religious unity as an important pillar of state construction, echoed moderate sensibilities and justified the character of the state constructed by them. A state without religious freedom that could motivate religious conflicts, a total exclusion of the fanatic messes from the political process and the church under state control is therefore the best regime for Spain that is historically proved. The failure of the medieval tolerance of minorities justified there after the intolerance of the Spanish state.